

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

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

**Chapter Four:
*Conflict, Racism, and Violence,
1910-1940***

by

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Chapter 4

Conflict, Racism, and Violence, 1910-1940

Whereas the previous chapter noted the difficult working conditions faced by early Hispanics in Boulder County, this one describes even harsher aspects of their lives during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. These decades experienced the severe economic slowdown in Colorado that followed World War I and the more disastrous conditions of the Great Depression. We first examine the role of unions in trying to get better wages and improved working conditions for coal miners and agricultural laborers. When the unions called strikes, owners and local authorities put them down by hiring temporary workers, arresting the organizers, and/or calling in troops. The chapter turns next to the issue of racism. Hispanics faced prejudice in all Boulder County towns around 1920, and that background level of discrimination was made more overt by the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK taught that white people were racially superior; it believed that power should rest in the hands of U.S. male citizens who were members of a Protestant church. In the Boulder area, Klan venom was directed at Hispanics, who were hated not only for their Catholic religion but also because they were brown-skinned and assumed to be immigrants to this country, sometimes wrongly. The final section of the chapter talks about “repatriating” immigrants (sending them back to Mexico) and forced deportations. It is impossible to read this chapter without being struck by the parallels with events in the southwestern U.S. in the early 2010s.

A. Labor Unions and Strikes, 1910-1935

The years between 1910 and 1932 saw considerable activity by labor

unions in eastern Boulder County, as was true in much of the state.¹ Union organizers tried to gain members and mobilize them to act as a group in demanding better working conditions and higher wages from employers. If their conditions were not met, unions called strikes, in which their members refused to go to their normal jobs and tried to keep newly hired workers from stepping into their places by mounting lines of picketers carrying protest signs at key entry points. In the Boulder area, unions were most active among coal miners, but in 1932 sugar beet workers too went on strike, one of the earliest farmworkers' strikes in Colorado's history.

Tension over unionization was particularly high in the 1930s, due to the Depression. Owners and operators of coal mines, Great Western Sugar, and the farmers who grew beets all saw their profits decline and were therefore eager to cut labor costs by lowering wages as well as laying off workers. Miners and beet workers claimed they could not support their families on the reduced pay that was offered to them, yet many hesitated to protest actively for fear they would lose their jobs entirely and be unable to find other employment. The force needed to stop strikes was provided by local and state government officials worried about economic and social unrest.

Although we do not have exact figures for how many union members in Boulder County were Hispanic, it is clear that some—perhaps many—were. Personal narratives indicate that some Lafayette miners in the 1920s and 1930s were active in the unions.² In the beet workers' strike of 1932, organized by a branch of the Industrial Workers of the World, all of the "agitators" arrested had Spanish names, and they included women as well as men. Labor organizations and their meetings brought Hispanics into contact with a wider group of people and served a social function as well. Some Boulder County miners made good friends with other union members, including people from different national or ethnic backgrounds, continuing to socialize with them after they no longer worked in the mines.³

¹ Unions were already active among miners elsewhere in Colorado between 1880 and 1903 (Abbott, *Colorado*, pp. 146-154, and Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, esp. ch. 5).

² E.g., "Archuleta/Ortega family information," "Manzanares, David J. and Marguerite, biography," and Duncan, Erminda "Oli" Olivas, interview, 2013.

³ E.g., "Madrigal family of Boulder, biographies" and "Archuleta/Ortega family information."

Coal miners

Although coal miners labored in difficult and often dangerous physical settings, many workers considered these jobs more desirable than agricultural employment, in part because in some periods their unions fought on their behalf.⁴ Miners and the owners or operators of mines in northern Colorado had repeated conflicts between 1910 and 1935, a period when many Hispanics were moving in from Mexico, New Mexico, and southern Colorado.⁵ The lengthiest confrontation, and probably the most difficult for workers, was “the Long Strike” of 1910 to 1914.⁶ It was called initially by the United Mine Workers of America [UMWA] in response to the efforts of northern Colorado mine operators to eradicate the UMWA from their coal fields, located mainly in Boulder and Weld Counties, despite having signed contracts with the union the past few years. The UMWA then extended the strike to the southern coal fields, around Trinidad and Walsenburg.

The Long Strike brought violence as well as economic hardship to the union miners. At its very beginning, operators of mines in the northern fields obtained help from local sheriffs in guarding the sites and protecting the non-union workers hired by the companies to keep the mines running; more than 100 deputies and detectives from Denver provided additional force.⁷ In 1912, a gun battle broke out near Lafayette between union and non-union miners, with at least 1,000 shots fired and one man wounded.⁸ By April, 1914, about 3,000 miners had left work in Lafayette and the nearby coal towns of Erie, Louisville, Marshall, and Superior. The union had by then run out of funds to help support its striking members, so individual families suffered badly. Their entire communities must have been affected too, for those five towns had a combined population of no more than 5,000 people, and the majority of their working males were miners.

To keep operations going, the mining companies brought in strike breakers (known as “scabs” by union members) to go into the mines and work, crossing the picket lines maintained by union members. Some of the men had been brought up from Mexico specifically for that purpose.

⁴ See Ch. 3B above.

⁵ See Ch. 2 above.

⁶ Smith, *Once a Coal Miner*, chs. 8-10.

⁷ Adelfang, ed., *Erie*, p. 68.

⁸ “Ten Day War.”

At the Hecla Mine, on the edge of Lafayette, the Northern Coal and Coke Company built housing for its strike breakers and put up a fence around the compound, to protect them from union men. A nearby tower housed searchlights and a machine gun. When angry strikers outside the compound shot out the searchlights, the guards fired the machine gun at them but apparently did not hit anyone. Boulder County Sheriff Martin P. Capp, who tried to provide protection for the strikers, told the *Boulder Camera*, “The mine operators are the most intemperate men I have ever dealt with.”⁹

The Long Strike culminated in April, 1914 with the Ludlow Massacre in southern Colorado.¹⁰ It took place near a mine operated by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, owned by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. There the Colorado State Militia attacked a tent city in which 1,200 striking miners and their families were staying. Some 39 people were killed, including women and children who were burned to death in their tents. Don Archuleta of Longmont recalled that his aunt Lola and her husband John Espinoza, a miner, were almost victims of the massacre.¹¹ They were living in the tents along with the other strikers, but because they suspected that troops were about to be brought in, they crawled down into an arroyo and worked their way out of the camp just in time.

When news of the Ludlow disaster reached Lafayette, local miners sent help to the southern camp. Fighting broke out in Boulder County too, with both strikers and strike breakers wounded. Sheriff Capp worked valiantly to maintain peace, preventing further deaths. When the governor announced he was sending a militia force into the area, Capp tried to keep it out, until eventually Federal troops came in to restore order. The strike finally ended late in 1914, though the demands of the union had still not been met. Until the later 1920s, most Colorado mines banned members of the UMWA from employment.

A strike in 1927 called by the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World, a socialist/communist union known as the “Wobblies”) likewise ended in death, this time at the Columbine Mine on the edge of Boulder County.¹² The Columbine, owned by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company,

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ For background and a full account, see Andrews, *Killing for Coal*.

¹¹ Archuleta, Don, interview, 2009.

¹² “The Columbine Incident,” and, more fully, Campbell-Hale, “Remembering Ludlow.” The I.W.W. had already aroused fear in Colorado. As part of the “Red Scare” of 1919, its local headquarters in Denver and Pueblo were raided by the police and its organizers run out of town (Abbott et al., *Colorado*, pp. 269-70).

was located just a few miles ENE of Lafayette; its housing camp was known as “Serene.” The Columbine was the only mine in the northern Colorado fields that continued to operate during the 1927 strike, due to the importation of scab workers. Union miners therefore focused their efforts here. The strike had widespread support: one meeting in Lafayette was joined by as many as 4,000 people, including community members and miners from other places.¹³

Because strikers were picketing the Columbine so energetically, Governor Billy Adams at the request of the owners sent in the newly formed State Law Enforcement Agency, a militia force, to protect the mine and strike breakers and curb the picketing. The troopers were under the command of a veteran of the Ludlow Massacre. On November 21, 1927, some 500 supporters of the strike—townspeople as well as miners and their families—came to a protest meeting at the mine. When conflict broke out, the troopers opened fire on the protesters, killing 6 people and wounding 60 others, both men and women.

The Columbine Strike and Massacre were long remembered by people living in this area. John Ortega had moved from the southern Colorado coal fields shortly before the strike started and was living in the Serene camp with his wife Mary and their five children.¹⁴ During the strike, the gates to the fence that surrounded the camp were sometimes locked, with no one allowed in or out. The Ortegas helped with the union’s relief efforts. Donated clothing was sent in from other places, and a joint committee of strikers and community people distributed it to needy families. David Toledo likewise joined the Columbine strike; because he had no income, he learned how to be a barber to support himself.¹⁵ Sally Martinez, whose family was living in the camp when she was ten years old, recalled going out every morning before school during the strike with her friend Virginia Amicarella to march with the pickets.¹⁶ She was at home when she heard the sound of shooting, which killed or wounded so many.

Trouble was brewing again in spring, 1932, during a period when

¹³ Smith, *Once A Coal Miner*, p. 170. This may have been the time when two of Canuto and Gregoria Martinez’s mining sons were arrested as strikers. Family lore has it that Gregoria marched off to the jail and got them out, without paying bail (“Martinez, Canuto and Gregoria, biography”).

¹⁴ “Ortega, John, family of, biography.”

¹⁵ Toledo, David, interview, c. 1978.

¹⁶ “Salazar, Jose Benito and Isabelle, biography.” After the strike, her father was laid off permanently.

the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company had again signed on with the UMWA, in part to avoid dealing with the I.W.W. Due to the Depression and declining demand for heating fuel, the company had recently cut miners' wages, as had happened several times before. Mine operators in the northern Colorado fields had previously banded together to lower wages to the same level, to reduce their costs without causing unprofitable competition between them. The *Lafayette Leader* reported on May 7 that the state Labor Commission had denied permission to mine operators in the northern fields to cut wages further.¹⁷ But the operators, including Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, had nonetheless gone ahead and reduced miners' pay by another 15%. Although the Labor Commission objected to this action, it lacked the power to enforce its decision. Over the next few weeks, miners in Lafayette and elsewhere held meetings to protest the pay cuts.¹⁸ On May 27 the Lafayette paper noted that the State Industrial Commission had just rejected yet another application from the northern Colorado lignite coal operators, this time to reduce the basic pay of miners from \$6.72 to \$5 per day, a drop of 26%.¹⁹ The commission "held there was no justification for a reduction in the wage scale," but it could not force adherence to its decision.

Quite different views about miners' wages must have been presented in Boulder on May 24, 1932, when Miss Josephine Roche, who had just become principal owner of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, addressed the Economic Round Table and the Young America Group at the University of Colorado. The *Boulder Camera* quoted the University's paper as saying,

Miss Roche is a famous lecturer and writer on democracy in industry and one of the most outstanding progressive liberals of the time. She is one of the leading advocates of profit sharing in industry and conducts her own company on a strictly profit sharing basis. She has conducted many experiments in more democratic relations with workers, and the dealings of her company with its miners are outstanding for their fairness.²⁰

¹⁷ "Coal miners' wages cut."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ "Coal miners' wage cuts denied."

²⁰ "Josephine Roche speaks tonight." Ms. Roche had a distinguished future career. After running unsuccessfully for governor of Colorado in 1934, she was appointed Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury by President Roosevelt, a position she held until 1937.

That description was well warranted. After graduating from Vassar College in 1908 and receiving a Master's Degree from Columbia University, Ms. Roche did social work for some years. In 1927, however, she inherited shares in the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company from her father. Over the next few years she purchased a majority interest in the company and became its president. She then enacted a variety of pro-labor policies, based upon her philosophy that capital and labor had equal rights, including inviting the UMWA to unionize her mines. In its 1932 article, the *Boulder Camera* wrote that "In the recent price war of the fuel companies of Colorado, Miss Roche refused to reduce the wages of her workers for the purpose of cutting prices, but the workers themselves agreed to make a loan of a portion of their wages to the company in order that it might be able to compete with the others."²¹ Few mine workers probably ventured onto the University campus to hear her talk, nor would most mine operators have wanted to listen.

The UMWA had more success in the mid-1930s, thanks largely to the passage of the Wagner Act of 1934.²² On Sept. 23, 1935 the *Longmont Times-Call* reported that 2,500 mine workers were on strike in the northern Colorado coal field as well as in other parts of the state.²³ In Boulder County, 750 miners were said to be participating. Two days later the paper claimed that the entire northern field was shut down.²⁴ But this time there was no mention of picketing, and the union's representative in Lafayette allowed maintenance men to keep the mines ready to resume activity, for an agreement with the coal companies was expected soon. The Boulder County Hispanic sources provide no further information about industrial conflict, though some workers remained active in their unions.

Sugar beet workers

Agricultural workers have always been hard to unionize, even though their jobs were often physically exhausting and poorly paid. Laborers were spread out over various farms and fields, rather than being concentrated in a mine or factory. Workers might be hired as

²¹ "Josephine Roche speaks tonight."

²² That measure guaranteed the rights of most private-sector employees to unionize, engage in collective bargaining, and if necessary strike; it did not, however, apply to agricultural workers.

²³ "8000 Colorado miners on strike."

²⁴ "All mines in Northern Colorado closed."

TIMES

and Community

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NUMBER 32

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MANY ATTEND FARM AUCTION

A record breaking crowd attended the John Ehler sale Thursday, and everything was disposed of at satisfactory prices.
W. A. Fisher conducted the auction sale.
Mr. and Mrs. Ehler moved into the F. W. Saylor residence on Collyer street. F. W. Balvd is moving to the Ehler ranch.

BIRTHDAY PARTY HELD FOR MOTHER OF LOCAL PASTOR

A birthday party was held at the Methodist parsonage Friday in honor of Mrs. Adeline Hollerback, 82 years old, Denver, mother of Rev. R. F. Hollerback.
Two daughters, Mrs. Ella Layton and Mrs. A. A. Nall, Denver, are in Longmont for the occasion.

IRISH PRESIDENT ARRIVES FRIDAY

(United Press.)
NEW YORK, Jan. 20.—Enthusiastic and noisy greetings were accorded to W. T. Cosgrave, president of the Irish Free State when he landed here today for a two weeks' visit to the United States.

HICKMAN ILL FROM FEVER

(United Press.)
LOS ANGELES, Calif., Jan. 20.—Will Ed. Hickman, slayer of Marian Parker, developed a high fever today following an operation to remove fluid from his spine in connection with tests being made to support his insanity plea.
Physicians at the jail said the illness was natural.

175 Workers Hold Meeting Thursday Night and Go on Record as Opposed to Formation of Organization Liable to Create Strife

WAGE SCALE NOT MENTIONED BUT BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS ASKED

As a result of published statements that I. W. W. organizers are busy among the beet workers of Northern Colorado with the intention of enlisting them as members of the organization for the purpose of forcing demands upon the growers thru strikes and otherwise after beets have reached a critical stage, a meeting of the laborers from what is known as the Longmont colony was held at the city hall Thursday evening and was attended by 175 Sannish speaking people.

After discussing the situation at length, a committee composed of W. Montes, Benjamin Garcia and Ramon Montes was appointed to wait upon the newspapers, and thru these publications, convey to the people a denial of any connection whatsoever with the I. W. W. In a statement to the editor of The Times, spoken in good English, Ramon Montes, as spokesman said:
"We were named at the meeting last night to visit the newspapers and deny any connection with the I. W. W. The contract was not discussed for 1928 as the farmer does not know what he is to get for his beets. But the grower cannot pay more unless he gets more money. We do want better living quarters and more sanitary conditions and believe we are entitled to them, but will try to bring this about in a friendly way, but we are not members of the I. W. W."
We were informed by Montes and the other two members of the committee that a former meeting was held on Jan. 12 when living conditions were discussed, but no mention was made of the

price to be paid for tending beets the coming season.

These men are to represent the Longmont colony at a meeting to be held in Brighton tomorrow when 26 colonies are to be represented. In speaking of this meeting the men said:

"We were instructed to leave the meeting if we discover the I. W. W. has any part in it, and return to Longmont. In that case we will carry on our work among ourselves."

In r's uncertain language Montes declared that everyone would suffer should the I. W. W. organize the beet workers and cause a strike in the beet field during the growing season. "The grower would suffer and so would the laborers," stated one of the men.

When asked if they expect to ask for more money for labor, the reply was:

"We are more interested in living conditions than we are in more money, but believe this can be brought about thru a better understanding and a friendly agreement. We want to cooperate with the grower and the sugar company."

APOPLEXY FATAL TO AGED LOCAL RESIDENT THURSDAY

Henry Gephart, 72 years old, died suddenly late Thursday afternoon at his home, 735 Martin street, following a stroke of apoplexy.
Mr. Gephart appeared to be in the heat of health and had returned from

sons, Ernest, Longmont, and Thomas of La Junta.

The deceased came to Colorado 30 years ago and moved to Longmont in 1908. He was a member of the K. P. Lodge and the Christian church.

Illus. 4.1. "Beet laborers deny affiliation with IWW".
Longmont Times-Call, Jan. 20, 1928

single men or families by individual farmers, rather than having many people working for a single employer with whom they could negotiate collectively. Migrant workers often moved through multiple areas during a given season and hence were unable to participate actively in any organizations, whether economic, social, or religious. Nor did agricultural laborers receive the protections granted to other workers in the Wagner Act and other New Deal labor legislation of the 1930s.

Hispanic beet workers in Colorado in the 1920s and 1930s were not in a strong position to demand better working conditions and wages from their employers. If they complained to the farmers who were their immediate employers, the farmers said that their hands were tied: Great Western Sugar's contracts dictated the conditions and rewards for work. Great Western said it only negotiated with farmers, not directly with field workers. In 1928, a meeting of beet workers called for better living conditions but did not protest the wage scale. They were also careful to dissociate themselves from the I.W.W., which was then trying to organize agricultural workers.

Four years later, however, when a sub-branch of the I.W.W. called a strike among beet workers in northeastern Colorado and the Arkansas River Valley of southeastern Colorado, some people from Boulder County took part.²⁵ Both male and female Hispanics were among the organizers of the 1932 strike, which was centered in Weld County, lying immediately to the east/northeast of Boulder County, but included some farms in this area too. Active coverage of the strike in east Boulder County's newspapers indicates that interest was high among their readers, some of whom would have been farmers raising beets for Great Western who relied on Hispanic labor. The articles make no distinction between people born in Mexico and those who had come from New Mexico or southern Colorado: all were simply "Mexicans."

The strike, which started on May 16, was called to protest "what the workers term 'starvation wages' and because of conditions which they say border on 'slavery'."²⁶ Between 1924 and 1928, sugar beet laborers had received a minimum rate of \$22 - \$24 per acre for tending and harvesting the crop during the whole six-month season.²⁷ In 1931, after the Depression hit, the per acre rate dropped to \$19, and in 1932, employers

²⁵ For "radical labor unrest in the Colorado beet fields" more generally, see Vargas, *Labor Rights*, pp. 70-76.

²⁶ "Beet growers disclaim responsibility for strike."

²⁷ Taylor, *Mexican Labor*, p. 142.

offered workers only \$13 - \$15 per acre. The union, claiming that the average beet laborer earned just \$150 in a full season, encouraged its members to strike for \$23 per acre.

Because this strike has received little historical attention, we will trace its course by means of local newspaper accounts. The first reference was indirect. On May 17, the *Longmont Times-Call* mentioned that three Weld County taxpayers had appeared before the County Commissioners in Greeley to insist that any person who participated in a labor strike be removed permanently from the list of those eligible for county aid.²⁸ They claimed also that farmers could not afford the higher payments per acre that beet workers were demanding.

The next day the *Times-Call* reported that seven "agitators," all with Spanish names, had been arrested by the Weld County sheriff for intimidating workers and threatening violence.²⁹ The sheriff claimed that the agitators had been "riding around, talking to groups of laborers here and there, making threats in some places." One of the organizers operated a pool hall in "Ragtown" (apparently a neighborhood in Greeley), which probably served as a social center for Hispanic men, who were not allowed into Anglo-owned bars and restaurants at the time.³⁰ Most of the other agitators lived in "the Spanish-American colony" (presumably Great Western's *colonia*) on the edge of Greeley.³¹ The May 18 article also suggested that when jobs were scarce, they should go to Americans. It commented approvingly that one Japanese truck gardener had decided "to curb strike activities on his own farm in his own manner."³² When his Mexican cabbage setters were tempted by agitators who tried to persuade them to join the strike, he fired them all "and got a new set of laborers of Anglo-Saxon blood and who would not be hindered by the visits of Mexican strike leaders."

Action against strikers continued. On May 19, the *Times-Call* noted that ten more "strike agitators" had been arrested in Weld County.³³ Three of the five who were jailed for "trespass and disturbance" (urging workers to leave the fields) had Spanish surnames. In response to

²⁸ "No benefits for strikers."

²⁹ "First arrests in beet strike."

³⁰ For pool halls, see Vol. II, Ch. 4B.

³¹ That *colonia* had been constructed to house Hispanic workers, located at a distance from the rest of the town (Lopez and Lopez, *White Gold Laborers*, esp. chs. 2 and 4-5).

³² For Japanese people brought in a generation before as sugar beet workers, see Ch. 3A above.

³³ "Beet growers disclaim responsibility for strike."

the workers' demands, the Mountain States Beet Growers Marketing Association, which represented farm owners, denied any responsibility for the conditions that had led to the strike.³⁴ The participation of Boulder County beet workers in the strike was described on May 20, when an article reported that Longmont police had "received telephone calls that some armed Mexicans had made threats to workers" in the area.³⁵ Eight Mexicans, who were picketing and trying to keep other workers from taking "scab" jobs in the fields, were arrested on charges of intimidation. When a meeting of workers appeared likely to end in violence, local authorities mustered their forces, but the crowd—though sullen—left quietly.

That same day the I.W.W. committee that was coordinating the strike filed a formal protest with the State Industrial Commission and Governor Adams against the proposed slash in wages, asking that compensation instead be set at \$23 per acre.³⁶ The committee demanded also a guarantee that at the end of the season, workers would indeed be paid the amount they and the farmer had agreed upon, rather than allowing employers to say they could not afford to deliver those wages.

The strike had now become sufficiently widespread and alarming to farmers and local authorities that the state police were ordered into the northeastern Colorado beet region.³⁷ Although the police were said to be there only "in case further trouble developed," their presence was presumably intended to restrain strike activists. Punitive measures intensified. On May 21, a *Times-Call* article said that picketing charges had been filed against two dozen activists.³⁸ The arrests near Greeley came after the sheriff had tailed the organizers for hours to see what they were doing. The paper was explicit about the ethnicity of participants: "The strikers, in the main, are Mexicans. Virtually all of the labor leaders arrested have been Mexicans." Interestingly, 6 of the 24 people jailed

³⁴ They claimed that their contracts with Great Western Sugar specified the amount of wages that should be paid to laborers; even with these lower payments, they were expecting a loss on their 1932 beet growing operations. The growers did not support labor contracts that would be unfair to the beet workers, but they could not recommend contracts that "would simply plunge the farmer deeper in debt" (ibid.).

³⁵ "State police sent to beet area."

³⁶ "Beet workers protest."

³⁷ "State police sent to beet area."

³⁸ "24 more agitators, mainly Mexicans, arrested."

were women. As early as the 1930s, Hispanic women were not only workers, some were activists!³⁹

On May 25, 18 Hispanic union organizers were given jail terms by a court in Greeley for violating anti-picketing and vagrancy laws.⁴⁰ Their leader, J. H. Cordova, aged 42, was sentenced to 30 days in jail, while the others received 15 days for picketing and 5 days for vagrancy. They had all pleaded “not guilty” and appeared in court without legal counsel. Witnesses for the prosecution said the defendants had moved from farm to farm in several districts, using four cars, encouraging workers to join the strike. Although one farmer said that his workers had asked for protection from the agitators, claiming they were talking about kidnapping, burning property, and even murder, the paper noted pointedly that there was no direct evidence of violence or threats.

More alarming to local authorities was a warning on May 21 from a state police officer assigned to the northeastern Colorado district that “foreign labor”—which meant Mexicans—in nearby coal mining areas was entering into the strike and “might cause some trouble among the agricultural workers.”⁴¹ (The I.W.W. was one of the few unions that attempted to build solidarity between workers across diverse types of employment.) Because the coal miners were generally more militant and had more experience at organizing, their intervention in the farm workers’ strike would have strengthened the latter’s ability to maintain their walkout. But that did not happen. By the end of June the strike had petered out, without any concessions by the farmers or Great Western. So many workers were desperate for employment they were willing to accept a lower payment rather than risking all by joining a strike. The failure of the strike may have hindered the development of a shared working-class bond among local Hispanics employed in different sectors of the economy. Fear of labor unrest probably intensified the racist attitudes already held by many Boulder County Anglos.

³⁹ One wonders if they remembered the *soldaderas* of the 1910s (see Ch. 2A above).

⁴⁰ “18 Mexican beet field picketers given jail terms.” Of those men, 13 were in their 20s or 30s, but the remainder were older, including one aged 73.

⁴¹ “24 more agitators, mainly Mexicans, arrested.”

B. Racism and the Ku Klux Klan, 1910-1940

"I would rather be a Klansman
 in a robe of snowy white,
 Than to be a Catholic Priest
 in a robe as black as night;
 For a Klansman is AMERICAN
 and AMERICA is his home,
 But a priest owes his allegiance
 to a Dago Pope in Rome."⁴²

Hispanics living in Boulder County between 1910 and 1940 experienced many forms of discrimination. Their position was ambiguous in racial terms.⁴³ They were not as dark-skinned as most African Americans, but their "brownness" covered a wide range. A few appeared to be "white," with light skins and blue eyes, while others were darker and/or had strongly Native American features. In the eyes of most Anglos, however, they were lumped together as "Mexicans," a group distinct from the white race.

Colorado's leading Anglo residents generally came from Protestant backgrounds in Northern Europe. They were committed to an American ethic of rugged individualism and a desire to get ahead. The early Hispanic arrivals, by contrast, were Catholic, spoke Spanish, and were often poor and relatively uneducated. Although they wanted their children to go to school and have a better future, they commonly placed family or community welfare above their own personal advancement. Many Anglos accepted without question the stereotype of Mexicans as dirty, lazy, and backward, people who were likely to be law-breakers.⁴⁴ As the number of people from Spanish-speaking backgrounds coming into Boulder County began to rise in the 1910s, whether from Mexico, New Mexico, or southern Colorado, Anglo concern mounted. Anxiety was particularly strong if these immigrants showed signs of staying in the area, rather than being temporary workers.

⁴² *Rocky Mountain American*, a Klan paper, April 24, 1925, as quoted in "Kolorado Klaverns of the Ku Klux Klan."

⁴³ See Ch. 1A above.

⁴⁴ Local newspapers rarely mentioned people with Latino surnames unless they broke the law, e.g., Mexicans arrested for stealing clothing and a shooting in Lafayette in 1915, and another shooting in Boulder in 1920 ("Law and Order"). For Mexicans as potential criminals, see Rosales, *Pobre Raza!*, esp. ch. 4.

Racist attitudes and practices took various forms in the towns we are considering. Evidence about discrimination in Lafayette is mixed. On the negative side, in 1911, during “the Long Strike,” a crowd tried to break into the building where Francisco Diaz and his three sons were being held.⁴⁵ The men were accused of killing Teddy Wycherley, a Welch miner who was part of the striking union. Wycherley was angry with the Diazes because they had crossed the picket lines to do scab work, and the men got in a fight with fists and knives outside a bar. When Wycherley was killed, the Diazes were put into temporary arrest in the town hall. A crowd then formed, numbering several hundred men and women, who shouted that the Diazes should be lynched. Only the intervention of Boulder County Sheriff Capp saved them and permitted their safe removal to the jail in Boulder. (The Diazes were later found not guilty of murder, because they had acted in self-defense.) This incident, the only mention of a possible lynching in Boulder County, apparently stemmed at least in part from pro-union/anti-scab sentiment. A different form of discrimination was described by Sally Martinez, who came to Lafayette in 1924 when her father began work at the Columbine Mine.⁴⁶ She remembers that other children made fun of her for speaking Spanish and bringing tortillas for lunch. Some of the Mexican and Japanese children used to take their lunches down by the creek near the school, to avoid being teased.

But there is also evidence from Lafayette of social interactions between people of diverse nationalities and ethnicities. A police raid in August, 1915 caught 50 Mexicans, Italians, and Russians gambling (shooting craps) in the back room of a local saloon.⁴⁷ When Lupie Ortega later described her walk to elementary school in 1928, she said that she, her sister, and her little brother “joined other children from the neighborhood,” children named Brugger, Beranek, Dillon, Hurd, and Lastoka.⁴⁸ Jim Hutchison, an English-speaker who moved to Lafayette in 1931 when he was in fourth grade, was welcomed at school by Hispanic as well as other children; his closest friend was Ernie Casillas.⁴⁹

Bonds across ethnic lines seem to have been especially strong among Lafayette’s miners. Men from all backgrounds had to rely upon each

⁴⁵ “Sheriff saved prisoners from lynching.”

⁴⁶ Martinez, Sally, and others, interview, 1990. For embarrassment about food, see also Vol. II, Chs. 3A and 6B.

⁴⁷ “Law and Order.”

⁴⁸ “Walking to School.”

⁴⁹ Conversation with Marjorie McIntosh, Jan. 7, 2014.

other while working underground. An immigrant from Wales who worked at the Columbine Mine during the 1920s stressed the solidarity among all the ethnic groups employed there: "We were close in those days. It didn't make any difference whether you were a Mexican . . . He drinks outta your bucket, you drink outta his bucket . . . And that's the way you are, down below there. . . . When you get down there, you're a family."⁵⁰ Tom Lopez too remembered the good relationships among miners during and after the Depression, with mutual assistance and close friendships.⁵¹ David Toledo lived for some years in the nearby coal town of Frederick.⁵² He recalled that although miners came from many different places (not only Mexico and New Mexico but also Italy, Bulgaria, and France), they socialized together as well as working side-by-side.⁵³ "Times were different then from now, because these people would get together to celebrate baptisms, birthdays, and weddings. They would have social dances in a hall." In the past, Toledo said, you "would know these people for years, and there would be a sense of harmony."

Boulder discriminated against the few African Americans who lived in the town and against all working people, but it did not display special animosity to the tiny number of Hispanic residents. Dr. Ruth Cave Flowers, an African American who later received a law degree and a doctorate in foreign languages and literatures, moved to Boulder in 1917 to attend the State Preparatory High School (later renamed Boulder High School).⁵⁴ After finishing its requirements, she enrolled at the University of Colorado and in 1924 became its second female African American graduate. She recalled that when she came to Boulder, blacks lived "on the wrong side of the tracks," could not buy food at ice cream parlors, and were not admitted to movie theaters. By the mid-1930s, African Americans were allowed into the theaters but had to sit in the balcony.⁵⁵ Boulder also had a city ordinance prohibiting workmen carrying lunch pails from walking around the downtown streets.⁵⁶ Chuck

⁵⁰ Interview with Welch Mathias, Eric Margolis's Colorado Coalfields Oral History Project, University of Colorado at Boulder Archives, Box 7, Folder 3, as quoted by Rees, "Chicanos Mine the Columbine," p. 51.

⁵¹ Lopez, Thomas, interview, 1986.

⁵² Toledo, David, interview, c. 1978.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Polly McLean, ed., *A Legacy of Missing Pieces*, pp. 31-41, and Abbott et al., *Colorado*, p. 222.

⁵⁵ "Segregation, 1936," by John Martinez (Vol. II, Illus. 4.6).

⁵⁶ As described by Jim Hutchison, in Martinez, Sally, and others, interview, 1990.

Waneka recalled that some of the stores refused to carry overalls or shoes for working men or wait on customers if they were wearing work clothes; Jim Hutchison said that miners were viewed as troublemakers and despised.⁵⁷ But in the late 1920s and 1930s, a few Hispanic families moved to Boulder from other nearby communities because it was less racist as well as offering better educational and employment opportunities and being beautiful.⁵⁸

A handful of people with Spanish names were at the University in Boulder, though they seem to have had no contact with local Hispanics. In the late 1870s, the first Board of Regents had included C. Valdez of Conejos County in the southern San Luis Valley, and a few Spanish names appear in student directories from the 1890s through the 1930s.⁵⁹ In 1902 the first Hispanic received an undergraduate degree, and in 1907 men with Spanish names graduated from the Law School and Medical School. These were nearly all *ricos*, coming from wealthy families in southern Colorado or northern New Mexico.

In the 1920s, racist views in Boulder County provided fertile soil for the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. The KKK publicly advocated racial discrimination, basing its views on what it claimed were high American principles, and it was prepared to use mob violence to terrify or chase out people it hated or feared. Many Americans in the early twenty-first century think that the Klan was active only in the southeastern part of the United States, directing its hatred and lynchings against African Americans.⁶⁰ So it may come as a surprise to realize how powerful the organization was in Colorado, as elsewhere in the West, and to learn that its attacks in our three communities were targeted at Hispanics.

Physical violence against Hispanics was already common in the Southwest. In the five southwestern states between 1880 and 1930, nearly 600 Hispanics were lynched.⁶¹ At least a few Boulder County

⁵⁷ Both statements in Martinez, Sally, and others, interview, 1990.

⁵⁸ E.g., the Maestas family (Maestas, Roy, interview, 1978) and the Martinez family ("Biographical sketch, Emma Gomez Martinez," p. 1). See also Vol. II, Ch. 2B.

⁵⁹ Hays, "A Quiet Campaign of Education."

⁶⁰ A lynching was when a group of local people took the law into their own hands and hanged someone, without a formal trial. In some cases they broke into a jail cell to remove a prisoner awaiting trial.

⁶¹ For the U.S. as a whole, lynchings of Latinas/os, predominantly men, occurred at a rate of 27.4 per 100,000 between 1882 and 1930. That rate was lower than the 37.1 per 100,000 for African Americans, 1880-1930, but far above that for whites (Carrigan and Webb, "Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin," Tables 1 and 2).

residents had relatives who were lynched in northern New Mexico; in the large southern Colorado town of Pueblo, two Hispanic railway workers who had been jailed in 1919 on suspicion of killing a policeman during a steel strike were pulled out of jail by an armed mob and hanged on the girders of the Fourth Street Bridge.⁶² Ku Klux Klan chapters in Colorado tapped into that tradition of violence and mounting concern among Anglos about the growing number of Hispanics. Although our study found no evidence of lynchings in Boulder County, and apparently the KKK caused few deaths elsewhere in the state, the organization was adept at using threats and occasional property damage against Hispanics and those who defended them.

The Klan, an organization with a secret membership by invitation only, offered many of the same attractions as other men's groups of the time: private handshakes and passwords, elaborate rituals, and special slogans and songs.⁶³ Klansmen wore a distinctive costume to events: a long white robe that covered everything except their feet, and a headpiece with eyeholes that covered their face and came to a high point above their head. That "regalia" meant that the men wearing the costumes could not be identified, though because the costumes were generally sewn from a sheet and pillowcase, their wives had probably made them and were aware of the men's participation.

The KKK differed from other fraternal groups because it openly preached a message of white male supremacy for Protestant men born in the United States or who had become naturalized citizens. The Klan promoted racial segregation, stressed a literal reading of the Bible, and advocated prohibition of liquor. In Colorado, the Klan directed its activities against immigrants, Latinos, Catholics, and Jews, with secondary attention to the few African Americans living in the state.

The Klan movement in Colorado kicked off in Denver in 1921. It had an elaborate structure of recruiters (called "Kleagles") who operated throughout the state. The group was especially popular among men who felt marginalized by the reforms associated with the Progressive Movement after World War I. By 1924 the Klan was strong enough that it took over the operation of Colorado's Republican Party, replacing existing candidates with its own. In the election of 1925,

⁶² Duncan, "Some Notes"; Rosales *Pobre Raza!*, pp. 118-119.

⁶³ General information in this and the next three paragraphs comes from Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, ch. 18, Goldberg, *Hooded Empire*, esp. ch. 4, Goldberg, "Denver," and Smith, *Once A Coal Miner*, esp. pp. 155-161, and will not be individually referenced.

Republicans who were Klansmen or open backers of the Klan were chosen as Governor (Clarence Morley) and for both U.S. Senate seats. Klan-supported candidates, some of them Democrats, were elected to the offices of lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, superintendents of public schools, a justice of the Colorado Supreme Court, and seven members of the Denver District Court. They controlled the House within Colorado's General Assembly and barely lacked a majority in the Senate. The Klan dominated city councils in some Colorado towns, and Mayor Benjamin Stapleton of Denver—after whom Colorado's main airport was later named—was an avowed member. One week after the 1925 election, the "Imperial Wizard" (the head of the national organization) and a host of other Klan dignitaries arrived in Denver from Atlanta, Georgia to celebrate the victory. They were greeted at Union Station by Governor-elect Morley, amid a crowd of reporters and photographers, before moving on to the Brown Palace Hotel to plan the agenda of the new administration.

The Klan was said to be stronger in Colorado than any other western state. At its peak, it had 30,000-50,000 Klansmen, with 81 chapters (called "Klaverns"). Not all of the men who joined the KKK were virulent racists. Some members probably liked the organization's emphasis on patriotism, the importance of good moral training, and a fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible; others succumbed to peer pressure, a sense that all respectable white men were joining. Such people may have chosen to ignore the Klan's bigotry and to avoid participating in certain activities. But it was deeply racist men who led Boulder County's chapters and implemented their anti-Mexican agenda.

The KKK emerged in Boulder County in 1922. In July, Colorado's Klavern No. 1 (based in Denver) initiated 200 members into a new Klavern in Boulder, in a secret ceremony held on an abandoned road 5 miles north of the town.⁶⁴ Fifty cars drove participants to the event. The *Boulder Daily Camera* said that the town had been full of rumors that such an organization was forming. The group swung into immediate action, shoving some kind of written warning under the office door of "a prominent citizen." The initiations in 1922, like all other Klan meetings and ceremonies, took place after dark. The Klansmen formed a half-circle around a huge flaming cross; light came from the headlights or spotlights of cars parked around the group, facing inwards. Each new

⁶⁴ "Ku Klux Klan ceremonial administered to Boulderites."

PAGE SEVEN

THE DA

Thirty-Second Year

Boulder,

KU KLUX KLAN VISIT BOULDER SWEEPING THROUGH STREETS A MYSTERIOUS, SHROUDED MASS

Three hundred members of the Ku Klux Klan, nearly all of them masked, paraded Pearl street in automobiles Saturday night headed by a float which was illuminated by three torch lights. The parade consisted of sixty-three automobiles, most of them touring cars, and was joined as it passed by a number of cars containing Boulder members of the klan and the curious of the Saturday night automobile crowd.

Circulars, folded and wrapped with a rubber band, were thrown to the people on the streets by men standing in the float. The float was in white and carried the words "Klu Klux Klan." The circulars stated: "Ku Klux Klan, 100 per cent American.

WE STAND FOR
and are pledged upon our sacred honor to uphold the Flag and Constitution of our country.

WE STAND FOR
Free Speech, Free Press, Free Public Schools, and Separation of CHURCH AND STATE.

WE STAND FOR
the Purity of Womanhood and are Pledged to Protect and Defend the Sanctity of the Home.

WE ARE "ANTI" NOTHING
save those principles which are un-Christian and un-American.

WATCH US GROW IN BOULDER
Postoffice Box 321.

Two or three digits of the license tags of each of the cars taking part

ALPHA TAU OMEGA
ARE THE INTERFRAT CHAMPS

in the parade were painted over to prevent detection. Such practice is forbidden by law. Most of the members taking part in the parade were from Denver. A much greater number was expected. As a matter of fact, one man whose name rumor quite commonly connects with the Boulder klan, stated there were 143 cars in the parade, and was surprised when told that there were but sixty-three.

Local klansmen in ordinary civilian clothes patrolled Pearl street at the intersections of Twelfth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth and possibly other corners for nearly an hour before the parade. Near these intersections were automobiles, some of them with drivers, who joined the tail-end of the parade. The patrolmen seemed impatient and anxiously watched the traffic.

The parade came from West Pearl and went as far east as Seventeenth. It turned south at this corner to Arapahoe and then went east, presumably on the way back to Denver. The parade was for the purpose of arousing local interest in the Boulder klan.

Bert Lowe, Convicted Of Murder At Greeley Shows Small Concern Wife Seems Satisfied

Greeley, Colo., Dec. 10.—Bert J. Lowe, convicted last night of the murder of his sister-in-law, Fern Skinner, is taking his fate with the same stoic

11 DAYS TO SHOP



READ THE ADS

DONATIONS BEING RECEIVED FOR NEW CHAPTER HOUSE TO BE BUILT IN BOULDER

The pledges of Chi Omega and house-building fund a \$100 at the annual Christmas party Saturday. Alumnae of the sorority and a number of active members gave useful gifts to the house. Kappa Kappa Gamma, as well as Chi Omega, are making preparations to build in the near future. Kappas own lots on University avenue, not far from Twelfth street. The Chi Omegas have not yet chosen a site.

Pi Beta Phi has purchased a group of lots at Eleventh and Colfax where they plan to build some in the future. They will first dispose of their chapter house on Twelfth street.

The annual Christmas parties of the Pi Phis, Kappa Alpha Theta and Chi Omega on Saturday were largely attended. A number were held from out of town.

MAY ADD TO CHARGES AGAINST MR. DAUGHER

By Associated Press.
Washington, Dec. 11.—Jackson Kailston, counsel for Representative Keller, Republican, Minnesota, has brought impeachment charges against Attorney General Daugherty. Chairman Volstead of the house judiciary committee that "may find it necessary to place before the committee additional charges of high crimes and misdemeanors."

Illus. 4.2. "Ku Klux Klan visits Boulder," Boulder Daily Camera, Dec. 11, 1922

member raised his right hand, went down on one knee, and swore an oath to defend the Klan's ideals, including protection of "the flower of white American womanhood."⁶⁵ Fear of inter-racial sexual activity lay right beneath the surface.

The Klan became more visible in Boulder later in 1922. In November, six hooded Klan members barged into a meeting of the Salvation Army, describing their goals and trying to recruit new members; they left a large donation, in keeping with their claim to be a charitable organization.⁶⁶ The *Daily Camera* commented that although members of the Klan were supposed to be unidentified, "rumor connects several Pearl Street business men with the organization." In late November and December the Klan organized four parades through the town. One included nearly 300 Klansmen, 63 cars (with the numbers on their license plates painted over so no one could identify their owners), and a float covered in white. The figures riding in the cars and on the float, with their bodies and heads draped in white, held up signs saying "Join the Invisible Empire " and "Watch Us Grow in Boulder."

A statement of the organization's goals is found in a poorly printed leaflet published by Boulder's Klavern around that time. This summary of Klan principles claimed that the group "is the incarnation of patriotism—of American ideals and institutions that are endangered by certain elements and sinister forces."⁶⁷ True Americans had to be white, and they had to be Protestant Christians: "God sifted the nations of the Old World and sent to our shores men and women of Protestant faith with which to build this republic." The movement wanted to make the Bible the basis of the U.S. Constitution, its government, and its laws; Bible study should be required in all public schools, while parochial schools should be abolished. The leaflet also stressed allegiance to the cross and the flag and said that the Knights of the Klan "stand for the Purity of Womanhood and are Pledged to Protect and Defend the Sanctity of the Home."

The statement contained an only slightly veiled threat of physical harm to opponents of the Klan. "We confess to certain admiration for the

⁶⁵ "White sheet business brisk during KKK's Boulder reign."

⁶⁶ "Boulder Ku Klux Klan rode thru streets" and "White sheet business brisk during KKK's Boulder reign."

⁶⁷ See Illus. 4.3 and "Summary of the Principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," pp. 2-4. The leaflet mentioned that ten months previously a sister organization known as Women of the Ku Klux Klan had been founded.

A Summary of the Principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

GOD GIVE US MEN!

"God give us men! The Invisible Empire demands strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands.
 Men whom just of office does not kill;
 Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
 Men who possess opinions and a will
 Men who have honor; men who will not lie;
 Men who can stand before a demagogue and damn his treacherous flattery without winking!
 Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog in public duty and private thinking;
 For while the rabbi, with their thumb-worn creeds,
 Their large professions and little deeds,
 Mingle in selfish strife, Lo, Freedom weeps,
 Wrong rules the land, and waiting justice sleeps.
 God give us men!
 Men who serve not for selfish booty,
 But real men, courageous, who flinch not at duty;
 Men of dependable character; men of sterling worth;
 Then wrong will be redressed and right will rule the earth.
 God give us men!

BIRTH OF THE KLAN AND A SUMMARY OF ITS PRINCIPLES

IN every community there are three groups of people who are opposed to the Klan. The first group are those of the lawless element, the crooked politician, the shyster lawyer, the bootlegger, the gambler, the dope peddler, the atheist, the white slaver and the rapist.

The second group are those who by virtue of their education are opposed to all Christian progressive organizations, especially those of secret character, a right that is exercised under the Constitution of the United States. By that same Constitution and right we claim the right and privilege to organize a white, native-born, Gentile Christian organization.

The third group opposed to the Klan are those who have based their judgment upon the articles appearing in newspapers, whose editors are either uninformed or misinformed and have not the time or inclination to look into the matter pertaining to the Klan to see if those reports are true.

The old Ku Klux Klan was a benevolent organization

of society. At the close of the Civil War the people were troubled by the carpet-bagger, the rapist and those given to pilfering. The chastity of the mother, wife, sister and daughter was imperilled, and their sacred persons were placed in jeopardy to the licentious longings of lust-crazed beasts in human form. You have heard of the night riders of the Ku Klux Klan. When their purpose was accomplished, the Klan voluntarily disbanded.

The new order of today was brought into existence on Thanksgiving night, in the year 1915. Sixteen men climbed up Stone mountain near Atlanta, Ga., in the teeth of a blinding rainstorm, arriving at the top, each man took a boulder, and they built an altar and placed the American flag and the Holy Bible upon the altar, erected the "Fiery Cross" and all knelt in prayer, and this wonderful organization was brought into existence as a result of that prayer meeting.

In 1920 there were less than 5,000 members, today, by virtue of the splendid, patriotic principles it proclaims, there is a membership of nearly ten million. And this in spite of the controlled press of the country which has continued to empty its vitals of hatred and falsehood against an order that is plainly needed in our land today to help place Protestantism where it rightfully belongs.

Ten months ago the organization known as the Women of the Ku Klux Klan came into existence. Its membership now numbers over half a million.

A man cannot make application to come into our order. We will investigate him, and if we feel he is eligible, we will offer him an opportunity of coming in. He must be born in the United States. He must be a Gentile. He and his wife must both be Protestants, then there will be no dissension in his home.

The Klan is not anti-Catholic; it is pro-Protestant.

The Klan is not anti-Negro; it is pro-White.

The Klan is not anti-Jew; it is pro-Christian.

The Klan is not anti-foreign; it is pro-American.

The Klan is not anti any race, color or creed. It is simply pro-Christian and pro-American.

The Klan believes in the tenets of the Christian religion. We magnify the Holy Bible as the basis of our Constitution, the foundation of our government, the source of our laws, the sheet-anchor of our liberties, the most practical guide of right living, and the source of all true wisdom. We have in mind the divine command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." We honor the Christ as the Klansman's only criterion of character.

There are more than 70,000 ministers of the Gospel who had the courage to stand on their convictions and come into the organization. If, during our ceremonial a man find anything un-Christian or not what he can subscribe to, he is permitted to retire with the good will of the Klan.

We are not a political organization. We don't care what a man's politics are if he is a MAN. Anyone who does not remain a MAN amongst MEN after he gets in

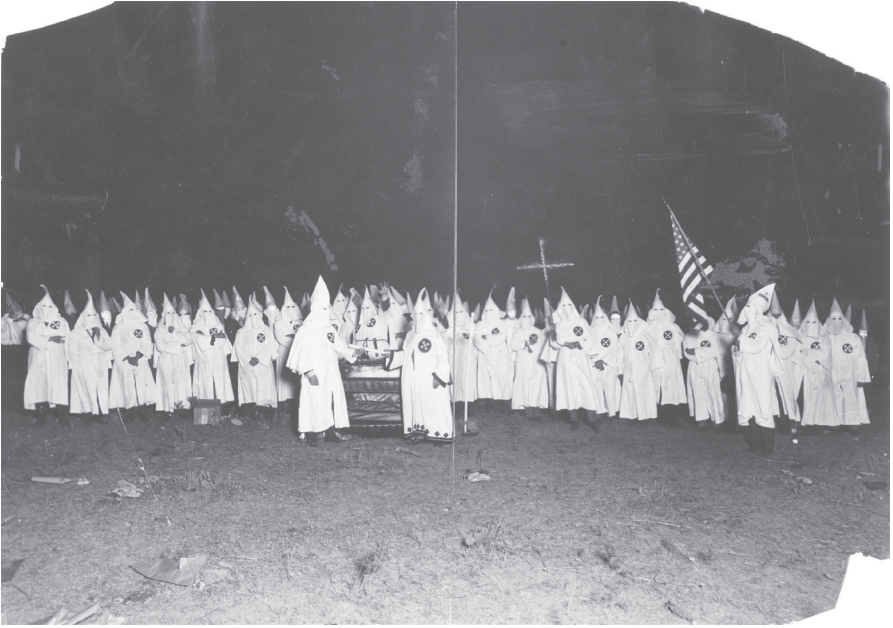
Illus. 4.3. "Summary of the Principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," 1920s, p. 1

patience and law-abiding characteristics of the reputed two thousand Klansmen of Boulder County in the face of long continued abuse, defamation and personal vilification, . . . especially so when fence rails and tar buckets are handy and feathers are so cheap." Carrying a person out of town on a fence rail or dipping him in hot tar and covering him with feathers were common forms of collective attack. Used especially against people of color, they were deeply painful as well as humiliating.

We have visual and written evidence about a mass meeting of the Boulder Klavern held probably in 1922 or 1923. (A newspaper reporter disguised as a Klansman sneaked into the event and wrote a short description to go with the photo he took of it.⁶⁸) The undated photo shows the head of the Boulder group, its "Exalted Cyclops," receiving the Klavern's official charter. This huge state-wide rally was held "in one of nature's amphitheaters in a canyon near Boulder." Boulder's Cyclops and 500 members of its Klavern welcomed 2,000 Klansmen from elsewhere in Colorado and representatives from the group's headquarters in Atlanta. Some of the visitors had driven only from Longmont, Lafayette, and Louisville, but others came from Pueblo and La Junta. Lighting was provided by 500 cars, many of them equipped with spotlights, forming a large circle around the gathering. New candidates—150 of them—were sworn into the Boulder chapter, after which "short addresses were made by leading professional and business men and the substantial agriculturalists and stockmen of the state." The event ended with "an old fashioned Western barbeque." The reporter's photo shows a large group of men dressed in white robes with the characteristic white pointed hoods carrying an American flag, with a 30-foot cross burning in the background.

The Klan reached its local peak in 1924 and 1925, when the Boulder Klavern may have had as many as 1,000 members. Boulder's total population at the time was only about 11,000, including women and children, so the male heads of many households had obviously joined the Klan. The KKK burned crosses on the lawns of Catholic families and was probably responsible for lighting a giant flaming cross one May night on Boulder's Flagstaff Mountain, visible from all the towns to the east. This structure, made of sawdust saturated with oil, was 53 feet high

⁶⁸ A date of May 31, 1926 was added to the back of the photo in pencil at some later time, but since it describes the image as "a street scene" and does not match the reporter's own text, we should probably discount it; the Boulder Klavern was collapsing by spring, 1926 ("A KKK meeting in Boulder, 1920s, back of photo").



Illus. 4.4. A KKK meeting in Boulder, 1920s

and 25 feet wide.⁶⁹ Hooded Klan members walked into a religious gathering in the basement of a Boulder Presbyterian church to advocate Bible study in the public schools.⁷⁰ (Though uninvited, they were received with applause.) As the 1925 election approached, the KKK sent out cards to Boulder County voters instructing them how to vote; Klan-backed candidates won many local offices.⁷¹ In that same year, the Klan went after the University of Colorado, due to the Jewish and Catholic professors who taught there. When President George Norlin submitted the University's request to the General Assembly for its annual appropriation of \$120,000, Governor Morley—backed by Klansmen in the legislature—demanded that all non-Protestant staff be fired.⁷² Norlin refused, whereupon the legislature denied any appropriation to the university for the year.

⁶⁹ "Cross burned on Flagstaff Mountain."

⁷⁰ "KKK influence was strong here in the 1920s."

⁷¹ "Ku Klux Klan sends election instructions to Boulder County voters"; Goldberg, *Hooded Empire*, pp. 81-82.

⁷² Knox, "The Campus and the Klan." The university was able to limp along without an appropriation thanks to a permanent mill levy to support higher education that Norlin had persuaded the General Assembly to pass in 1920.

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NO ALIEN NEWSPAPERS NEEDED IN AMERICA

“One tongue,” said John Milton, “is enough for a woman.”

He said that because he did not wish his daughter to learn French. He thought English was good enough for her, as an Englishwoman.

We borrow Milton’s thought, to say that one tongue is enough, for an American. And that tongue ought to be the language of America, not the language of some alien land.

The editor of a foreign-language newspaper has just been sentenced in Chicago, for attacking through his journal, the American Army and Navy, in an alien tongue, and disseminating his scurrility within the United States.

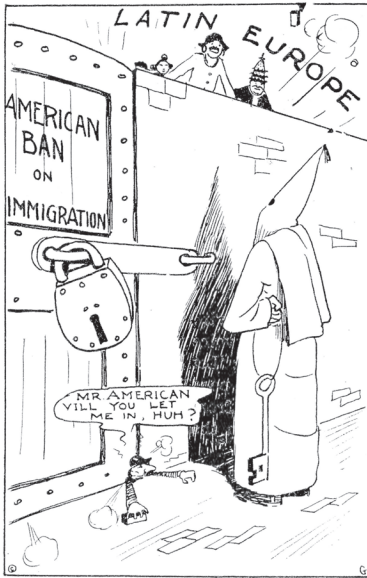
Why should we have foreign language newspapers at all?

If a man lives here and makes his money here, and enjoys the blessings that go with life in America, he ought, in all conscience to be willing to learn the language. And he can find enough reading in the newspapers printed in the American language.

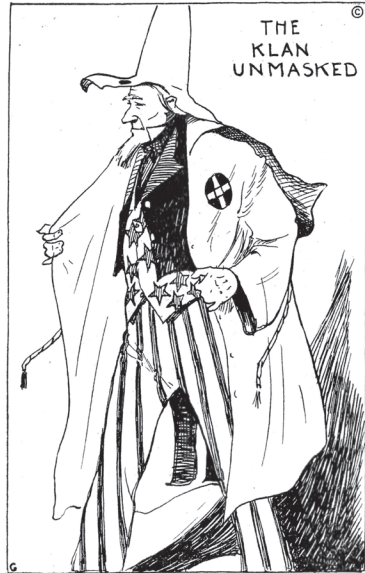
These foreign-language papers simply keep alive foreign allegiance and hypheisms and serve as agencies of foreign propaganda in this country. There is nothing American about most of them.

Talk United States!

Illus. 4.5. “No Alien Newspapers Needed,” The Rocky Mountain American, May 15, 1925



Illus. 4.6. "Ban on Immigration,"
The Rocky Mountain American,
 Apr. 17, 1925



Illus. 4.7. "The Klan Unmasked,"
The Rocky Mountain American,
 Feb. 27, 1925

Although by 1925 the main Boulder newspaper was starting to oppose the KKK, or at least make cautious fun of it (editor L. C. Paddock of the *Daily Camera* referred to it as the Komic Kapers Klub), a Klan paper, the *Rocky Mountain American*, was published in Boulder for six months.⁷³ It spewed out false information and vicious attacks on Catholics, especially foreigners, including the statement that 15 million Catholics in the county were forming military organizations and arming themselves in order to make America Catholic. It argued that no foreign-language newspapers should be published in the U.S. and featured cartoons showing the Klan at work, such as keeping out undesirable immigrants and enforcing laws.⁷⁴ One cartoon responded to the objection that Klan members were always covered by showing what lay underneath: Uncle Sam!

The *Rocky Mountain American* encouraged its readers to buy products at local stores approved by the Klan. (It described the new chain stores that were beginning to appear as the work of "unscrupulous Jewish

⁷³ Smith, *Once A Coal Miner*, pp. 159-60, and Goldberg, *Hooded Empire*, p. 9, for this and below.

⁷⁴ See also "Cartoon: The KKK and Law Enforcement."

business magnates.”) To demonstrate their support for the organization, business owners placed ads in the paper that described their goods or services in catchy phrases with K’s: “Klassy Kut Klothes,” “Kash and Karry Shoe Shop,” or “Klothing Karefully Kleaned.”⁷⁵ One store sold “Wizard Sheets” at 98 cents each and “Wizard Pillowcases” at 25 cents each.

The eastern towns of the county had their own Klan chapters.⁷⁶ Jack Murphy, a former Boulder County Commissioner born in 1915, remembered being taken to a Klan parade in Longmont when he was 10 or 11 years old.⁷⁷ “There were about 2,000 to 3,000 Klan members from northern Colorado—all in their bed sheets—and there were some black horses.” Many of the viewers, including young Jack, were “scared to death.” Since Longmont had about 6,000 residents at the time, the appearance of so many Klansmen must indeed have been frightening.

The Longmont parade that Murphy remembered was probably the one described in the *Rocky Mountain American* in early June, 1925.⁷⁸ The paper said that the procession of local and visiting Klansmen, all in their white robes and marching four abreast, started at 8 pm and was led by officers on horseback; the parade stretched nearly a half mile in length. As the group moved through the main streets of the city, thousands of spectators stood at attention “to show their respect and admiration for the valiant Knights of the Ku Klux Klan as they marched silently by and in perfect order.” The procession ended up at a large open space south of the city, where “a huge flaming cross emblematic of the cross of Christ” was erected, together with an American flag. Several hundred new members were initiated into the group, swearing to give their allegiance—and if necessary, their lives—to America and its principles.

Klan members dominated Longmont’s government in the mid-1920s. In the election of 1923, only a few Klan candidates were chosen, but in 1925, the group’s political efforts paid off: a majority of the city councilors, the mayor, school board members, and various others were elected.⁷⁹ The Klan-led city council fired the city engineer, the

⁷⁵ “KKK influence was strong here in the 1920s.”

⁷⁶ The KKK was active in other parts of the sugar beet area too. In Greeley, Klansmen marched at night through “the Spanish colony” in 1925, setting fire to at least one cross in the yard of a resident. In Brighton, located 12 miles east of Lafayette, 500 Klansmen joined a parade in 1933, and a “fiery cross” was burned in the fair grounds on 5th Ave. (Donato, *Mexicans and Hispanos*, pp. 53-55).

⁷⁷ “Klan had its heyday in county.”

⁷⁸ “Mammoth Klan parade.”

⁷⁹ “Ku Klux Klan controlled Longmont in 1920s” for this and the dam, below.

street superintendent, and the fire chief, replacing them with their own sympathizers. One of their ventures was the Chimney Rock dam, which they started against the advice of reliable water engineers and cost the city \$130,000 before it was finally abandoned. Klan members flew their flag on the city's official pole and erected an 8-foot cross in electric red lights at the intersection of Main Street and Fourth Avenue.⁸⁰ The *Longmont Times-Call*, a Klan supporter, described the cross as "the most effective and beautiful decoration of its kind ever displayed in Longmont." Signs appeared in local stores and restaurants saying "Whites Only," "White Trade Only," or even "No Mexicans or Dogs," and although no actual violence was reported, several men received threatening letters on letterhead with the Klan's insignia.⁸¹

Oli Olivas Duncan, a local historian of Longmont, was told that sometime in the 1920s, there was a showdown between the Klan and a group of Mexican men.⁸² The Klan's rallies were held on the southeast corner of Third Avenue and Martin, which was then an open field. At one nighttime meeting, dozens of armed Hispanic men appeared. They warned the Klan that if any one of them was harmed, all of them would respond. The spokesman for the group was José Hilario Cortez, the informal head of Longmont's Hispanic community, a person to whom local Spanish-speakers turned for advice and help. Mr. Cortez may have learned what happened at Klan rallies from his grandson, Eddie Vigil, who used to sneak out at night with his buddies to watch the meetings from a safe hiding place.⁸³ But Longmont's Hispanics did not take legal action against discrimination as did people in Greeley, with its large *colonia*. There Mexicans filed a civil rights case in 1927 against restaurant owners for refusing to serve them and organized a boycott of businesses that displayed "White Trade Only" signs.⁸⁴

The Klan was active in the Lafayette area too. The initial meeting was held in 1924 at the "J" barn near Isabelle Road, north of town.⁸⁵ The first two members of the local chapter were a dentist and the manager of the Public Service Company; membership grew rapidly over the next two

⁸⁰ "KKK influence was strong here in the 1920s" for this and below.

⁸¹ For letters, see *ibid.* For such a sign, see Illus. 5.12 below.

⁸² Conversation with Marjorie McIntosh, July 26, 2013, and see "Cortez, Jose Hilario ('J. H.),' and Maria Sabina Maes Cortez, biography." One wonders if this story is an example of embellishment.

⁸³ "Cortez, Jose Hilario ('J. H.),' and Maria Sabina, biography."

⁸⁴ Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, p. 155.

⁸⁵ "Ku Klux Klan in Lafayette."

years, with teachers, town councilors, members of the school board, and even some church pastors signed up. Later the KKK met on a bluff to the southeast of the town, near the Columbine Mine where many Hispanics and Italians worked; large bonfires and the crosses the group erected and set on fire made its presence visible.⁸⁶

The Klan worked inside Lafayette as well. It put up a cross at the intersection of Baseline and South Public Roads and tried to run a few people out of town, coming to their houses wearing their regalia, breaking windows, and threatening them in various ways.⁸⁷ A common practice was for Klan members to come into Lafayette's Protestant churches during services, wearing their regalia and leaving a cross burning outside while they gave a speech about the purpose of their organization.⁸⁸ The local Klavern treated Lafayette's Catholic Church more fiercely, claiming that it owed its allegiance to the Pope, not to the United States. In 1926, a reporter who was spying on the building that housed the KKK in Lafayette was spotted and kidnapped.⁸⁹ With a sack thrown over his head, he was carried to a large Klan rally in the hills somewhere behind the Standard Mine. There some 1,000 white-clad men from various Denver-area Klaverns looked on as he was forced to kneel in front of a wooden altar and threatened with a dagger, after which he was lectured about Klan goals. Finally he was released but had to find his way home by foot in the dark.

The political power of the Klan in Colorado weakened quickly after 1925, at both state and local levels, due to corruption within its leadership, the defection of Mayor Stapleton, and the impact of the few newspapers courageous enough to speak out against it. When Colorado's central organization fell apart late in 1925, Boulder's Klavern voted to leave the national group and remain with Dr. John G. Locke.⁹⁰ Locke, the former head of the Colorado unit, was expelled from the Klan for financial misconduct and founded his own group, the Minute Men of America. The Boulder chapter joined the Minute Men in 1926, but that organization soon died out. Yet the hatred the Klan promoted, and the fear it caused,

⁸⁶ Jim Hutchison, conversation with Marjorie McIntosh, Jan. 7, 2014, "Salazar, Jose Benito and Isabelle, biography," and "Klan had its heyday in county."

⁸⁷ Jim Hutchison, conversation with Marjorie McIntosh, Jan. 7, 2014, and "More than 50,000 donned hoods at Klan's height."

⁸⁸ "More than 50,000 donned hoods at Klan's height" and "Ku Klux Klan: the invisible empire in Boulder County."

⁸⁹ "Ku Klux Klan in Lafayette."

⁹⁰ "Boulder Klan fails to take action."

continued. In Boulder, a resident later recalled that during the 1930s a store on 24th Street (now Folsom Avenue) had a racist sign in its front window, and crosses were burned on Flagstaff Mountain as late as 1939.⁹¹

In Longmont, overt hostility to Hispanics remained strong in the later 1920s and 1930s, though the KKK no longer had a public presence. In 1927, Fred W. Flanders ran successfully for mayor on an anti-Klan platform.⁹² When Klan members attempted to march through the downtown later that year, he stopped them. Yet Al Cardenas, born in 1934, described coming into Longmont from Erie as a little boy and seeing signs on the restaurants that said “No Mexicans or dogs allowed.”⁹³ Not until the later 1940s and 1950s were such signs removed.⁹⁴ Tony Gomez said that his dad, who was living in Longmont in the 1930s, told him that Mexicans were not allowed to come into many restaurants and stores at all; at others, they had to go around to a back door, off the alley.⁹⁵ A hamburger that cost 25 cents for white people would cost 35 or 45 cents for them. The only place Mr. Gomez knew he would be treated well was the City Café, owned by Alex Panfilo Gonzales. As a child in 1938, Virginia Maestas went to a magic show in the Longmont theater but was told that Mexicans had to sit at the very back of the balcony.⁹⁶ Some local Hispanics believed that the Klan continued to meet privately for decades longer.⁹⁷

Racism in Longmont may possibly have been directed against African Americans too. Referring to the 1930s, Tony Gomez’s dad described large signs over the Johnson’s Corners filling stations on Main Street, at the north and south entrances into the town, saying something like, “Nigger, don’t let the sun go down on you.”⁹⁸ Another mention of banners telling blacks to get off the streets before dark came from Al Cardenas; he recalled that these signs said, “Don’t let the sunset set on your butt” and that any blacks who violated them would be arrested, in accordance with a city ordinance.⁹⁹ Since there were few if any African Americans in

⁹¹ “Historical hatred,” and “Ku Klux Klan: the invisible empire in Boulder County.”

⁹² *Longmont’s 125th Anniversary*, pp. 21-24.

⁹³ Cardenas, Alfonso, interview, 2004.

⁹⁴ See Ch. 5C below.

⁹⁵ Gomez, Tony, interview, 2009.

⁹⁶ Conversation with Marjorie McIntosh, Nov. 24, 2013.

⁹⁷ Tony Gomez, for example, reported that his father believed that Longmont was “KKK all the way” (Gomez, Tony, interview, 2009). As late as 2013, several Latinos referred to Longmont as “the Klan capital of Colorado” and thought that a local chapter had met secretly until very recently or was perhaps still active even then.

⁹⁸ Gomez, Tony, interview, 2009.

⁹⁹ Cardenas, Alfonso, interview, 2004.

Longmont at the time, these notices are puzzling.

A striking example of discrimination in action occurred in Lafayette in the mid-1930s. The episode is surprising, because the little town seemed in general to be fairly well integrated. In 1933, Lafayette's leaders decided to build a swimming pool for children and young people, located west of the high school.¹⁰⁰ The project was sponsored by the Town Board and the Lions Club, with some labor provided through the Federal Relief Program. It was a community-wide effort, with all residents encouraged to contribute a bag of cement or help with the work. The pool was to be like the one at Sunset Park in Longmont, with a concrete swimming area, miniature beach, dressing rooms, and a parking area. Construction began in April, 1933, and after a problem with obtaining water had been solved, was completed the next summer. The pool, operated by the fire department, was officially opened on July 31, 1934.

Two weeks later, however, the Lafayette newspaper reported that a sign had been posted at the entrance saying: "We reserve the right to eject any and all persons without cause. White trade only."¹⁰¹ Hispanic residents, some of whom had helped to build the pool, were outraged by this policy and decided to turn to the courts. The lawyer they hired, Rose Lueras, prepared a petition claiming that the town had violated the petitioners' equal rights under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and demanding that they be allowed to use the pool. After obtaining signatures on the petition and collecting money for legal action, Lueras brought suit in Boulder District Court against the mayor of Lafayette, its town council, fire chief, fire department, town marshal, and city clerk. The pool was closed while the case was being heard. The following summer the District Court judge denied their petition on technical grounds, though he agreed that "race and color should not be made the basis of discrimination."¹⁰² Lueras then appealed the matter to the Colorado Supreme Court. Only in March, 1937 was the suit ended,

¹⁰⁰ "Swimming Pool," "Lafayette's 'white only' pool," and "Lafayette's new swimming pool" for this paragraph and the next.

¹⁰¹ Jim Hutchison recalled that when he was 13, he and his friend Ernie Casillas went to the pool, but Eddie was denied entrance, so they both left (conversation with Marjorie McIntosh, Jan. 7, 2014). Lafayette was not alone in segregating swimming. When blacks in Denver tried to integrate Washington Park's swimming beach in 1932, they were beaten by enraged white swimmers in front of 1,000 onlookers; when the *Denver Post* hired its first black reporter in 1950, he was not allowed to swim in municipal pools (Delgado and Stefancic, "Home-Grown Racism," pp. 739-40).

¹⁰² "Lafayette's 'white only' pool."

with another verdict against the petitioners.

Nevertheless, after those first two weeks in 1934, the pool was never used again. It sat empty during the summer of 1935, and in May, 1936 it was filled in with dirt as part of a new softball field. Sally Martinez commented in 1990 that Lafayette had recently had to spend \$8,000 to dig out the old concrete when the Bob Burger Recreation Center was built.¹⁰³ Sally's daughter, Sharon Martinez Stetson, the first Latina elected to Lafayette's City Council, described her satisfaction in helping to choose tiles for the swimming pool in the new building, on the very site from which Mexicans had been excluded more than 50 years before.¹⁰⁴

C. Repatriation and Deportation of Mexicans, 1932-1936

On May 18, 1932, the Boulder County Commissioners passed the following resolution:

WHEREAS, A number of Mexican families in Boulder County are unemployed, some of which are public charges and there being no prospect of them finding employment and it appears that all of the said families will become public charges of Boulder County, and WHEREAS, the Mexican Government has agreed to accept these families and take care of them if Boulder County will transport them to the Mexican border and the Railroad Company has agreed to transport said families for the sum of \$8.00 for each full fare and \$4.00 for each half fare.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that there be and is hereby appropriated out of moneys not otherwise appropriated, in the fund for the support of the poor of Boulder County, the sum of \$312.00 for the transportation of said families to the Mexican border.¹⁰⁵

This measure was part of a broader movement between 1930 and 1936 to deport or "repatriate" Mexicans, especially from California and other southwestern states.¹⁰⁶ As the result of large-scale immigration

¹⁰³ Martinez, Sally, and others, interview, 1990.

¹⁰⁴ Conversation with Marjorie McIntosh, Jan. 15, 2014. Stetson served on the City Council 1986-1995: "Swearing-in, Lafayette City Council, 1989" and "Lafayette Councilwoman Sharon Stetson." See also Illus. 5.13 below.

¹⁰⁵ "Boulder County Commissioners' Resolution."

¹⁰⁶ For this and the following paragraphs, see Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, esp. pp. 63-88, and Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*, esp. ch. 4.

during the 1910s and 1920s, several million Mexicans were living in the United States by 1932. Most of them had taken unskilled, poorly paid jobs: working in fields or mines, or building railroads. Their labor was welcomed in those decades, but as the Great Depression worsened and employment opportunities constricted, many Americans found a convenient scapegoat in these foreign workers. After negotiation with U.S. authorities, the Mexican government offered to pay train fare south from the border to places where returnees could find agricultural work.

In what has been described as a “frenzy of anti-Mexican hysteria,” many counties and states decided to cover transportation costs as far as the border in order to send Mexicans back home.¹⁰⁷ That policy, which was promoted at the national level by Secretary of Labor William Doak, was thought to serve two purposes: Mexicans would not compete with American workers for the few jobs available; and local governments would not have to provide relief for destitute Mexican families, support that came out of taxpayers’ pockets. A further benefit was that repatriation allowed local authorities to get rid of undesirable people, especially labor union activists.¹⁰⁸

Although we lack definite figures, as many as one million Mexicans may have been repatriated during the early 1930s.¹⁰⁹ When adult workers left, they were required to take their entire family with them. Because any children born in this country were legally U.S. citizens, their removal may have been illegal, but that was not taken into account. Some Mexicans went home voluntarily, discouraged by their failure to find work and enjoy “the American Dream.” Others, however, were in effect forced out of the U.S. by being told they would receive no further relief or would be arrested as agitators if they stayed.

The lives of these families when they reached Mexico were generally very difficult. The new government, still struggling to gain economic solidity after the Revolution of the 1910s, was often unable to honor its promise of employment. Most returnees were therefore left largely on their own, desperately trying to find work and reestablish social ties in a country they had left as many as 20 years before. Young people had a

¹⁰⁷ Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Doak advocated the deportation of Mexican labor organizers; in California, some of the people sent back were union activists (Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*, pp. 79 and 123).

¹⁰⁹ Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, p. 151, and Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits*, p. 5.

particularly hard time adjusting. If they tried to come back to the U.S., however, they rarely had the birth certificate needed to prove their claim of citizenship. As the American economy began to recover from the Depression, it was hampered by the loss of so many hard-working Mexicans. It is impossible to quantify the contributions that these immigrants and their children might have made to the U.S. in social, political, and cultural terms had they remained.

How are we to interpret the 1932 resolution by the Boulder County Commissioners? Was it a clear example of illegal activity, underpinned by racist attitudes and economic concerns, constituting a clear violation of basic human rights?¹¹⁰ Or were the Commissioners genuinely trying to help destitute Mexicans return to their families and friends, in a setting where they would be able to find work? To answer those questions, we need to explore what was happening in this area in spring, 1932. Evidence is available in English-language newspapers from Longmont, Boulder, and Lafayette. They reflect only Anglo perspectives, but no Spanish-language papers published in northern Colorado survive from the early 1930s.

The first reference to repatriation came on May 17, 1932, when the *Longmont Times-Call* reported that a trainload of Mexicans would depart that evening.¹¹¹ Four trucks carrying Mexican men, women, and children from Larimer County had passed through Longmont on their way to the train station in Denver, the beginning of an expected exodus to their native land. Boulder County's "first consignment" was expected to leave the following week. Claiming that an estimated 700 people from the region would eventually "make the trip," the paper noted that only people who volunteered to leave and could demonstrate that the head of the family had been born in Mexico were eligible. The article said that the cost of train fare to the border at El Paso was being covered "by county commissioners of various northern Colorado counties, charity organizations and the Great Western Sugar company." From Ciudad Juarez onward, the Mexican government would furnish transportation to the farm lands which it was giving to them. That benign account was reinforced the next day by the *Boulder Daily Camera*, which quoted a county welfare worker as saying that "the families came to the county in

¹¹⁰ In California in 2006, the children and grandchildren of families that had been forced out in the 1930s demanded an official apology from the state.

¹¹¹ "Train load of Mexicans will leave for homeland tonight." Larimer County adjoined Boulder County to the north.

the hope of getting work in the beet fields, but had been unable to do so. The county is defraying their expenses on the return trip.”¹¹²

A similar perspective is seen in a report printed on May 18 by the *Longmont Times-Call*. This article said that 14 Mexican families from Boulder County, comprising some 75 men, women, and children, would be sent to Denver by train the following day to start their journey.¹¹³ Transportation for these people was being handled by the American Red Cross. Four more families left by train for El Paso on May 24, with another group scheduled to depart later in the week; for all, transportation was paid by the county.¹¹⁴

On May 18, the *Boulder Daily Camera* presented a quite compassionate first-person description of families leaving from Union Station in Denver.¹¹⁵ Harry Casaday said that watching many hundred people being loaded onto trains “for deportation to their native land” was “an affecting sight.” Nearly all of the deportees, who included women and children, were from Weld and Larimer Counties. Observing that many of them did not understand “what it was all about,” Casaday explained that they had come to Colorado to work in the beet fields, “ignorant of the fact that the state has more laborers than it needs.” He felt, however, that the deportations were being conducted “in a humane manner,” supervised by state authorities.

These reports suggest that local officials and organizations like the Red Cross were for humanitarian reasons assisting unfortunate Mexican citizens who wished to return to their home country. One wonders, however, why Great Western Sugar was willing to pay to have Mexicans sent home. Other factors were certainly contributing to pressure for repatriation.

An economic motive was mentioned in an article published on June 3 in the *Longmont Times-Call*.¹¹⁶ Commenting that several hundred people who had been living in Weld County were leaving for Denver that day on their way to Mexico, the account said the county commissioners and other agencies that were paying for transportation “believe that the cost of deporting them is less than the demand upon charity sources would be.” That concern parallels the Boulder County Commissioners’ reference

¹¹² “County to deport 75 beet workers.”

¹¹³ “75 Mexicans leave for Mexico.”

¹¹⁴ “Mexican families deported at county’s expense.”

¹¹⁵ “1,500 Mexicans loaded on trains in Denver.”

¹¹⁶ “300-400 Weld County Mexicans leaving.”

to “public charges.”

The need for welfare assistance was indeed high and growing, in Boulder County as in most of the U.S., due to the ongoing effects of the Depression. On May 25, the *Boulder Daily Camera* reported on a talk given to the Lions Club by E. B. Hill, one of the county commissioners, and Mrs. Anna Powless, the Social Service secretary.¹¹⁷ Mrs. Powless said that whereas in the past, about 30 families had required assistance for three months in the year, now 100 families were being “kept alive by Social Service funds every month.” Each household received between \$8.50 and \$18 per month. She described 40 of the families, containing 8 to 11 members each, as “transients,” presumably referring to Mexican immigrants; they were totally dependent upon Social Service support. Commenting that the county lacked sufficient funds to care properly for “our own Boulder people” and yet was expected to help outsiders as well, she noted that all of the newcomers had been offered transport back to their previous homes, but some had declined.¹¹⁸

Many Anglo Coloradans probably resented Mexican laborers on multiple grounds. If they were working, they took scarce jobs away from “Americans” and were likely to be trouble-makers, stirring up unrest among their fellow employees. They participated in mining and agricultural unions, and some were organizers of strikes. The Boulder County Commissioners’ resolution was made two days after the beginning of the beet workers’ strike; subsequent conveyance of Mexicans out of the area came just as the mine operators were cutting wages once again and the unions were attempting to resist. If, on the other hand, Mexicans were unemployed, hard-working taxpayers had to provide relief. Encouraging or in some cases virtually forcing immigrants to go back to Mexico therefore seemed justified. We do not know the names of the people who left, but it would not be surprising if some were union organizers: miners or beet workers who had been given a choice between repatriation or a jail sentence. Getting rid of these “agitators” may explain why Great Western Sugar was helping to cover transportation costs.

Racism presumably played a role too. Although the views openly espoused by the KKK in the 1920s were no longer being expressed by local governments and newspapers in the mid-1930s, those attitudes

¹¹⁷ “Relief units swamped by needy’s calls.”

¹¹⁸ Unemployed Mexican beet workers had been treated differently in Denver in 1921, when “public hysteria” led the police to put hundreds of them in jail on trumped-up charges of loitering (Rosales, *Pobre Raza!*, p. 78).

obviously continued among at least some people, as witnessed by “White Trade Only” signs in Boulder and Longmont and the swimming pool episode in Lafayette. Public statements justifying deportation on economic grounds may have been supported by racially-based fears of Hispanics.

Although efforts at repatriation in Boulder County were concentrated in 1932, government-backed discrimination against Hispanics did not end then. During the new few years, unemployment worsened, and labor unions, some with Mexican leaders, called a growing number of strikes. In a drastic and illegal attempt to stabilize the situation, Colorado’s Governor Edwin C. Johnson recommended in 1936 that all “Mexicans” be sent back to their homes.¹¹⁹ (“Big Ed” was running for Senate that year.) He did not distinguish between immigrants from Mexico, children born in this country, and people whose families had lived in New Mexico for many generations. (As we have seen, by 1930, 69% of the adults with Spanish names living in Longmont, Lafayette, and Boulder had been born in this country and were therefore citizens; by 1940 the proportion had risen to 84%.¹²⁰)

Few people responded voluntarily to Governor Johnson’s proposal, whereupon he ordered all Mexican beet workers to leave the state. To make sure they did not return, he declared martial law in southern Colorado and sent the National Guard to blockade its border. Troops set up barriers and stopped trains, buses, and automobiles. People who looked “Mexican” were questioned by the soldiers about their origins and financial situation; only those with money were allowed to enter. After strong protests by Mexico’s Ambassador to the U.S. and by Hispanic organizations in Colorado and New Mexico, the blockade was lifted. Other organs of Colorado’s government nonetheless continued to push for deportation. Relief agencies alone arranged for the expulsion of thousands of Mexicans.¹²¹ Other families probably found their own transportation, though it was a long drive to the Mexican border, some 650 miles south.

¹¹⁹ For “Big Ed’s War,” in this paragraph and the next, see Delgado and Stefancic, “Home-Grown Racism,” pp. 737-739, and Sandoval, “Recruitment, Rejection, and Reaction.” A newspaper in one of the Denver suburbs proposed that Mexicans who refused to leave should be placed in concentration camps (“Home-Grown Racism,” pp. 737-738).

¹²⁰ See Ch. 2D above.

¹²¹ Delgado and Stefancic, “Home-Grown Racism,” p. 739.

Emma Gomez (Martinez) provided an eye-witness account of the deportation of Mexicans, evidently in 1936.¹²² In a later letter, she described a “scary and sad” experience she had as a young girl, when she and her dad had come into Longmont from Erie to go shopping. As they walked along Main Street, they saw “a parade of old cars and trucks filled with Mexicans and all their household items. Men were clinging to the trucks and standing on the running boards.” Emma was frightened, but her father told her to stand close beside him and she would be safe. He was “not molested because he had blue eyes.” Her recollection is that these Mexican farm workers were replaced by Anglos.

The full number of Mexicans who left Boulder County in 1932 and 1936—whether willingly or unwillingly—is unknown but was probably fairly small. Figures given in the newspapers for those who went in 1932 total only 18 families, including perhaps 100 - 150 men, women, and children, plus one more group of undescribed size. Many more people, perhaps as many as 1,700, went from Boulder County’s eastern and northern neighbors, Weld and Larimer Counties. We do not know how many people were forced to leave in 1936, or how many of them subsequently returned.

It is clear, however, that the departure of Mexican families from Boulder County did not have the same effect upon the local Hispanic community as was often the case in California and Arizona. In those settings, many of the early *barrios* or *colonias* in which Mexican families had found housing, friendship, and neighborly assistance disappeared as the result of massive repatriation during the 1930s.¹²³ When Mexicans again began to come into the U.S. after the Depression, they formed new residential and social communities.

For our three towns in Boulder County, U.S. Census records show that the total number of Spanish-surnamed households grew slightly between 1930 and 1940.¹²⁴ Any decline in the Hispanic population due to repatriation or deportation in 1932 and 1936 was therefore surpassed by new arrivals as well as by natural growth within settled families. But we do see a drop in the number of Mexican-born people living in these

¹²² “Martinez, Emma Gomez, letter to her children” and “Mexican deportation in the 1930s.”

¹²³ In Los Angeles, which had the largest Mexican population in the country, about 35,000 Mexicans (nearly one-third of the city’s total) were deported or repatriated during the 1930s (Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits*, p. 5).

¹²⁴ See App. 1.2.

communities across that decade: 92 were listed in the U.S. Census of 1930 but only 57 in 1940.¹²⁵ Further, the number of Spanish-surnamed household heads and their spouses listed in *Polk's City Directories* for Longmont remained flat between 1936 and 1946, whereas figures for Lafayette and Boulder show a marked rise.¹²⁶ It is possible that repatriation and deportation of Mexicans contributed to the stagnation of Longmont's Hispanic population between 1930 and 1946, but the Depression and economic problems confronting the sugar beet industry were probably the major causes.

We have now completed our description of the main features of the local Hispanic experience during the first four decades of the century. By around 1940, Boulder County contained hundreds of Spanish-surnamed people from Mexican, New Mexican, or southern Coloradan backgrounds who had lived in this area for a decade or more and were ready to start moving into new kinds of economic and community activity. Some had settled into integrated though low-income neighborhoods in the towns, their children were attending school, and the local churches were beginning to welcome them.¹²⁷ The regionally-based identities that had previously separated them were breaking down. The great majority of these Hispanic residents were U.S. citizens, most of them spoke English, and they were gaining confidence in dealing with Anglos. In the following chapter we follow their expanded range of activity across the next generation.

¹²⁵ See App. 2.1.

¹²⁶ App. 1.2 for this and below. For *Polk's City Directories*, see Ch. 3, note 62 above.

¹²⁷ See Vol. II, Chs. 2A, 6, and 5C.

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.

- 4.1. "Beet laborers deny affiliation with IWW", *Longmont Times-Call*, Jan. 20, 1928. Courtesy of Longmont Library. [BCLHP-MKM-259](#).
- 4.2. "Ku Klux Klan visits Boulder," *Boulder Daily Camera*, Dec. 11, 1922. Courtesy of Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library. [BCLHP-MKM-356](#).
- 4.3. "Summary of the Principles of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan," 1920s, p. 1. Issued by the Boulder Klavern of the KKK, undated but mid-1920s. Courtesy of Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library. Boulder Daily Camera collection 928-9-3 KKK. [BCLHP-MKM-357](#).
- 4.4. A KKK meeting in Boulder, 1920s (front of photo). Courtesy of History Colorado, photo #F37858. [BCLHP-MKM-391](#).
- 4.5. "No Alien Newspapers Needed," *The Rocky Mountain American*, May 15, 1925 (Vol. I, no. 15). Courtesy of Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library. [BCLHP-MKM-378](#).
- 4.6. "Ban on Immigration," *The Rocky Mountain American*, Apr. 17, 1925 (Vol. I, no. 11). Courtesy of Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library. [BCLHP-MKM-376](#).
- 4.7. "The Klan Unmasked," *The Rocky Mountain American*, Feb. 27, 1925 (Vol. I, no. 4). Courtesy of Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library. [BCLHP-MKM-374](#).

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.

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

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

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.

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