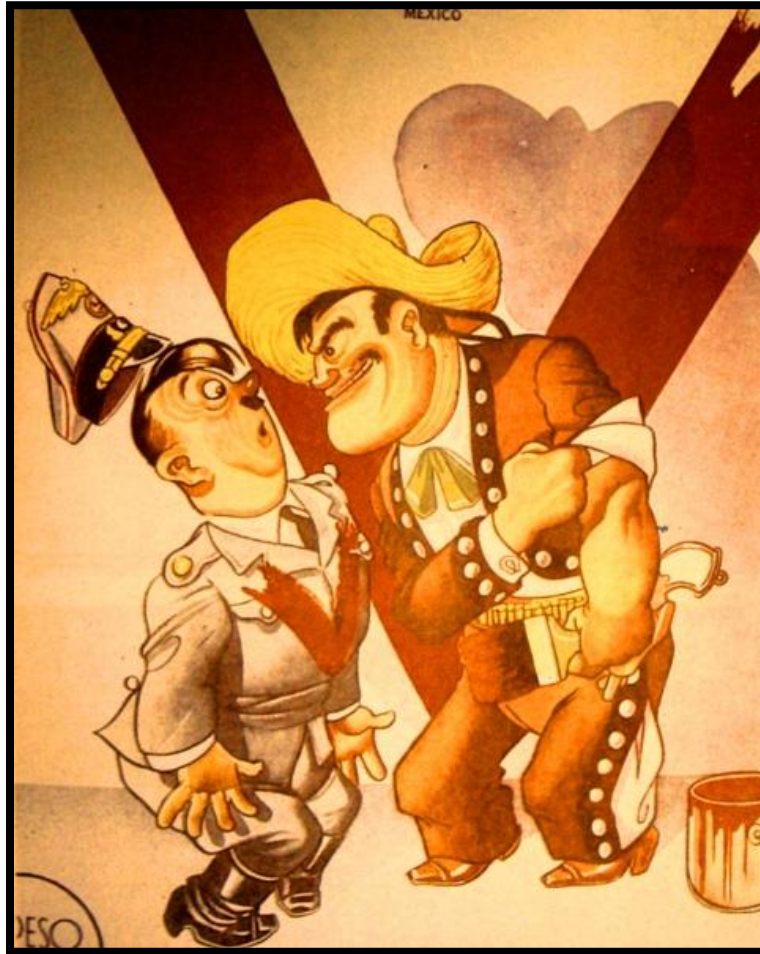


Historical Writing Assignment

Seminar 3



Giavanna Hampton

Spanish 308

Spring 2015

Professor Andrade

Crucial, historical events occurred in the 19th century. I'll be focusing on events after the period of the signing of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1846. Leading up to the results of the Mexican-Americans in World War II, I want to incorporate who was involved and what happened in the particular events. Therefore, I'll be including the period of The Great Migration, The Depression, and of course, the Mexican-Americans in World War II. How, where, when, and why these events happened and the leaders who were involved are the purposes of this piece.

A brief result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was the peace treaty between Mexico and United States. In addition, Mexicans then had to choice to return to Mexico or move to the United States and becoming United States citizens with full rights. (Wikipedia 2015)

The first set of events occurred in the period of the Great Migration. In the late 19th century, the Mexican population, about 300,000 Mexican nationals, was then living in the United States. The population grew due to the all the territory the United States gained under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Through the 19th century and early 20th century, Mexican migration had very limited restrictions. Therefore, Mexicans were basically free to move across the border. Usually, the excuse for moving across the border so often was to work in professions such as construction, railway, and as agricultural laborers. (Gratton, 2013)

Looking at Mexico first, interpretations of Mexicano experience in their country tended to highlight problems encountered in American society. Mexicans have faced many problems as immigrants, including racial prejudice and discrimination. Yet the fact remains that Mexicans have willingly entered the U.S in huge numbers. Why have they come? Why do they continue to do so, tolerating the prejudice and discrimination? (Gonzales, 2000; pg. 114)

The Mexican Revolution was the upheaval that Mexico experienced in 1910-1920. First, it began as a protest movement by Francisco I. Madero. He's a very important leader; was a member of the landholder elite from the state of California. (Gonzales, 2000; pg. 115) Francisco had a political perspective to escalate the social revolution. Generally, he was instrumental in creating the revolutionary movement that began in 1910 and led to the fall of the dictatorship of then-president, Porfirio Diaz. (Wikipedia, 2015) Anyways, Madero launched the Revolution with his *Plan de San Luis Potosi*, issued in San Antonio in November, 1910. The support came only from the middle class rather the workers. The plan, called for the destruction of Diaz's authoritarian presidency and the re-institution of democracy through violent direct action on the part of the Mexican populace. The Plan asked the Mexican people to rise. (Gonzales, 2000; pg. 118-119)

Fortunately, the Immigration Act in 1917 assisted the increase population for it offered many allowances. Elaborately, the Immigration Act added to the number of people considered as "undesirables" banned from entering the country. In order for people to prevent themselves from being banned, this act would force individuals to take a literacy test and also pay a head tax. Although this act set a slight boundary for the Mexican migration, the companies and the groups who were interested in the cheap laborer ensured that the act didn't affect the movement of the Mexican Migration. However, Mexicans ran into some trouble in the 20th century because of the depression. (Ornelas, 2012)

The Great Depression of the 1930s really hit the Mexican immigrants hard. The depression for the Mexicans resulted in food shortages and job crisis that affected the Mexican American, Mexican, and the United State workers. The additional threat was deportation. Due to the large amount of job shortages, the citizens of the United States grew hostile to immigrant workers. For

that, the government began sending immigrants to Mexico. (Ornelas, 2012) It was a struggle to survive. There were Mexicans who voluntarily moved back, had free train rides back but, many were tricked. Mexicans, who moved to the United States and became citizens, were deported just for being Mexican or on suspicion for being Mexican. In total, hundreds of thousands of Mexican farm workers and immigrants were sent out of the country during the 1930s depression. (Minzt, 2009) Personally, it was incorrect of what the U.S government did because many of those Mexicans were the same workers who had been eagerly recruited decades before the depression.

On the other hand, the farm workers did the work that many non-Mexican people didn't want to do because it was inferior to them. They worked and lived in bad and desperate conditions. During the depression, many banks foreclosed which also forced farmers back to their land. Also, landholders cut back on their workforce. (Wikipedia, 2015) Perhaps the Mexicans most impacted by the Depression were the Hispanics of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. During the course of the early 20th century, as their land base contracted, villagers in this impoverished area were fighting to survive. Men were forced to make ends meet in mining industries which were declining at a fast rate. Many Hispanics lost their farms. (Gonzales, 2000; pg. 141)

Many Mexicans found temporary stability in the migrant work camps. Housing, food and medicine were provided for the farm worker families. The only benefit I saw with these camps was the protection and the fact that many residents coming together formed ties within the community so they were able to discuss farm working issues. Farming was an important origin of the Mexican immigrant employment. By the end of the 1930s, Mexican-Americans were established through the American workforce. (Minzt, 2009)

Mexican Americans were found working in mining and ranching. The rail network was growing rapidly which was essential for Mexican immigrants. Yet again, the railroad industry forwarded the immigrants from Mexico as the chief source of low-cost labor. However, the railroads offered mobility for the Mexican immigrants to travel from their families. The cost of the travel was very low. (Minzt, 2009)

Speaking of low cost, in the 1940s, the United State policies made farmers desperate for low-cost labor. The wartime industries recruited all the United States workers. This period was the expansion and expulsion period and the Mexican immigrants wanted the United States government to take action. (Gratton, 2013) Mexicans eventually became contract workers for the U.S. Again, they were paid very low wages and worked in conditions that citizens couldn't accept. This contract program became popular and survived till 1964. Mexicans started coming back to the United States as contact workers and stayed. (Wikipedia, 2015)

However, the deportation campaign that was mentioned previously during the depression was still undergoing. The contract worker program was bringing Mexicans into the U.S but the deportation program was pushing them out. (Gratton, 2013) It was known as the "Mexican Problem." In the 1930s, America encouraged the Mexicans to cross the border to take advantage of the very cheap labor but at the same time, people wanted to keep America *pure*. (Gonzales, 2000; pg. 147) In the end, I was very confused on what the U.S government wanted from the Mexican immigrants. The deportation program lasted into the 1950s and sent back millions of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans back to Mexico.

From the words of Mexicanos by Gonzales, along with other references, it seemed like the Mexicans were fed up and sort of took the stage in the public. Mexican-Americans began

enlisting in the military. If you're going to live and work in the country, I understood why the Mexicans would fight for the country. It didn't matter if they were immigrants or Mexican-American citizens.

The military at the time simply counted Latinos as "whites." In complete contrast with WWI, when Mexicans were recruited exclusively in the southwest, in WWII they came from other regions. (Gonzales, 2000; pg. 164) Mexicans even won scores of medals such as the Purple Heart and Congressional Medal of Honor. They did very well after the 1941 attack of Pearl Harbor and they were prominent in the postwar years.

References

Wikipedia. (Feb. 13, 2015). History of Mexican Americans. Wikipedia. Source received, April 2, 2015. From, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Mexican_Americans

Brian Gratton, Emily Merchant. (2013). Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the U.S 1920-1950. Center of Migration Studies of NY. Volume 47. 944975. Source Received on April 2, 2015. From, http://www.academia.edu/5353742/Immigration_Repatriation_and_Deportation_The_Mexican-Origin_Population_in_the_United_States_1920_1950

Michael R. Ornelas. (2012). Beyond 1848. (pg. 117-130). Responses to Mexican Immigration. Source retrieved: April 2, 2015. From, <https://www.utsa.edu/president/Essays/Beyond%201848-Responses%20to%20Mexican%20Immigration%201910-1930.pdf>

Manuel G. Gonzalez. (2000). Mexicanos: The History of Mexicans in the United States. Second Edition. Chapters 5-7. Indiana University Press

Steven Mintz. (2009). Mexican Americans and the Great Depression. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Source retrieved: April 2, 2015. From, <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/great-depression/resources/mexican-americans-and-great-depression>