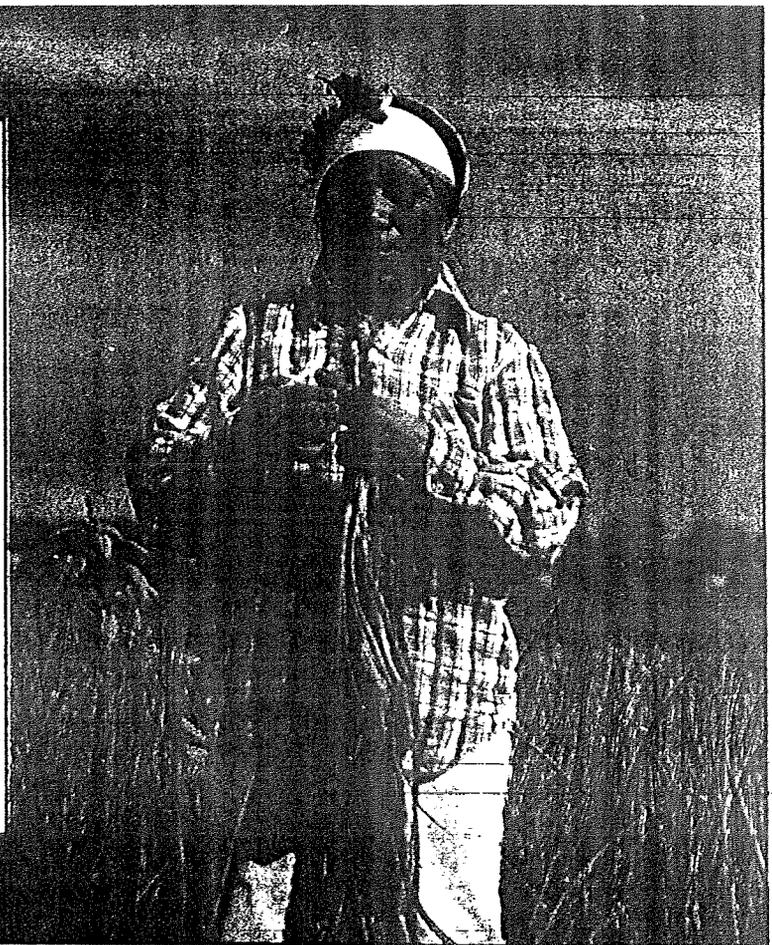


The other Boulder

A half hour's drive from the Downtown Mall is the world of the migrant worker



In the early morning, Ana Pedro makes bunches of the onions she and her daughter have just pulled from the ground.

By ANDY HOOD
For the Camera

"I've worked in your orchards of peaches and prunes.
"I've slept on the ground by the light of the moon.
"At the edge of your city you will find us and them.
"We come with the dust and we're gone with the wind."
"Pastures of Plenty" Woody Guthrie

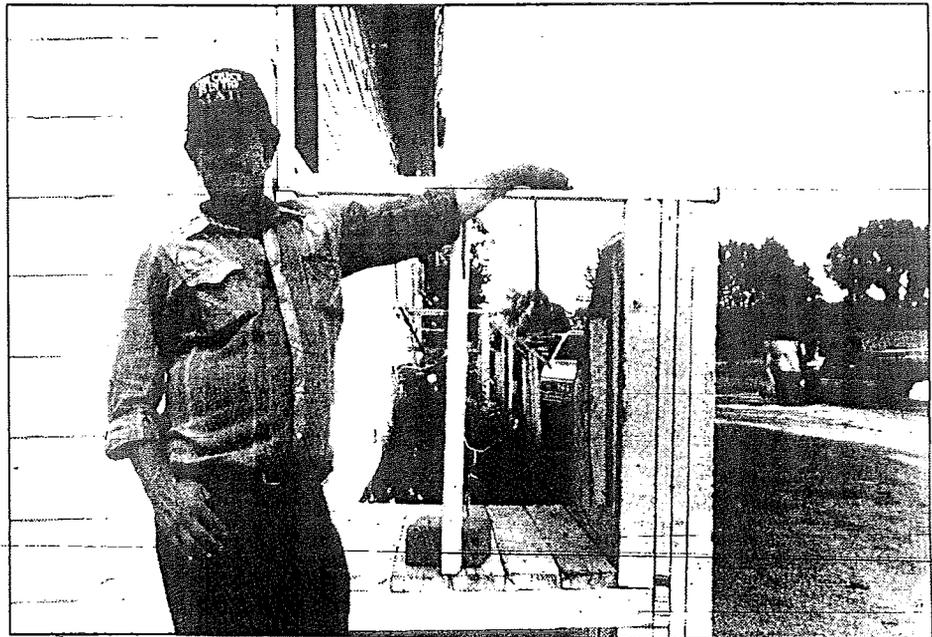
On a late Sunday afternoon, 45-year-old Guadalupe Lara steps out of the shade and holds his hands side by side to show why he has the whole day off. His right ring finger is swollen like a bloody balloon — a striking contrast to the rest of his thick, callused fingers, which testify to years of hard labor.

He says he ripped his finger open while loading crates of vegetables onto a forklift at "la bodega" — the warehouse at Tanaka Farms Inc. in east Boulder County, where he works. Because Lara can't close his fist, he has been out of work for several weeks. And he has waited as long for his workman's compensation check to arrive.

"I hope it arrives soon. I have no more money," Lara explains in Spanish. In his good hand, he clutches a fistful of papers. He looks hopelessly at the bureaucratic gibberish in English and says he wonders if he'll ever get the money he's been told he's entitled to. Then he shrugs and pulls on his baseball cap. It reads, "The check is in the mail."

"I don't speak English," says Lara, who's from Mexico. "I need to get back to work so I can eat."

Lara is a migrant farm worker, just one of hun-



Guadalupe Lara at the barracks where he lives.

dreds who work on vegetable farms in east Boulder County — and of thousands who journey annually to Colorado to find temporary and seasonal jobs in the state's orchards, groves and farms.

The work is arduous and demanding and the conditions hellish. When a crop needs to get in, timing is crucial and migrants may work up to 90

hours a week in the hot, dog days of summer for \$3.35 an hour. Overtime? No hay, amigo. Sick pay? Tampoco.

In Boulder County, there may be more than 1,000 migrants, along with their families. They work farms that hire hundreds, such as the Tanakas, Mayedas and Sakatas, as well as smaller

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farms that may hire only a few workers to help out.

They live here temporarily in old farm houses, trailers and barracks, in conditions that some say resemble those in the Third World — and all within a half-hour of the manicured Pearl Street Mall. They come in the spring to help with planting and irrigation work and, when they pack up and head out in the fall, they leave behind a healthy harvest of vegetables. The farmers depend on the migrants to provide the cheap labor that keeps their produce prices competitive — onions, cabbage, spinach, broccoli and squash, all harvested by hand.

The migrants' toil helps keep America fed and U.S. food prices the lowest in the world. But consumers at the market often take the wealth of colorful, fresh vegetables for granted. They seldom make the connection to the other side of the story: a story of human sweat, hard living, pride and even courage, the story of the Boulder County migrant farm worker.

Visiting the Third World

So you want to visit the Third World? Just drive east of town along, say, Isabelle or Lookout Road, past IBM and all the houses near Niwot. Turn down any dirt road and watch closely. Look for trailers, old wooden farm houses and bunk houses. This is where the migrants live. Neatly tucked away on rural farms, in the shadows, out of sight of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Some observers say the migrant

Pesticide problems

Edna Perez lay in bed, staring at the ceiling, holding her stomach. The previous night she had been taken to the CU Health Sciences Center's emergency room to be tested for possible chemical exposure while working in the cucumber fields near Greeley.

At least seven workers were feeling possible side-effects from the exposure after coming into the fields the morning after a chemical spray, said Ed Hendrickson, environmental health worker with the Colorado Migrant Health Program.

Hendrickson said another woman was taken to the center earlier in the day. She had burner burns to her eyes, which were painful. It took her a while to believe the pain and swelling. The woman had been picking cucumbers in the fields near Greeley.

Edna Perez said she was in bed for a week after the exposure. "It wasn't life-threatening," she said. "The people are doing a lot better," said Hendrickson a few days after the accident. "We really don't know about these pesticides. I don't think the Environmental Protection Agency knows."

"We arrived two weeks ago," said Perez, a 21-year-old from Texas. "This is my first time doing this. We need the money." She and her 23-year-old boyfriend — who leads the bags of just-picked cucumbers for \$10 a truckload — said they couldn't find jobs in Texas and had heard about the job on the cucumber farm from friends.

"I'll go back to Texas to harvest," Perez said.

Perez would be tested on one of the pesticides used in the fields, Hendrickson said. "I don't know what the results will be."

Most have 24 to 48 hour re-entry times, but some have none.

"The migrants are a high exposure group," said Hendrickson. And with 1,000 new chemicals on the market each year that are tested only with animals, Hendrickson said, it's impossible to gauge the human impact.

"Basically what we have is Jose Gonzalez vs. Dow Chemical," he added.

The cucumber farmer says that he followed all the rules for chemical application. If the workers were injured, he said, it may have been because of drift from another application on a nearby field.

"No one did anything wrong," said Chuck Olson, director of the Colorado Migrant Health Program. "The thing we don't know is how much exposure they had."

housing is probably better than the housing where the workers came from, and that they should be thankful it's free. Advocates for the migrants say the conditions are intolerable, and that no one should have to live in such overcrowded, unsafe and unsanitary situations.

There are migrant camps throughout the Front Range, usually on farm property. Read: No Trespassing. You could drive from Lafayette to Longmont and never see a migrant camp. You have to know where they are, and even then, sometimes they're hard to find.

Hudson, Gilcrest, Kenosha, Sugar Mill, Quicksilver and Henderson are just a few of the names of the larger, more established camps, where dozens of migrants live together in isolated hamlets. Men traveling without their families usually live apart from the families with children. At these larger camps, health workers can bring in their outreach programs, kids can be picked up for migrant "summer school" and problems can be solved.

There are also countless smaller, inconspicuous sites that at first glance seem to be abandoned farm houses or mobile homes. Sprinkled throughout the area, these sites are harder for health workers to find.

One migrant family (who asked that their names not be used) lives in one of Tanaka Brothers Farms' family barracks, a wooden, white-washed building divided into six or eight separate apartments. It's one of the nicer units and it's used by workers employed year-round. The husband and wife share their three-bedroom apartment with their five children. Their oldest daughter, recently married, lives around back in another apartment.

The family has made the most of it. Outside, a small flower garden adds a splash of color to the old, decaying buildings and the dusty parking lot.

The father first came up from Mexico in 1979, finding work as a picker for the Tanakas. In 1985 he brought in the whole family. It cost them \$2,500 for the illegal crossing.

Dependent solely on the husband's income, the family is strug-



Steven (far left) and David Salomon (center); Veronica (holding gun) and Luis Reyes play outside their homes in the evening with another friend.

The other Boulder



Gilbert Hernandez, who will return to his home in Texas after the harvest here, is bunching onions.

gling to get by — even with the free housing. Clothes are expensive, and the kids want to dress like everybody else when they go to school in Lafayette. To make a little extra money, the wife sells tortilla chips and coffee and occasionally washes clothes for some of the male workers.

The family has suffered a string of bad luck. Earlier in the year, the father had to return to Mexico for his own father's funeral. To help out, friends came over and filed by, slipping him a few rolled-up dollars, a five spot, whatever they could afford.

The father himself has diabetes and requires expensive medical treatment. In the spring, his eye began hemorrhaging and he needed emergency treatment cost-

ing \$400.

While the father battles his health problems and continues to work, the mother wants the five children to remain in school.

"I don't want my children to work in the fields," she says. "I want something better for them. That's why we came to America." Yet when her Spanish-speaking children go to school in Lafayette, they often do poorly and have trouble keeping up with the other kids.

Under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, the husband and wife have received temporary resident cards that allow them to work legally and to travel freely to Mexico. But their children — born in Mexico — remain undocumented and, technically, could even be deported if caught by the INS. The INS has said, however, that it will not split up families.

But the parents are wary.

"We'd like to go back to Mexico to visit friends and relatives, but we fear we won't be able to get the kids back across the border," says the mother.

She sits quietly on her bed, looking out the window at the workers stooped over the leafy cabbages.

Health problems

Members of migrant families are hard-pressed to maintain their health, says Eleanor Montour, health worker with Lafayette's Clinica Campesina.

"The migrant family has more health problems, and the women and children are much more isolated," says Montour. "When cars are used by working members of the family, women and children are left at home, limiting access to

Continued on next page



Sitting on the back of a truck bed, Irene (left) and Marta Morales play with a Barbie doll while their parents work in the nearby onion field.

Portrait of the farm worker

The migrant farm worker has been part of the human landscape since colonial times. After the Civil War, many former slaves still worked the tobacco and cotton plantations of the South as migrants. During the Great Depression, millions of migrants headed from the ravaged Dust Bowl states to California, a trek immortalized in John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath."

Today only a small percentage of workers remain labor-intensive. Some — primarily fruit, nut and vegetable — still can't be harvested by machine. Mechanization has reduced the gross harvest of the harvest of cotton and wheat.

95 percent of Colorado's migrants are Hispanic. More than half of them come from Texas and 30 percent from Mexico. Most speak Spanish as a first language, though many are bilingual.

But the population is always fluctuating, with some workers leaving each year and others recruited to. And because of the growth in demand for migrant workers, some workers in Colorado have had to leave the state for other states where the demand is higher.

In the 1970s, the state's migrant population was about 100,000. Today it is about 150,000.

from World War II until 1964. Migrants started coming to Boulder County after World War II as local farms expanded operations.

Bob Ryder, executive director for the National Migrant Resource Program based in Austin, Texas, estimates there are 3 to 5 million migrant farm workers nationally.

In the United States, we have a Third World population. The migrants are truly Third World workers," he says. "In Colorado, there are four primary grower areas: the nut and fruit areas, the vegetable areas, the berry areas, and the vegetable areas. The migrants are truly Third World workers."

The migrants are truly Third World workers. They are truly Third World workers. They are truly Third World workers.

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health care."

The migrant women have it doubly hard, she continues. Working in the fields all day and then coming home to cook and take care of children frequently leads to stress and hypertension.

Montour says health care for migrants is available in Boulder County, which has the San Juan Clinic in Boulder, the Salud Clinic in Longmont and Clinica Campesina in Lafayette. But migrants still put off going for help until their problems are chronic.

"They work until they can't," says Montour. And lack of access leads to dental problems, the number-one ailment for migrants. And for women, to complications during birth.

A recent survey by the Colorado Migrant Health program shows that 95 percent of all migrant women have been pregnant, and one-third have had miscarriages or abortions.

"Migrant women have many high-risk pregnancies. They don't have access to prenatal care," says Chuck Stout, director of the program.

Workers in the fields suffer from muscle aches, strains, heat exhaustion and dehydration. Despite a federal law requiring farmers to provide drinking water, portable toilets and hand-washing facilities when 11 or more workers are in the fields, few farmers provide these amenities. Some spread their workers throughout their crops in groups of 10 or less, thus getting around the law, says Ed Hendrickson, an environmental health specialist working with the Colorado Migrant Health Program.

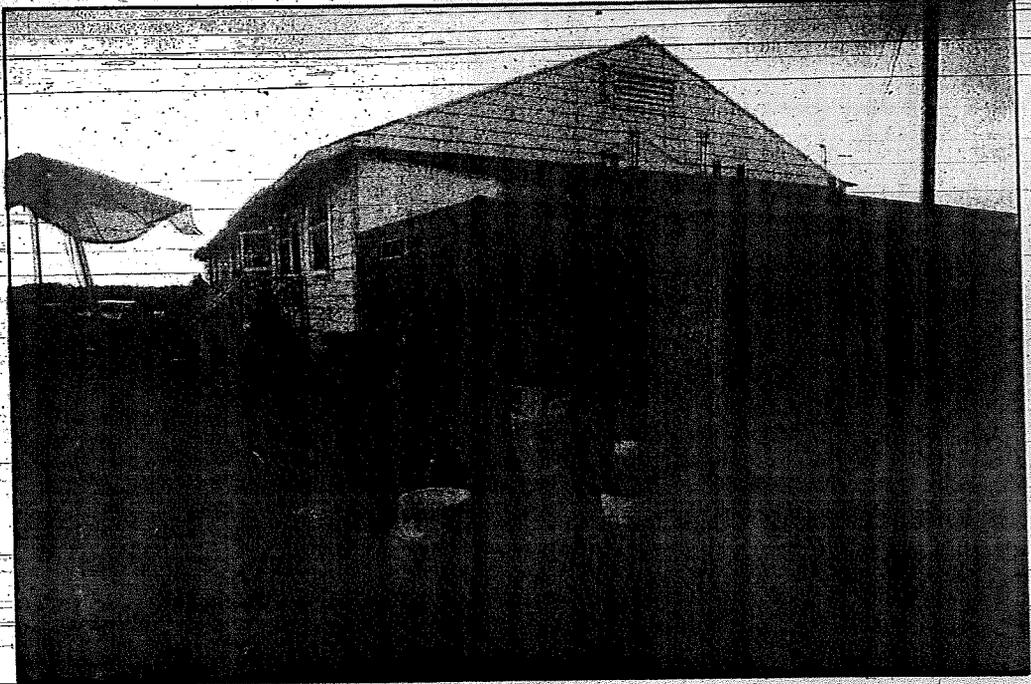
While in the fields, migrants are in contact with pesticides and other chemical sprays that cause headaches, skin rashes, burns and other ailments — the long-term implications of many of these symptoms remain unknown, adds Hendrickson (see accompanying story).

Contaminated drinking water coupled with the overused toilets and showers cause classic Third World illnesses, says Stout. All of them — intestinal and urinary diseases, diarrhea, stomach aches, hepatitis and dysentery — can be prevented through education and improved sanitation.

"There's a general feeling of unhealthiness among the migrant population," says Stout, who's been with the health program since 1979.

"Migrants are absolutely at the bottom. There's minuscule attention paid to their most basic needs," he says, adding that the health of the migrant is well below that of most Americans.

"On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being your average American, the migrants are at 5 or 6," he says.



Before the Sunday afternoon Mass and supper, young men wait their turn for the showers at Kenosha Camp. Others rest and talk.

And flies, mosquitoes and rats breed in the irrigation ditches and standing water, as well as in the omnipresent trash piles around the migrant camps, causing further health problems, says Hendrickson.

Legal woes

The split-status family, like the one described above, is just one of the woes caused by Immigration Reform and Control Act, says Stout.

The Colorado Migrant Health Program recently surveyed 1,000 members of farm-worker families. They found that 42 percent were newly legalized, 28 percent were U.S. citizens and 30 percent were undocumented.

Many migrants missed out on amnesty. Some couldn't afford the amnesty price-tag; some couldn't get the documentation to qualify. In addition, "We are seeing a secondary migration," says Stout. "A legalized male brings his family up to the states."

"Is it (the law) keeping illegals out? Absolutely not. Five years down the road we will have more undocumented people here than before IRCA."

Those without legal status are now finding it harder to get jobs. Many employers are checking papers in order to comply with the business sanctions of IRCA. Employers caught hiring illegals can be fined heavily.

Solo men

His patched jeans and plaid shirt are spotless. Only on Sundays does Miguel (for fear of retribution, he asks that his real name not be used) have time to wash his clothes, buy groceries or relax. As a picker at Tanaka Brothers Farms, he works 6½ days a week, putting in about 80 hours in the fields and making \$3.35 an hour. He claims his hours are shaved. A few here, a few there. But what can he do? He says if he makes a stink about it, he'll lose his job.

The migrant's work day is not measured by the clock or by work shifts, but by the sun. When the crop needs to get in, workers are out in the fields from dawn until dusk.

Miguel has worked since 1986 at the sprawling, 6,000-acre Tanaka farm, a patch-work of plots — some directly owned, most leased — that make this one of the largest family-owned vegetable farms in the country.

Living in an old, wooden barrack near the Tanaka loading warehouse, Miguel shares a two-bedroom unit and community kitchen with 12 other solo-male migrant workers. This year there is plenty of room to stretch your legs. Last summer 35 men shared the same space. Two shower heads and three toilets are around back, shared by at least 50 men.

Life-on-the-road necessitates liv-

One of the rooms in the single men's barracks.

"Mexico, we are almost like little animals. We work for nothing. A shirt and pants may cost more than a week's salary. Here we can buy clothes, eat well and save a little too."



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ing light. Stored below Miguel's wire cot are a few boxes filled with his worldly possessions: clothes, photos, check receipts, a pair of work gloves. In the room is an old refrigerator, packed with jugs of water for the next work day, beans, tortillas, potatoes, milk and soft drinks. Migrants pick vegetables for a living, but they usually don't eat them. The ubiquitous ranchero music is blaring from someone's portable stereo.

Miguel, 50, recently became a legalized worker. He has spent a lifetime dodging the Border Patrol, living in fear of being deported and struggling to make money. He now earns about \$230 a week, and sends money to his wife and eight children in Guanajuato, a small colonial town northwest of Mexico City. Every year he works the farms for six to eight months then returns to Mexico to be with his family.

"America is better for work," he says. "The pay is better. I'd like to live in Mexico. But in Mexico I couldn't make enough to feed my family." The average weekly salary in Mexico is about \$25 — and even at minimum wage a worker can make more here in a day.

Miguel proudly shows his temporary resident card. Approximately 22,000 people, about half of them farm workers, received legal status in Colorado under the amnesty program of the Immigration Reform and Control Act. Nationwide, more than 1.5 million farm workers received temporary resident alien status under the law's Special Agricultural Worker program, about half of the 3 million who obtained amnesty under the law.

Under the SAW program, Miguel is free to look for work out of the fields. He'd like to find another job, he says, but, "At a job, they ask me if I can speak English. I can't."

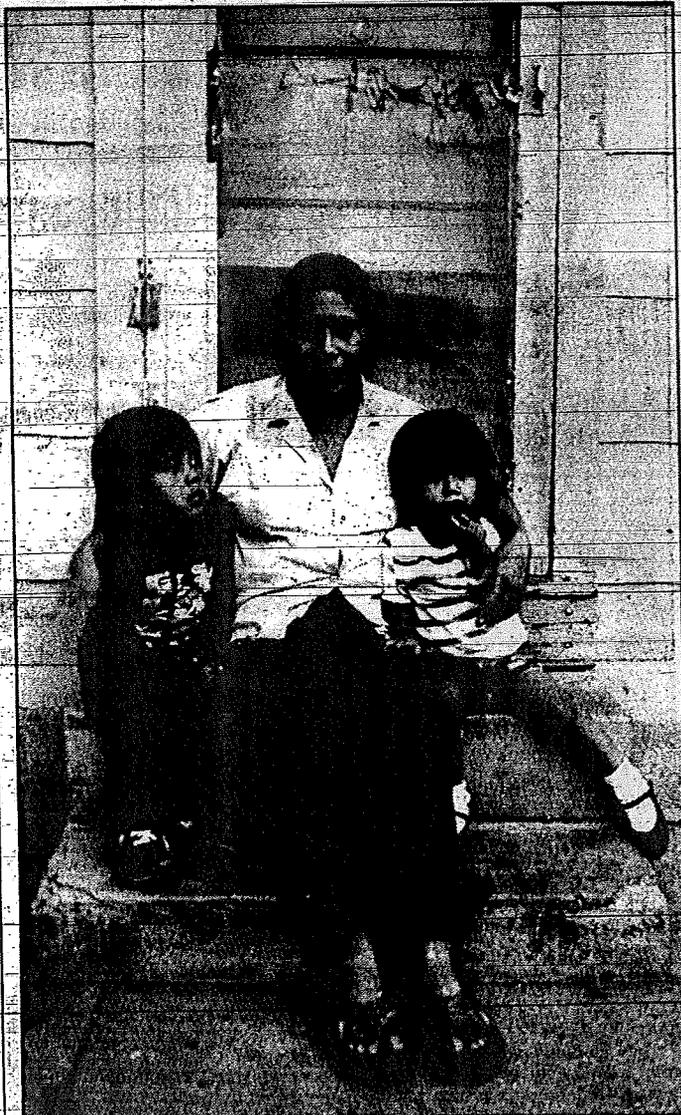
"I can't get a better paying job. I have no time to learn English. Sometimes I work until 7, 8 or 9 p.m. I come home, shower, eat and go to bed. The next morning at 7, I'm up to work. Vamos. Who can study English?"

Even though Miguel has lived in America for 37 years, he says he rarely speaks to Americans. He knows a few words: hello, goodbye, thank you. Everyone he knows, all his friends and co-workers, are Mexicans.

Miguel says this is his last year at Tanaka Brothers Farms. He's getting too old to work so hard for so little, he says. He's heard that in California the farmers pay more. Or he may try his luck in Chicago, where he has a brother working in a factory.

"I wont goot job," he stammers, switching to English. But one thing he does know is that he won't find it in Mexico.

"In Mexico, we are almost like little animals. We work for nothing. A shirt and pants may cost more



The wife and children of Pascual Jose-Mateo, sitting on their front step.

than a week's salary. Here we can buy clothes, eat well and save a little too."

Miguel will return to his country to visit his family. He says he is proud of his children, who are staying in school. And on his return next spring, he will proudly flash his temporary residence card and walk across the border unharassed.

The card will also save him a little money. He won't have to pay for a "coyote," Spanish slang for the sleazy characters who smuggle illegal aliens across the 1,950-mile-long U.S.-Mexican border for a fee of anywhere from 50 to several thousand dollars.

The INS has invested millions to bolster the Border Patrol to keep out the illegals, and the "coyotes" make thousands of dollars in the risky business of sneaking them

across the Tortilla Curtain. This may require a raft trip across the Rio Grande, a midnight dash across the deserted border by car or truck or even a shuttle between two U.S. cities.

The Tanaka Brothers Farms

In east Boulder County between Lafayette and Longmont is the Tanaka Brothers Farms, a huge operation and a kind of world unto itself. During a normal year, the Tanakas employ up to 600 migrants.

But the past year has seen trouble for the Tanaka brothers — Sam, Dick, Rocky and Bob, all of Longmont — and plans call for a scaled-back year. In August 1988, the brothers were accused of providing unsuitable living and working conditions for their workers by the U.S.

Department of Labor, resulting in several migrant housing units being closed down. In November 1988, the Internal Revenue Service issued a \$1.1 million lien against the farmers for back taxes. They have also been sued by former farm workers, taken to court over dumping violations and threatened with possible Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The Tanakas did not return calls asking for comment on this story.

But to the Spanish-speaking farm worker, the Tanakas are "los patrones" or "los jefes" — literally, the bosses. Men to respect and to fear. When it comes to talking about the day-to-day operations of the farm and the farm worker's role, many are afraid of speaking candidly.

During the two seasons Roberto Dansie, a bilingual health worker with the Alcoholic Recovery Center in Boulder, has worked with Boulder County migrants, he has pieced together a perspective of the different communities and networks within the migrant world.

According to Dansie, there are primarily four groups of workers at Tanakas. Two of them are more settled in their positions; the two others newer to the farm. The Tanakas first began recruiting workers from Chihuahua, a northern Mexican state that borders New Mexico and Texas, says Dansie. These men worked themselves into good, year-round jobs, later bringing their families. Many of the "Chihuahuences" are "mayordomos" or crew leaders.

Next, says Dansie, a group of men from Guanajuato, Mexico began moving into the Tanakas' field and packing jobs. They, too, brought their families, and returned to Tanaka Farms for many seasons.

But every year, there are new arrivals desperate for work. They are driven north by unemployment, inflation and the sliding value of the peso. And there are workers from other farms who compete for jobs and housing.

The fourth group consists of Guatemalans, a fringe group of about 25 to 50 field workers who generally stay within their cultural community, living together on isolated camps, in mobile homes or nearby towns.

A flight from horror

A stout man, Pascual Jose-Mateo is barely over 5-foot-tall with his boots on. Proudly leaning against the used, dented 1984 Oldsmobile he bought for \$1,250, he watches his kids play among the cars and pickup trucks of the crowded parking lot. Living in Lafayette with his wife and two young children — with one more on the way — he's about a 20-minute commute from his picking job at Tanaka Farms.

Jose-Mateo says he couldn't find housing this year at one of the several migrant camps, many closed or

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The other Boulder



Photos by VALARI JACK

(Photo left) Maria Hernandez and her daughters Misty and Ruby at home in the barracks. (photo right) Danitzi Lugo (left) and her sister Maria. (Photo far right) They call it "stoop labor." Mid-morning in the onion field.



The farmers' perspective

Tanaka, Mayeda, Petrocco, Sakata, Frank. They're the major vegetable growers and employers of migrant farm workers along the Front Range in Boulder, Weld and Adams Counties. Depending on who you ask, these growers and others employ between 4,000 and 10,000 migrants, a number that includes dependents.

The migrants depend on the farmers for jobs and sometimes housing. And the growers depend on the migrants to harvest their crops. But farmers say they are feeling the pinch, and they're the ones who take the heat for the migrants' poor working and living conditions.

Bob Sakata, a 60-year-old grower with more than 3,000 acres north of Brighton, says that farming is like any entrepreneurial enterprise. The grower needs high-quality workers. And this means, Sakata says, treating the workers right.

"I've been in this business for 40 years. My family worked as migrants in California. I know how it is, from both sides. Growing vegetables is a complicated business," Sakata says.

Sakata hires about 300 workers a year to harvest his cabbage, onions, broccoli and other vegetables.

"The vegetable business is like playing the stock market," Sakata says. "Some days the prices are high and a few days later they may drop."

Labor-intensive agriculture requires more overhead than growing grains or corn. The crops require more pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, more irrigation. There are high labor costs. Growers also have to contend with unpredictable markets and an often uncooperative Mother Nature.

"Either you make big or you lose big," says Gary Mayeda, a Longmont

farmer who normally hires about 100 workers. This year his crop consists primarily of corn.

"You don't make a lot of money doing this. For most people, it's in your blood," he adds.

Chuck Stout, director of the Colorado Migrant Health Program and leading migrant advocate, says that America must invest in agriculture and help the farmer and the farm worker — or risk losing vegetable farming to overseas competitors. Already, at least half of all winter tomatoes bought in the United States come from Mexico.

Farmers originally provided housing for migrants as an incentive to get workers. But conditions in some of the housing deteriorated. Health workers contend that developing a cooperative spirit with growers is the answer to many of the problems concerning migrant living and work conditions.

For example, the Boulder County Housing Authority is planning to build and manage two housing sites on Tanaka Brothers Farms, Inc. The project, which will house 32 families and 48 solo males, will be the first public housing of its kind for migrants in the state.

But for Sam Frank, a 65-year-old farmer with 160 acres near Greeley, the strain of providing housing for his workers is becoming overwhelming. He says that next year he may not open the Gilcrest Camp, called by some the best housing along the Front Range.

"Some of the people are good people. They've been with me for six years," Frank says. "I'd like to (keep the housing open). But it's just not worth it."

ANDY HOOD



Dressed for the afternoon Mass in his white hat and blue shirt, Angel Cervantes, with three other men, watches the meal preparations.



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overcrowded. So he settled for a squalid, motel-turned-apartment that he rents for \$225 a month, about a week's pay.

The Guatemalan workers have a different reason for being in the United States. During the late 1970s and early '80s, the Guatemalan army waged a genocidal campaign on many of the indigenous communities that dot the highlands of this small, Central American country. Nine million people live in Guatemala, a country a little smaller than Colorado. More than half of them speak one of about 20 Mayan languages and more than 100 dialects.

Brutal conflicts between a popular guerrilla movement and the army created havoc for the "campesinos" or peasants in the rural, mountainous countryside. Thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands fled to Mexico and the United States.

"Two of my cousins were killed," says Jose-Mateo in a Guatemalan accent, which is slower and more deliberate than Mexican Spanish. "The army was killing hundreds in the villages near me. They would kill hun-

dreeds and burn whole villages. For this many came here."

Jose-Mateo was 18 years old when he fled his village near Huehuetenango, a small town in the Sierra Madre of northwest Guatemala. That was in 1980 and he's never been back. Although his mother remains in Guatemala, all his brothers and sisters have left.

He talks softly about his former home, afraid of the memories that still haunt him. The army would torture victims, he says, to turn in their friends or family. Afterwards they would cut off their victims' heads and arms.

Lured by the jobs and money of "El Norte" and scared by the worsening conditions at home, Jose-Mateo snuck across the Guatemalan-Mexican border by foot. With \$300 and the clothes on his back, he ventured north with his best friend.

He couldn't afford a coyote at the U.S. Mexican border, so he walked across the desert for three days carrying a small backpack loaded with two melons and two gallons of water. It was, he says, a harrowing ordeal.

"We got lost and we were running out of water," he explains. "But we saw lights, and it was an orchard with workers who helped us."

Jose-Mateo landed some farm work in Arizona, which is still his home base during the winter months. He first came to the Tanakas in 1982.

"The work is very hard, but the money is good," he says. To make extra money, he sometimes loads heavy boxes full of vegetables onto trucks on Sundays for six cents a box. If he loads 1,000 of them, he can make \$60.

He has a car; his kids — born in America, hence U.S. citizens — have clothes and go to school; he has a roof over his head. It's not a palace, he says, but he's better off than he would have been in Guatemala.

"In Guatemala you can eat meat maybe two or three times a week. Here we can eat meat every day," he says. His wife doesn't work. She stays home, watching the kids and keeping house.

"I don't want to go back," he says. "I want my kids to stay in school and I want to buy a house." And since Jose-Mateo qualified for

his temporary residence card under the SAW program, he does not have to worry about being deported.

"I was caught twice by 'la migra' (INS); but I said I was Mexican and they drove me to Nogales (a border town in Arizona.) Each time I snuck back across the same day. Now I am not scared anymore. When you don't have 'la cedula' you are scared, always looking for la migra."

□□□

The afternoon sun casts eerie shadows around the cars and trucks crowding the parking lot. Men huddle in groups, telling jokes. The smell of chili and garlic from the bunk house, overpowers the stench of the portable toilets, as a few men take their turn cooking the evening meal.

Inside a small bedroom, a man gets up from his cot to adjust the black and white television he's watching.

"I've worked here eight years. Nothing has changed. Nothing will change," he says.

The sun is setting. Soon sleep will fall. The morning comes early for migrants.

ANDY HOOD is a Spanish-speaking freelance writer living in Boulder.