

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

**Volume II:
*Lives and Legacies***

**Epilogue:
*Echoes of the Past, Voices of the Future:
Ten Young Latinas/os in 2013-2014***

by

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Epilogue

Echoes of the Past, Voices of the Future: Ten Young Latinas/os in 2013-2014

We end by skipping 30 years forward in time to learn about the experiences of 10 young Latinas/os who worked as interns with the Boulder County Latino History Project in the summer of 2013. In their interviews and written statements, these outstanding high school and college students—seven women and three men—discussed many of the topics examined in the two volumes of this set. Because the interns are likely to become leaders of their communities, their descriptions of their own lives, some of them painful to read, connect the past and the present and give us hope for the future.

All of the interns were recommended by people who had worked with them at their schools or colleges or in community organizations. In the summer of 2013, four were attending local high schools or had just graduated; six were students at nearby colleges and universities or had just finished.¹ As it became clear that the interns had extremely interesting histories of their own, the BCLHP arranged for them to do videographed interviews with each other.² In the summer of 2014, five of them returned questionnaires that provided further information.³

¹ The high school students attended Skyline High School in Longmont (2), Longmont High School (1), and Centaurus High School in Lafayette (1). The older interns were undergraduates at Front Range Community College in Longmont (1), the University of Colorado at Denver (1), Metropolitan State University in Denver (1), and the University of Colorado at Boulder (3), all majoring in Ethnic Studies, of whom 2 had just graduated with honors or highest honors).

² All of the interns gave written permission for their interviews to be posted on the website of the Maria Rogers Oral History Program at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library. Nine of them were willing to have their real names used in this book; the URLs for their interviews are given in the listing of primary sources at the back: Ana Gonzalez Dorta, Ana Karina Casas Ibarra, Veronica Lamas, Deisy de Luna, Emmanuel Melgoza, Jason Romero, Jr., Dalia Sanchez, Kelly Sarceno, and Salvador Serrano. One intern requested that a substitute name be used in the book; she appears here as “Elvira Lucero.”

³ Gonzalez Dorta, Lamas, de Luna, Melgoza, and Romero. The statements described below are all found in their interviews or “Intern questionnaires” and will not be individually referenced.



Illus. Epilogue.1. *Interns and the author at a reception for BCLHP, August, 2013*
back, left to right: Jason, Salvador, Emmanuel; front, left to right; Deisy,
Ana Karina, Dalia, Kelly, Marjorie, Elvira, Ana, Veronica

This epilogue reports on their experiences with immigration, employment, family relationships, religion, ethnic identities, education, discrimination, and deportation.

Nine of the interns' parents were immigrants to this country. Their histories bear striking similarities to those of the Hispanics who came to Boulder County prior to 1940. Most of their parents had left their homes elsewhere due to extreme poverty, political unrest, and/or a strong desire to create better opportunities for themselves and their children, which included getting an education. Seven of the interns were from Mexican backgrounds, in all cases from the same states that had provided immigrants early in the twentieth century. Four were born in Mexico—two in Zacatecas, one in Guanajuato, and one in Michoacán. Their parents were evidently undocumented and hence subject to arrest and deportation by ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement].⁴

⁴ The BCLHP did not ask about the interns' immigration status, but most volunteered that information in their interviews or questionnaire responses.

Three of these foreign-born young people were themselves at risk of deportation; they could not get working papers, and until 2013 they had to pay out-of-state tuition if they wanted to go to college.⁵ Deisy was the only one to have applied and paid for D.A.C.A. status through the 2012 “Dream Act,” which allowed her to live and work in this country legally for a two-year, renewable period.⁶ The parents of three other interns had come from Guanajuato, Durango, and Jalisco, and in at least two cases were undocumented. But because these children were born in the U.S., they were citizens.

The remaining young people came from different backgrounds. Kelly’s parents had emigrated from conflict-torn Guatemala to California in the late 1970s and obtained legal residency through the 1986 Amnesty Law.⁷ Kelly was born in this country, so she was a citizen. Ana’s family had relocated from Caracas, Venezuela, where her father operated a successful business and her mother worked for the American Embassy. They had come to this country in 2010, with the necessary permissions, because of their opposition to the current government of Venezuela. They chose Boulder due to its ready access to good universities for their three children. Only Jason came from a deeply rooted American family. His grandparents were from old northern New Mexican families but had moved to Pueblo, in southern Colorado, where he grew up.

Current U.S. policies and practices concerning immigration, as enforced by the border patrol, have created dangerous conditions for desperate people trying to cross the border from Mexico without papers. In her interview, Ana Karina described how she walked across the desert from Mexico with her mother and two little brothers when she was 11 years old. Her mother, who was escaping from an abusive marriage in Zacatecas, had tried to cross previously with only the boys but was stopped and sent back. The next time she decided to bring Ana

⁵ The passage of Colorado’s ASSET bill in April of that year allowed many undocumented college students who met certain criteria to qualify for in-state tuition, which was far less expensive, though they were still ineligible for most scholarships.

⁶ The federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program allowed some young people who had been brought to this country as children, without papers, to obtain permission to remain. The cost was high, however: \$465 for the application, plus whatever a lawyer’s fees might be.

⁷ The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 made it illegal to hire undocumented immigrants and required employers to determine their workers’ immigration status, but it also granted legal status to about 3,000,000 immigrants who currently lacked formal permission to live and work in this country.

Karina too, but once again they were caught. Finally, after sleeping on the streets of a Mexican border town for several nights waiting for the *coyote* who was going to lead them across, they made it out into the desert. Ana Karina carried one of the little boys on her back much of the time. "It was really scary. . . . We were crossing through big hills full of cactus, and it was at night so we couldn't see. People were getting cactus spines all over their bodies and hands. We walked for a couple days. My mom was alone, but she got help from the other people." When they reached the other side, "We waited a long time until it got dark and a van picked us up. They took us to a house, and it was packed, packed with people." After that they were taken to Nevada and eventually came to Boulder.

In terms of employment, the fathers of those interns who had recently come from Mexico faced a somewhat wider range of options in the U.S. than had their predecessors a century before. But the jobs they found were nevertheless unskilled, poorly paid, often temporary, and—for those who were undocumented—had to be arranged and paid under the table. In time, however, some were able to move into more regular positions. Emmanuel's father, who had been a baker and very small farmer in Mexico, worked in construction when he first came to Colorado; later he was the cook in a restaurant and then became the janitor at a casino. Deisy's father had run a hamburger and Taco stand and worked in a carpet factory in Mexico. In Colorado, he first did any kind of manual labor he could find but was then hired part-time at a horse ranch and by 2013 was working there full-time, dealing mainly with the machinery. After starting with various unskilled jobs, Salvador's father took short-term factory work before getting a position at Fresca Foods.⁸ Veronica's father had done factory, agricultural, and construction work in Mexico. After coming to the U.S., he was for many years a migrant farm worker, moving around with his wife and four children through Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, and Texas. Later he did construction work.

For educated people with citizenship or papers, the options were far greater. Ana's parents had set up a business in Boulder similar to the one they had in Caracas, providing advertising and promotional materials for companies and organizations. Jason's father was an operating room assistant at a hospital, and his mother was a school nurse: he referred to

⁸ When he was unemployed during the economic downswing of 2008, the whole family made and sold tamales to get by.

his family as middle class.

The mothers of the interns had generally not worked before coming to this country, and if they were currently married, a few continued as housewives. But women on their own and some of the newer immigrant wives needed to earn money. Possibilities were even more limited for them. Several cleaned houses, taking their children with them if they had no relatives to look after them. One did domestic work in a hotel, and another was employed at a *tortillaria*. Veronica's mother, who did migrant field work with her husband for some years, was later a house cleaner and eventually found a production job at a Coca-Cola bottling plant.

Thanks to their access to higher education, the interns foresaw a much wider range of possible careers than had been open to their parents. These positions would have been inconceivable for first- or second-generation immigrants early in the twentieth century. No gender differences were visible: all the Latinas expected to have their own careers, generally as professionals, like their male counterparts. Three of the young people wanted to become teachers or counselors: Ana Karina hoped to work with troubled children/teens and Elvira to teach in a bilingual school; Jason planned to start with high school teaching but later get a Ph.D. and become a professor of Chicano Studies. Veronica was determined to go to Law School and become an immigration lawyer; Kelly wanted to work on immigration reform in some capacity. The other career choices were scattered: Salvador was interested in architecture, Deisy in accounting and marketing, and Ana in film making. Dalia wanted either to become a mortician and eventually a coroner or go into the military. Emmanuel hoped to go to graduate school in political science and perhaps try politics.

When asked whether they thought that being Latino would stand in the way of their career goals, most of the interns said it would not. They did not expect to be discriminated against, and they thought that being bilingual, as all of them were, would be an asset in the kind of work they hoped to pursue. That positive hope for the future was at odds with the negative treatment many of them had already received, based upon their ethnicity.

Many of the family patterns we observed prior to 1980 remained strong for these young Latinas/os. Although the number of children per family was now much lower, close relations with grandparents were still very important. When Salvador's family first came to Colorado, they

stayed with their grandmother, who had moved here earlier. He said that his grandparents “have been taking care of me since I was young. They’re always striving to make me go to a higher level than them. They always tried to give me the best. I appreciate that.” When both of Veronica’s parents were arrested and imprisoned, she and her younger brother lived with their grandmother in Denver for three years. Elvira’s grandmother stepped in to help Elvira and her mom after her dad was taken by ICE and held for deportation. Family mattered to young people from long-established American backgrounds too. Jason said that his grandparents lived near where he grew up in Pueblo, and he saw them regularly; three or four times each year his immediate family traveled to New Mexico and other parts of Colorado to visit his aunts, uncles, and cousins. For a few years, two young cousins lived with his family before moving in with his grandparents, and his aunt and her four children also lived with them temporarily.

But migration might cut ties across generations. Because people without papers could not risk crossing the border, they were unable to go to their home countries to visit relatives. Deisy said that when she lived in Mexico, “I would see my grandparents and cousins on a daily basis; my cousins were my friends, and my family was my everything.” But since coming to the U.S. nine years before, she had not seen any of them in person, and it was hard to talk with them by phone. “They are family, but we live in completely different worlds.” When describing life in Mexico when he was young, Emmanuel explained that while his father was away, working in the U.S., his mother and the children lived with their grandparents. “My grandparents played a big role in my childhood. They were like my parents, especially my grandfather, he was a father figure.” But Emmanuel had not seen his Mexican family since he arrived in the U.S. Documented immigrants and U.S. citizens had the great advantage of being able to visit their relatives. Kelly had been to Guatemala at least ten times, Dalia visited her Mexican relatives every two years, and Ana had already returned several times to Venezuela.

In the area of religion, these young people were even more loosely connected to the Roman Catholic Church than many earlier Latinas/os. All of them were raised in Catholic families, and many had gone to church regularly with their older relatives and/or had prayers at home when they were young. Most still classified themselves generally as Catholics, and a few said they went to services anywhere between once every few weeks and once every three or four months. But several were

at least partially separated from the church. Deisy, who had gone to Mass regularly with her grandfather in Mexico, commented, "I don't feel the need to go to church every week to feel spiritually bonded with God. I also believe in parts of other religions, and a 'good' Catholic does not do that. I go to church about once a month, sometimes more, sometimes none at all." Jason laid out his position more fully:

I consider myself to be a Chicano Catholic, with many of my beliefs and practices coming from the Catholic Church. However, I also recognize the indigenous influence on my spirituality, and I enjoy exploring that further. While this is in conflict with the teachings of the Church, which claims to be the singular holy representative of God on Earth, I do embrace elements of my Native spirituality.

Defining one's identity as a Latino/a remained a problem for these young people. There was no agreement about what descriptive labels to use. Emmanuel termed himself "Mexican," and Salvador spoke about "Mexicans, whites, blacks, and Asians" as the main groups in Longmont, identifying himself with the first category. Elvira referred to people like her as "Hispanics," but Kelly talked about herself and her friends as "Latinas." Veronica described herself as "Mexican American," while Ana said she was "Venezuelan."

The degree of certainty with which the interns responded to questions about ethnicity also varied. Jason was definite in calling himself "Chicano," because he wanted to acknowledge his indigenous ancestors as well as the Spanish/European side of his background. In his interview, he described the emotional impact of reading Corky Gonzales's poem "I am Joaquín" when he was in high school, and he quoted the opening and closing lines of that powerful exploration of the various facets of Chicano identity.⁹ Deisy described the complexity of her identity in a different way: "My nationality is Mexican, my ethnicity is Hispanic-Latino, and my race is white."

Dalia, however, was still struggling to situate herself. At one point in her interview she said she thinks of herself as American, because she

⁹ "I am Joaquín, lost in a world of confusion,/ caught up in the whirl of a gringo society,/ confused by the rules, scorned by attitudes/ suppressed by manipulation, and destroyed by modern society. . . . I am the masses of my people and/ I refuse to be absorbed./ I am Joaquín./ The odds are great/ But my spirit is strong,/ My faith unbreakable,/ My blood is pure./ I am Aztec prince and Christian Christ./ I SHALL ENDURE!/ I WILL ENDURE!" (Rodolfo Gonzales, "I am Joaquín").

was born in this country, as compared to people born in Mexico. But she also talked about the social problems she faced in high school. "I wasn't Mexican enough, and I wasn't white enough either, 'cause I'll never be white enough. I was just me, stuck in the middle. I didn't know where to go or who to hang out with for a while. And then eventually, I started hanging out with the Mexicans, 'cause that was the only option I really had." When the interviewer, a slightly older intern, asked how she would describe her ethnicity, Dalia said she didn't know: "Hispanic? Both of my parents are from Mexico, so I'm Hispanic, right?"

The biggest single difference between these young immigrants and their predecessors in the first half of the twentieth century was access to high school and college education. Although previous immigrant parents were eager to have their children go to school, it was not until the 1940s that more than a few Latinas/os reached the secondary school level. Graduating from high school was common only among Latino children born in this country to well-established parents, and not until the third generation—starting in the late 1960s—did many begin to move to the college level. Among the interns, by contrast, all planned to complete high school (or had already done so) and go on for further education. Their commitment resulted in part from their parents' belief in education.

The importance of education was stressed by many of the interns. When Deisy arrived in this country from Mexico at age 13, speaking only Spanish, she went into the "Newcomers" program at Heritage Middle School in Longmont for one year, learning English. She then decided to challenge herself by transferring to Altona Middle School, where all classes were taught in English. After graduating from Silver Creek High School in Longmont, where her teachers were very supportive, she enrolled at Front Range Community College and planned to continue at the University of Colorado at Boulder [CU-Boulder]. When asked what advice she would give to other young people, she said, "Of course, go to school. Because right now, it just seems like, 'Oh, I need to work, I need to get this job, I want to buy this thing.' But in the long run, your education is the only thing that sticks with you. Education is the only thing that will save you." She remembered that when she first came to Boulder County, a man who had a job killing turkeys at the processing plant in Longmont told her to stay in school, saying "*Nunca vayas a trabajar en la*

mataderia."¹⁰ Her conclusion: "Just keep going with education is what I say, because education is the key to success."

Emmanuel described his educational history after moving to Colorado from Mexico when he was in third grade. He attended an elementary school in Denver where most of the children spoke only English.

So it was hard for me to communicate with teachers when I needed to go to the bathroom or I needed to do something or ask a question or get help in my homework. But luckily there was a high school student who was helping ESL kids, so that's how I was able to break that barrier and start learning English . . . I learned by reading books, by going to the library, watching a lot of TV. . . . That's how I learned English, just by listening to other people.

He had an extra reason to become competent, because his parents had little formal education and spoke almost no English: "I'm the one who's always having to take care of the bills or car companies and all those things." In middle school, he moved out of ESL classes and into regular ones; in high school he went into the International Baccalaureate program and did well in it. At the time of his interview, he had finished his second year at CU-Boulder, where he was majoring in Political Science and Ethnic Studies, with a minor in Technology, Arts, and Media.

When asked why he decided to go to college, Emmanuel said that part of the reason was to avoid "all the struggles my family has gone through, from not having food on the table, to not being able to pay bills, or having to sell items in order to pay a bill, because there's no money. Or starting to work at the age of 13." But he also felt obligated to study because other people believed in him.

One thing my parents have taught me, "Go to college." And you know you're not the only one who's going, it's the rest of the people that are behind you, that have been supporting you all through your struggle, your teachers before, in middle school, elementary, high school, all of them. 'Cause if you fail, everybody fails. If you graduate, then you're bringing ten people with you. That's the one thing that drives me, it's them.

Veronica went to Montbello High School in Denver, in a poor community where few students even finished high school and very few went on to any kind of further education. She had a strong personal

¹⁰ "I never want to see you working in the slaughterhouse."

motivation for doing well academically. When she was in elementary school, during one of the few times she saw her father in jail after his arrest and before his deportation by ICE, she said to him, “Dad, when I grow up I’m going to become a lawyer so that I could get you out of here.’ As little as I was, that’s what kept me going.” When she got to high school, she always told herself, “I am going to be a lawyer” and studied hard to get very good grades. She decided to go to CU-Boulder, against the advice of her teachers and counselors, who thought a community college would be the most she could handle. Veronica did come to the university but struggled in her first year because of inadequate preparation, especially in writing. When she was unhappy, her mother, who was cleaning houses at the time, encouraged her to keep trying. Veronica persevered, seeking extra help, and later graduated with Honors, having majored in Ethnic Studies, where she received good support from the faculty. She wrote her Honors thesis on the problems faced by undocumented students in obtaining a higher education.

Interns from educated, middle class families had different experiences. Jason went through the Pueblo schools and began attending Pueblo Community College while still in high school, graduating with an Associate’s degree in 2010. He then went to CU-Boulder, where he graduated in 2013 with Highest Honors. Ana’s family was firmly behind her education and training. She became interested in film in her early teens while living in Caracas; her parents, instead of putting on a *quinceañera* party for her, used the money to send her to a summer program in film studies in California. After the family moved to Boulder, she was involved in various film projects at Fairview High School; when she started college at the University of Colorado in Denver, she majored in film and television. While working as an intern with the Latino History Project, she made films of places in Longmont, Lafayette, and Boulder that had been important to Latinas/os.¹¹

Although many local colleges and universities were trying to increase the diversity of their students in the early 2010s and therefore welcomed applications from Latino students, finances were a problem for these interns, especially those who were undocumented and therefore had to pay out-of-state tuition and/or were not eligible for scholarships. Ana Karina, who was attending Metropolitan State University in Denver on a

¹¹ “Longmont, film of places of historical importance,” “Lafayette, film of places of historical importance,” and “Boulder, film of places of historical importance.”

part-time basis while also holding down a job, was discouraged at how slowly she was moving towards her degree. She had been paying out-of-state tuition because she was undocumented, and she could only afford to take one or two classes each semester. Some semesters she could not enroll at all. She was bitter, because although she was just as bright as other students and worked harder than most, she did not have a wealthy family who could pay her tuition, and she did not qualify for scholarships.

The interviewers asked the interns if they had experienced any form of discrimination or racism because they were Latino. A few, those with less obviously Latino skin color or features, said they had not, though they knew of others who had. The majority, however, reported that they had at times been treated differently from Anglos within the community. Salvador noticed that if he and his family went to a restaurant in Longmont, they did not get served as quickly or spoken to as nicely as the white family at the next table. Emmanuel said that in Boulder:

You definitely get looked at weird, or with some type of face or some type of body language, when you're talking Spanish to someone. . . . Obviously the color that your skin is—your skin color—you stand out. . . . It's hard to be looked at, because we're human beings, we're not from a different world. We're the same, we're made out of bone and flesh. There's nothing different between us, it's just that they speak English, we speak Spanish, there's only that. We live in this multi-cultural country. . . . If we could just look at everybody as if color doesn't exist, there wouldn't be any racism in this country.

The most overt example of negative treatment evidently based on ethnicity or race was described by Jason. This case of "profiling" by the Boulder police occurred shortly after he had graduated from the University of Colorado, when he was riding one evening in his truck with a friend, who was African American. Jason drove a small, candy-apple red 1991 Chevy low rider with gold trim and lettering, an object of pride that he regarded as a statement of his cultural identity. A policeman noticed that one of Jason's headlights was out and turned on his flashing lights.

So I pulled into a parking lot. And I kid you not, four police cars showed up. To surround one little truck, one tiny low-rider truck with two people in there, a Chicano and a black guy. But they had four police show up. They were just harassing us, asking us who we were, where we were going, what we were up to. Asking why I was dressed up at the time. (I was dressed up because I had a

presentation at work.) Asking if we had any weapons, illegal substances. Then they said, "Why are you so nervous?" They were continuously, continuously harassing us, for a good 20 minutes or so.

Eventually the police left, after explaining it was their job to keep the streets safe. "To me that's just crazy. The fact that you need four police to show up for one car." Jason was fortunate in being a citizen. Undocumented young Latinas/os were often afraid to drive—even to work—lest they be stopped for some minor problem; if they were arrested, they might be reported to ICE.

It is troubling that many of the interns had suffered racist treatment at school or college. They were generally positive about their teachers, reporting that they had helped them learn English and move into more advanced classes and had encouraged their hopes of going on to college. Deisy said that her teachers at Silver Creek High School in Longmont had even raised the money to pay for her first semester at Front Range Community College, before she was eligible to get a work-study position on campus. The interns who were undergraduates at CU-Boulder gave much of the credit for their success in staying in college to supportive professors and counselors. For Veronica, participation in the McNeill Academic Program for first-generation students made a big difference, as did the encouragement of Prof. Arturo Aldama of Ethnic Studies who advised her senior Honors thesis and backed her desire to go to Law School.

But Ana Karina felt differently. When she came from Mexico to Casey Junior High School in Boulder, not speaking any English, one of her teachers got angry and started yelling at her because she was not responding to him. Afterwards one of the Latinas she ate lunch with explained he was saying that "he couldn't understand why we were accepted into schools when we didn't speak a word of English." Later she resented how she was treated at Boulder High School.

You feel alienated, you feel like you don't belong. Everyone, from people on the street to teachers even, they look down on you, thinking that you don't have the intelligence to do as well as a white student. And when you do actually do good, they're like, "Oh, my God, you're actually smart! Look at you!" . . . It's a challenge, but it's a good challenge, because it makes us who we are. That makes us work harder and makes us stronger. We know that because we already went through so much and accomplished so many things,

the next thing to come, the next challenge, we know we can go through it, we can accomplish it.

Interactions with their Anglo peers at school or in college were more likely to be problematic. Kelly went to Niwot High School for her freshman year, to take advantage of its International Baccalaureate program. That school was overwhelmingly white, and she found the other students very racist. She described eating lunch in the cafeteria one day.

It was me and my two or three friends, and we were all Latinas. We were just eating, and then one guy, he came up to us, and he was like, "Do you get free lunch?" We were like, "Yeah." And he was like, "Oh, no shock there!" There were a lot of small things like that, and it added up, and emotionally I just couldn't deal with it. So after my freshman year I went to Skyline High School. That was a better fit for me there, and I feel more accepted.

Kelly said that her teachers at Niwot sometimes tried to help. She described an incident involving her IB English teacher, "who was basically my backbone through it all." The class had an assignment of writing about themselves after reading Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*. Kelly chose a prompt about a struggle she was dealing with, and her teacher encouraged her to write about what she was going through at school.

I wrote about it, basically everything that really hit me hard, I just wrote it down on paper. I wrote how it was making me ashamed of who I was, and my background. That's probably one of the main reasons why I left Niwot, because I never want to feel ashamed of who I am and my background. Because my family is everything in me and my background. I'm proud of being dark skinned, having long black hair with brown eyes, and speaking Spanish. That all adds up to Kelly.

The students then read their papers out loud. Kelly was "the only girl of color, so reading that felt definitely empowering. I ended up crying, and so did my teacher, and a couple classmates did. Everyone was like, 'We didn't know just how hard it is for you' and stuff like that." She thought that other students probably realized that discrimination was an issue, but they did not want to face it.

Five of the interns had been at CU-Boulder: three as undergraduates, and two as members of a summer program for students of color between their junior and senior years in high school, designed to prepare them

for college-level work and to help them and their parents navigate the process of applying for admission and financial aid. All of them commented on how difficult it was to adjust to a heavily white, English-speaking campus. Emmanuel, who had gone to high school in a largely Latino neighborhood outside Denver, observed,

It was walking out of one bubble and walking into a different bubble without having in-between preparation. You walk into that campus, and boom, 90% white. You're used to seeing, walking down the street, it would be like, "*Hola! Como está?*" Calling out to your neighbors that speak Spanish. Walking around campus is . . . different than the way you interact back at home with your neighbor or your family.

The two high school students who had spent five weeks on the campus in CU-Boulder's Pre-Collegiate Development Program shortly before their internships were likewise struck by how few people of color there were. Elvira said, "I saw how there's very few Mexicans or Latinos in that school. It's primarily white dominant people who are there. It's scary sometimes, 'cause you don't feel comfortable where you're at, and you wish you had more people next to you with that support."

Kelly loved being on the campus, taking college classes, and meeting interesting people. But she too was startled by the shortage of students of color and the implicit prejudice her group experienced from Anglo students. The summer participants ate their meals at the university's new Center for Community, where she and her friends sat at the same table every day. Their group consisted of two Latinos (one from Mexico and herself, whose family was from Guatemala), and three students of mixed race: half black and half Latino.

People would look at us as if we didn't belong, dirty looks. They're not saying anything, but just with their face, that says enough. Like, we don't belong here, why are you here, stuff like that. . . . That was discouraging at times. A lot of my friends, they go, "I don't want to come here 'cause there's no diversity at all." But in my head, I'm like, "If you don't come here, that's just adding to the problem, not adding the diversity that CU does need."

An important factor for the interns attending the university was participation in Latino-focused student organizations, especially UMAS y MEChA (United Mexican American Students and *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanos de Aztlán*), the combined descendent of two groups active on

campus since the 1970s.¹² Emmanuel said that joining that organization and later getting involved in student government “has opened up a different door, . . . a new chapter has started. I feel like I have a voice on campus, with being a leader and a future leader on that campus as well. There’s a lot of things that need to be changed, but I feel like one foot is inside the door.” Jason too described what those groups had meant to him.

Honestly, without UMAS y MEChA, I would not have stayed at CU. I would have been gone my first semester. I remember, I was actually at a meeting with one of our professors, Dr. Aldama, and it was the very first semester of my freshman year. He said that 38% of students of color don’t finish their first semester. I thought to myself, “Woa!” because I had actually been filling out my transfer paperwork to go to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. And I was like, “OK, well, I’m not going to be a statistic, so I’ve got to figure out how to make this work, how I’m going to stay.” UMAS y MEChA has provided me that. It’s been a community where I feel safe, where I feel like myself, where I feel like I can meet people who know who I am, who’ve lived similar experiences.

In conclusion, we turn to the issue of deportation. In the 1930s, some Boulder County Hispanics were subject to repatriation or deportation to Mexico.¹³ It would be satisfying to end this book by saying that such treatment was no longer present in the early 2010s. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Two of the interns described the arrest and eventual deportation of their fathers by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, leaving the children—who were U.S. citizens—without emotional and financial support.

Elvira said, “Something that has impacted me in my life a lot was that last summer, my father was taken away by Immigration.” Her parents were separated, and her undocumented father was living with his girlfriend Toni and her daughter. One night, when Elvira was 16, she and her younger sister were staying with their father and Toni. At 5 am, someone who looked like a policeman came to the door, asking if their parents were there. Toni’s 12-year-old daughter, who answered the door, said no, for she knew that Elvira’s dad had already left for work and thought that her mom had too. The officer asked when the adults would come home; when the girl said at the end of the afternoon, he

¹² See Vol. I, Ch. 7B.

¹³ See Vol. I, Ch. 4C.

responded, "All right, I'll come back later." The girls thought he meant he would return that afternoon.

When Toni (who had actually been in the shower at the time) heard about the officer's visit and that he had a paper in his hand naming Elvira's dad, she was worried and phoned him at work. He came right home to see what was going on, and a few minutes later the officer returned. His car was parked around the corner, but Elvira could see that it said "Immigration." Her dad talked with the officer outside for a little while, handed over his credit card, ID, and wallet to Toni, and then disappeared. Shortly thereafter he phoned Toni to say that "Immigration had taken him."

Elvira continued, "A month later or so, we actually got to see him, they had him in a jail. The mirror, it's not clear, it has little black cubes, and it had that thing for you to talk, and it smells bad. You were lucky enough if you actually got the opportunity to grab a phone and talk on the phone." Elvira felt especially sad, because

My dad, he's a working guy. They didn't allow him to do anything there. I've never seen my dad in that position. He was almost crying to me, and it broke my heart to see him like that. He was like, "I don't know what to do, there's nothing I can do here. I feel like I need to work, you guys don't have any support. Who's going to pay for your stuff?"

That worry was justified, for Elvira and her sister were now dependent on the limited earnings of their mother and their grandmother.

Elvira's dad was later moved to an immigration detention center outside Denver, run by a private company. "That was worse. Every time I kept on going [to visit him], part of me didn't want to go 'cause I knew it was going to hurt me more." When she visited, they could only see each other through computers with a camera. "That was so unfair, because . . . I couldn't grab him. I missed hugging him. It wasn't the same." At the time of her interview in 2013, Elvira's dad was still in the detention center, but she had recently been told that he was being sent to Mexico. She was worried, "'cause he's been here all his life, and he doesn't know what it's like over there."

Elvira talked about the impact of her father's arrest and disappearance on her school work. Her dad had told her when she last visited him,

"Pretend like if I'm not here, like if nothing happened. Then you can keep on doing good in school." My teachers told me, "You

have to be strong. Just pretend everything's normal so you can continue." One of my teachers said, "I know this hurts you, but it's going to hurt him more if you don't try." So I try my best to honor him. [At that point in the interview she cried.] Things just aren't the same anymore. . . . I want to make 10,000 videos and put them on YouTube, to try to explain how this immigration thing is so unfair.

Veronica too saw her family ripped apart, though for somewhat different reasons. When she was seven, she, her parents, and her three siblings were staying temporarily with her grandmother in Denver. While there, both of her immigrant parents, who were in the U.S. legally, were arrested and sent to prison in Oregon for three years. The children were split up. Her older brother and sister were sent to foster families in Oregon, where they had lived the longest. Veronica and her younger brother remained with their grandmother, but they were not told where their parents were and did not know if they would ever see them again. Three years later, her father—whose visa had expired while he was in prison—was deported to Mexico by ICE, where he has remained. Veronica's mother was allowed to stay in this country and settled in Denver with the children.

Several aspects of these experiences were particularly upsetting to Veronica. One was the way her older siblings were treated.

They were shackled on their way to foster care, to Oregon. And they were only 15 and 12 years old. So the fact that you're shackled—handcuffed and on your feet—and going through the airport, and you're seeing everybody just looking at you while you're hopping up and down, I think that was very humiliating. Even though the government did take care of it, it's still very painful for them.¹⁴

She thought that the difficulties her brother and sister faced subsequently resulted from that shaming plus receiving minimal attention in their foster homes.

Another problem was that because Veronica's grandmother could not work, their little household lived on charity for the three years after her parents' arrest.

¹⁴ The American Civil Liberties Union helped the family bring suit against the correctional services for maltreatment of the children:

<http://aclu-co.org/court-cases/lamas-v-correctional-connections-l-l-c>.

Everything that we got, the food we got, the clothes we got, school supplies and everything like that, was all donations, from churches and different places. I think that was one of the hardest things, because I remember going to school, and then people —like having new clothes and stuff—and my little brother and I would be with donated clothes. We had to just deal with that. People would make fun of us, like “Oh, look at your clothes!” [She cried here.] I had no choice but to think, “You don’t understand what it’s like to have your parents taken away.”

Veronica finished her account by saying that after her father was deported,

My mother decided to stay in the United States because she had the vision of giving her children a better life—a life filled with opportunities and the ability to escape from poverty. My mother occasionally cleaned houses and earned about \$80 per house, but it was difficult for her to support a family of five. Her hands were sometimes full of blisters. “I want you to go to school so that you don’t have to clean bathrooms like I do,” she would say to me, crying as she read the eviction notices. Although we constantly received eviction notices, our electricity would be disconnected, and our water would get shut down, my mother always provided food for us. I learned to fight for survival and to hunger for success from my mother, a woman who invented names for egg sandwiches so we would not know that was the only food we had.

This book joins the first volume in the set in demonstrating why it is essential to include the experiences of Latinas/os when thinking about Boulder County’s history in the twentieth century. It contributes also to analysis of the four interpretive questions that began in the previous volume. It has enriched our picture of Latinas’ roles, showing how they functioned within their families and neighborhoods and what they contributed in the areas of food, medicine, and religion. We noted the centrality of senior women as health care providers within the household and neighborhood and as organizers of home-based worship, though those duties declined after the mid-century.

The most conspicuous feature of intra-family relationships was their adaptability. Many adults weathered the potential challenge to their authority posed by having sons and/or daughters who had been to school and were better prepared to negotiate successfully in the Anglo dominated world around them. Many fathers and husbands took in stride

the schooling of girls and women, just as they came to accept female work outside the home and women's leadership roles.¹⁵ Grandparents remained important to their younger relatives emotionally and as teachers even after the authority of Latina elders due to their medical knowledge and spiritual guidance had decreased. The sole evidence of inter-generational tension, a topic suggested in the first book, comes from some young people's unwillingness to remain as fully engaged with the Catholic Church as their parents or grandparents wished.¹⁶ Excessive male dominance and misuse of family resources, the negative face of *machismo*, was described only in private conversations.

Some patterns seen among Latinas/os in Boulder County, on the northeast margin of the borderlands, differed from what has been described in more heavily Latino communities. The composition of neighborhoods here, where people generally lived in mixed though poor sub-communities alongside people of different ethnicities and national backgrounds, contrasts with the residential experiences of Latinas/os who were surrounded by others like themselves in southwestern towns closer to the border or in the *barrios* of major cities. Nor did young Mexican American women in Boulder County during the 1940s and 1950s define themselves as deliberately distinct from Anglos, through dress and social behavior, as they did in some big cities. But there are suggestions of at least a weak local network: Latinas/os here had some cultural and religious contacts with people in Denver and agricultural Fort Lupton, especially during the first half of the twentieth century, and they interacted occasionally with groups based in Denver during the period of Chicano activism.¹⁷

The ethnic identities visible among Latinas/os in this setting contained strong social, cultural, and religious components. Preparing and sharing traditional foods was an enduring part of what it meant to be Latino, even after many women were working outside the home; love of familiar music and dancing likewise continued. Catholicism was part of the individual and family identity of most Boulder County Latinas/os throughout the twentieth century, whether or not they were regular church-goers. The willingness of children to go to school, despite the discrimination they sometimes faced there, had an impact upon identity formation. Young people taught by Anglo teachers alongside mainly

¹⁵ Vol. I, Chs. 3A and D, 5A, and 6C.

¹⁶ Vol. I, Chs. 5C and 6A.

¹⁷ For the latter, see Vol. I, Ch. 7.

Anglo classmates needed to define themselves in a way that validated success within the dominant society and culture, even as they maintained aspects of their Hispanic heritage.

The people from Spanish-speaking backgrounds described in these two volumes left some positive legacies to Latinas/os living in Boulder County today. Because the Latino community is now very diverse, containing newcomers from multiple countries and backgrounds, not all of its members are affected by these inherited patterns. But especially for descendants of families that arrived prior to around 1980, even if they are married to non-Latinos, many of the attitudes and traditions highlighted here remain influential. Key features are: working hard for the good of your family in whatever your occupation may be; strong families that provide affection and practical support when needed; acknowledgment of the key roles played by women; religious faith, though not necessarily active church participation; a belief that education is the best way to attain a better future; a willingness to stand up and confront racism and discrimination; and development of an identity that allows you to function effectively in an environment shaped by Anglo expectations while still feeling pride in your own heritage. Among the cultural patterns that many local Latinas/os preserve in the twenty-first century are affection for traditional foods, especially at holidays, and enjoyment of Mexican or Latin music and dancing. Some of these cultural features have now made their way into Boulder County's population as a whole, enriching the lives of people who have no Spanish-speaking ancestors at all.

The interns described in the Epilogue to this volume provide grounds for optimism. The attitudes of these young people, some of whom will certainly become leaders—their dedication to education, ambitious goals, and social commitment—suggest that Latinas/os will make even greater contributions in the future. The potential they offer to the U.S. counteracts in powerful terms the anti-immigrant rhetoric voiced by some Americans in the 2010s.

This study has also furnished troubling information about racism and discrimination, not only in the past but in the present as well. To tackle the disparities that hinder Latinas/os and other people of color today, we must identify and challenge embedded ethnic and racial inequalities.¹⁸

¹⁸ This paragraph is influenced by "Race Matters." As we saw with respect to the G.I. Bill (Vol. I, Ch. 5B), even projects with generally positive goals can have differential impacts for people of color if those measures are linked to institutions or programs that contain discriminatory features.

We need to commit to a serious examination and possible modification of attitudes, policies, and programs within in our own communities and at a higher level. The admirable goal of creating equitable opportunities for everyone lies at the core of a democratic society.

List of Illustrations, with Credits

All the images 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. Those that have a reference number beginning with “BCLHP” are on the Boulder County Latino History website:

<http://bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu/>

It contains hundreds of additional photos and other types of material as well.

Epilogue.1. Interns and Marjorie McIntosh at reception for BCLHP, August, 2013. Tom Martinez, photographer. Courtesy of BCLHP.
[BCLHP-MKM-028.](#)

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.¹ These provide the ID number for items accessible on the Boulder County Latino History website, 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

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

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

¹ 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.

A. Sources about Boulder County Latinas/os

“Boulder, film of places of historical importance” to Latinos, made in 2013. Linda Arroyo-Holmstrom and Phil Hernandez, narrators; Ana Gonzalez Dorta, videographer and editor. Produced for BCLHP.

[BCLHP-MKM-100.](#)

“Lafayette, film of places of historical importance” to Latinos, made in 2013. Eleanor Montour, narrator; Ana Gonzalez Dorta, videographer and editor. Produced for BCLHP. [BCLHP-MKM-102.](#)

“Longmont, film of places of historical importance” to Latinos, made in 2013. Esther Blazón, narrator; Ana Gonzalez Dorta, videographer and editor. Produced for BCLHP. [BCLHP-MKM-101.](#)

B. Other Books, Articles, and On-Line Materials

Gonzales, Rodolfo (Corky). “I Am Joaquín.”

<http://history.msu.edu/hst327/files/2009/05/I-Am-Joaquin.pdf>

“Race Matters.” Power Point presentation produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, no date, to go with the Race Matters Toolkit.

<http://www.aecf.org/resources/race-matters-powerpoint-presentation>