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PORTRAIT OF A BARRIO: MEMORY AND POPULAR CULTURE IN
BARELAS, NM 1881-2000

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HISTORY

by

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Abstract

Portrait of a Barrio: Memory and Popular Culture in Barelas, NM 1881 – 2000

Alicia M. Romero

Drawing on cultural history, Portrait of a Barrio: Memory and Popular Culture in Barelas, NM, 1881-2000, by Alicia M. Romero, traces the creation and evolution of a stereotype of Barelas, a centuries-old Albuquerque community. It demonstrates how popular culture affected social membership, the criminalization of identity, the racialization of poverty, and complicates questions concerning national memory and claims of belonging. It explores how the people of Barelas, and communities of color more generally, often competed with and at times embraced identities enforced upon them. Those identities in Barelas varied with developments in urbanization, popular culture, public policy, and academic inquiry throughout the twentieth century. They also depended on internal developments in the community itself; the residents’ voices are highlighted as a means to combat constructed representations of and for Barelas. Portrait of a Barrio considers how Barelas was indeed framed – criminally and visually – and how the resulting stereotypes of that frame determined social membership for over a century.

The study begins in the 1880s, when modes of industrialization effectively transformed what was for the most part an agricultural, Spanish-speaking community into an urban barrio that worked to support the new American economic structure in Albuquerque. East coast photographers new to the area visually framed the neighborhood, celebrating the open landscapes and its exotic non-white inhabitants.
These images provided the first reference points that influenced future outsider perspectives of Hispanic life and cultural norms in New Mexico. Over the course of several generations, Barelas’ image and representations of the residents – los Bareleños – mirrored trends in the ill treatment of people of color nationwide. Ultimately by the 1970s, those negative representations denied membership to half of the community and resulted in their displacement. After years of inattention and neglect from the local government, by the 1990s a fight ensued over Barelas’ memory, its location, and its history as the State of New Mexico battled a lifelong, elderly resident for control of the barrio’s future.

The wedding together of oral history and photography provides an alternative to the standard barrio narrative that leaves little room for resident agency. The memories and vernacular photography used here suggest that, while ultimately unsuccessful in the urban renewal fight, Bareleños’ centuries-old identification with their community lasted long after many of their homes faced destruction. Supplementing the photographs and memories with novels, film, and variety of traditional sources truly reveals the many elements at play that coalesced to shape one community’s future and fortune. These sources detail a community’s struggle to maintain its sense of self and belonging, despite negative formations of public opinion that ultimately proved damaging to community livelihood. Negative public opinion served to erase prior generations of prosperity and replace those memories with near inescapable representations of backwardness, poverty, and un-Americanness.
Portrait of a Barrio is an investigation into the construction of an evolving external identity and the struggle to preserve and celebrate an internal, heterogeneous one for Nuevomexicanos (Spanish-speaking, multi-generational New Mexicans) in one Albuquerque barrio. It privileges community voices and perspectives over those of the oppressive sociopolitical forces that silenced them over time. For the history of New Mexico, it adds to the historiographical overhaul of a Spanish identity tied to a tri-cultural harmony. For Chicano/a and borderlands histories, this study contributes to the growing scholarship of urban renewal in the Southwest and provides the residents themselves to tell their own story contrary to the story that has been constructed for them. The people of Barelas are actively fighting to regain the right to their own individual self-determination and the assertion of new, positive identities for their barrio as a whole, and in fact, they are recreating and celebrating a frame of their own design.
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Introduction: Framing History, Identity, and Representation

I was walking down the street
Minding my own affair
When two policemen grabbed me unaware
They says, “Is your name Henry?”
I says, “Why sho’”
He says, “You’re the boy I been lookin’ for!”
I was framed
-- Ritchie Valens, “Framed”

Construction began at the start of 2003 on an Albuquerque, New Mexico church to incorporate two steel beams from the remnants of the September 11, 2001 aerial attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. Soon after the tragedy, some members of Albuquerque’s Barelas community later questioned the possibility of bringing pieces of the Twin Towers to their Sacred Heart Catholic Church to frame its long awaited bell tower. Although members of the church’s bell tower committee had already began formulating plans to structurally add to their parish long before 2001, with the help of State Senator Manny Aragón, other local politicians, and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, they approached New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and requested two small pieces of the beams. In May 2002, Bloomberg gave his approval, and plans to bring the beams and incorporate them into Sacred Heart began in earnest. The idea was to reconstruct Sacred Heart’s “twin bell towers”¹ with two twenty foot-tall beams from the World Trade Center in commemoration of the victims but also as an effort of “rebirth and renewal”² of the Barelas community itself. Finally, after the fundraising campaign raised more than $200,000, construction on

² “Bell to Toll for Rebirth,” Albuquerque Journal 19 May 2002
the church began and was finished by June 2003. Three years after the attacks on New York City, the parish served as a focal point for local memorialization of a national event in Albuquerque and as Archbishop Michael Sheehan said Mass, students recited the national anthem, and doves were released into the crisp Barelas air.³

Barelas now assumed its place on the national map. This community that began as a Spanish colonial installment eventually transitioned into a bustling hub of Albuquerque’s emerging downtown scene of the 1940s but soon fell into disarray in the postwar period. How is it, then, that Barelas recovered to such a remarkable degree so as to invite and receive remnants from the national tragedy that occurred on September 11, 2001? How was it that Barelas could reframe its bell towers, and in doing so, simultaneously reframe its long reputation from a poverty-stricken, criminalized barrio to a site of sacred national memory? This project traces that movement; it seeks to understand how Barelas, a centrally located barrio near the river, and its residents navigated oppressive circumstances and took advantage of opportunities to frame themselves as they saw fit in an effort of self-determination.

_To frame and be framed: An approach to the history of Barelas_

In July 1958 Richard Valenzuela recorded the lyrics to his song “Framed” under the name Ritchie Valens for the Del-Phi record label in Los Angeles, California. One of several artists to record the Leiber and Stoller tune, Valens’

³ “Remembering Sept. 11,” _Albuquerque Journal_ 12 September 2004
version appropriately reflected the tense racial climate of the postwar period for many ethnic minorities. For a Mexican American teenager in Southern California, Valens’ rendition of “Framed” effectively communicated the existence of racial profiling and the unsettling feeling of suspected guilt and police apprehension at any given moment. That the song’s protagonist – Valens – is indeed a “victim of someone’s evil plan” underscores not only his keen understanding of guilt by ethnic representation and membership, it also encourages the listener’s participation and sympathy as he or she potentially experienced undue police attention as racialized, juvenile delinquency problems ravaged Mexican American and African American communities in the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s, and certainly long before then.


This project explores photographs and memories of a Mexican American community in twentieth century New Mexico and considers how one can be framed both legally and visually and how together these two variants might congeal into a third form of cultural politics – representation. To be framed in the legal sense suggests an act of incrimination based on contrived evidence – guilty by association perhaps. The underlying premise, of course, is that the accused are innocent despite the case presented against them. The accused, then, stands to reverse their newfound circumstance as guilty until found innocent. For many non-white, working-class individuals throughout the twentieth century – and on into the present day – who found themselves in such a legal quagmire, the task of proving their innocence and restoring their reputations verged on near impossibility without the right jury, connections, and funds.

To be framed in visual culture is attributed to composition or organization of subject matter in any type of media for the purpose of exposition and interpretation. In his seminal discussion of visualization, John Berger notes that the understanding of external subjects often depends on intentional acts of looking, hence seeing and interpreting people, places, and things standing before the viewer. He describes seeing as that process which, “establishes our place in the surrounding world.”6 The act of photographing someone or something usually requires framing the individual or scene to fit the viewfinder’s parameters. Of course, that which is omitted from

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view is also eliminated from the final composition itself, regardless of its existence outside the frame. The way in which the print is preserved, celebrated, and gazed at – framed – is dependent on the caretaker of the image. For families without constant access to a photographer’s services, due to financial constraints or studio inaccessibility, special wedding or family photographs were displayed in the home with a delicate care paralleling that of cherished religious icons and other priceless heirlooms. I contend that Mexican Americans – and by extension other historically interrogated and photographed communities of color – were and continue to be framed in popular culture based on white suspicions of their perceived innate guilt within the American sociopolitical system of assimilation.

From photographs of early landscapes to railroad laborers to dilapidated housing, Albuquerque’s Barelas community identity faced constant negotiation in the public consciousness to serve the city’s needs with little regard for how Bareleños – the residents – saw themselves. In essence, Barelas was framed. I begin with an analysis of mid-nineteenth century photographers new to the area; their careful construction – the first point of systematic framing – of the New Mexico territory from an outsider perspective visually captured the romantic Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo tri-cultural harmony ideal so promoted in travel and local literature. Remarkably, a shift in public perception began following New Mexico’s

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7 Greater discussion of New Mexico’s tri-cultural harmony is found in chapter two of this dissertation.
successful pleas for statehood as elite Nuevomexicanos\(^8\) embraced a whiter, brighter Spanish identity as a sociopolitical survival strategy under American control.\(^9\)

The explosion of popular culture in the twentieth century – in print, radio, and film – made sense of these new formally recognized American citizens in a much different way, contrary to the desires of those in the New Mexican political machine. The contention between what Laura Gómez considers as “asserted and assigned” identities plays out in the Barelas community.\(^10\) Adding to Gómez’ analysis of legal expressions of racialization pertaining to Mexican Americans in the New Mexico Territory, this dissertation discusses racialization and social membership via popular culture and the many ways in which Barelas residents chose to assert their own identity through such self-contained means as family photography. In this way, when family members actively photographed themselves in their own community for their

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own consumption and commemoration, they effectively challenged the asserted identity and problematic representations imposed on them from the outside. The photograph was a simple, yet effective means through which Nuevomexicanos, and all Mexican Americans more generally, could document their own stories contrary to what academics, novelists, and government photographers said about them.

Alongside the actual and theoretical framing process explained above, W.E.B. Du Bois’ discussion of double consciousness expresses itself in my analysis. Du Bois so clearly described the African American condition at the turn of the century as one of duality; an existence not entirely belonging to him, but often negotiated within the white world where Blacks are aware they are seen negatively. A long-standing concept in African American history and cultural studies, double consciousness is recently breaking into studies of Mexican Americans and Latinos/as more broadly, arguably beginning with Gloria Anzaldúa. Explaining what she calls a “mestiza consciousness,” Anzaldúa describes the condition of mestizas as they learn to function in and survive often precarious and ambiguous gendered and cultural situations in borderlands. The ambivalence of and pain experienced due to existing in such a state of nepantla, a third space between two worlds, the mestiza, Anzaldúa suggests, forms a new consciousness – a mestiza consciousness – that supersedes

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cultural, gender, sexual, and patriarchal boundaries. Sylvanna Falcón’s discussion of what she calls a “mestiza double consciousness” for Afro-Peruvian women explores DuBois’ racial framework and Anzaldúa’s third space. For Falcón, the mestiza double consciousness is about the, “gendered interpretation of racialized realities and agency,” which I see occurring in Barelas as well.

We may consider Du Bois,’ “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others,” for the African American community also similar to the Mexican American experience. Mexican Americans have, throughout the twentieth century, and perhaps even dating back to the American conquest of the Mexican Far North, felt an uneasiness and displacement in their position in society. As Juan Nepomuceno Seguín first articulated in 1858, later scholars of Chicano/a history considered the conquered Hispanic population as “foreigners in their own land,” a duality of their own emerged as they struggled and learned to survive the American political system despite rampant ethnic, cultural, social, and sexual discrimination. In effect, I consider photography and other elements of popular culture as the veil through which Falcón’s mestiza double consciousness is revealed. This double consciousness

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12 Anzaldúa, 101-102.
explores not only how Euro-Americans envisioned Mexican Americans, but also how Mexican Americans flipped the assignment process and asserted their own identity via images and texts of their own construction.

(New) Mexican American History

In a larger sense, part of this project intends to reinsert Nuevomexicanos into the wider net of Mexican American and Chicano/a historiography. The long-standing absence of Nuevomexicanos and other regionally specific communities from scholarship is a further affirmation of the California-centric focus in the academe, although works exploring Chicano/as outside the Southwest are increasing in steady numbers. For scholars and students of Mexican American history, do the central issues that polarize the historiography concern periodization, region, or both? Clearly the nineteenth century provides two watershed moments in the long relationship with the United States, which are arguably seen as the beginning of Mexican American history. Unfortunately, nineteenth century periodization often forgets the long Spanish colonial period or indigenous beginnings. The Texas Revolution (1836) and the subsequent US-Mexico War (1846-1848) have garnered much attention as the initial violent moments of a nascent Mexican American history, both of course taking

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place in the long nineteenth century. Scholars of the borderlands, Chicano/a, Mexican, and US history have investigated these wars, though few until recently have conducted their analyses from a truly transnational perspective, employing archival material and historiographies from both sides of the border.\textsuperscript{17} Their transnational approach encourages the discussion of the fluidity and negotiation of political and cultural borders that often go understudied in histories that typically focus on a strict national framework. Some do take on identity preservation and negotiation as the primary issue, though they often omit how Mexico dealt with the significant territorial and population loss in terms of its own national identity.\textsuperscript{18}

Though a significant portion of New Mexico historiography explores the earlier indigenous and Spanish colonial histories, the US-Mexico War and long


Territorial Period (1848-1912) mark a shift in analysis. Along with Arizona, New Mexico experienced a sixty-four year territorial status that ended with statehood for both entities in 1912. Surpassing the duration of the territorial governments of Alaska (1912-1959) and even Hawai‘i (1898-1959), New Mexico’s situation faced equal devastation politically and socioeconomically for the long-standing indigenous and Spanish-speaking populations. It is no surprise, then, that many scholars focus on the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and territorial politics predating 1912.¹⁹ As Nuevomexicanos and Native Americans comprised the major demographic groups in the area over whites prior to and into the early twentieth century, instances of accommodation, negotiation, and resistance are part of the scholarly attraction to this earlier period. This dissertation explores how, in the duration of the twentieth century, Nuevomexicanos continued to look for strategies of cultural survival that they had employed for generations prior.

Instead of continued investigations into how Nuevomexicanos continued to grapple with displacement, discrimination, and poverty in the twentieth century,²⁰

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²⁰ An exception here is Phillip B. Gonzales’ analysis of Nuevomexicanos during the twentieth century and their quest to maintain or claim actual and political space under
many scholars of Mexican American and Chicano/a history focused their attention more heavily on other geographic locations. Community studies of barrio transformations and cultural negotiations comprise a formidable part of Mexican American – though not necessarily New Mexican – historiography. Within these early studies, such as those of Albert Camarillo, Ricardo Romo, and Mario T. García, the analytical focus highlighted urban and regional transformations resulting from land loss, industrialization, and dependency on wage labor in cities and their surrounding regions. Together, these studies emphasized cultural heterogeneity and survival among Chicanos, although their specific regional foci left Nuevomexicanos out of the fold.

Although Nuevomexicanos certainly experienced an abrupt socioeconomic change with American colonization, there seem to be few authors discussing the barrioization in New Mexico as they do in other parts of the Southwest. Unlike her contemporaries who discuss a single city of Mexican American habitation, Sarah Deutsch’s book considers the entire southern Colorado and northern New Mexican American domination. See Phillip B. Gonzales, “Struggle for Survival: The Hispanic Land Grants of New Mexico, 1848-2000,” Agricultural History 77:2 (2003): 293-324; Forced Sacrifice as Ethnic Protest: The Hispano Cause in New Mexico and the Racial Attitude Confrontation of 1933 (New York: P. Lang, 2001).

region as a cohesive community of cultural interaction and acculturation with Euro-Americans, thus challenging Camarillo’s barrio thesis.\textsuperscript{22} As such, Deutsch sees no detrimental - despite transformative - effects of white settlement that led to creation of barrios, even though she begins her analysis in 1880 – the moment of rapid industrialization and movement of Euro-Americans into New Mexico. This dissertation argues to the contrary - it is this period in the late nineteenth century that, over the course of a few generations, initiated the transition of Hispanic familial settlements into Nuevomexicano barrios as of the late twentieth century. While a barrio scholarship does not formally exist for Nuevomexicano neighborhoods, scholars have produced work on these Spanish-speaking areas, though without labeling them as barrios per se.\textsuperscript{23} Taken as a whole, these Hispano community studies accomplish the goals of Mexican American historiography – explorations of class,


resistance, culture, history, race, ethnicity, and colonialism. Gender and sexuality certainly appear in New Mexico historiography – Deena González, Ramón Gutiérrez, and Pablo Mitchell are three examples. The overall dearth of these analyses in New Mexico reflects the long-time scarcity of these gendered histories of Mexican Americans overall prior to the 1990s. As community or historical barrio studies began to lose its stronghold as one of the primary approaches of analysis, other approaches began to gain footing in the historiography. The decline of the traditional barrio history, then, was met with a rise in gendered histories from scholars such as Vicki Ruíz and Antonia Castañeda, and others that use interdisciplinary tools and frameworks to reexamine historical issues in Mexican American lives and communities. These authors and the tools used to access often ignored histories,


perspectives, and identities have also inspired my research and the way in which I attempt to tell Barelas’ story.

Memory in Oral History and Photography

Oral history is one of the most common and successful ways scholars, such as those of Mexican American and other ethnic communities, have traced the histories of underrepresented communities. In researching a small Nuevomexicano community, oral history became an indispensible approach to understand the history and social dynamics from the perspective of its residents. My approach to oral history is rooted in Maurice Halbwachs’ *The Collective Memory*, first published in 1950, and long considered to be a foundational text of memory studies.26 Influenced by Emile Durkheim and his work in sociology, Halbwachs questioned the social construction of memory and its vitality, malleability, and utility in family and community interaction. Underpinning his analysis is the assertion that collective memory operates on a continuum with little interruption in time so that the past is always remembered in the present. This fundamental claim is evident in the works of Eric Hobsbawm, John Gillis, and other scholars who locate the materiality of memory and its practice in the public sphere.27 Thus national celebrations, city monuments, and even kitchen tables function as what Pierre Nora termed *les lieux de mémoire*

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(sites of memory) as individuals collectively and regularly engage in storytelling, reenactments, and reflections of the past. All of these are identity-affirming and reaffirming rituals, as the sites of memory exist so that emotional connections with historical identities remain current and present in everyday life, as is the case with the incorporation of World Trade Center steel into a Barelas parish.

One of the many benefits of the study of memory and the practice of oral history are the promises that anyone may offer a perspective for consideration, and this is especially important for those who were and continue to be marginalized from the historical narrative, such as the people of Barelas. In this way, the memories of excluded communities and its different members provide elements to the analysis that would otherwise be overlooked or ignored for more favorable sources or even the interviews of more prominent individuals. For historian Michael Frisch, oral history is a functional method of obtaining the peculiarities of historical memory, which allows for an understanding of “how people make sense of their past, how they connect individual experience and its social context, how the past becomes part of the present, and how people use it to interpret their lives and the world around them.”

Similarly reflecting on oral history, Nora notes that oral histories only retain the

dignity of their meaning if considered in their entirety. From this perspective, oral testimonies must be considered as a whole; fragmentary statements pulled out of the interview’s context often lead to muddled and misinformed analyses. Furthermore, Nora claims that the interviewee’s “will to remember” is often the product of an interviewer’s question and does not reveal spontaneous memories. What results is a secondary or “prosthesis-memory”; an artificial memory created and documented at the motivation of the interviewer, archivist, or historian.\(^{31}\) Nora’s discussion of archives and sites of memory are particularly pertinent here, as this project reviews independent archives comprised of photographic collections and memoirs, and considers physical commemorative structures such as the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Barelas and the community’s memorial to the World Trade Center victims as its parish bell tower.

The dissertation’s approach is inspired by the possibilities of what sensory triggers, such as photographs, can reveal about a marginalized, racialized, and criminalized population. Photographer Don Normark’s images of Los Angeles’ Chávez Ravine and his subsequent interviews of the displaced residents reveals the potential of interviewing with material aides.\(^{32}\) In 1949 Normark photographed this Mexican American barrio shortly before it fell to urban renewal and redevelopment planning. He returned close to fifty years later, and much to his surprise, found Dodger Stadium where homes once stood and children played. *Chávez Ravine, 1949:*

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\(^{31}\) Nora, 14.

A Los Angeles Story is the result of interviews and collaborations with the neighborhood’s displaced residents. Many of the residents were unaware that Normark ever visited their community, and seeing his images triggered both joyous and painful memories of the time before everyone was forced from the ravine in the 1950s. Though Nora would claim that these later memories border on inauthenticity because they were not revealed spontaneously, the beauty of Normark’s approach is that it reinforced Halbwachs’ claim that memories do not reside and exist in any one being. Often, two, or more residents were shown images of themselves or their families, creating an environment conducive to memory retrieval as lengthy conversations erupted on the basis of a single image or component within the photograph. Also, Normark demonstrated that separation from the group – the Chávez Ravine diaspora – meant forgetting, but reconnection after their traumatic removal was enough to facilitate what was considered a lost history of a forgotten people in the larger narrative of US history.

Memory and oral history are two long-time approaches that social historians have used concerning Chicano/a history. Historians in this field have engaged memory in a way that demonstrates its viability as another avenue to analyze communities and families beginning from kitchen table conversations. Some of the most formidable sources for the study of memory are oral histories, which for scholars of Chicanos/as and their communities are often the only sources available that allows them to reveal their history on their own terms. Chicano/a social historians since the 1970s have used oral history and interviewing tactics to buttress,
contradict, and juxtapose traditional written documents written about, though not necessarily by, those communities. It is evident how oral history is valuable at retrieving the experiences of marginalized populations, and especially those silenced within that population due to their gender, sexuality, political status, economic reality, and criminal activity.

A new generation of scholars has further complicated the tools of oral history and memory as they work to illuminate the intricacies of gender in Chicano/a historiography. Working in a well-established tradition, Catherine S. Ramírez has resuscitated a particularly forgotten figure from collective memory, using interviews and memory in her analysis of Mexican American female zoot-suiters from the 1940s onward. This methodological approach allows Ramírez to track the genealogy of the pachucha/chola/cha-cha, firmly establishing her presence in Mexican American memory and popular culture throughout the twentieth century. The use of oral history as a tool of community resistance is but one major element of Monica Perales’ study in the Ciudad Juárez/El Paso metropolis as she confronts the issue of memory.

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33 As previously mentioned, Vicki Ruíz is among those earlier generations of Chicano/a historians using oral history, although her work privileged women and families, effectively challenging the male-dominated narrative of her contemporaries. Beyond Cannery Women, Cannery Lives and From Out of the Shadows, see also her article with co-author and immigration historian Donna Gabbaccia, “Migrations and Destinations: Reflections on the Histories of US Immigrant Women in the United States,” in The Practice of US Women’s History: Narratives, Intersections, and Dialogues, S. Jay Klienerk, Eileen Boris, and Vicki Ruiz, eds. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007).

identity, and the concrete markers of both. Perales’ use of personal archives and interviews introduces a new set of questions for scholars interested in complicating the barrio narrative to include stories from the viejitos (elders) and their cherished family photographs. Similarly, Lydia Otero’s use of oral history bolsters her narrative that looks at the spatial mapping of identity in Tucson. However, Otero starkly departs from Camarillo’s barrio analysis as she discusses the destruction rather than focus on the creation of Tucson’s Mexican American community. Following Perales and Otero, this dissertation also examines the dismantling of a Nuevomexicano community that only exists in memories. Together, these books illustrate the convergence of memory as an interdisciplinary tool; these scholars ask questions and explore issues familiar to memory studies and oral historians, though firmly grounding their analyses in Mexican American history. They offer more nuanced discussions of not only memory, but gender as well, in a traditionally male dominated field that focuses on heteronormative constructions of the barrio community and its members.

In part, this dissertation draws inspiration from Carolyn Kozo Cole and Kathy Kobayashi’s Shades of LA: Pictures from Ethnic Family Albums, the published version of a photo acquisition and exposition of the same name. Arranged thematically based on typical family events, the authors organized photographs of non-white Los Angeles residents in their daily lives throughout the first half of the

35 Monica Perales, Smeltertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
36 Lydia Otero, La Calle: Spatial Conflicts and Urban Renewal in a Southwest City (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010).
twentieth century. Stylized portraits, informal snapshots, and even examples of memento mori are captured in this volume, which effectively positions African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans as active players in the Los Angeles region. This collection of photographs – with family names, dates, and locations – adds a significant dimension to the understudied personal lives of these families living and working in one of the world’s most notable cities. In addition to the images in this retroactively organized photographic essay, the authors offer two brief written explanations of both the initial photo collection project and the book publication that followed. As Kobayashi notes in her piece explaining the latter process, these images have served academics and filmmakers searching for ‘accurate’ historical representations of non-white Los Angeles life.

Kobayashi specifically mentions George J. Sánchez’ use of Shades of LA images in his book, Becoming Mexican American. As historical sources, the photographs collected from Shades of LA take on another significance beyond their importance to the families from which they derived. Sánchez’ use of the Shades of LA images as documentation of a historical circumstance begs for deeper analysis beyond their basic function as evidence of what was. Most of the images in my project are contextualized, questioned regarding their authorship, and weighed in degrees in their deliberate construction. The difference in the use of images as historical evidence, of course, is their visual communication over the written word.

Unfortunately, many historians’ reliance on images as “windows into the past” deflates any potential for critical analysis of what went on behind the camera to make that image possible and the gendered, racial, and socioeconomic circumstance behind each and every one. *Shades of LA* is one of a few photographic essays of nonwhite communities that positively asserts family and identity in the midst of racial tension, discrimination, and persecution that took hold of Los Angeles and the United States more generally.

Looking through *Shades of LA* as a deliberate reconstruction of nonwhite urban life in the twentieth century prompted me to question the photographs individually and as a whole. This volume is deliberate in that behind the project and publication lie an intention to reveal, perhaps for the first time, the representations that belie popular stereotypes of non-membership, backwardness, and cultural inferiority. It is also a reconstruction of lived experience that, although thematic and non-linear, still reads as a typical family album, with the most important photos carefully selected to represent the most aesthetically pleasing shots of any one family gathering. It is quite possible that the donating families participating in the project only offered their best photographs to represent themselves, and as such, Cole and Kobayashi presented a relatively sanitized photo essay perhaps in part to combat and even reverse the damaging effects of negative representations of ethnic minorities. Perhaps this was also due to the authors extending a level of protection to these families’ identities, traumas, and private moments. Instead of including familiar yet disturbing images, such as those of youths assaulted in the 1942-1943 riots, we see
stunning portraits of Mexican American couples happy and in love during that same period. Reading those photographs with the larger history looming in the background led me to take a similar approach in the dissertation’s middle chapter that looks at Bareleño family photography and how those images contradict local stereotyping of Barelas residents, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican Americans more broadly.

Merely looking at images as opposed to reading them is a familiar point of contention and debate among those interested in visual culture. I found that both canonical analyses of photographic practice and intention, namely Sontag and Berger,\(^39\) in addition to studies of family or vernacular photography all provide this dissertation the language necessary to ask pertinent questions relating to image and representation. Julia Hirsch’s early study of family photography and its relationship with the compositions of Renaissance art calls into question the seemingly honest and candid nature of informal snapshots.\(^40\) For Hirsch, family photographs demonstrate domestic politics based on a set of accepted practices – poses, locations, particular people, and events – that all serve to reproduce collective memory. Similarly, Gillian Rose’s study of mothers’ relationships with their family photographs suggests that the process of maintaining family albums is almost an extension of their care for individual family members.\(^41\) The photographs Rose’s interviewees shared with her – those displayed on walls and on shelves, in countless albums, stashed away in dusty


\(^{41}\) Gillian Rose, *Doing Family Photography: The Domestic, the Public and the Politics of Sentiment* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010).
boxes, and even on computers – all carried with them levels of intimacy that complicate the emotional value placed on the materialization of memory. For Hirsch, Rose, and others, vernacular photography is inextricably linked to memory as part of a dual process that on the one hand relies on the photograph for the visual memory, while on the other hand the images serve to reconstruct or trigger family memories based on conversations concerning their content.  

Here again is the convergence of memory and oral history but as a gendered process, for women typically seem to fulfill the role of both photographer – as mothers were the ones to photograph, frame, organize, and fully care for their family albums. The role of women in the cultivation, maintenance, and preservation of memory via family photography is a significant element in this dissertation and is paired with male generated popular images that seem to contradict what community women see as defining themselves and their loved ones. An exception of this rule is the early career of Alabama Milner, a turn-of-the-century woman photographer working in Albuquerque among her male colleagues. Although gender certainly influenced her photographic perspective, I contend that race and ethnicity seemed to play a much more significant role in who, what, and how she photographed the so-called tri-cultural harmony of New Mexico. Nonetheless, hers is an interesting case of gender politics, visual production, and their intersection with ethnic representation that is very similar to Laura Wexler’s analysis of 19th century colonial photography.

and female photographers. Though *Tender Violence* addresses the absence of race and gender in the male-dominated photographic history and pays due homage to many successful women in photographic work, it would have been fruitful to address how women photographers intersected with their male counterparts in terms of recognition, competition for jobs, and general consultation between artists and photojournalists. It seems as though the women in Wexler’s analysis worked and existed in a world all their own and were not influenced by other photographic movements around them, movements that committed to the “male gaze” and highly objectified the female body or those that challenged sexual norms. Also absent from this study are questions concerning how these women photographers interacted with their already racially objectified subjects, as the many colonial subjects were nonwhite and continually victimized by the American assimilationist and settler colonial projects.

In the end, this project details a community’s struggle to maintain its sense of self and belonging, despite negative formations of public opinion that ultimately proved damaging to community livelihood. Negative public opinion served to erase prior generations of prosperity and replace those memories with near inescapable

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representations of backwardness, poverty, and un-Americanness. While *Shades of LA* suggests the affirmation of non-white belonging in the American nation, other books speak to this dissertation’s exploration of negatively photographed and framed communities of color. Both Paula J. Massood’s analysis of Harlem’s visual image and iconicity\(^45\) and Jennifer Nez Denetdale’s book on Diné photography and historiography\(^46\) reveal ways in which scholars actively engage with visual culture, identity, and their lasting effects on communities of color. Tracing the evolution of Harlem’s identity through photography and film, Massood complicates the history of African Americans and their relationship – fictive or not – to Harlem as a place and an idea in the minds and memories of both white and non-white America. She discusses how positive uplift images of early 20th century Harlemites, in conjunction with cultural and intellectual celebrations of the New Negro, gave way to the later 1970s, ‘80s, and ‘90s blaxploitation and gangsta films that in some ways reflected the neighborhood’s socioeconomic conditions of that time. As Massood demonstrates, these images as a whole contributed to Harlem’s iconic position in American history.

Although Barelas hasn’t yet reached quite the national attention as Harlem, it nonetheless occupies a unique space in New Mexican history and popular culture that is just seeping onto the public stage. Partly due to early initiatives under Bill Richardson’s gubernatorial administration (2003-2011), film and television makers were encouraged to consider New Mexico as a viable place for visual production.


The popular television series *Breaking Bad* was filmed all over Albuquerque and even in the abandoned rail yards adjacent to Barelas. This has created, as I discuss further in chapter one, another dimension in the criminalization and racialization of Nuevomexicanos and New Mexico in the public consciousness via television, both locally and across the nation. Massood’s analysis provides relevant tools for thinking how Barelas, a community of smaller stature and of Mexican American population, has and continues to experience framing in ways similar to Harlem.

Whereas images of Harlem and its African American population ultimately reached nostalgic realms in contemporary representations, Jennifer Nez Denetdale details photography’s damning hold over the Navajo community. *Reclaiming Diné History* looks at the manners in which Navajo history and identity has been constructed from the outside, mainly from scholars and photographers, thus producing a limited and inaccurate portrait of her great-great-great grandparents, Chief Manuelito and Juanita, and of Navajos more generally. Denetdale’s analysis of the (mis)representation of Native Americans in the public consciousness lends this dissertation useful tools with which to view stereotyping of a Mexican American community. While Denetdale’s book is an important step in recovering Diné identity and history, it is part of a wider effort among scholars of color to retell the stories of their communities from their own perspectives. In this way, I find Denetdale’s book particularly useful, as I include Bareleño oral histories in my analysis of their community. In looking at images produced of them – not necessarily by them – I find that the ways in which Barelas and its residents were typecast into poverty and
backwardness produced similar affects as did the images and histories of the Navajo people.

While it seems that scholars of Mexican American history infrequently engage with Native American history, I find those stories particularly useful when thinking of colonization and representation. Though part of the US southwest and borderlands historiography includes Native peoples, those books tend to be limited to the Spanish colonial period or, if they delve into the American period, do little to discuss the relationship between Natives and Spanish-speakers. This dissertation, while primarily focusing on the Nuevomexicano population, acknowledges the presence and on-going colonialism and oppression of the many indigenous communities in and around Albuquerque at the time. In this way, one of the goals of the dissertation is to begin a dialogue of historians discussing both Native and Hispanic communities of New Mexico as they both struggled to exist and survive in the new political system as American colonial subjects.\textsuperscript{47} That Barelas still struggles to shed its designation as a “Pocket of Poverty” community speaks to the damaging nature of historical (mis)representation and local, contemporary efforts to combat those negative perceptions, a struggle similar to the experiences of African, Native, and Mexican Americans more broadly.

\textsuperscript{47} Examples of these histories that do engage both populations are Eric Meeks, \textit{Border Citizens: The Making of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos in Arizona} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007) and Lisbeth Haas, \textit{Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
Sources: Sites of Bareleño Memory

Nuevomexicano memory is as tied to history as it is to the landscape. It is rooted in demonstrations and exertions of power, violence, and colonialism. It is also a product of extractive and reciprocal relationships with those they oppressed.

Nuevomexicano memory extends far beyond the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the subsequent land loss after 1848, although that could be considered a crisis point in the collective memory that continues to inspire contemporary generations to regain family lands, and in effect, regain their identity. Pierre Nora, in his description of sites of memory, noted that, “the quest for memory is the search for one’s identity.”

Nuevomexicano memory as a contemporary practice is apparent in ritual, speech, gastronomy – the variants of which themselves are products of Spanish colonialism over indigenous communities.

Two Nuevomexicano and Bareleño sites of memory have developed over the last twenty years in an effort to preserve their identity and the fading past. The first

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48 Nora, 13.
was a magazine that grew out of *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, a newspaper circulated in the state’s capital and northern region. Readers of *La Herencia del Norte: The Magazine for the Hispanic Community of New Mexico* enjoyed and anticipated its quarterly issues from 1994-2000. Each of the issues explored pieces of Nuevomexicano culture and memory mostly relevant to the mid-century generations. Regular contributors produced articles such as the origins and preparations of traditional recipes; those stories prompted letters to Ana Pacheco, *La Herencia* editor, that shared memories of the writers’ grandmothers and mothers who prepared meals in similar but different ways. Photography was a central focal point of the magazine; inclusion of archived and donated family photographs incited further participation from the readership in this site of memory. While *La Herencia* lasted only six short years, many readers – including those in my own family – preserved each issue, safeguarding them as tangible collective memories and relics of years gone by, evidence that they existed and endured in New Mexico for centuries.

From 2000-2001 the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC), located in Barelas, began a memory-collecting campaign on the local history of the barrio and compiled a second site of Nuevomexicano and Bareleño memory. Carlos Vásquez, director of the center’s History and Literary Arts department, spearheaded the campaign to collect oral histories and family photographs of old time Bareleños. The NHCC distributed brochures and leaflets asking Bareleños from all over the city and state to contribute their documents and, “put a human face on the history of Barelas over the years,” which eventually became part of the center’s 2001 opening exhibit,
“Barelas a través de los años/Barelas Across the Years.” The brochure claimed that, “Albuquerque has had the unfortunate history of destroying its past as it re-invents itself to meet new trends and realities.” In this way, the Barelas exhibit, due to the efforts of its people, was supposed to stop that pattern. Not only did Vásquez and his co-curators Mo Palmer and Michael Miller request and organize new materials, they also asked for help in identifying unknown people in their existing photographic holdings. Almost any resident – former or continuous – had something to contribute.

The result of the acquisition period produced an invaluable collection of family photographs, memoirs, personal papers, and oral histories. That the NHCC was partly responsible for this Barelas archive was an amazing feat, given its history and often tumultuous relationship with the community. As an attempt to integrate itself into Barelas, the NHCC dedicated a portion of its resources to gathering and preserving the history of its neighbors. Those who donated their time and materials to the center were supportive of its mission and vision; those who did not refrained from sharing anything of themselves or their family history in Barelas. Participants in this site of memory may very well have been self-censoring in the materials contributed; it is likely that although some photographs were donated and stories were shared, Bareleños shielded from view photographs of hard or traumatic events – if they existed at all – from which families have yet to heal. This project takes note of the many filters involved in the creation of this particular archive, and all archives

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50 “Barelas a través de los años/Barelas Across the Years” brochure to request information, National Hispanic Cultural Center, 2000, collection of the author.  
51 Chapter five of this dissertation provides a more detailed investigation of the center’s origins and the dispute within Barelas.
more generally, but understands that these two sites of Nuevomexicano and Bareleño memory were largely due to the efforts of the people themselves, and so it is with great respect that I explore their memories selected for the public eye.

Barelas’ framing process occurred throughout the decades in a number of ways as exposed in various media. The sources for this project proved almost limitless as I expanded my perspective of what could be viable material - as Bareleño sites of memory - to use in this investigation. The two major types of sources used here are photographs and oral histories. Usually, historians use photographs solely as a visual documentation of the period or event in question without reading the visual composition in the same way as they would a more conventional, traditional source. I ask questions more akin to those in visual studies, questions concerning the composition, technology, and the place of these images in the broader history of photography in an effort to see beyond a two dimensional narrative. These photographs are used to tell a story, and in part, this story is told through the voices and recorded memories of Bareleños themselves.

Of the many oral histories used throughout this investigation, a small number of them were conducted within the last four years as new research. Similar to Don Normark’s dialogue with former Chávez Ravine residents, I used photographs of Barelas during the interview process to aid in memory reconstruction and retrieval. The majority of the oral histories are archived memories, many of them sporadically taped from the 1970s-2001. I primarily rely on those as opposed to newer interviews I conducted myself for a number of reasons. The most important of these is the older
residents’ temporal proximity to the 1970s; many of them had just lost their homes, as opposed to today’s younger residents who likely had no association with the time, though they may have an inherited or generational memory. Because many of the elderly voices interviewed even as recently as 2001 are now deceased, the memories shared of Barelas during its postwar heyday provide irrefutable context for their identity during a crucial turning point in New Mexican history. The sites of memory used here provide an intimate portrait of how Bareleños, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican Americans framed themselves and were framed over time. Supplementing the photographs and memories with novels and film, in addition to newspapers, census data, and city directory information among other things, balances out this story and truly reveals the many elements at play that coalesced to shape one community’s future and fortune.

Dissertation Description

Organized temporally, this project traces the evolution of social membership of Bareleños in Albuquerque from the 1880s through the twentieth century, taking developments in popular culture as the topical linchpins throughout. Here, I trace how Barelas’ positive or neutral framing in the late nineteenth century evolved over time to reach a stigmatized, contradictory positioning by the late 1990s. The lives of Bareleños at this time reflect a greater, general experience of Mexican Americans involved in a rhetorical war with the media over negative depictions of their communities at the height of the 1930s deportation campaigns, postwar urban
renewal, and Operation Wetback of the 1950s. Wedding together oral history and
photography, among other elements of material culture, provides an alternative to the
standard barrio narrative that leaves little room for resident agency. The oral histories
and vernacular or family photography used here suggest that, while ultimately
unsuccessful in the urban renewal fight, Bareleños’ centuries-old identification with
their community lasted long after many of their homes faced destruction. Finding
someone from South Barelas takes as much effort as going to the neighborhood
Barelas Coffee House or to Sacred Heart Catholic Church; patrons and parishioners
there are always eager to share their stories of the old barrio. Framed in this way, the
Barelas of today coexists with its former self, and at once, its sunny, friendly
reputation seems to grow darker and more dangerous as dusk falls on the intersection
of Avenida César Chávez (formerly Bridge Boulevard) and Fourth Street as a result
of prevailing stereotypes rooted in the 1930s and ‘40s. This dissertation is an effort
to explore that negativity more than a century in the making.

The opening chapter, “Every Barrio is my Barrio: Framing Barelas in
Composition and Visual Memory,” discusses the history of early urban photography
in Albuquerque and the history of the Barelas community more specifically. Here I
lay the groundwork for subsequent chapters as I discuss three leading Albuquerque
photography studios that were the first to document the New Town/Barelas area and
its people. These images are the first to frame and racialize Barelas as a historically

Sources refer to this street as both Bridge Boulevard and Bridge Street prior to its
partial renaming in December 1996 as the current Avenida César Chávez. “Honoring
Cesar Chavez,” Albuquerque Journal 1 April 1997
Mexican American neighborhood in collective memory. The majority of the earliest known photographs depict a growing Albuquerque in the late nineteenth century. As the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) made its way through New Mexico en route to California, the Alvarado depot at Albuquerque created an urban work and social culture unfamiliar to its long-term residents. Some of these images from the more popular photographic studios document the socioeconomic transformation of industrial development and housing that accommodated a growing population as it soon consumed the agricultural, pastoral communities just minutes away from the hustle and bustle of New Town (downtown) Albuquerque. These images are the first to frame not only Barelas, but also Albuquerque and its Nuevomexicano and Native communities in such a way that manipulations of these early representations in the larger public consciousness and discourse on the ‘ethnic question’ in New Mexico were ultimately used against the groups depicted. These photographs are the first veil through which the later framing project takes place in the mid-twentieth century.

Next, “Constructing a Contradictory Frame of Wartime Barelas in Pictures and on Paper,” discusses budding conflicts in Barelas as a paragon of prosperity and backwardness. The first part of this chapter discusses the Office of War Information (OWI) images of the Santa Fe railroad shops adjacent to the Alvarado depot in Albuquerque. In 1943 Jack Delano photographed the laborers who were, more often than not, from Barelas and the neighboring San José community. In addition, this chapter frontloads a gender analysis of the all-masculine shops as well. From
photographer to subject, these images eliminate – erase – women and children as participants in this industry as well. The oral histories for this project – in this and other chapters – include the perspectives of erased women and children as not only sideline participants in the rail industry, but also as active members of their neighborhood in work, family life, community activities, and religious obligations.

The second part of chapter two discusses the surprising impact of John Steinbeck’s 1935 novel *Tortilla Flat* on Barelas. *Tortilla Flat* depicts a community of raw, rowdy, and raunchy *paisanos* who do little more than drink, fight, and love their lives away. Steinbeck wrote on the paisanos’ mixed racial identity – though they claimed pure Spanish blood – their weedy yards, possession of livestock, dirt roads, lack of basic utilities, and unconventional manner of speaking. As the novel gained nationwide popularity, Hollywood eventually turned it into an upbeat film version of the same name. Released in May 1942, the picture effectively visualized Steinbeck’s words. Audiences saw debauchery, domestic violence, and drunkenness en masse as the protagonist and his comrades fool-heartedly engaged in barbarous behavior fit for people on the margins. Coincidentally, some Albuquerque residents felt that the southern end of Barelas fit Steinbeck’s description of the paisanos and their community. From the 1940s on, South Barelas was referred to as Tortilla Flat, or Tortilla Flats as some currently say. Juxtaposing the Delano photographs with the Steinbeck novel and film, this chapter discusses these dual identities and double consciousness that met Barelas in the 1940s, a duality that still exists in the present day. Also significant here is the fact that most Bareleños then and now were unaware
of both the shop photographs and the Steinbeck film, and as such I discuss how these two examples of visual culture defined collective memory, representation, and social membership.

In, “I was Framed: Nuevomexicano Vernacular Photography,” I explore the opposition to the framing project taking place in the public consciousness via images found in family albums and those hanging on the walls of Bareleño homes. Beginning in the 1940s through the 1960s, Bareleños challenged their depiction in popular media through the use of their own cameras. Within Barelas’ parameters existed well-known boxing and baseball traditions, the pachuco and zoot-suit subculture. Barelas was even the site for “Pal” Al Tafoya’s weekly radio show that introduced Nuevomexicanos to the jazz sounds of Los Angeles. Here I discuss three Bareleños, two women and one man, and the different stories their photographs tell of their lives there. Humanizing the barrio with the images and stories of its members is one way to combat the media’s visual criminalization of Nuevomexicanos. The 1940s was a period of severe racial violence for ethnic minorities in the US as evidenced in the images of riots, lynchings, and wartime internment. The victims of such violence were depicted just as they were stereotypically portrayed in accompanying news stories. Bareleño personal and family photography casts a different perspective of what Nuevomexicanos and Mexican Americans seemed to be in the media; their images act as a counter to those found in newspapers. Within their own community, Barelas residents actively asserted their own identity and as such resisted negative portrayals of themselves.
Chapter four, “‘The Trees are Still There:’ The Post-War and Urban Renewal Reframing of South Barelas,” discusses twenty detrimental years in Barelas. This was visually captured in Albert Vogel’s *Barelas – Arenal and Los Lunas* published by the UNM’s Political Science department in 1967. Vogel’s method was reminiscent of the 1930s Farm Security Administration (FSA) and later reincarnation as the 1940s OWI photographic project – to visually document life in the US during another bust in the (regional) economy. Unfortunately though, his approach seemed more conducive to what I consider photographic drive-by shooting as Vogel released the shutter on anything that depicted his specific ideological and social target. Parts of Barelas – specifically the so-called Tortilla Flat(s) area – seemed to be the antithesis of modernity; some families lived without indoor plumbing, drove along dusty unpaved roads, and raised chickens in their yards. Vogel capitalized on ideas of civility, modernity, and whiteness in the post-war period. These photographs along with other academic and government inquiries of the area fundamentally assaulted the community in the utmost destructive manner. Barelas, in addition to other historically Mexican American neighborhoods in Albuquerque, was identified in the early 1960s as a target for urban renewal called the “Model Cities” program. Within a decade of failing expectations however, in the 1970s communities targeted as Model Cities now became part of the “Pocket of Poverty” model emphasized in city redistricting measures and still used in some programs at the University of New Mexico.
This dissertation concludes with the fifth and final chapter, “Death of a Barrio, Birth of an Icon, and the Living Museum: Barelas in the Late 20th Century,” as I bring the community into focus during the 1990s, well beyond the years of urban renewal. In 1978, some years after Vogel’s publication, noted Chicano author Rudolfo Anaya published Heart of Aztlán as his characters experienced the WWII era in Albuquerque. Originally titled Barelas, Anaya showcased another kind of migration story as many Nuevomexicanos made the transition from their rural, communities to Albuquerque’s urban, industrial center. Heart of Aztlán reflects much of Anaya’s own life in Barelas, his memories of the rail yards, and adjusting to life in the city. I also explore the images of Rodolfo Serrano’s photo essay, Los Bareleños, a study on the relationship between the local junior high and the community itself. These images were taken during the early 1970s when the reality of urban renewal and relocation were inescapable. In concluding this dissertation with a brief juxtaposition of Vogel’s images with Anaya’s memories of his youth in Barelas, and Serrano’s images of South Barelas on the brink of death, I find a perfect example of contradictory representations as they took shape in the form of memory, visual, and popular culture in one Nuevomexicano community. Vogel provided the public consciousness the damning images necessary for South Barelas’ identities as Tortilla Flat and ‘Perfume Valley,’ the latter referring to the neighboring sewage treatment plant. Serrano, in contrast, captured the pride of South Barelas despite the reality its residents faced. Anaya, then, offered a counter to Vogel’s stark photos with his description of Barelas, as he knew it for all its positive and negative qualities.
Positioning Barelas as the heart of Aztlán, the mythical homeland for Chicano/a people, Anaya effectively iconized the neighborhood for this ethnic community still reeling from the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

It is this iconicity and nostalgia that brought the National Hispanic Cultural Center to South Barelas, which is the analytical juxtaposition to Anaya’s novel. At issue here is one resident’s refusal to abandon her property – the only one that survived urban renewal – so that the center could be built. After a lengthy political battle, the center agreed to build around the resident’s property. It has now become a “living exhibit” of the museum, as the home sits directly in front of the center, surrounded by the openness of chain link fencing with home life in plain view of anyone who visits the grounds. It seems that Barelas suffers from dual identities as those choosing its path either celebrate its cultural, historic, and charmingly authentic Nuevomexicano qualities or bemoan it as a stubborn obstacle toward progress. In the end, two Barelas communities exist – one that celebrates a nostalgic memory of what once existed and another that seems to condemn those living there now. This contradictory existence is based on a long-standing precarious relationship with photography, the media, and Barelas itself as the residents struggle to maintain their community alongside the “progress” of racial capitalism and development. Despite all of this, one resident aptly stated, “I am from Barelas, and I’m damn proud!”

Portrait of a Barrio is an investigation into the construction of an evolving external identity and the struggle to preserve and celebrate an internal, heterogeneous one. It privileges community voices and perspectives over those of the oppressive
sociopolitical forces that silenced them over time. For the history of New Mexico, it adds to the historiographical overhaul of the tri-cultural harmony. This project tells a story of racialization so damning that, in the end, residents themselves have internalized and replicated those stereotypes without the slightest idea of their origins, although they are actively fighting to regain the right to their own individual self-determination and the assertion of new, positive identities for their barrio as a whole. In fact, they are recreating and celebrating a frame of their own design. This frame was cemented, bolted, soldered, and nailed into place with the unveiling of Sacred Heart Church’s Memorial Bell Tower in 2003. The bell adorning the top was to signal that “Barelas’ hushed ‘voice’ will ring again.”


In a January 2011 edition of *The Wall Street Journal*, the reporter wrote a story on an Albuquerque jeweler’s $1.3 million dollar mansion, locating the concrete “castle” in what “locals call skid row.” Julia Flynn Siler described Gertrude Zachary’s ivory tower [Fig. 1.1] in the middle of Albuquerque’s downtown as, “rising like a fortress between a rescue mission and the railroad tracks…[It is] the only apparent residence in the desolate neighborhood.”  

Wall Street Journal might associate a ‘skid row’ identity for this part of Albuquerque’s downtown, residents near this area call their community Barelas and themselves Bareleños. Written in January 2011, Siler’s article is but one example demonstrating the increasingly negative public perception of downtown urbanization, deindustrialization, and movement toward gentrification as rehabilitative measures. Albuquerque owes much of its wartime to success to the Barelas community, an area that enjoyed a favorable public position over one hundred and thirty years prior in comparison to its vastly different identity. The readers of this Wall Street Journal piece might have little understanding of the complexity of the area that borders Zachary’s mansion on all sides – not just Barelas. These readers would likely not know that over the iron-tipped walls of Zachary’s courtyard lie decades of history, labor, prosperity, and destitution in what are now the remnants of a bustling railroad industry that once provided gainful employment to neighboring communities.

The issue at hand here is the framing of a community – a people – and how that process of identity assignment shifted over time. This chapter provides the groundwork for how Barelas eventually became targeted as a twenty-first century skid row. Barelas and the people who lived there shared a long, complex history of conquest and survival throughout the three centuries under Spanish colonial rule. Each change in political and cultural domination made an impression on the small

Similar to the WSJ piece, the AMC network’s smash production, “Breaking Bad,” takes place in and around Albuquerque, further perpetuating an image of crime and drug use in the Duke City. Currently, fans may attend “The Bad Tour” and witness firsthand the many significant sites in the show. One such stop includes the railyards near Barelas. Adrián Gómez, “Trolley Tour Takes in All That’s ‘Bad’,” Albuquerque Journal, 30 June 2012.
community on the river so that the people of the Spanish crown “created” this community on paper and the Americans affirmed it in pictures. Using memoirs, oral history, and photography, the following pages discuss the community history of Barelas in light of structural impermanence. Residents created an identity based on instability stemming from political change, infrastructural creation and demolition, migration, and racism.

_Bareleño Beginnings_

Barelas began as an agricultural colonial settlement, as had most of New Mexico’s centuries-old villages and towns, nestled near the Rio Grande as a middle point between the established Sandia and Laguna Pueblos to the north and south, respectively, neighboring the current downtown area.\(^{55}\) Barelas’ narrative begins with Governor Diego de Peñalosa’s orders to establish _villa_ on the estate of Pedro Varela de Losada in 1662, just as the Spanish Crown cultivated its empire throughout Latin America.\(^{56}\) The exploration, settlement, and colonization of what is now New Mexico first took shape as a mid-sixteenth century Spanish endeavor to seize territory from the land’s many indigenous peoples.\(^{57}\) These were native communities who had

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\(^{55}\) The early colonial reference to the community as _Las Barelas_ is changed to simply _Barelas_ in the Mexican period (1821-1848).

\(^{56}\) Although Barelas was an area likely part of indigenous communities prior to Spanish colonization, there is a void of information or evidence discussing that part of Barelas’s history. Spelling of _Varela_ varied as it was also spelled _Barela_, though referring to the same name.

\(^{57}\) The earliest Spanish colonist to enter New Mexico was Hernán de Coronado in 1540, whom formed a settlement north of Albuquerque near Bernalillo. The next, and perhaps one of the more heinous and controversial, especially in terms of contemporary “Spanish” identity in New Mexico, was Juan de Oñate, an elite criollo
centuries-old settlements along the Rio Grande river valley and among the mountains, hills, and plateaus that dotted the landscape. Among them are the Pueblo, Diné, Apache, and Comanche people. Just twenty years after the establishment of Barelas, though one hundred and forty years after the first Spanish intrusion into New Mexico, indigenous peoples challenged Spanish authority, dehumanization, proselytizing, and general presence in their ancestral lands.

The Pueblo Revolt in 1680 effectively removed Spanish colonists from northern New Mexico and held them at bay to the south in El Paso del Norte – now Ciudad Juárez. Although the Pueblo victory lasted only twelve short years, that was sufficient time to halt the Hispanicization of their culture and create a foundational movement of decolonization, retrieval, and preservation of their languages and traditions. In 1692 Don Diego de Vargas – an elite criollo (American-born child of mestizo) who was a descendant of the Malinche/Jaramillo lineage in Mexico. In 1598 he and his band of men entered New Mexico and brutally mutilated Pueblo men who resisted his colonial demands.

Within each community are distinct differences in tradition, history, lineage, and language. Among the nineteen Pueblos – as the Spanish referred to them – are speakers of the Keres, Tanoan, and Zuni language groups, with further linguistic differences in Tanoan. Likewise, the Apache and Diné belong to the Athabaskan linguistic community with shared similarities among other people. Despite linguistic particularities, the indigenous populations of what is now the US Southwest, and New Mexico more specifically, had centuries of contact and communication with each other as well as Nahua-speaking communities farther south.

Iberian Peninsular-born parents) from the silver-rich lands of Zacatecas – led the
Reconquista de Nuevo México, the reconquest movement, with additional Mexicano families and individuals ready to reestablish the area under the jurisdiction of the Crown. With movement back into the area, this time for what proved a more permanent settlement, Nuevomexicano families carved out their own communities alongside the river in the spaces among those people who already inhabited the area.

Despite colonial efforts led by criollo and mestizo (child of Indigenous and criollo or peninsular parentage) elites who whitened themselves through their status and initiative to lead missions from Mexico up through the Rio Grande, the demographic of the Spanish-speaking inhabitants varied tremendously in terms of racial miscegenation. No doubt, the colonists themselves, regardless of their social status, came from a variety of backgrounds not only in Mexico, but in Spain as well. The ability to reinvent one’s self from undesirable origins in the acumen to becoming shining examples of the limpieza de sangre and gente de razón – Spanish Catholics free from Jewish and indigenous blood – successfully happened in the Spanish colonies and later on throughout various periods in community history, as will be explored in family images of self-representation in the twentieth century. Thus, the colonists themselves typically came from an ethnically diverse background and led

\[Pueblo\ Revolt\ of\ 1680:\ Conquest\ and\ Resistance\ in\ Seventeenth-Century\ New\ Mexico\ (Norman,\ OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995).\]
\[60\ Ramón Gutiérrez provides a succinct discussion of the varied and often contested nature of identity in colonial New Mexico. See Gutiérrez, When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away, 101-104.\]
their missions reflecting that desire for *ethnic* purity under the rhetoric of *moral* purity cloaked in religious obligation. Families that continued those efforts in the name of the Crown increasingly found themselves reflecting the diversity of the Spanish landholdings. Although Spanish purity in the New World was next to impossible, elite families often shunned genealogical blemishes in their family trees in an effort to remain dominant in an increasingly diverse society. The colonial racial hierarchy so common throughout Latin America extended itself to the Internal Provinces – *las Provincias Internas* – up through New Mexico as well, and although families there were without the type of wealth common in Zacatecas, Mexico City, or Lima, Nuevomexicanos nonetheless organized a similar socioethnic hierarchy early on.

Eventually, as both time and the peculiar nature of colonialism in New Mexico moved forward, this socioethnic hierarchy was further complicated with the acquisition of both indigenous and Hispanic slaves, usually resulting from raiding and trading among all interested parties with political influence. Thus, by the time Mexico achieved independence (1810-1821) and after surrendering its far northern lands to the US in 1848, many Nuevomexicanos could trace a relative back to any number of local native tribes because of the establishment of *genízaro* communities in the colonial period. These towns of detrivalized, Hispanicized native peoples were usually found in the outlying areas of Hispanic villages and Pueblos, the most
recognized being Abiquiu.\textsuperscript{62} While the genízaro heritage of Barelas residents is uncertain, many people of the community, though far removed from the goings on in the older, northern Nuevomexicano settlements nonetheless descended from the region’s history of violence and captivity. This heritage exists in shrouded opposition to a more sanitized celebration of New Mexico’s Spanish colonial past. Accepting an indigenous ancestry meant that Nuevomexicanos were not as pure as they claimed at the turn of the nineteenth century, and thus, that potential acknowledgement could have jeopardized their claims to whiteness. Denial and reinvention of one’s ethnic heritage was a familiar process conducted for centuries in the Americas and was no different in New Mexico, especially as political and cultural survival were at stake. The cultural, collective memory was manipulated to suit a specific need and was continually modified over the course of the next few centuries to avert further disenfranchisement.

Since the repopulation of Barelas following 1692, residents relied on the Rio Grande in many ways for their own livelihood; the \textit{acequia} made crop irrigation possible, the \textit{bosque} provided firewood, and \textit{terrón} homes cut from riverbed sod

blocks provided shelter from the elements. Owing to their survival was the interaction with native communities who – either through force or virtue of kinship through blood and marriage – shared elements of indigenous knowledge. This Nuevomexicano and native coexistence and collective memory, problematic and oppressive as it was, lasted through Mexican Independence until the end of formal Mexican governance in New Mexico. Scholars have noted the growing presence of Americans in what was the Mexican Far North prior to the Texas Revolution in 1836. This of course, was due to Mexico’s desire to further populate its northern territories in order to provide more economic and political stability in the area. Though many argue that New Mexico swiftly and gratefully accepted American domination, other scholarship tells a more complicated story, and suggests that Nuevomexicanos did in fact actively fight to remain part of the Mexican Republic.

This dispute in the scholarship demonstrates a point of contingency in the broader New Mexican collective memory. On one hand, perhaps the welcoming of

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63 *Bosque, acequia,* and *terrón* refer to the irrigation canals, dense wooded area along the river, and cut blocks of riverbed clay still commonly used in their Spanish form in everyday conversation.

64 Much of New Mexico historiography is devoted to its early indigenous and Spanish colonial beginnings. See for example, Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*; Henrietta Stockel, *Salvation through Slavery: Chiricahua Apaches and Priests on the Spanish Colonial Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008); David Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992);


American domination could be seen as another instance of political and cultural survival. In this way, the official memory excludes any possible connection to Mexico; after all, many would say that New Mexico spent a brief twenty-seven years under Mexican rule, as opposed to the centuries under the Spanish crown, thus affirming their white identity so promoted in the American period. On the other hand, the denial that Nuevomexicanos embraced American soldiers on their lands is a type of subversive collective memory contrary to the official narrative. Acknowledging that resistance is a celebration of the relationship with Mexico. It is also an acceptance of New Mexico’s heritage as a Latin American territory with a complicated and even contradictory colonial past.

Despite the goings-on at the federal level, most Nuevomexicanos outside the political machine continued with their daily lives, unaware that their new status in 1848 as second-class citizens of New Mexico territory held irreversible consequences for all people swept along in the tide of Manifest Destiny. The Spanish and Mexican colonists, once the oppressors, now became the colonized. The lands seized from Native Americans as part of Spanish and Mexican land grants became near null and void regardless of what the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo promised, although Nuevomexicanos and Native Americans would never forget the loss of lands that occurred once or two times over. What followed in New Mexican history was a

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67 The most famous example of collective memory regarding land loss in 1848 was Reies López Tijerina’s campaign to regain colonial and Mexican land grants in the 1960s. He regularly referred to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the US government’s failure to uphold their terms of land preservation. Reies López
long-term campaign from 1848-1912 to whiten the Spanish-speaking people, further
disenfranchise native communities, and impose the American sociopolitical system of
assimilation on all.⁶⁸

Beginning in the American period, and in congruence with the Spanish
Heritage Fantasy of California and Texas, New Mexico experienced its own nostalgia
for the pre-Mexican era. Carey McWilliams, an early critic of such cultural
oppression in California, noted in 1948 that, “by emphasizing the Spanish part of the
tradition and consciously repudiating the Mexican-Indian side, it has been possible to
rob the Spanish-speaking minority of a heritage which is rightfully theirs.”⁶⁹

Fashioning themselves in romanticized colonialism, New Mexican elites – both white
and Nuevomexicano – attempted to remake their territory’s ethnic identification to
reflect that of respectable, civilized American society. From the outset, New

Mexico’s non-white populations were framed into an identity of inadequacy and

⁶⁸Scholars have long discussed how the long territorial period effectively shaped New
Mexican politics, racial and ethnic relations, and land rights. See Laura E. Gómez,
Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race (New York: New
York University, 2007); Meléndez, Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico;
Pablo Mitchell, Coyote Nation: Sexuality, Race, and Conquest in Modernizing New
Mexico, 1880-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); John Nieto-
Mexico, 1880s-1930s (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004) Deena
J. González, Refusing the Favor: The Spanish-Mexican Women of Santa Fe, 1820-
1880 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Carey McWilliams, North from
Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States (New York: Greenwood
Press, 1990); Sarah Deutsch, No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an
Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940 (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1987).

⁶⁹ Carey McWilliams, North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the
barbarism that was linked to their cultural practices and effectively exoticized when they no longer posed a looming threat to white society. Native Americans, by and large, suffered the most damaging Americanization efforts that strove not only to assimilate but also annihilate their communities. While New Mexico’s Spanish-speakers remained in their homes and with their families, they too suffered abuses for their cultural differences with the Americans. While speaking Spanish, usually with trusted people in their communities, Nuevomexicanos typically called themselves “Mexicanos,” in contrast to their identification as “Spanish” or “Spanish American” when speaking English, which early on, indicated a class difference as well.

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72 Arthur Campa, professor of linguistics at UNM, stated similarly that, “Mexican-Americans [Nuevomexicanos] are likely to say nosotros, nuestra gente, la raza, or nosotros los mexicanos. But, as Dr. Campa carefully emphasizes, by mexicanos they do not mean Mexicans; nor can it be translated as such.” Cited in Carey McWilliams, 190.
Once the diverse cultures of New Mexico’s non-white populations were sanitized for American palates, they were reinvented into the highly problematic Tri-Cultural Heritage myth. Still in existence today, this myth of harmonious ethnic coexistence among the Native, Nuevomexicano, and American – typically referred to as the Indian, Spanish, and Anglo – emphasizes a contemporary cultural balance over New Mexico’s violent past. Promoters took the safest, most romantic, seemingly docile elements of indigenous and Spanish-speaking cultures and celebrated them alongside the supposedly more scientific and technological contributions from whites.

It was in this sociopolitical context of statehood and racial antagonism that Nuevomexicanos embraced a Spanish heritage as a means of cultural and political survival.

The Railroad

Bareleños, unlike their compadres in other parts of Albuquerque – with the exception of the San José community – initially experienced a much greater assault on their ethnic identity, as the railroad urbanized them and brought people of all backgrounds to their barrio. When the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (AT&SF or Santa Fe) railroad came to Albuquerque in 1879, it brought people, commerce, and urbanization to a rural society. Founded twenty years earlier, the AT&SF immediately assumed its role in a competition to reach California ahead of the other

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74 A perfect visual example is Kenneth Adams’ Three Peoples Murals in the West Wing of University of New Mexico’s Zimmerman Library. Completed in 1939, Adams depicted four panels “celebrating” the Tri-Cultural Harmony in New Mexico. Read from left to right beginning with the Native American followed by Nuevomexicano and then American, these panels were supposed to showcase each of these cultures’ contributions to New Mexico. The Native American and Nuevomexicano panels emphasize production of material culture, manual labor, and pastoral livelihoods, while the American panel takes place inside a laboratory with microscopes, doctors, and references to astronomy. The fourth panel was meant to represent the coming together of the (male) three cultures, as a Nuevomexicano and Native American flank either side of an American man, their hands joined together. While all of the men are dressed similarly in long sleeve, button-down shirts with slacks, a belt, and shoes, the American is the only one of the three to face forward with his blue eyes open, gazing at the spectator. The non-white men have no eyes. In 1974, some Nuevomexicano students at UNM, enraged with the mural’s overall racist overtones, defaced the final panel, throwing paint over the American man. Today, the murals remain in the library and are safeguarded with security cameras should another problem arise. Jim Dawson, “Mural at UNM is defaced,” Albuquerque Journal, 27 January 1974.
railroad corporations. By 1887, the AT&SF made it all the way to Los Angeles, and began a new era in transcontinental transportation, real estate, and cultural tourism.\textsuperscript{75} Part of the railroad’s success at the turn of the century was due in part to the exploits of the Fred Harvey Company.\textsuperscript{76} Capitalizing on the idea of the west the Fred Harvey Company created what Marta Weigle calls an “ethnic theme/amusement park” all along the Santa Fe railway.\textsuperscript{77} Not only did the AT&SF dominate the transportation of people and goods, it paired with Harvey to encourage leisurely travel and tourism, usually at the expense of Native American communities. Steeped in the language of “the open West,” well-to-do travelers enjoyed fine dining and luxury accommodations in any number of Harvey hotels with the Harvey Girls to serve them as they traveled through the desert en route to Los Angeles. Should these travelers want to escape the confines of the locomotive’s roomy passenger cars, they could go out on their own for adventurous day-trips and explore the so-called “vanishing Indian” communities and purchase goods for sale.

In New Mexico, travelers typically stopped at Harvey’s Alvarado Hotel in Albuquerque, then might have connected on another line to reach Santa Fe, where they stayed at the La Fonda Hotel, another of Harvey’s investments. From there,

visitors could go on their own up to Taos Pueblo to see “authentic” Native Americans, but first they might stop in the village of Chimayó and purchase a woven blanket, jacket, or purse made by local families with generations of weavers. By the 1930s, these products were so popular as wearable pieces of Native American culture and identity, that little emphasis was put on the Nuevomexicano make up of these weavers as well. One article from 1934, comparing Mexican serapes from the Saltillo region with those of Chimayó remarked that they, “have the same half Indian, half Spanish origin, and are woven and worn by the Spanish-speaking Indians in the mountain valleys of New Mexico.”

It was in this Spanish Heritage Fantasy and Tri-Cultural Harmony conglomeration that the railroad achieved its highest success and routinely engaged in exploitative cultural appropriation so apparent in tourism to New Mexico. As the AT&SF broke ground for their Albuquerque depot in 1879, suddenly a new labor force was needed to maintain the engines and the Harvey tourism sector. As local Spanish-speaking elites became confronted with the reality of American colonialism in New Mexico, daily life continued to change in Albuquerque at a rapid pace.

The locomotive industrial change partitioned Albuquerque into “Old Town” and “New Town,” with the San Felipe and Barelas neighborhoods as their respective centers. San Felipe served as the focus of local political activity in La villa de

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Alburquerque prior to the American takeover and was spatially organized in typical colonial fashion with a plaza at the center with buildings and dwellings on its perimeter. The San Felipe parish was constructed on the northern side of the plaza and became an integral part of the community. A close location to the Rio Grande’s eastern banks allowed the families of San Felipe to maintain a largely agricultural lifestyle as their sustenance depended on acequias and other irrigation methods that diverted water from the river to connect to communal land holdings or ejidos nearby. Though San Felipe was home to some commercial activity, it was not an industrial area by any means and never saw the gains and losses stemming from Albuquerque’s many economic transformations throughout its history.

Barelas, similar to San Felipe in economy and demographics, was transformed into New Mexico’s first urban barrio through little more than the sheer virtue of its location [Fig. 1.3]. As the new railroad diverted economic and political attention away from San Felipe, it attracted movement to Barelas. In some ways, Barelas’ gains were San Felipe’s losses; the newly minted “Old Town” ceased operation as the center of town life in the American system in favor of the nascent “New Town” that held a promising future for white venture capitalists, industrialists, and health-seekers migrating from the east. Other Albuquerque communities such as Duranes, Atrisco,

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79 The first “r” in Alburquerque was summarily dropped following US takeover and is now commonly, though erroneously spelled with only one “r.”

80 For more on the local history of San Felipe see Tomas Atencio, “Social Change and Community Conflict in Old Albuquerque, New Mexico,” (PhD dissertation in Sociology, University of New Mexico, 1985); Marc Simmons, Albuquerque: A Narrative History (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1982).
and Martíneztown had little day-to-day interaction with the railroad, although their individual residents may have shipped their woolen, agricultural, or timber products on boxcars to the rest of the country, and perhaps into Mexico.\textsuperscript{81}

Initially after US takeover, Barelas held on to its village/vecino social construction so common in New Mexican history. Barelas’ close proximity to the river allowed families to grow beans, chile, and corn; the river provided drinking water for livestock, and if low enough, could be crossed on horseback to the western banks. Unlike San Felipe’s plaza-oriented organization, Barelas had no recognizable center and was primarily a tightly knit community of Nuevomexicano families. The viejitos – elders – lived with their children and grandchildren on the same parcel of land, if not in the same house. Perhaps more so than any other New Mexican town and Albuquerque community, Barelas was the first to face remarkable sociopolitical changes within a highly concentrated time and space. The AT&SF partitioned Barelas from its neighboring communities. While San José no longer bordered Barelas to the east, the residents there experienced their own pattern of development and urbanization on a comparable, yet much smaller scale than Barelas. Barelas’ parameters were clearly defined with the railroad to the east, Coal Avenue to the

\textsuperscript{81} Additional Albuquerque communities did come into direct contact with the railway, however their interaction was not as complex as what was experienced in Barelas. Although Martíneztown, Sawmill, and other areas were in close or immediate proximity to the railway, they did not experience as profound a community transformation as did Barelas. Included in this narrative – it should be noted – is also a description of the often overlooked, yet adjacent, William and San José communities. For more on Martíneztown, see Joseph P. Sanchez and Larry D. Miller, \textit{Martíneztown, 1832-1950: Hispanics, Italians, Jesuits and Land Investors in New Town Albuquerque} (Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, NM: Rio Grande Books, 2009).
north, and the Rio Grande to the west. The southern border had less definition and was congested with thickness of the *bosque*, though eventually this area became more contentious and clearly delineated as time wore on.

The community’s proximity to the railroad tracks, the Alvarado train depot, and locomotive repair shops, and railroad tie treatment plant facilitated this urbanization. Barelas’ adjacent location to this major source of employment in Albuquerque brought people of all backgrounds to the area. Not only did industry change Barelas, but the labor force associated with that industry changed it as well. As migrants from the eastern part of the country followed the train to Albuquerque, they found lodging and amenities in Barelas. Nearby railroad housing was essential for many of these single young men who came from the east to work on the AT&SF, and many found it in the homes of Bareleños as they rented rooms or extra homes on family parcels of land. American migration into Albuquerque certainly accelerated in the late nineteenth-century as the hope of developing the west suddenly became a reality. Lucrative financiers Franz Huning, Elias Stover, William Hazeldine, and Oliver E. Cromwell were largely responsible for the economic transformation of Albuquerque. Huning played a particularly important role as he heavily invested in land speculation beginning in the 1850s and continued to develop his personal fortune over the next few decades.\textsuperscript{82} Albuquerque’s growing landscape was dotted with neighborhoods more conducive to white settlement and reflected a severe departure from the Nuevomexicano village construction of even fifty years prior. Whereas

whites were a small, yet present minority in Barelas, Nuevomexicanos by and large flocked to the community more than any other area for that same potential employment with the railroad.

_Framing the Landscape_

With the flood of entrepreneurs and health-seekers into Albuquerque, so too came photographers eager to capture images of New Mexico’s exotic population and wild west landscapes. What they did, in fact, was build the initial frame of Albuquerque. Some of the earliest archived images documented the development of New Town at the turn of the century, tuberculosis sanatoriums, and visually classified the ethnic exotica found in New Mexico’s Spanish-speaking and indigenous populations. Photographers ventured outside with their medium and large format cameras to capture the hustle and bustle of city life as well as serene landscapes. Still, others remained enclosed in their studios and photographed formal portraiture for events such as weddings, tourism campaigns, and political purposes. Often family-owned and operated studios exchanged hands depending on economic conditions and opportunities in New Mexico and further westward.

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The American imagination of the US west and its populations at the turn of the century was quite possibly similar to the gendered and racialized perceptions and exploits of US domination. In one case, Kristin Hoganson demonstrates how US commentary on the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War often described the native populations as hypersexual or effeminate in order to normalize and justify the extremities of conquest and imperialism. This commentary always included a visual component in the form of cartoons usually showing dark skinned and poorly dressed Cubans and Filipinos in need of Uncle Sam’s careful guidance and benevolence.

Similar visual jingoist tactics were used during the US invasion of Veracruz in 1914 to describe Mexican men and women. In his analysis of US occupation, Paul Vanderwood described how soldiers regularly described Mexicans on the backs of photographic postcards with racial epithets and that, “the best of them were dead ones.” In regards to women, one postcard showing a US soldier shaking hands with a Mexican woman at a border marker is accompanied by a caption reading, “Well good-bye love, the old man is coming now. I will see you later on the border.” In this example, as in others, the soldier and sender of such postcards referred to the apparently loose sexual morality of Mexican women, especially those near the

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These forms of visual jingoism were made for American consumption and were useful for gaining popular support for military invasion or occupation abroad. The type of colonial discourse and visual rendering of race, civility, and social morals these images encouraged were easily applied to any non-white populations standing in the way of US expansion.

As visual jingoism propagated conflicts overseas, discussion concerning social reform startled the nation at the turn of the century, as overcrowding, ethnic immigration, and poverty took on a different medium. Jacob Riis, famed activist and photographer of inner-city enclaves on the east coast, used technology to highlight the deplorable conditions of working-class communities at the turn of the century. Riis’ 1890 *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* was an early photo essay exploring urban poverty among the immigrant population. Here, Riis photographed Jews, Chinese, Germans, Italians, and the conditions under which they lived; each set of images was accompanied by the photographer’s explanation of the inherent cultural deficiencies that brought these individuals to their misfortune. Whereas newspaper print media capitalized on visual jingoist measures to favorably coerce public support for international conflicts, Riis’ photographs spurred remarkable support to alleviate the deplorable ethnic conditions at home.

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The social ‘problems’ Riis encountered were not found in Albuquerque – or at least we have no record of them. Perhaps, though, these Euro-American photographers looked at the wide-open landscapes of New Mexico and the west with eyes that were too accustomed to seeing the endemic crowded, cramped livelihoods found in Riis’ photographs. Instead, these photographers – these new migrants – focused on visually writing the story of the American west as part of an ongoing colonial project. Carol J. Williams’ analysis of Native American photography in the Pacific Northwest describes how mid-nineteenth century photography was often used to map out colonial landholdings – including the native population. She notes that photographs were a type of evidence used to lay claim to conquered lands and that, “these images visualize the intrusive process of Euro-American settlement.”

Although New Mexico had been a Spanish colonial and later Mexican province, it was not overdeveloped or overpopulated. Americans moving westward may have considered New Mexican lands to be underused, underexploited, and ripe for their industrial development.

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88 Carol J. Williams, Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier of the Pacific Northwest (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 5-7.
Instead of overpopulated tenements on the east coast, what we see in many frames of Albuquerque are quaint images of empty Nuevomexicano communities. Few images actually depict common Nuevomexicanos in their communities; they are more a study of the architecture and the open land rather than those who occupy the space. For example, an early photograph [Fig. 1.4] of Old Town from the well-known Cobb Studio emphasizes the importance of space and emptiness without the imposition of people, as opposed to the detrimental effects of overcrowding as seen in

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89 William Henry Cobb, an east coast migrant, was one of many to venture west on the railroad, only to stay for the positive health benefits of New Mexico’s dry climate. Buying out the former W. Calvin Brown Studio by 1891, Cobb and his wife, Mrs. Eddie Ross Cobb – daughter or Gov. Edmund G. Ross - founded their business on West Gold Avenue in New Town where it remained until 1942. Richard Rudisill, *Photographers of New Mexico Territory* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 1973): 20-21.
Riis’ work. This particular photograph was taken just as the railroad made its way into Albuquerque, and as the shift in the city’s economic hub shifted toward Barelas. In this scene we notice the barren, unpaved street lined with adobe houses fading into the horizon. As such, this photograph also serves as a commentary on the shift in economy, politics, and development occurring in Albuquerque at this moment. The movement once enjoyed in this part of the city dissipated with the goings-on in New Town; the buildings and those who lived in them seem abandoned in favor of progress. Perhaps for the photographer and his or her audience, images such as this one encouraged the perception that the west was a land uninhibited by social ills in other parts of the country. Although its ultimate use is unknown, this image certainly acts as a stark contrast to the Riis photographs, where people, poverty, and vice run rampant. This image of Old Town Albuquerque suggested the limitless potential in its depiction of open space.
For the Barelas community, perhaps the most significant of all these landscapes are those depicting the Barelas Bridge [Fig. 1.5]. Here we see the earliest known photograph of the original bridge in 1880 prior to its destruction in 1884 due to flooding. Looking east toward the Sandia Mountains and over the river, this image visually crosses communities in the same way that travelers crossed the bridge for work or settlement. More importantly, this photograph signifies what opportunity lay ahead to the east – rather than west – in the brand-new bustling rail yards, saw mills, and business ventures. These photographers framed Albuquerque progress as booming to the east under the shelter of the Sandia Mountains, thus visually

90 Communities on either side of the Rio Grande often suffered detrimental flood seasons each spring. Nuevomexicanos had to build their own structures to stave off flooding in their fields and in their homes.
disrupting the conventional western narrative of progress. Perhaps the purpose of this photo was, again, to encourage tourism and settlement of the area; its wide-open fields with few building in the distance offer its viewers the possibility of land tenure. Similar to the previous photograph, there is an absence of people here. Although this and other images of the bridge communicate movement, we do not see any of this movement as it occurs. Some of the early photographs of Albuquerque are devoid of people as a simple assertion of its potential. The buildings in the distance, while suggesting development and use, are actually overtaken with the expanse of open land. Perhaps, as Williams also suggests, these types of images validated migration and expansionism as they reflect the land’s potential use and development. It is quite possible that these images were part of a larger body of photographs that served as, “an expression of Euro-American entitlement to the frontier.” New Mexico, certainly in the late nineteenth century, was imagined and described under expansionist frontier terms.

Civilizing the New Mexico frontier, for Americans, meant organizing and controlling the river, the land, and other natural resources to suit new economic endeavors. For hundreds of years residents came to understand, depend on, and expect routine flooding of the Rio Grande, potentially making river crossing all the more difficult. Prior to any type of relatively stable bridge that connected east and west through Barelas, Nuevomexicanos forded the river on horseback, circumventing

91 Williams, 9.
any inconveniences from bridge inaccessibility. After the late nineteenth century bridge was initially destroyed in 1903, its was finally rebuilt again in 1912 [Fig. 1.6]. The reconstruction of the Barelas Bridge coincided with New Mexico earning statehood after sixty-four years of territorial status and second-class citizenship.\footnote{New Mexico (6 January 1912) and Arizona (14 February 1912) were the last of the acquiesced Mexican territory to gain entry into the Union and became the 47th and 48th states, respectively.}

The 1912 Cobb Studio image highlights the new mechanics and technological progress of bridge construction, as remnants of the older bridge, and New Mexico’s
territorial past, fades and almost falls outside the frame. The primary focal points here are the workers and the means of bridge construction. The image suggests that they are the architects responsible for the new progress coming to New Mexico.

Representative of modernity and progress, the 1920 Alabama Milner Studio photograph [Fig. 1.7] shows both the old 1912 wooden bridge alongside the nearly completed concrete and iron bridge with an automobile speeding off in the distance.\footnote{After much dispute and a lag in contract negotiations, the Barelas Bridge was completed in May 1922. “Barelas Bridge now open for traffic; has been closed over a year,” \textit{Santa Fe New Mexican}, 1 May 1922.} The wooden bridge on the left, however, still shows signs of the demographic that
most often traveled along that passageway; evidence of well-worn wagon wheel trails mark the earth in an exaggerated serpentine curve suggesting movement onto that bridge to avoid traveling on the other. The juxtaposition of the two bridges in this particular image suggests fleeting time and inevitable progress as horse-drawn wagons would only impede and interfere with the freedom afforded by Ford Model T automobiles. The Barelas Bridge faced a consistent pattern of construction and demolition, largely due to natural circumstances. The bridge was the first structure—the foundational site of memory as Pierre Nora describes—to play a major part in Barelas as a passageway from village to city and from traditional to modern.

For many Nuevomexicanos, daily life depended on crossing the river to work and also to socialize with family and friends; those who could not cross were simply halted from any obligations on either side of the Rio Grande. Even so, one photograph shows two men avoiding the bridge altogether and crossing the river on horseback [Fig. 1.8]. They, like the wagon-wheel marks in the foreground, suggest that while the bridge was important to the infrastructural development of Albuquerque, it was not an absolute necessity in maintaining relationships and connections with other Nuevomexicano communities. When it was low, travel through the Rio Grande could include horse-drawn wagons and avoidance of the bridge altogether. Although in this particular frame the river is at a high level, the men pictured here still cross on horseback despite the bridge appearing in usable condition. With the river *bosque* in the background, and no visible mountains
to speak of, these men seem to be moving from the west to the east into, not from, Barelas.

Beyond their subject matter, these bridge photographs share a similar geographic and social perspective. In the first three images, the viewer is directed to look eastward into Barelas and New Town from the western banks of the Rio Grande, while in the last we see movement from the west into the east. These images highlight progress and the ‘bridge’ to modernity, opportunity, and even capitalism that eventually came with Route 66 in 1926. Even more broadly, they serve as commentary on rapidly growing regional and national migrations taking place.

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94 From 1926-1937 Route 66 ran straight through Barelas on 4th Street between Central Avenue (formerly Railroad Avenue) downtown until it hit the Barelas Bridge some blocks to the south. Although Route 66 changed its course in the late 1930s, heavy automobile and commercial traffic continued to flow through Barelas and across the Barelas Bridge.
though this visual narrative confronts the American idea of westward expansion as much of Albuquerque’s initial development took place east of the river. In looking east from the west, these photographs perhaps highlight more specifically the Nuevomexicano migration experience, although taken from the Euro-American viewfinder. Unlike the first three bridge images, the fourth photograph shows a westward perspective, though the subjects in view are undoubtedly moving east most likely for reasons previously discussed. It is this initial instance of construction, demolition, and reconstruction that is the basis for the memory of impermanence and the material framing of and imaging in the Barelas community. Beginning with the bridge at the turn of the century and culminating in the construction of the National Hispanic Cultural Center, Barelas has witnessed decades of structural damage, replacement, abandonment, and redevelopment.

One of these early photographers to visualize Albuquerque was Alabama Milner, an anomaly in the community of primarily male photographers. A Midwestern migrant, Alabama came to New Mexico in 1918 with her niece and children. She eventually found employment with the Walton Studio, and soon her brother, Algernon Milner, bought the Walton Studio in 1919 and turned it over to her. Alabama Milner’s time with Walton and in the control of her own studio led her to become one of Albuquerque’s leading photographers. She maintained the Milner

95 These visuals are similar to Daniel Richter’s innovative analytic perspective in his 2001 Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America. Here, Richter narrates the early history of the US from a Native perspective looking east to colonialism rather than privileging the European westward vantage point. Daniel Richter, Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).
Studio until 1955. While Milner photographed the Barelas Bridge, she also traced the spatial growth of Albuquerque seen in the city’s old and new architecture, took formal studio portraits of wedding parties, and documented the inside of St. Joseph’s Hospital, which at that time was one of the state’s more populated tuberculosis sanatoriums. Milner also photographed Native Americans and Nuevomexicanos.

When photographers took pictures of Albuquerque’s architecture and natural surroundings, some captured images of its residents only as an emphasis on the area’s perceived exoticism. Alabama Milner took advantage of the photographic opportunities in The First American Pageant, a “Wild West” type spectacle meant to attract tourists to gawk at Native Americans, their selected cultural elements, and carefully constructed style. Myla Vicenti Carpio notes that pageant organizer Mike Kirk created the pageant in 1928 to, “reinforce the notion of Indigenous peoples as past phenomenon.” In conjunction with the Fred Harvey Company’s railroad tour of Native Americans across the Southwest, Kirk envisioned this particular four-day event to reenact Albuquerque’s history from its Indigenous founding, then to the Spanish colonial years, and finally culminating in the arrival of American cowboys. From 1928-1930, spectators watched thousands of Native Americans “dancing weird and different dances” and understood that the pageant’s finale also signified that those Indigenous communities were relegated to the past. In 1930 an estimated 5,500

people watched in awe the “savage music and beauty of nearly fifty tribes of ‘primitive Southwestern Indians.’”98 Alabama Milner photographed some of those participants in its last year of production [Fig. 1.9]. In this particular image, a group of unidentified (in name and nation) Native Americans and a white male are arranged near what appears to be the train depot or near streetcar tracks. The eight Native American men are dressed in “costume,” although the third man from the left in the back has a suit jacket, shirt, and tie peaking out from underneath the weaving slung across his shoulder. The other men wear button-down shirts as well, and the man farthest to the right, somewhat away from the group, wears a Pendleton shirt. Other Milner images do not suggest that the white male in this picture is on the panel of pageant directors, although he could be another person of local importance or merely

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98 “5,500 Witness Pageant’s Opening,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 20 August 1930
a tourist getting his photo taken with the group.\textsuperscript{99} She took a few shots on location replete with kivas, tipis, and “real” Native American men dressed in their actual or stylized regalia.\textsuperscript{100}

Unlike her First American photographs, Milner’s other images of “Native Americans” and the few “Spanish” and “Mexicans” are studio shots depicting dancers in costume representing each of those cultures. These types of images were taken between 1925-1930 and appear to be composed solely of white women, adolescents, and children. The “Native Americans” were positioned in quite a different way than Milner photographed actual Natives at the First American Pageant a few years later, although they were also highly stylized, and their portrait was more of a tourist ploy than anything else. In one of these photos [Fig. 1.10], Milner has arranged four young ladies by their height and age, all wearing clothing and headdresses apparently reflective of Native American custom. The girls are all positioned with their right leg out and crossing over the left, their bodies facing the same direction, while their faces are turned toward the photographer. The oldest wears a type of war bonnet while the younger three wear another type of decorative headpiece with only a few feathers to accentuate their bands. Each of them, with the exception of the smallest girl, who appears to be four or five years old, all wear two-piece outfits decorated in Native

\textsuperscript{99} Other Milner photos show the group of the all white male pageant directors as they are dressed in western attire. One of them takes place in front of a specially constructed kiva and the other is in front of the now demolished Pueblo Building in what was then an undeveloped part of eastern Albuquerque.

\textsuperscript{100} At present, the author is unable to identify patterns in the Native American regalia that would indicate accurate tribal membership.
imagery, with just a bit of their midsections exposed. The youngest of the group is without a top and only wears what appears to be a skirt similar to the other girls. All three carry hoops or other objects in their hands, though the smallest child looks as though her left arm is raised, perhaps holding another object or fidgeting with part of her costume. This photograph at first glance, unlike the First American Pageant photos, communicates serenity and whimsy. The little girls, because of their gender and whiteness, are non-threatening. They are dancers playing dress-up, and although the Natives included in the Pageant were also “dressing up” to varying degrees as members of the American wage economy, their ethnicity and cultures were commodified to such an extent so that little boys and girls could play pretend with significant elements of Native culture.
Alabama Milner’s photographs of dancers in stereotypical Mexican and Spanish costume also embody a type of non-threatening imagery contrary to the historical and contemporary reality facing the actual people of those cultures, including Nuevomexicanos. Although the ethnicity of these particular dancers is unclear, one particular photograph [Fig. 1.11] from 1930 depicts a man and woman dressed in a mixture of both Spanish and Mexican costume, unlike what we see in other photographs similar in nature. As indicators of his ethnic costume, the “Mexican” man wears a sombrero and holds a Mexican flag in front of himself with his companion in front, as if she is about to be cloaked with the flag. The “Spanish”
woman stands with her hands on her hips, emphasizing her shawl’s fringe as it hangs from her arms and is draped over her tiered white skirt. Her hair is parted in the middle and pulled back into a bun with a comb and rose next to her ear. She is not Mexican; other photographs show “Mexican” women in identifiable china poblana costumes.

The placement of these “types” in this composition is rather interesting here, for it can be read along both gendered and racial lines, both of which work together to create a single narrative. They are dancers, yet the Mexican man is luring the Spanish woman to his side and is about to drape his flag over her, perhaps to whisk her away and steal a kiss. She stands in an assertive pose while the man hides behind his nation and his flag. It is unclear why Milner chose to pose this pair in such a way when other photographs isolate the Spanish from the Mexican. This photograph was taken during an on-going moment when many Nuevomexicanos staunchly asserted a Spanish or Spanish American identity over a Mexican identification. To be Mexican or Mexican American at this time in 1930 was dangerous and swiftly dealt with, as seen in deportation raids taking place at that time. To be Spanish at this time was a lesser offense in New Mexico than it was in other parts of the country and continent where Spanish immigrants were largely cast as political subversives. On the contrary, the representatives of Mexican and Spanish cultures were framed in a harmonious, romantic way, so that the underlying threat perceived in each of those cultures is illuminated. They, like the little girls in Native dress, are performers of exotic cultures. Alabama Milner’s photographs seem to fictionalize actual people that may
have lived only steps away from her studio. Though the photographs were of an undisclosed dance troupe, they performed or at the very least wore ethnic costumes somewhat associated with actual cultures in the area. While it is unclear who these dancers were, where they were from, or what type of dance they performed, these people assumed identities of communities under severe socioethnic persecution and discrimination. Alabama Milner’s highly stylized caricatures of Native and Spanish/Mexican Americans further reduces those actual populations to a status incompatible with the fantasy she created on film and what was emphasized in popular discourse concerning the state’s ethnic communities.

**Nuevomexicano Migration Stories and Creating a Barrio Identity**

Because the railroad so significantly transformed the labor and economic landscape, many Nuevomexicanos abandoned their agrarian livelihoods for what the city might offer them, as promised in the Barelas Bridge photographs. Although some of the families in Barelas participated in the initial resettlement of the early eighteenth century, many residents came from other parts of New Mexico to call Barelas their home. These Bareleños came from the eastern Manzano Mountains, or Los Padillas, Los Lunas, and Los Chávez to the south, from Atrisco just west, and from any number of northern communities far beyond Bernalillo and even Santa Fe. What happened in Barelas is similar to urbanization occurring in other southwest communities. Socioeconomic transformations in Barelas reflected themselves in de facto social and residential segregation of this community, although there were a
small number of non-Nuevomexicanos living in the barrio as well. The railroad transformed the Spanish-speaking populace from a largely agrarian to industrial labor workforce, culminating in the creation of dense working-class ethnic communities dedicated to blue-collar work, and increasingly faced pressures of Americanization.¹⁰¹

The railroad’s charge through Albuquerque created a cleavage separating the movement and the worn paths traveled among the people of these neighborhoods. Although the railroad created steel and iron borders between these communities, it did not sever the familial and spiritual ties that were forged for generations. The Barelas Bridge, however, partitioned the community into North and South Barelas, though it served to link east and west. By the 1930s, and after generations of forging relationships with other Nuevomexicanos across Albuquerque, Bareleños could consider themselves as part of a wider cultural community. Trekking across Central Avenue into Old Town, Los Duranes, and Martíneztown to visit friends was just as common as crossing the nearby railroad tracks into Williams and San José to visit family.

While Nuevomexicanos and Native Americans provided the labor that made Albuquerque move, there are few images dedicated to their contributions. Instead, we see vast, empty landscapes that suggest an absence of the local ethnic population or we see stylized representations of what photographers, such as Alabama Milner,

wanted them to represent. The community was a stopping point for many Nuevomexicanos because of promising opportunities for work in the Alvarado train depot, the railroad shops, or in the service industry that catered to train passengers and its laborers. Barelas’ prime location made it one of many links in Nuevomexicano chain migration. As was the case in other urban hubs, such as Los Angeles, migration to Barelas usually consisted of one family member initiating a move, usually for economic reasons though not always. Family and friends of that individual would then follow that migration route and take advantage of connections made in the new barrio.

One such migration story to Barelas began in the northern New Mexico village of Cuyamungué, close to thirty miles north of Santa Fe and eighty miles north of Albuquerque. Cleofes Romero, a World War I veteran, moved to Barelas following the war and found stable employment in the railroad shops until his retirement in the 1950s. Residing in the southern end of the barrio, Cleofes met and married Bareleña Anita Varela. His journey to Albuquerque encouraged subsequent movement of younger family members seeking greater opportunity than what their village offered them. Having an elder, more experienced member of the family already in the city made the transition to urban life easier for Cleofes’ nephew Adolfo, who lived with his uncle and aunt in Barelas throughout his youth. Because Nuevomexicano extended families commonly helped care for their younger relatives, it was no surprise that Cleofes and Anita took in their nephew. Teofila Maestas, Cleofes’ sister-in-law, passed away suddenly on April 26, 1930 due to complications
from Adolfo’s birth, leaving behind seven children to the charge of her husband, Asención Romero. Asención’s need for Cleofes and Anita to care for his youngest son in Albuquerque was obliged, and together Cleofes and Anita, who never had children of their own, raised Adolfo in Barelas.

Another case of Bareleño chain migration began south of Albuquerque. In an interview from 2001, Bareleña Lutgarda Apodaca-Gonzales described her family’s origins in Belen, a town about thirty miles south of Barelas. Mrs. Apodaca-Gonzales recalled that her grandparents initially moved to Barelas in the 1910s and then sent for their adult children to follow. These two migratory experiences were characteristic of many families who came to Barelas seeking economic stability in a known community and who ultimately found social stability with each other. These in-migrations played a major role in attracting Nuevomexicanos to Barelas as well as maintaining a steady reinforcement of traditional values and customs from sending communities. Despite the proximity of some sending communities to Barelas, there was comfort in knowing that familiar faces or relatives would receive their migrants and help them settle into the city.

Of course, many families moved to Barelas on their own without any contacts or prior experience in the area. Laura Vigil García noted that her grandparents came to Barelas immediately following the birth of their son (her father) in 1894. Her

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102 Romero family Bible, personal collection of José Erminio and Matilde Vigil Romero, Sombrillo, NM.
103 José Erminio Romero interview by author, 20 December 2010, Sombrillo, NM, tape recording.
104 Lutgarda Apodaca-Gonzales interview by the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 29 November 2001, Albuquerque, NM, video recording.
grandfather Juan de Jesus Vigil de Madariaga chose to leave his pastoral community in nearby Peralta to seek employment with the railroad. He sold his few sheep to relatives and moved his family to Barelas where they remained for over a century.\footnote{Laura V. Garcia, “Brief Recollections of South Barelas,” submitted in 1993. Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico.}

In another case, Jenny Castillo’s parents moved their eleven children from the northern village of Algodones to Atrisco (now in Southwest Albuquerque) in the 1920s and from there to Five Points, on the western banks of the Rio Grande in Albuquerque. After residing a short time in Five Points, Mrs. Castillo’s parents bought a house in Barelas where she spent the remainder of her childhood.\footnote{Jenny Castillo interview by the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 16 January 2002, Albuquerque, NM, video recording.} These are memories of the Nuevomexicano migration story; the familiar routes that families took in their transition from villages to urban communities are not unlike those of other migrations nationally and worldwide. Their difference, however, is in the relatively close proximity that these migrations occurred. With the exception of Cleofes Romero, the families described here were only thirty miles either north or south of Barelas, though that small distance was certainly enough to make a lasting impact on the family structure. Yet, these migrations are left out of the American depictions of New Mexico settlement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

While these families and others did not traverse oceans or international borders, however close they did travel created their own migration stories passed on through generations in much the same way that families of contemporary migrations
might share their stories of arrival to the US. Regardless of the path taken to reach Barelas, families and individuals settled there and formed or reaffirmed actual or spiritual kinship ties with other residents of their new community. As the locomotive industry grew, Barelas became more confined to specific borders, and residents traveled to and from to visit relatives and friends, work, and in a sense, build a larger form of community.

Although the Barelas barrio was primarily home to Nuevomexicanos, the railroad did bring some whites, Chinese, and a growing number of Mexican nationals who together affirmed that urbanization was now a reality. Part of that reality signified transition and transience. While the railroad brought non-Nuevomexicanos into Albuquerque, the few that made Barelas their home did so out of convenience and most were not in residence indefinitely, Mexicanos being an exception, perhaps due to cultural familiarity. Barelas maintained itself primarily as a Nuevomexicano barrio, and though it accommodated waves of new residents, it functioned as an ethnic enclave that encouraged ethnic solidarity through capital and labor. The mass movement of people into the area coupled with railroad industrialization transformed Barelas into New Mexico’s urban area. Similar to other ethnic enclaves, Barelas also seemed to hold assimilation at bay due to local support-networks and constant cultural reinforcement, especially with the influx of Mexicanos in small numbers throughout the twentieth century.\(^{107}\)

\(^{107}\) See Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach for their analysis of Latino ethnic enclaves in the twentieth century. Alejandro Portes and Robert L. Bach. *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California
New Mexico’s territorial years proved an ambiguous period for the Spanish-speaking population. Those who remained in the area following US annexation in 1848 were subjected to American laws, and incoming Mexican migrants had little contact with the Mexican government or its representatives.\textsuperscript{108} From 1915-1917, Albuquerque was home to at least two different Mexican consular representatives: Eligio Osuna (1915) and Ignacio Bonillas (1917).\textsuperscript{109} Unlike other cities with an exponentially growing Mexican population in the early twentieth century, the Mexican Consulate seemed to have little influence over the interests of its national citizens in Albuquerque at this time, especially in terms of labor organizing and the struggle for civil rights.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{108} There seems to be no evidence to suggest that the Mexican Consulate had an office in either Santa Fe or Albuquerque prior to 1912. Francisco León de la Barra actively held the position as \textit{Embajador de México} in 1910 although it is unclear exactly how much time he may have spent in the New Mexico territory or if his duties were limited to the states themselves. See Archivo de la Embajada de México en los Estados Unidos de América (AEMEUA), Mexico and Michael M. Smith, “Andrés G. García: Venustiano Carranza’s Eyes, Ears, and Voice on the Border,” \textit{Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos} 23:2 (2007): 355-386.

\textsuperscript{109} Archivo de la Embajada de México en los Estados Unidos de América (AEMEUA), Mexico.

\textsuperscript{110} In the early 1930s the Mexican Consulate played an active role in the desegregation of Mexican children from American schools in the Lemon Grove school district near San Diego. See Vicki L. Ruiz, “South by Southwest: Mexican Americans and Segregated Schooling, 1900-1950,” \textit{OAH Magazine of History} 15:2
Mexican Republic, the Mexican presence in New Mexico has most certainly been ignored in favor of a romanticized Spanish past. Whether celebrating the Spanish religious arts or dedicating monuments to conquistadors, the colonial history of New Mexico is fervently emphasized over Mexico’s influence in the state.\textsuperscript{111} The Spanish and Mexican identities in New Mexico occupy separate spaces in the collective memory as each one found specific political use, the former as a public identity and the latter a private one.\textsuperscript{112} The Mexican presence in New Mexico, and Barelas more specifically, was heightened with the railroad.

Following the Rio Grande, the AT&SF went as far south as El Paso and connected with the Southern Pacific across lower Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, until it finally met with the Sonora railway in Northern Mexico. By 1882 the Santa Fe announced the completion of a close to 2000-mile line that connected Guaymas,

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\textsuperscript{111} The lone exception is the Albuquerque’s Mariachi Spectacular, an almost week long annual devotion to the instruction, performance, and enjoyment of mariachi music. Sponsored in part by the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce (located in Barelas), University of New Mexico, and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mariachi Spectacular since 1994 has given workshops in music and folklórico dance, offered a star-studded concert of major names in the genre, and concluded the festival with a Catholic Mass accompanied by mariachis. This is one such instance in Albuquerque’s annual calendar of cultural events that does not focus on the Spanish colonial, although explicit reference to mariachi as inherently Mexican is avoided. The Mariachi Spectacular in fact pledges to meet the community’s needs in, “promoting culture, arts & excellence in art education that demonstrate Albuquerque’s vibrant artistic, cultural and ethnic Heart & Soul; participation builds bridges for inter-cultural understanding and appreciation in Albuquerque and other New Mexico communities,” among other things. http://mariachispectacular.com/serving-the-community/
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Sonora with Kansas City. By the end of the Porfiriato, thousands of miles of railroad track linked towns and cities within Mexico and eventually paved the way for a direct route to the United States. Mexican laborers from the southernmost part of the nation suddenly found themselves in an unfamiliar desert terrain with ironclad prospects of migration northward. The railroad provided both a means for migration and survival since the AT&SF, among others, promised employment on the trains, in the yards and shops, and on the tracks themselves. By 1909, six US railway companies employed more than six thousand Mexicanos to lay track and perform maintenance duties. Some of those that chose to continue their relationship with the railroad in the States found employment in the Santa Fe shops. In this case these

114 Porfiriato refers to the near continuous rule of president-dictator Porfirio Díaz in Mexico (1877-1880, 1884-1910).
workers overwhelmingly lived in Barelas and San José and coexisted with their Nuevomexicano neighbors.

The gains from the 1930 census – as the only census that allowed ‘Mexican’ as a viable racial category – are as apparent in New Mexico as they are in California and elsewhere with a dense Spanish-speaking population. In Barelas it seems that even for men and women who were born in New Mexico and had Nuevomexicano and/or Mexican parents, many identified racially as Mexican, and this proved especially true for those who primarily spoke Spanish.\textsuperscript{117} Although the Mexican repatriation movement of the early 1930s occurred primarily in California, Nuevomexicanos were undoubtedly touched with the same fear of deportation based on racial profiling. Xenophobia and the Great Depression were key factors in the campaign to ‘return’ Mexicans to Mexico in the 1930s. Despite citizenship status, anyone suspected of being Mexican – usually based on appearance, place of residence, and Spanish-speaking – was immediately apprehended and processed for deportation to specific towns in Mexico.\textsuperscript{118} In a way, those that racially identified as

\begin{footnotes}
\item[118] Some Mexican nationals left voluntarily with their US-born children, only to find another level of alienation that welcomed them in Mexico. An estimated 1.5 million people were deported in the 1930s, some of them settling in Mexico, while others made their way back to the United States. A similar program was initiated in 1954 as Operation Wetback to send ethnic Mexicans to Mexico. Recently the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors issued a formal apology for the 400,000 deportations carried out in this part of California alone. For more on this story see, “LA County Officials Apologize for Depression-era Deportations,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, 21 February 2012. For a thorough discussion of repatriation movement see Francisco Balderrama and Rodríguez, \textit{Decade of Betrayal}; Camille Guerin-Gonzales, \textit{Mexican
\end{footnotes}
Mexican resisted against the nativism and xenophobia characteristic of the interwar period when hysteria over unemployment and immigration was at an all time high.\textsuperscript{119}

The turn of the century saw the earliest documented expressions of Mexicanidad – Mexican identity from outside Mexico – in Barelas, due largely to the consistent stream of Mexican immigration to the area. The two most common celebrations in the barrio were the 1862 Battle of Puebla and Mexican Independence (1810-1821). A 1906 article appeared in the Nuevomexicano Spanish-language newspaper \textit{La Hormiga de Oro} promoting both the historical significance of the Battle of Puebla and the highly anticipated second visit from Theodore Roosevelt to the territory.\textsuperscript{120} Dr. Bernard Ruppe, a pharmacist whose Barelas drugstore was located on Fourth Street between Atlantic and Hazeldine Avenues, wrote the celebratory article on Roosevelt’s impending visit to “la ciudad ducal” or the Duke City, Albuquerque’s longtime moniker.\textsuperscript{121} Ruppe noted that among festivities planned for

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\item \textsuperscript{119} US Bureau of the Census, \textit{Fifteenth Census of the United States: Reports on Population}, Vol I.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Simmons, 351-352.
\item \textsuperscript{121} The \textit{Santa Fe New Mexican} carried neither Ruppe’s article nor a piece on Roosevelt’s planned visit to Albuquerque. Though the \textit{Albuquerque Journal}’s archives are lost from 1904 through 1910, it is highly probable that they carried an article on this moment. It is uncertain whether or not Ruppe wrote his article first in either Spanish or English. Simmons notes that in fact Roosevelt actually postponed his 1906 trip to New Mexico until 1912.
\end{itemize}
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all of this was to be done under a banner reading, “the president’s arrival included a parade down Railroad Avenue and Second Street in New Town, just blocks from Barelas, with little girls demonstrating their own patriotism in the form of red, white, and blue clothing and accessories. All of this was to occur under a banner reading, “Roosevelt and the State in 1904,” [Fig. 1.12] referring back to the president’s visit to Albuquerque in 1903 and the failed plea for statehood.  

Not to be outdone with the expected presidential spectacle, especially because it was almost Cinco de mayo after all, La Hormiga included a historical narrative between Benito Juárez, Emperor Maximilian, and their decisive meeting on the  

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122 “El Presidente visitará Albuquerque el día 5 de mayo,” La Hormiga de Oro: Semanario, Independiente, Dedicado a Promover y velar por los Intereses del Pueblo Hispano-Americano. 2 May 1906.
battlefield.\textsuperscript{123} The piece romantically opened with, “Juárez, el gran Juárez,” as the unnamed author played on the heroism of the liberal president. Written as if the encounter between Juárez and Maximilian happened only days ago, this piece tapped into the memories and nostalgia of both Nuevomexicanos and Mexicanos old enough to recall both the 1863 event and Juárez subsequent liberal reforms in Mexican history. Likely that these Nuevomexicano readers had no close connection with Juárez, they still gained access to that shared national memory with other Mexicanos who may have seen Juárez in person and even fought in his military against the French. Indeed, older men and women would also remember when New Mexico was part of the Mexican Republic prior to 1848.

\textit{La Hormiga’s} audience, regardless of national identification, read an inspiring story about Juárez’ triumph over French imperialism that coincided with a story promising a visit from their Rough Rider American president. It linked Juárez and Roosevelt as national heroes across borders. Juárez story reminded its readers of his triumph over tyranny. Roosevelt’s impending visit to Albuquerque was an opportunity for the designated “cultural backwater” to demonstrate its civility and plea for statehood. Not only were the residents politically motivated to demonstrate their patriotism, they likely wanted to catch a glimpse of the man who helped “liberate” Cuba from Spain in 1898. Although the paper encouraged American nationalism and hysteria on an official, public level in one column, it clandestinely promoted reverence and remembrance for Benito Juárez and Mexico itself in a non-

\textsuperscript{123} “La Unica Vez que Juarez vio a Maximiliano,” \textit{La Hormiga de Oro}. 2 May 1906.
threatening manner in an adjacent piece. In these two articles from the same paper, 
*La Hormiga* cast a wide net aimed at preserving what it felt were significant markers 
of Mexicano, Nuevomexicano, and American cultural, historical, and political 
identities.\(^{124}\) Publishing stories concerning Mexican history connected much of the 
state’s Spanish-speaking population who feared cultural annihilation as the American 
migration pushed farther westward. Framing a distinct Nuevomexicano-Mexicano identity and history through the pages of local papers favorably positioned not only the journalists but also their readership to participate in a non-threatening celebration and exploration of their Mexican ancestry.

The shaping of Barelas’ history prior to the twentieth century, based on fictive 
narratives of the Southwest and of the disparate individuals who comprised the 
community, gave way to how the neighborhood was positioned in popular memory. 
Because it straddled both Nuevomexicano and American worlds, Barelas was caught in a firestorm of urbanization and movement into and out of the neighborhood. What came to be true over time was that perceptions and ideas of the community existed and were perpetuated through various forms of media. The photographs shown here help illustrate the perception of ethnic communities and Barelas’ importance to

\(^{124}\) A. Gabriel Meléndez, historian of early Nuevomexicano journalism, notes that Jesús Enrique Sosa, *La Hormiga* founder and Mexican expatriate, established three additional papers during his life in central and northern New Mexico. Sosa’s educational background in Mexico, as Meléndez discusses, was quite unlike other “Neo-Mexicano” (Nuevomexicano) journalists, though he shared a deep interest for retaining a distinct New Mexican identity and expressed it through the printing press. Meléndez, 88-91.
Albuquerque, an importance that only grew over the decades. The Barelas Bridge, while it provided passageway across the Rio Grande, brought people into Barelas as well. The community’s location made it an ideal destination for Nuevomexicano migrants seeking better employment opportunities; one of course was at the railroad shops nearby. Just like their community, these Bareleños will be framed as well.
Chapter Two: “Contesting a Contradictory Frame of Wartime Barelas in Pictures and on Paper”

I am from Barelas,
I make that statement with pride and dignity.
--- Pat R. Vigil of South Barelas\textsuperscript{125}

In 1935, just a few years shy of his epic publication, \textit{Grapes of Wrath}, John Steinbeck released a novel detailing the lives of a community of Depression-era \textit{paisanos}. \textit{Tortilla Flat}, so named for the area overlooking the hills of Monterey, was a precursor to the many California-themed novels and short stories that sky-rocketed Steinbeck’s fame in the literary world.\textsuperscript{126} But it was this early novel that surprisingly impacted the Barelas community, a much different world some thousand miles away, with a completely different set of historical circumstances leading to its notoriety. Although most residents of South Barelas assumed that their community was nicknamed “Tortilla Flat(s)” because of the number of tortillas consumed there on any given day, or because of the nearby El Modelo restaurant, few remember that such a designation resulted from Steinbeck and his literary vision as it played out in the motion picture of the same name. One Bareleña believed that the moniker was because, “there were a lot of poor, little houses in our neighborhood...You know, like beans, tortillas and chile. We may have all been poor, but we all seemed to make it somehow.”\textsuperscript{127} Former Barelas resident Pat R. Vigil noted in his memoirs,

\textsuperscript{125} Pat R. Vigil memoir, page 1, n.d. Pat R. Vigil Collection, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Of Mice and Men} (1937), \textit{Grapes of Wrath} (1939), and \textit{East of Eden} (1952) are some of the more famous of these.
Some individuals within Upper Barelas boundaries often looked-down at Lower Barelas residents, whom they called “Tortilla Flat”...I wish to clarify one misconception, among many. That is the name of “Tortilla Flat” once applied to the entire Barelas area. The name “Tortilla Flat” originated after World War II. This area came into existence when a series of shanty-towns, ill constructed homes sprang up south of old Dan Avenue. They were made from whatever construction materials were available. However, even in this “shanty-town” homes were reasonable, well cared for and maintained. This was the area called “Tortilla Flat.” It was named by an unknown after the old movie, starring the famous actor, Spencer Tracy. It was a derogatory term. In later years the term was applied to the entire Barelas area by an uneducated nitwit.\

Mr. Vigil’s poignant explanation for how South or Lower Barelas came to be known as “Tortilla Flat” wedds together his understanding and experience of socioeconomic discrimination and the effects that representation in popular culture had on his community. From the film’s release in 1942, and on into the present day, this place-name identification has survived, even when South Barelas did not. The genealogy of that designation in South Barelas is linked to its earliest creation in the experiences of Steinbeck himself.

By the 1940s, academic investigations of ethnic and working class communities in the United States and elsewhere became commonplace as scholars actively worked to link race and intellectual capability with socioeconomic ineptitude. New Mexico was no exception to this output of research, especially in regard to the often friendly but also volatile relationship between Nuevomexicanos and white Americans. Yale sociology student Carolyn Zeleny discussed that coexistence in her 1944 doctoral thesis titled, “Relations between the Spanish

\[128\] Pat R. Vigil memoir, page 3, n.d. Pat R. Vigil Collection, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.
Americans and Anglo-Americans in New Mexico: A Study of Conflict and Accommodation in a Dual-Ethnic Situation.” As she states:

The other areas of Spanish-American segregation are clearly “areas of minimal choice” to which the disadvantaged Spanish-American population has been relegated by the force of economic pressure. One of these, Barelas, is situated near the Santa Fe Railroad shops, where noise and dirt create unfavorable living conditions. All of them are characterized by unpaved streets and shabby adobe dwellings, which make them clearly low-class residential neighborhoods. The existence of these neighborhoods reflects upon the social status of the whole group, much as do the slum-dwellings of urban immigrant groups in our larger cities elsewhere in the country.129

Zeleny’s observation identifies Barelas as one of the more disadvantaged Nuevomexicano barrios in Albuquerque that, due to economic circumstance, actually suffered because of its proximity to the railroad. For Zeleny, an academic from the east coast, dirt roads and adobe homes seemed to signify a pre-modern existence. Unfortunately, this was a familiar opinion of Nuevomexicanos who, voluntarily or not, remained in their traditional homes. Zeleny would have her readers believe that Barelas’ proximity to the railroad was a disadvantage; rather, it was because of the railroad that Bareleños and other Nuevomexicanos made a living wage, especially during the Depression and into the World War II period. Zeleny’s research expressed an outsider opinion; residents such as Pat R. Vigil expressed a deep-seated pride in coming from the barrio, despite the socioeconomic inequalities that often made life challenging.

This chapter focuses on the collision of three fronts – academic, popular, and official – that indirectly worked to produce a contradictory frame of poverty.

degeneration, and prosperity. It begins with an analysis of the academic inquiry of Nuevomexicanos from scholars who worked with or against George I. Sánchez’ critique of local education, Nuevomexicano cultural complexity, and American assimilation. These studies worked to justify city and county intervention into the area, especially as the war neared its end and barrio infrastructure seemed to support mid-century American life and expectations. Next, the chapter discusses a damning image of Mexican Americans as constructed in John Steinbeck’s *Tortilla Flat*. Of primary concern is how Steinbeck’s *paisano* caricature of Californian Mexican Americans denigrated the larger ethnic community. This variation of the “lazy Mexican” archetype even extended itself into Barelas. Finally, this chapter ends with an analysis of the Office of War Information’s (OWI) 1943 photographic stop into Albuquerque’s railroad shops. These images offer a counter to the academic studies and Steinbeck’s literary imagery that generalized disparity in Mexican American communities. Whereas some scholars such as Zeleny provided the qualitative evidence of Mexican American inferiority and laziness – reinforced in film and literature – the OWI images challenge those claims and instead provide a clear image of Nuevomexicanos’ participation in the war effort. During the beginning of the 1930s, Bareleños – and Nuevomexicanos more generally – were framed into a stereotypical identity that later provided justification for their displacement a generation later.
Academics and the Empirical Frame

Mexican Americans, like other people of color, increasingly came under rhetorical attack as they were blamed for the economic woes of the 1930s, the degeneration of patriarchal values, and were seen as a hindrance to the general progress of American society. Despite fervent American hyper-nationalism of the WWII period, the reality for many ethnic minorities as legitimate US citizens was far from celebratory. In the midst of internment efforts, riots, institutional segregation, and other acts of brute violence, academics across the country looked for biological reasons to explain the second-class status of people of color.

Since the late eighteenth-century, scientific racism in the form of intelligence testing, phrenology, and other forms of classification was seen as an accurate indicator of a community’s worth and an individual’s potential. The question of varying degrees of “civilization” and “barbarism” gave impetus to stereotyping of many ethnic communities, including Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Investigating levels of “primitive” and “modern” traits, many members of the social sciences attributed environment as a key community indicator of qualities such as intellectual capacity and ambition, although some such as Franz Boas, challenged those assumptions. As many scholars continued forging a path of pseudoscience and intelligence testing to prove Mexican American deficiency well into the 1940s, literary authors adopted similar ideas concerning the Spanish-speaking population.

and illustrated them in their works of popular fiction. The people and their behaviors were reduced to caricatures in print and on film.

While the early 1940s relished in feel-good war films and enjoyed the promises of abundant job opportunities, this moment in US history was also fraught with new or continued academic investigations into the root of ethnic poverty. Nuevomexicano George I. Sánchez, education professor at the University of Texas at Austin, explored rural poverty in Taos County, NM, among the Spanish-speaking population in his 1940 study *Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans.*\(^{131}\) Though not the first of Sánchez’ studies on the people of New Mexico or the educational system, this particular book came at the end of his long relationship with UNM and the State of New Mexico, who for years funded his various research projects on Hispano literacy rates.\(^{132}\) Here, Sánchez criticized prevailing theorists who suggested that centuries of generational conquest actually inhibited the progress of the Hispano community. He found that Nuevomexicano geographical isolation coupled with discriminatory economic factors were key in the Taoseño inability to overcome their contemporary impoverished circumstance.\(^{133}\) He noted that,

\begin{quote}
More and more people are living on less and less land which is becoming poorer and poorer. Only the share-cropper and tenant in the South present comparable pictures of distress and privation. Poverty stricken families are forced to become migratory laborers, trekking north into Colorado to chop beets, to pick peas, and to gather potatoes…As long as the New Mexican is
\end{quote}


\(^{132}\) Lynne Marie Getz, *Schools of their Own: The Education of Hispanos in New Mexico, 1850-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

\(^{133}\) Taoseño refers to the Spanish-speaking Taos residents, as opposed to the Native Americans of Taos Pueblo and the Anglo Americans artists’ colony in town.
unable to make a satisfactory livelihood he cannot profit greatly from measures designed for his welfare. A full stomach and economic security are the prerequisites to social progress.\textsuperscript{134}

According to Sánchez, historical isolation and few economic opportunities prevented Taoseños and Nuevomexicanos in general from integrating with both the core of Mexico throughout in the early nineteenth century and the Americans later in the twentieth century.

Sánchez argued that formal childhood education was neither culturally attainable nor economically feasible. In New Mexico and other economically poor states, especially in light of the Depression, the lack of resources necessitated children to work alongside the family to contribute to the household income. Furthermore, and much to the chagrin of his colleagues at the university and in politics, Sánchez argued that few resources were spent on funding primary education since the American takeover of New Mexico. The reason Nuevomexicano schoolchildren seemed to fall far behind was not for a lack of intellectual capability. In fact, as Sánchez argued, the American system failed them. He found that New Mexican education was worsened with a lack of bilingual instruction for Spanish-speaking children who did attend school on a near regular basis. Those children did not have the adequate tools to compete with their white classmates. As the US had long instituted Americanization immersion programs and directives, the possibility that there could simultaneously exist bilingual education was remarkable at the time.

\textsuperscript{134} Sánchez, 64 and 89.
Sánchez set forth a scathing critique in part due to his dedicated research and analytical skills. But, he also experienced firsthand the shortcomings of the New Mexico school system for part of his childhood. He was from Barelas. Sánchez spoke with an insider’s sensibility that was unique to his time. Although he inspired several studies on Albuquerque’s impoverished areas for the next twenty-five yeas, none of those budding scholars could claim the same historical or cultural ties to the area. In the years immediately following *The Forgotten People*, at least five UNM Master’s theses investigated poverty, urbanization, and cultural change in Nuevomexicano communities. Sociology students primarily conducted research in areas of the closest proximity; they looked toward older Albuquerque neighborhoods for their answers. Titled similarly though produced six years apart, sociology graduate students Laura Waggoner and Frank Moore both embarked on separate investigations of the San José barrio in relation to urbanization and acculturation during the 1940s. Their research choice was interesting and convenient for a number of factors, specifically the Spanish-speaking population and its proximity to the locomotive shops. These analyses neither commented nor considered Barelas in relation to San José and their near-identical journey into urbanization. After all, the

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two communities were neighbors prior to the railroad’s entrance in 1881. Both studies discussed rural transformation, lack of acculturation and assimilation, and how these factors led to overt poverty among Nuevomexicanos in a particular area of Albuquerque.

Waggoner, writing the earlier of the two analyses, repeated common notions of cultural deficiency as she wrote that New Mexicans “had no tradition of competition, of education, or of western civilization beyond the sixteenth century. Consequently the great majority of the citizens of New Mexico who are of Spanish descent constitute a severely handicapped social and economic minority.”136 She went on to note that this deficiency revealed itself in the dwellings, occupations, and need for government aid and relief. Sociologist Phillip B. Gonzales writes that while the growing dependency on aid escalated by the 1930s, reasons could be found in Nuevomexicano – or Manito – employment opportunities that existed mostly in shepherding, dairy work, and other manual labors.137 Waggoner wrote that by 1941 53 percent of families relied on commodities and other programs to survive through the days and weeks.138 Despite the high level of economic need in the San José barrio, and the limited, low-wage jobs overall, Waggoner was apathetic and unconcerned with deeper systematic reasons for their impoverishment.

136 Waggoner, 4.
138 Ibid., 65.
Operating in a similar sociological inquiry, we can return to Carolyn Zeleny’s 1944 dissertation. Unsurprisingly, she found that the socioeconomic circumstance of the Nuevomexicano was partly due to his or her lack of acculturation in to the American system. Zeleny argued that,

Although the traditional lives of the Spanish-Americans have entailed much hard work, pressure has not been great and the enjoyment of leisure has been greatly prized by them...One or two university students interviewed, after a tirade against the economic prejudice which prevented them in securing good jobs, admitted that they had turned down positions which sounded like “too much work”...In spite of the fact that the Spanish-American has suffered from his underprivileged position, it is possible that the accommodation by which he was accorded a position of subordinacy [sic] has been in part because of his cultural heritage.\(^{139}\)

Zeleny returned to George I. Sánchez’ work throughout her study and reduced his analyses as merely him exploring the “problems of a group.” While Sánchez blamed system-wide economics and politics for deficiencies in Nuevomexicano social standing, Zeleny attributed problems to cultural backwardness due to the existence of widespread complacency and laziness in Spanish-speaking communities.

Furthermore, Zeleny found that the assimilation process stalled in New Mexico for a number of reasons. First, she recognized that Nuevomexicanos were unlike migrants new to the country, as the people of the new US southwest had little choice in their colonization. Zeleny heavily critiqued the Territorial Period for allowing Nuevomexicanos to remain culturally isolated with little need to venture outside their communities. Regardless of her complete misreading of New Mexican life after 1848, she asserted that “the group was too well adjusted to its poverty to be stirred by

\(^{139}\) Zeleny, 193-194.
strong [American] incentives for group betterment...The continued use of the Spanish language has isolated the group and retarded other aspects of assimilation.”

Zeleny continued her discussion, calling attention to physical stereotyping as another element preventing Nuevomexicanos from full social membership. The skin tone of Spanish-speaking people in the southwest, Zeleny claimed, led to the creation of the “greaser” stereotype in the minds of newcomers to the area. Zeleny argued that the primary use of Spanish made the greaser identifier even worse, as they were immediately considered a distinct outside group despite their long history in the area. In addition to their language, Zeleny noted that Nuevomexicano clothing failed “to measure up to the standards of style displayed by even the less prosperous Anglos.”

She supported her point, by citing author and artist Mary Austin’s 1931 article, “Mexicans and New Mexico,”

Clothes for the lower-class group come from Spanish-American clothing shops of a low quality, or from low-grade American dry-goods stores. Black is a favorite color even in summer...Black-shawled old women, devoutly counting their beads, are seen in the churches or hobbling along in religious processions. The men dress much as do the Anglos of the less prosperous classes.

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140 Ibid., 297.
141 Here Zeleny quotes Carey McWilliams’ Brothers Under the Skin (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1943): 120.
142 Zeleny, 298. Quote from Mary Austin, “Mexicans and New Mexico,” Survey Graphic 66 (May 1931): 141-144. Mary Austin was originally from Illinois and spent much of her life in California before moving to Santa Fe, NM, later in life. She became enamored with Hispano and Native American culture. Her story as an activist, feminist, and cultural preservationist in New Mexico, while praised by many during her lifetime and even as she was remembered in the early twenty-first century, has yet to be critically analyzed for any orientalist attitudes she held about the local people. See for example, Susan Goodman, Mary Austin and the American West (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) and Lynn Cline, “Mary Austin: Oracle of Santa Fe,” The Santa Fe New Mexican, 9 April 2004.
According to Zeleny and her contemporaries, these were a couple of the reasons that Nuevomexicanos suffered the ills of “social segregation” and the reception of racial epithets and antagonism. Zeleny remarked that even “Anglo boys would hesitate to enter a ‘Mexican district’ at night because of beatings which have sometimes occurred under such circumstances” of racial taunting.143

Many analyses of the Nuevomexicano socioeconomic condition in the 1930s and 1940s reflected broader ideas concerning poverty, ethnicity, and progress among the US’ communities of color. While Zeleny’s work is highlighted here, she was by no means extreme or unique in her ideas at the time of her writing. Reading Zeleny alongside George I. Sánchez, who she does cite at length, serves as an example of the tension within academia to cast off whole communities based on cultural traits or geographic location. While Zeleny and her contemporaries worked and existed in a world far removed from the realities of Nuevomexicano life – both urbanized and rural – they nonetheless perpetuated long-established stereotypes and provided evidence explaining the Nuevomexicano unattainability of American social membership. What they did in academia was also reproduced in literature for popular consumption and as a means to normalize such views of Mexican Americans.

Nosotros los paisanos: Steinbeck’s Mexican Americans

Born to first-generation California residents, John Steinbeck grew up in and around California’s central coast, among the rich agricultural fields and foggy

143 Ibid., 305.
seascapes. From Salinas to King City, and the many towns between the two, Steinbeck crafted stories and characters out of these backdrops. His early life in this area, including his years at Stanford and brief time in San José, created one of California’s most recognized and celebrated authors of the twentieth century. Certainly, the area boasts any number of street signs and local monuments in his honor, especially within Monterey Country as Salinas and Monterey were of particular literary importance to the author.\textsuperscript{144} It was during his time in the Monterey Bay in the early 1930s that Steinbeck found the fodder for his collection of short stories-turned-novel, \textit{Tortilla Flat}. There, Steinbeck came into the company of Susan Gregory, a granddaughter of the Hartnell and de la Guerra families of Salinas and Santa Barbara, respectively.\textsuperscript{145} Steinbeck often visited her and Harriet Gragg, who shared their stories of the local Spanish-speaking population he came to call the \textit{paisanos}, as Steinbeck, “couldn’t get enough of them.”\textsuperscript{146} The most material came from Susan Gregory, who taught Spanish at Monterey High School and took extensive notes on the population she served, which she relayed during future visits with Steinbeck.

During one such reunion with other friends, including an ex-mayor of Monterey, Gregory heard a police siren climbing up the street to the hillside

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\textsuperscript{144} Both the Steinbeck House and the National Steinbeck Center are located in Salinas, various commemorative material is located along Monterey’s Cannery Row, the largest collection pertaining to the author is housed in San José State University’s Steinbeck Center, and Stanford’s Wells Fargo Steinbeck Collection are the most widely recognizable attractions for scholars and Steinbeck fans alike.  
\textsuperscript{146} Nelson Valjean, \textit{John Steinbeck, the Errant Knight: An Intimate Biography of His California Years} (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1975): 136, 145. 
\end{flushright}
community, at which point the ex-mayor shouted, “‘There must be hell poppin’ on Tortilla Flat’…Sue [Gregory] made a note and later repeated it to John. He was elated. Tortilla Flat! Tortilla Flat!”

Although another source claims that Gregory named her hillside cottage ‘Tortilla Flat’ early in 1926, both stories confirm the extractive manner in which John Steinbeck found the title for his book. As a gesture of gratitude, Steinbeck dedicated the book to Susan Gregory in the final published version. Although the author translated his friends’ anecdotes into his own stories, Steinbeck based much of his writing on his own interactions with the residents themselves. Steinbeck was known to frequent “paisano parties” where he and Carol, his first wife, drank, danced, and listened to their local companions play music.

Between Susan Gregory and Steinbeck himself, the fictional characters of Tortilla Flat seemed almost identical to the real residents of the hillside community. They were a rowdy group of men who hardly worked, enjoyed light adventures, and engaged in a drink or two with the other residents of the neighborhood. These were the paisanos, although it is unclear if they referred to

147 Ibid., 147.
149 Valjean, 147.
150 Descendants of Mary “Mamita” Dixon, a Carmel, CA woman of the Chumash Native American community, contest that Gregory was responsible for introducing Steinbeck to the Monterey Bay “paisanos.” In fact, Santa Cruz author Lois Robin conducted an oral history with Mary Dixon’s relatives in 2010. They argue that Mamita, a resident of Tortilla Flat, and other Native Americans she knew were the actual inspiration for Steinbeck’s story. Some even make the case that the Señora Teresina character (to be analyzed here) was based on Mary Dixon. See Lois Robin, Mamita’s House: A True Tale of Tortilla Flat (Santa Cruz, CA: Robin Productions, 2010).
themselves by the same name. Although the plot followed the protagonist, Danny, and his friends, it was because of their culture and ethnicity that the characters engaged in such unorthodox behavior. It was because of these elements that the public found them so endearing and irrational. The *paisano* [Fig. 2.1] was described as,

a mixture of Spanish, Indian, Mexican and assorted Caucasian bloods. His ancestors have lived in California for a hundred or two years. He speaks English with a paisano accent and Spanish with a paisano accent. When questioned concerning his race, he indignantly claims pure Spanish blood and rolls up his sleeve to show that the soft inside of his arm is nearly white. His color, like that of a well-browned meerschaum pipe, he ascribes to sunburn. He is a paisano, and he lives in that uphill district above the town of Monterey called Tortilla Flat, although it isn’t flat at all.¹⁵¹

The first introduction of the community is a racialized one crouched in a complicated, colonial history and identity. Steinbeck based the fictitious characters on real people,

and as cultural anomalies ignorant of the American capitalist system, they were supposed to be authentic remnants of the glorious Spanish past, existing in a suspended state neither wholly Spanish nor American. Steinbeck’s placement of the paisanos in a hillside barrio provided an isolated space in which the characters could live just as they were accustomed, in a social circumstance unfettered with the capricious nature of capitalism, and among those who spoke the same regional Spanish [Fig. 2.2]. At once, the readers are thrown into the world of Tortilla Flat and follow along as the characters steal, binge drink, throw parties, and harass the young women of the barrio.

A common point of discussion in subsequent book reviews was not necessarily the storyline, as Danny and his friends, Pilon and the Pirate, comprised a poor man’s King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable.\textsuperscript{152} In fact, it was their

\textsuperscript{152} The parameters of this dissertation limit further discussion of Steinbeck’s narrative beyond how he described the characters and their living situation. For a more complex critique of Steinbeck’s literary style and intellectual contribution, see for
ethnicity and livelihood that drew substantial attention. In 1938 Burton Rascoe, reviewer for *The English Journal*, began his discussion of the novel with a breakdown in their identity, since that seemed so necessary for understanding the plot. He immediately explained to his readers that, “*paisanos* are mixed-breed Mexicans. That is to say, a people who may have flowing in their veins the blood of Spanish conquistadors, Mayan chieftains, Inca artisans, Mongol Manchus, Ute Indians, and descendants of Cotton or Increase Mather, collateral or direct.”

Steinbeck’s opening description of the paisanos’ ethnicity created a frenzy for his readership and was but one more example of communities of color providing elements of comic relief in their perceived innocence, savagery, and barbarism. Wilbur Needham for the *Los Angeles Times* enthusiastically praised Steinbeck’s characters as,

> lovable thieves…they are part Spanish and Mexican, part Indian, and part varieties of other things. None of these other bloods contributed any energy to spoil the Latin and Indian delightful lethargy: a laziness in the face of work to earn money, but a sleepiness that awakes when wine is drunk or love is not too far away. They will even work, if there is no other way…if they cannot steal something to trade for [a jug of wine].

Although it received wide critical acclaim, reviewer Kyle Crichton, an author who later wrote on Nuevomexicanos, noted that the story was about a, “worthless bunch of

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Mexicans in California and extremely funny if you can forget that it [was] after all about poverty-stricken people. I should laugh at that more than I do.”\textsuperscript{155} No doubt, Steinbeck wrote \textit{Tortilla Flat} during some of the worst moments of the Depression as seen in the photographs of his contemporaries working both independently and with the Farm Security Administration (FSA).\textsuperscript{156}

Although claiming to have fraternized with the Spanish-speaking people of Monterey and delighting himself in secondhand stories of their daily lives, Steinbeck turned their destitution into a mockery and eventual tourist attraction. Despite the tragic ending of Danny’s death in \textit{Tortilla Flat}, the book was seen as a carefree tale of people who lived within the means of their poverty, even if that meant committing petty crime to acquire what little that they did desire. But of course, this was a work of fiction, as few people in the midst of the Depression could hardly be content in their utter and complete abjection. Evidently, for some of Steinbeck’s readers, the book may have well been an ethnography charting the plight of the poor. Tourists looking for the authentic, the contradiction to their own identity and American capitalist existence, flocked to the area looking for real-life versions of their beloved characters. Not only did Steinbeck fanatics seek out the Tortilla Flat winos, the local newspaper even referred to the book when commenting on commotion along the

\textsuperscript{155} Kyle Crichton, “Contents Noted,” \textit{Life}, August 1935, pg. 39. Interesting that Crichton criticized Steinbeck at this point, for less than ten years later, he published \textit{The Proud People}, a novel exploiting some of the very issues in Mexican American life that Crichton himself criticized Steinbeck for discussing. Kyle Crichton, \textit{The Proud People: A Novel} (New York: Charles Schribner’s Sons, 1944).

\textsuperscript{156} Primarily, the work of Paul S. Taylor and Dorothea Lange documented migrant worker strife from the Midwest through California.
barrio’s Johnson Street, although the homes had since been razed and rebuilt. Still, many residents relished in the opportunity and demand for “Tortilla Flat parties.”\footnote{Valjean, 156, and Rascoe, 208.}

Unsurprisingly, not everyone in Monterey was pleased with either Steinbeck or the perception he cast over the people. The most severe critic was the Chamber of Commerce of Monterey, whose members felt strongly against praising \textit{Tortilla Flat}, and instead thought the town’s more positive elements merited recognition.\footnote{Lee Shippey, “Lee Side o’LA,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, 7 September 1938.}

Evidently, Steinbeck received backlash against his publication as he soon included a forward to the 1937 printing of \textit{Tortilla Flat}. Steinbeck issued the following remarks:

\begin{quote}
When this book was written, it did not occur to me that paisanos were curious or quaint, dispossessed or underdoggish. They are people, whom I know and like, people who merge successfully with their habitat…Had I known that these stories and these people would be considered quaint, I think I never should have written them…These stories are out, and I cannot recall them. But I shall never again subject to the vulgar touch of the \textit{decent} these good people of laughter and kindness, of honest lusts and direct eyes, of courtesy beyond politeness. If I have done them harm by telling a few of their stories, I am sorry. It will not happen again…Adiós, Monte.
\end{quote}

This apology, despite the fact that he seems to equate the description of a Mexican American community akin to observing wild animals in their natural environment, appears to bookend an equally, if not more problematic, anecdote Steinbeck used to illustrate his pure intentions in the treatment of people he considered friends.

Steinbeck recounted a memory of a childhood friend he had and how he and his sister lived. Devoid of any human identity, the “nice, kind, brown little boy” was called “the \textit{piojo}” (head lice) and shared a home with his sister, called, “with a great deal of respect, a hoor-lady.” She was an unnamed sex worker. For Steinbeck, at least in
this moment of reflection, the friend and his sister lived an uncharacteristic life. They had little running water, and in fact, they retrieved water from the toilet for cooking and drinking. Of course, as Steinbeck swiftly notes, this toilet was only used as a receptacle for a constant flow of clean water. It was not used for one’s personal relief. Although so much time had passed since Steinbeck’s youth, the apparent reverence he felt for his childhood friend was so pure that he “still can’t think of the hoor-lady as (that nastiest of words) a prostitute, nor of piojo’s many uncles, those jolly men who sometimes gave us nickels, as her clients.”¹⁵⁹ These people were in the same company as the paisanos of Tortilla Flat – they were a people to be honored and celebrated as they fought for daily survival. Unfortunately, though, Steinbeck’s seemingly noble intentions did not come through in his forward nor did they appear in his text. This “apology” underscores and highlights the ways in which Steinbeck’s storytelling created an additional level of Mexican American exploitation and the impoverished, violent conditions in which some of them lived.

Not only did the paisanos embody ethnic and economic disparity to many of Steinbeck’s readers, their mere existence in the 1930s was also surprising as the few years leading up to the book’s publication were marked with incredible violence against Mexican American communities. It is likely that Steinbeck had some awareness of the Mexican and Mexican American deportation movement beginning in 1929, as he often boasted about his connection to the Spanish-speaking people of

¹⁵⁹ John Steinbeck, Tortilla Flat (New York: Random House, 1937). The forward only appears in the second edition of Tortilla Flat and is separately copyrighted in the year of its publication. The pages are unnumbered and precede the table of contents.
California and was a contemporary of Carey McWilliams, Paul S. Taylor, and other scholars investigating the area and its laborers. None of this context was highlighted in *Tortilla Flat*. A fraction of that awareness could have been shared with the author’s audience, as these early instances of racial profiling en masse took place on a highly publicized scale. Resulting from both the Depression and perception that Mexican and Mexican-descent people were lazy, carefree, and culpable for job scarcity during hard economic times, the US government organized a two-pronged effort – official and unofficial, brutal and traumatic – to remove and relocate individuals, families, and whole communities to areas throughout Mexico.

The first type of persuasion was considered voluntary by way of dehumanizing, terrifying tactics. Termination of assistance benefits, unemployment, and general threatening their means of survival encouraged families to move with the help of free railway passage and the promise of help once in Mexico. The second type of persuasion was more direct, as many were apprehended against their will and packed into a cattle car en route to Mexico. In this way, families experienced a violent forced separation as many spouses, parents, and children were snatched up without any notification to their family members or due process. Those in most pressing danger were more likely to fit the Mexican phenotypical stereotype, speak Spanish, and congregate in predominantly Spanish-speaking areas whether or not they were US or Mexican citizens. Unsurprisingly, many of the estimated 500,000
total deportees came from the Los Angeles area. By the mid-1930s, these measures declined, as the American public seemed satisfied that these intimidation tactics proved somewhat successful, and the undesirable agricultural work was left vacant for the white migrant laborers Steinbeck later celebrated in his *Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

The people of *Tortilla Flat* were a safe, lovable bunch of impoverished Mexican Americans. They posed neither threat to nor burden on the American welfare state since they had no desire to participate in its whims. This is why in the post-deportation era, Steinbeck’s paisanos received such a warm response in the minds of his readers who were all too familiar with “bad” Mexicans who, because of the nature of the deportation movement, were nothing less than guilty in the public eye. Although framed within such a hostile domestic circumstance, Steinbeck’s paisanos were freed from the criminal frame that characterized other Mexicans and Mexican Americans at the time. This was due partly to their poverty and seemingly noble choice to survive on their own means. The way they lived and where they lived further reinforced the paisanos’ social difference from white Americans.

In contrast to the more prosperous agricultural, canning, and fishing industries of the Monterey Bay, the Tortilla Flat community was a conglomeration of wooden shacks and near hopelessness. A stark contrast to the coastal landscape down the hill, the paisanos lived in squalor and abandoned fruit trees with “a few tent-like chicken coops [that] lay among the weeds, a pile of rusty barrel hoops, a heap of ashes and a

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160 See Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*; Guerin-Gonzáles, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*. 
sodden mattress,” to make it complete. Although it seemed that some might have running water, they lacked electricity for their basic needs. Tortilla Flat was a shantytown. Rascoe also noted that “the paisanos [were] clean of commercialism, free of the complicated systems of American business, and, having nothing that can be stolen, exploited or mortgaged, that system has not attacked them very rigorously,” as impoverished people often have very few valuable material possessions to lose, and this very quality was what made them charming, pleasant, and non-threatening. Still, the reviewer affirmed that simple sensibility as he believed the paisanos, if confronted with the possibility, would only steal out of necessity, and even then he would have to force himself to do so. As such, undamaged by the ills of capitalism, the paisano existed in a simple universe with very little worry to bother him. These characters led Tortilla Flat to worldwide success.

Coincidentally in 1936, children’s book author Margaret “Peggy” Pond Church released a story remarkably similar to Steinbeck’s novel, though it took place in New Mexico. The Burro of Angelitos [Fig. 2.3] told the tale of a musically inclined, lazy, ownerless burro and his relationship with a likewise careless pauper who claimed ancestry to the Spanish conquistadors. At the outset, the young reader encounters Tomasito, the burro, as he wanders along fields and meadows, whistling

\[161\] Steinbeck, 29.
\[162\] Rascoe, 206.
\[163\] Margaret Pond Church, The Burro of Angelitos (Los Angeles: Suttonhouse Ltd., 1936).
and singing songs to celebrate his solitude. Tomasito was a transient burro that enjoyed his leisurely strolls through the town of Angelitos and feasted on a diet of strewn trash he encountered in the arroyos and yards. Although other burros lived in Angelitos, they worked and regularly hurled insults at Tomasito, attempting to embarrass the donkey for his easy-going life.

Soon, Tomasito encountered Tranquilidad de Oñate, a man of comparable work ethic and appearance. Readers familiar with the conquest of New Mexico know that Tranquilidad’s surname refers to Don Juan de Oñate, the early colonist who settled New Mexico in 1598. Lest the reader question Tranquilidad’s social status, the author noted that “the proud name, however, was practically the sole possession of its owner, since it was the only thing he had been able to achieve and to maintain
Just as Tomasito enjoyed his constant napping, so too did Tranquilidad, just as his name suggested. Similar to Steinbeck’s paisanos, Tranquilidad dressed in the same disheveled fashion, though with a typical Nuevomexicano flair, unlike the coastal paisanos. Tattered overalls, a recognizable Stetson hat, and shoes that hardly kept his toes from peeking through the leather were all satisfactory to Tranquilidad as, “to have been otherwise would have required more energy than he was accustomed to expending.”165 Suddenly, the conflict between a homeless man and burro arose as Tranquilidad sought a solution to the burro’s constant interruptions of the man’s regular naps. As a descendant of conquistadors, Tranquilidad felt insulted at the lack of respect Tomasito showed his biological and social superior.

After various schemes to quiet the burro and seek retribution for his disrespect, Tranquilidad finally dominated Tomasito into submission through trickery. For Tranquilidad, the ultimate insult bestowed on a man – or burro – of leisure was work. After borrowing a pack saddle and axe from a cousin, who lent them out of pity, Tranquilidad finally and forcefully dressed Tomasito for labor. Despite his hallucinations and misunderstanding of Tranquilidad’s intentions, Tomasito finally succumbed and was loaded with a substantial stack of juniper logs that Tranquilidad had surprisingly cut down. Subject to the same insults hurled at Tomasito, the workingmen of Angelitos were impressed with Tranquilidad’s effort to transform Tomasito from a tramp to a pack animal, just as this conquest also

164 Ibid., 12.
165 Ibid., 14.
transformed Tranquilidad into a respectable member of society, and even alluded to the larger process of Spanish colonization of New Mexico and the Americas. Tranquilidad found a purpose in dominating the burro, and gave the burro a purpose in his own oppression.

Like Steinbeck, Peggy Pond Church was from the area depicted in her writings. She wrote another children’s book, *Shoes for the Santo Niño*, which earned her considerable local fame as it explored the story of Catholic New Mexico’s most celebrated saint. That is to say, Pond Church’s writings on New Mexico were not uninformed stories written by a newcomer to the state. On the contrary, her carefree – or rather, careless – story of Tranquilidad and Tomasito came from her own perspective and experience as a lifelong resident of New Mexico, just as Steinbeck used his own life in California as writing material. On a much smaller scale, *The Burro of Angelitos* communicated a storyline similar to *Tortilla Flat*, albeit without the problematic adult issues present, though with the characters’ same child-like sensibilities.

Upon its release, the *Los Angeles Times* called the children’s book a “Miniature ‘Tortilla Flat’” that depicted a donkey, Tomasito, and his relationship with his “master,” Tranquilidad de Oñate, in New Mexico. In fact, Steinbeck even

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166 In fact, her father, Ashley Pond II, founded the Los Alamos Boys Ranch School in Northern New Mexico in 1917. Later, her husband, Fermor Church, took over as headmaster from 1922 until it closed for the Manhattan Project in 1943. “Newcomers Club Speech,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 14 June 1974.
endorsed Pond Church’s book in the article. Likewise, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* hailed the storyline, as it possessed a, “profound human quality,” for its readers. It even earned a prize from the Julia Ellsworth Ford Foundation in Los Angeles for its “encouragement and advancement of children’s literature.” In New Mexico, English-speaking people of all ages had at their disposal two books that appealed to their cultural surroundings – *Tortilla Flat* for adults and *The Burro of Angelitos* for their children. Likely that *Angelitos* initially caused much more collateral damage to the perception of Nuevomexicanos, as English-speaking families could make a more direct connection between the book and their neighbors near the river. This association was further heightened with the inclusion of pen and ink illustrations similar to those in *Tortilla Flat*, though the children’s book boasted color drawings. The charming, simple qualities of the California paisanos transferred themselves to New Mexico, on its people and animals. Only a few years after Pond Church published her book, recent Taos migrant Lorraine Carr wrote and published her novel, *Mother of the Smiths*, in 1940 about the Nuevomexicano people in her new home. An *Albuquerque Journal* review said that “the plain folks that walk through the pages of the book are the ‘paisano’ neighbors of the New Mexican reader,” and that “the

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167 Steinbeck is quoted as saying, “This is a completely charming book! I like it particularly for not ‘talking down.’ The author of this story enjoyed it as much as I think children will; that is perhaps the test.” The ‘talking down’ Steinbeck referred to were the “big words and bits of Spanish phrases” Peggy Pond Church used to tell her story. “Miniature ‘Tortilla Flat,’” *Los Angeles Times*, 18 October 1936.


author is realistically truthful.” She, like Pond Church and Steinbeck, “watched the scene around her with sympathetic eyes.”

These stories of poverty and colonization go far beyond the borders of California and New Mexico, and based on their popularity, communicated a gentle rendering of the violence and trauma of domination to its readers across the country and, in Steinbeck’s case, even internationally. Steinbeck’s book inspired some authors, such as Pond Church and Carr, in New Mexico to address the very same population he romantically denigrated. *The Burro of Angelitos* went under its second printing and release in 2013 under Sunstone Press, an independent publishing house in Santa Fe, NM. The catalogue notes that it “is actually a bit of a political statement,” as a response to intellectuals who thought that New Mexico’s way of life would be destroyed as the century waned on. For this bookseller, Pond Church’s book is reminiscent of the past with *Tranquilidad* representing an, “isolated, beautiful lifestyle that is now history.”

By the time the film version of *Tortilla Flat* was released in 1942, the US was at war and engaged in both domestic and international conflicts. Between 1940 and 1945, Steinbeck was responsible for four films, three of which dealt with Mexican Americans, California, and/or labor. In fact, after the book’s release in 1935, an

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172 *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), *Tortilla Flat* (1942), *The Moon is Down* (1943), and *A Medal for Benny* (1945). Of the three, *The Moon is Down* is the only film that takes place in Europe and has nothing to do with either agricultural labor in California or Mexican Americans.
Albuquerque Journal blurb excitedly reported on a future movie version. “‘Tortilla Flat,’ that colorful and amusing book by John Steinbeck that warms the hearts of all New Mexicans reading it, has been purchased by Paramount to be filmed. It’s the ‘paisano’ life of Indian, Mexican and Spaniard.”

With the success of The Grapes of Wrath motion picture in 1940, Steinbeck sold the Tortilla Flat film rights to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for a price upwards of $65,000. The film was met with great success upon its release, though journalists remarked as early as 1940 that getting the movie to production was a difficulty in and of itself, especially after the theatrical version of Tortilla Flat tanked. Nonetheless, the film went into production in 1941 under the direction of Victor Fleming with an all-star cast to comprise the leading roles. “Danny Alvarez” went to John Garfield, Frank Morgan acted as “The Pirate,” and the legendary Spencer Tracy took on the role of “Pilon.” Hedy Lamarr was chosen to play Danny’s love interest, “Dolores ‘Sweets’ Ramirez.” Together, these four reenacted life and adventure in Tortilla Flat for an eager public on the silver screen.

The trend of Hollywood filmmaking at this time was to release uplifting, good-natured films that distracted Americans from the war, and although Steinbeck ended the Tortilla Flat novel with Danny’s death, the character had remarkably good

174 Sources debate the actual figure, with one estimating the cost at $55,000 while another claims Steinbeck received $65,000. “Hedda Hopper’s Hollywood,” Los Angeles Times, 15 April 1940; and Philip K. Scheuer, “Studios Theater Gossip: Town Called Hollywood,” Los Angeles Times, 11 January 1942. The film rights to The Moon is Down were purchased for $300,000 upon its release. Edwin Schallert, “DRAMA: John Steinbeck Holds Spotlight in New York,” Los Angeles Times, 5 May 1942.
fortune in the film version. Viewers saw how Danny hounded the tough and often hostile “Sweets” so that he eventually married her, unlike their stagnant relationship in the novel. Even his friends Pilon and the Pirate were happy at the film’s end as they continued on their own carefree path. Not much else changed between the two versions of *Tortilla Flat*. Just as the novel received overwhelming praise, so too did the film, for it visualized what Steinbeck’s readers had imagined in 1935.

Publicity of the highly anticipated film premiere echoed the literary criticism from years earlier. Featured in late April as the “picture of the month,” an early *Los Angeles Times* review of the film – reproduced from *Good Housekeeping* magazine - described the community of *Tortilla Flat* as “a strange world apart. Steinbeck, with his genius for depicting unusual people (“Grapes of Wrath”), has found in his own native locale these wayward, wonderful characters. They are often in trouble but never really bad.”175 Without a doubt, the use of *paisano* to describe the characters was a veil for any number of terms to describe the impoverished, hillbilly, drunk, wino, thief, criminal, and greaser without having to say any of those terms to describe a Mexican or Mexican American. *Los Angeles Times* writer Philip K. Scheuer felt that the film was “less a narrative than a study of the paisanos – a colony of mixed Americans who laze away the days on the coast near Monterey…complexly simple, living by their own code…gypsies who have stayed put.”176 As *paisano* became more racialized, as reviewers began to associate class with this term, more words were added to the visual definition of a paisano based on Steinbeck’s work and depicted in

175 *Los Angeles Times*, 26 April 1942.
Fleming’s film. “The men are a bunch of veritable vagabonds…full of schemes and intrigues,” falling in line with the Spanish colonial Black Legend. The novel and film take on voyeuristic qualities as the viewers witnessed poverty from afar without ever having to interact with it or see any of its negative effects.

Consequently, the paisanos came to represent part if not all Mexican Americans in the US in terms of their historicity in the nation and their cultural backwardness. Though they may have descended from the likes of Cortez or Oñate, they possessed few traits to suggest their noble ancestry as people of the conquest. And this is what gives the film its comedic presence, for only the audience recognizes the paisanos’ poverty. As the audience watched the poor folks’ antics played out on-screen, it seems that a fictional livelihood was interpreted as fact. Even the *Los Angeles Times* reported in their review of the film’s that, as the title made clear, “Paisano Life Mirrored in ‘Tortilla Flat’.” This and other titles emphasized the true-to-life element of *Tortilla Flat*, such as “Camera Paints Paisano Village with Fidelity,” and “Life of the Lowly.” Just as the drunken escapades of Danny and his friends seemed to ring true for the viewers, so too did the scenery. Another *Times* article reported, that “the subject reveals the life of Tortilla Flat as Steinbeck knew and described it. The somnolent village with its humble shacks and flower gardens

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oddly contrasting with nondescript junk heaps, is on the screen in every detail.”

A less positive review, though not altogether condemning of the film, out of Canada declared, “This time the bums are a guitar-playing, chicken-stealing group of peons in California...They can work harder at avoiding work than any character in recent screen history.” Though a fictional film, viewers overwhelmingly interpreted the storyline, characters, and scenery as authentic representations of Mexican American life and values.

Coincidentally, as the “lazy Mexican” archetype emphasized in Tortilla Flat played out in cinemas across the country, the United States was in the process of formalizing a labor agreement with the Mexican government that lasted more than twenty years. The Mexican Farm Labor Program Agreement was signed on August 4, 1942 thus initiating the beginning of the Bracero Program until its end in 1964. For the thousands of Mexican laborers that signed on with the program, life was far from the simplistic vision described in any of Steinbeck’s work, both literature and film. Once again, Tortilla Flat comes at a moment in which the United States was

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180 “Sets Called Authentic,” Los Angeles Times, 2 June 1942.
181 “Tattered Screen Families,” Winnipeg Free Press, 16 May 1942 (Winnipeg, Manitoba)
embroiled in a xenophobic, contradictory relationship with Mexicans and Mexican-descent people within its national borders. While hailed in the American English-language press, primarily the Los Angeles Times, some Spanish-language media objected to the film’s portrayal of the characters, especially in light of the new Bracero agreement and, though they didn’t know it, the impending Zoot-Suit Riots to take place a short time after the film’s initial release.\textsuperscript{183}

In a prominent San Antonio, TX newspaper, La Prensa, journalist Maria Sánchez argued against the film as potentially offensive to Mexico and Mexican-descent people. As she stated in an impassioned article in August 1942, the actors traded in their elegant Hollywood dress for the darkened, burned flesh of farm workers – “carnes tostadas de los pizcadores” – who were starving, filthy, and too poor to marry for fear of the financial obligation of maintaining a wife. Sánchez noted that while there were “mexicanos buenos y malos (good and bad Mexicans),” the viewer should refrain from seeing the paisano as representative of the entire Mexican community. However, she commented that sooner or later, because of the uncertain nature of the Bracero Program in relation to human rights and the possibility of destitution, people of Mexican origin will come to deny their heritage for fear of being associated with those “compatriotas que cayeron en la pobreza y a quienes despiadadamente condenan a la deportación” – compatriots who fell into


\textsuperscript{183} See chapter three of this dissertation for more on the Zoot-Suit Riots and its historiography.
poverty and are condemned to deportation. For Sánchez, the film robs Mexicans and Mexican Americans of any shred of dignity they might possess for the enjoyment of American audiences.\textsuperscript{184}

Stock advertisements of \textit{Tortilla Flat} emphasized the take-away elements of the film – poverty and hypersexuality – seemingly two inalienable facts of the Mexican American community. In the \textit{Albuquerque Journal}, at least two advertisements emphasized the latter. The Chief Theater encouraged patrons to “forget the world for two glorious hours…Come to Tortilla Flat, where they live in love and love in life!”\textsuperscript{185} Likewise, a Kimo Theater advertisement [Fig. 2.4] played on the supposed romantic element of the film: “Tortilla Flats – where the girls are never lonely…and the boys are ever bold!”\textsuperscript{186} In the film, the point of contention was the relationship between Sweets and Danny. Neither Danny nor the other male characters were particularly hypersexualized beyond the stereotypical Mexican

\textsuperscript{184} Maria Sánchez, “Comentarios acerca de ‘Tortilla Flat,’” \textit{La Prensa}, 23 August 1942.
\textsuperscript{185} Tortilla Flat advertisement, \textit{Albuquerque Journal}, 28 August 1942.
\textsuperscript{186} Tortilla Flat advertisement, \textit{Albuquerque Journal}, 20 June 1942.
American masculinity or machismo, though their drunken behavior and physical confrontations were fundamentally associated with Mexican American men.

On the other hand, Hedy Lamarr’s portrayal of Sweets particularly emphasized the character’s rather humble sexuality. The relatively simple clothing for Sweets supposedly devoided her of the typical Hollywood glamour, but in fact her use of peasant blouses and dresses equally heightened her sexuality on film.\(^{187}\) As problematic as all of the characters were, Sweets was considerably heinous,

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\(^{187}\) “How Deep is Glamour?” *Los Angeles Times*, 5 April 1942.
as she not only embodied a simple sexuality, she was also regularly violent in her behavior. In one scene of the movie, she responds to Danny’s disrespectful words with a bite to the hand and immediately subdues him with the threat of a dagger to the body as she calmly says, “I’ll cut ya to pieces” [Fig. 2.5].

Although Sweets is the embodiment of the “hot, fiery Latina” type, another character, Señora Teresina Cortez provides not only a counter to Sweets, but another stereotype commonly placed on Mexican American women and families, especially those receiving government assistance. Immediately when we meet Señora Teresina, she holds a baby in her arms and is flooded with children around her, all of varying age. She explains laughingly to Danny and his friends that the new baby arrived the day before as she “was picking beans.” To be sure, because this was her ninth child, Señora Teresina’s body handled the labor easily enough so that as she bent down to collect the beans, the infant was born immediately. Although this situation was
not unlike the experiences of many women working in the fields without relief, that part of the conversation was quickly dismissed, both because it was commonplace for her and because she spoke to men. In a later scene, a doctor from the Board of Education and Department of Health examines each of the children, sticking tongue depressors in their mouths, and questioning their eating habits. When hearing that the children eat tortillas and beans for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the doctor shook his head in disgust and muttered “amazing” under his breath as he left the family to go back to town. “I don’t understand it,” he said to Danny, “a steady diet of beans is slow poison.” By the end of the movie, and after Danny and his friends attempted to
change the Cortez family’s diet, the camera zooms in on one of Señora Teresina’s children as he is happily eating from a giant serving bowl full of beans.

Her film depiction was similar to her characterization in the novel [Fig. 2.6]. A woman not quite thirty years old, Teresina gave birth to her first child at age fourteen. “The regularity with which she became a mother always astonished Teresina. It occurred sometimes that she could not remember who the father of the impending baby was; and occasionally she almost grew convinced that no lover was necessary,” wrote Steinbeck of this heavily fertile, devout Catholic yet unmarried, Mexican American woman.\(^{188}\) Whereas Sweets Ramírez embodies the lusty Latina type who could flip in an instant from seductive to violent, Teresina is so promiscuous that she could not tell when, where, or with whom she conceived most of her children. She is a single mother and a leech on government assistance. Sweets, Teresina, Danny, and all the rest are paisanos, the mongrels of Monterey’s Tortilla Flat. Although Steinbeck wrote of people in California, fans of his books and films could transfer those characters to real, nearby people who seemed to fit the fictional construction, even in New Mexico.

*La vida es así en Lower Barelas*

At the outset *Tortilla Flat*, a story of Spanish-speaking people in California, would not seem to have such a profound impact on a small community of Nuevomexicanos. It did. In fact, the story was more familiar to New Mexico than

\(^{188}\) Steinbeck, 222-223.
might seem at the outset. Historian Charles Montgomery, in his discussion of Nuevomexicano markers of race and identity, noted that beginning in the Mexican period (1821-1848) there existed a distinction among the landed gentry, known as *los ricos*, and the laboring peasantry. Those people were known as *la clase miserable*, *los pobres*, and finally, *los paisanos.* Steinbeck’s characters, then, unintentionally connected with New Mexico on a historical level. Shown in both the Kimo and Chief Theaters along Central Avenue in the middle of downtown, audiences saw the paisanos on the silver screen and associated them with the Barelas community just minutes to the south, although only a specific area of Barelas seemed reflective of Tortilla Flat. It was the Bareleño community south of the bridge that suffered such an unfortunate distinction. To make matters worse, “Perfume Valley” - the sewage treatment plant located in the vicinity of Lower Barelas - was just further south of the last few homes comprising the community and carried its pervasive odor throughout the area. Whether shown in English as *Tortilla Flat* or in Spanish as *La vida es así* (Such is life), all of Albuquerque had the opportunity to see Steinbeck’s story play out in film. As it was, Lower Barelas came to be known as “Tortilla Flat,” which

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190 The Kimo Theatre on 421 W. Central Avenue and the Chief Theater on 206 W. Central Avenue were two of nine theaters in Albuquerque at the time of the film’s release. Of those nine, only three remain, including the Kimo, which now features live theatrical performances, concerts, as well as classic movie marathons.  
191 While there are no local reviews of the film, Albuquerque papers carried the advertisements and show times in various downtown theaters. The Coronado, Mesa, Mission, and Chief Theaters all showed Mexican and Spanish-language films in Albuquerque beginning in the early 1940s. Rogelio Agrasánchez, *Mexican Movies in*
quickly evolved into “Tortilla Flats” as the decades waned on. Whether or not the scenery of *Tortilla Flat* accurately represented the homes south of Bridge Street is irrelevant, as few homes in Nuevomexicano neighborhoods had the elements of finely manicured flower gardens and lawns abundant in the nearby country club or Ridgecrest areas. Rather, areas such as Barelas, Martíneztown, Duranes, Atrisco, San José, Old Town, and many others routinely had vegetation native to the area, whether that was wide-leaf sage, cottonwood trees, or hollyhock flowers, with gardens of chile, beans, corn, squash, and perhaps a few hearty fruit trees on their property. Perhaps these desert yards looked unkempt compared to affluent homes with sprawling lawns. Perhaps for the people of Albuquerque, the scenery of *Tortilla Flat* was reflective of the paisanos that lived there: ragged, disorderly, dirty, and wild. In the public consciousness, then, so too was Barelas.

What was a matter of fact in Barelas, however, was that the area south of Cromwell Avenue, just of the bridge, was an unincorporated part of the city.¹⁹² As a result, Bernalillo Country was responsible for providing services that the city could not do. Although the unincorporated section of Barelas had electricity, unlike the paisanos, many did not have indoor plumbing. Perhaps the unsightly outhouses –

¹⁹² In 1942, Albuquerque’s city limits reached as far north as Indian School Boulevard, as far west as 16th Street, stretched far east to San Pedro Boulevard, and bisected Barelas to the south. For the most part, much of Martíneztown was unincorporated, as were most historic Nuevomexicano communities including Santa Barbara, Los Griegos, Los Duranes, and those west of the Río Grande. *Sanborn Insurance Maps of Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1942*. Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico.
comunes – as they were referred to, shocked and disgusted some Albuquerque residents. What gave Barelas the responsibility for bearing such a designation over other Nuevomexicano communities is uncertain, especially given the similar socioeconomic circumstances found in many of these Spanish-speaking areas. It was probably due more to Barelas’ proximity to downtown and its transition from village to barrio unfamiliar in these other communities.

As the fictional sets of Tortilla Flat may have reflected humble life in Barelas, so too did the paisanos embody Bareleños in the public consciousness. Not only were the paisanos “mixed” with any degree of conquistador, Caucasian, and Native ancestry, they also spoke an archaic Spanish and English. Although the audience rarely read or heard the characters speak Spanish, their English conversations were wrought with Shakespearean speech patterns. Perhaps this was Steinbeck’s way of emphasizing the story as a modern, Californian version of the British King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table folktale. For example, in a conversation over a bottle of liquor, Danny casually asks Pilon, “Thou hast brandy?...Perhaps thou keepest it for Our Lord Jesus when He comes again. Who am I, thy friend, to judge the destination of this brandy? I am not even sure thou hast it...Thou are welcome to this big roast of pork I have, but as for thy brandy, that is thine own.”193 Or perhaps a simple, “ai, amigo, a’onde vas?” from Sweets was enough to remind the audience of the manner in which Nuevomexicanos spoke Spanish. The linguistic regionalisms found throughout the Southwest, and particularly New Mexico, reveal a certain speech

193 Steinbeck, 22-23.
pattern containing older Spanish words, as well as an Hispanicization of English words that contribute to the vocabulary.\footnote{See Garland D. Bills, \textit{The Spanish Language of New Mexico and Southern Colorado: A Linguistic Atlas} (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2008).} Despite Nuevomexicanos’ use of words such as \textit{vide} (\textit{vi}), \textit{truje} (\textit{traje}), and \textit{asina} (\textit{así}), which may have been in use at the time of colonization, those who spoke English did so in a twentieth century fashion and did not refer to one another with “thou” or “thee.”

The speech presented in the book and film further heightened the contradiction between the social and economic realities of the paisanos. Perhaps then, viewers of the film felt the same way about Barelas and its residents. Bareleño – and other Nuevomexicanos – seemed to resemble the Steinbeck’s characters in their community, language, and ethnic identification. Because of three important factors in the early twentieth century – statehood, ethnic discrimination, and disenfranchisement – many Nuevomexicanos began identifying themselves as “Spanish” or “Spanish American.” Phillip Gonzales points out that the transition from the earlier use of “Mexicano” to “Spanish American” was based on, “the need for a competitive political nomenclature,” that would serve their cultural preservationist concerns.\footnote{Phillip B. Gonzales, “The Political Construction of Latino Nomenclatures in Twentieth-Century New Mexico,” \textit{Journal of the Southwest} 35:2 (1993): 158-185.} By the 1940s, this continued whitening effort was a vain attempt to gain social acceptance in a world where Jim Crow ruled the South and the Fair Housing Act of
1968 was a lifetime away. Not only did de facto segregation thrive in areas with a high African American population, it also lived alongside Mexican Americans.¹⁹⁶

Photographing the Domestic War Machine

What did not correspond well with the movie, however, was that unlike the paisanos, most if not all able-bodied Bareleños worked. Although government assistance was a reality in the 1930s, the railroad provided a much-needed and highly utilized labor stimulus through the war, and the men in and around Barelas provided that labor. By the turn of the century, and certainly at the height of WWII, the railroad had transformed the Barelas community into a virtual company town both within and beyond the city limits of Albuquerque.¹⁹⁷ Those who did not find employment at the shops, the depot, or on the engines themselves catered to those who did. To support the growing labor force and their families, boarding houses, cafés, corner store markets, bars, and other establishments popped up along Fourth Street, the primary thoroughfare connecting downtown with Barelas and communities west of the river, and within the barrio itself among any one of the windy roads.


¹⁹⁷ A more detailed discussion of the railroad’s entrance into Albuquerque and its transformation of Barelas occurs in chapter one of this dissertation.
The laborers brought a level of dispensable income to Barelas that allowed for such a surge in commercial and leisurely activity. Of course, the downtown hustle was within walking distance just a few blocks north of Barelas. There, all Albuquerque residents participated in the larger economy that helped fuel the city’s progress. Department stores, cinemas, restaurants, banking, and of course, the Fred Harvey Alvarado Hotel provided residents the things not found in their own communities, whether those were the newly developed Highland Heights area close to the University of New Mexico or older Nuevomexicano communities along the Río Grande. Still, the railroad brought those goods to Albuquerque in much the same way that it brought passengers and celebrities to its depot. For its laborers, the railroad created a series of hazardous working conditions, wage exploitation, and dependency so that families often had at least two generations or more working in the shops. But in the larger scope of domestic financial health and rehabilitation, the railroad was a part of the war effort, and it was a national obligation for each citizen to fulfill his or her duty to the state. Part of that national obligation took form in the documenting of American life at home and at work. The wartime photographic project also visualized marginalized Americans in everyday atmospheres that worked against stereotypical and academic notions of their domesticity, civility, and work ethic.

The history of photography as a tool of social documentation in the United States arguably began with the imagery of Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, and Paul Strand at the turn of the nineteenth century as they framed urban misfits and the downtrodden - immigrants, the disabled, child laborers – and the impoverished environments in
which they lived. More than just art photography, their images fanned the fires of progressive change and legislation to cure these social ills. By the mid 1930s however, documentary photography took on an intimate relationship with the federal government through the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and the later Office of War Information (OWI) under the leadership of Roy Stryker. Visualizing for the American public “what ‘the boys’ left behind” during the war was part and parcel of Stryker’s intention behind OWI as the program moved beyond legitimizing the New Deal for Roosevelt’s critics and gaining its acceptance among the public. Working beyond the well-known – and well documented in its own right – photographs of Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and Russell Lee, scholars have slowly explored the work and lives of lesser known men and women who visually captured the lives of Americans in the interwar and WWII periods. Complicating the narrative beyond the institutional desire for facing Americans – confronting them and putting a human element onto statistical data -- recent works explore how gender and race influenced the taking and collecting of such government information.

After working on the Railroad Photographic Project years earlier for Roy Stryker, Jack Delano was the most experienced and well-versed of the government

photographers to undertake the lengthy travel aboard the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe (AT&SF) line, for he understood the intense labor and dangerous conditions under which men and women worked.\textsuperscript{200} By the time Delano entered Albuquerque in March 1943 the shops were at full production with both seasoned and fresh laborers. While the US was entrenched in World War II, job opportunities in the railroad shops exceeded all expectations. As long-time Bareleña Jenny Castillo remembered from her childhood, “all the men were employed there at the railroad and we used to see all the neighbors go and come from work. All my neighbors worked there. There were a lot of jobs there. People had money.”\textsuperscript{201} Similarly, Romelo Nuáñez recalled that “the only secure jobs were with the railroad. That's were my grandfather worked, with the railroad…The ones that stayed with the railroad had more money; the others that farmed had less.”\textsuperscript{202}

Traveling in early 1943 from Chicago en route to Los Angeles, Delano photographed the entire rail system with delight. He called it the, “most exciting part of the work [he] did for the OWI,” as his credentials allowed him access to anywhere his camera and tripod could fit.\textsuperscript{203} While Delano photographed with his own sensitivity and insight, his primary purpose was to collect information for the federal

\textsuperscript{201} Jenny Castillo interview by the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 16 January 2002, Albuquerque, NM, video recording.
\textsuperscript{202} Romelo Nuáñez by the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 19 December 2001, Albuquerque, NM, video recording.
\textsuperscript{203} Jack Delano, Photographic Memories (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997): 89.
government on this month-long assignment. Typical of many photojournalists, Delano provided as much technical information in the photographs’ titles so as to inform the readers of what they saw. It is evident from Delano’s memories that in the short time he had to photograph the railroad he intended to showcase not only the industry but also make visible those who were hardly remembered or respected for the important work that they did. For Stryker, the most essential quality that his photographers possessed was a, “deep respect for human beings,” as the days and months spent traveling alongside workers or in the most rural communities could hardly produce photographs criticizing families’ daily struggle of survival.

Of Jack Delano’s three hundred and fifty-two photographs taken in New Mexico along the AT&SF, sixty-five of them took place in Albuquerque. In his quick stop there in March 1943, Delano encountered mostly Nuevomexicano males who spent their lives in the shops, many of whom came from Barelas and San José. The photographs taken at the Santa Fe shops depicted the livelihood of a community that ran dry just a handful of years later, not the downtrodden folks represented in *Tortilla*

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204 Delano’s role in the FSA/OWI is often overlooked in favor of his many years spent living in, writing on, and photographing Puerto Rico. Much of this published work Delano authored himself. For example, Jack Delano, *Puerto Rico mío: Four Decades of Change/Cuatro décadas de cambio* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990); Jack Delano, *Contrasts: Forty Years of Change and Continuity in Puerto Rico/Contrastes: cuarenta años de cambio y continuidad en Puerto Rico* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990); Jack Delano, *De San Juan a Ponce en el tren/From San Juan to Ponce on the Train* (Río Piedras, PR: Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1990).

If a laborer had tattered overalls and gloves, it was because of how hard he worked and the nature of his job, not because his culture shunned cleanliness or dressing in well-maintained clothing. One particular image working against the paisano stereotype showed men washing up after an arduous day at work [Fig. 2.7]. Here, we see the first few rows of workers as they cleaned soot off their faces, arms, and hands in preparation to return home in a nearby community. This was perhaps one of the more intimate photographs of the workers as Delano showed them outside the struggle of manipulating steel and iron. This was one of few times Delano shows

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206 See chapter four of the dissertation for a more detailed explanation of the railroad’s steady decline from the 1950s-1970s.
the workers as they are – apart from the few portraits he took – without the machinery dictating their lot in life or confirming their contribution to the country. While workers and their families endured life controlled by the shops, the *Tortilla Flat* image pervaded the popular cultural sphere and influenced the way in which Nuevomexicanos – specifically Bareleños – were seen. Delano’s images offer a counter narrative to those jarring stereotypes and overgeneralizations seen in literature and academic work.

Not only were men and women bound by the communities they lived in, despite their separation from the railroad, they were tied to each other through their labor. Here, Andrew Santiago, a boilermaker from San José, worked in the shops for twenty years by the time Delano photographed him [Fig. 2.8]. Mr. Santiago stands alongside the boiler, framed in his own shadow cast by the Delano’s intense flash from his camera. Mr. Santiago is dressed in dark work wear with his tools resting in the front pocket of his overalls and a cap covering his head. His face, with the exception of his eyes, is covered with the same soot on his goggles and clothes. This particular portrait, while isolating him from other laborers, highlights his role and dedication to the job in both Delano’s visual framing of him and the informative caption attached to the image.

Mr. Santiago and four other family members lived in separate adobe homes on the same street, but their connection with Barelas and other Nuevomexicano communities was consistent. In a couple of different instances, the Santiago men served as *padrinos* in Barelas weddings or were involved with Bareleños in minor
In an interview from December 2010, Bareleño Henry Chávez looked silently at Andrew Santiago’s photo, recognizing him but unable to put the name to his face. As he learned that pictured was Andrew Santiago, Mr. Chávez breathed a sigh of relief and said, “Oh, yes! I knew his boys. No wonder he looked so familiar…I bet they’d love to see their father pictured this way. I bet they

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don’t even know about this.” He continued at that moment to silently search Andrew Santiago’s face with lips pursed and heavy eyes.

The railroad and its shops fostered community among its Nuevomexicano workers who, despite being from separate, neighboring barrios, could identify with one another on the basis of language, culture, history, and most importantly – labor. This is not to suggest, however, that Nuevomexicanos did not associate with their Euro-American, African American, or Native American co-workers under both positive and unfortunate circumstances. One Bareleña, alluding to the apparent ethnic tensions within shop gates recalled that her uncle, “complained about the gringo. ‘We teach the gringo and the gringo advances and we don’t.’ It didn’t seem fair that the New Mexican would train the extranjeros” – the foreigners for higher skilled and higher paying jobs. Nonetheless, Delano photographed the laborers as he saw them, racially charged disputes or not.

Although Delano documented the railroad workers as a class of laborers, he did not necessarily privilege race or ethnicity in how he chose to photograph this industry. Although the US at the time regarded the USSR as an ally against fascism, it is doubtful that Delano had little more than a sympathetic view towards Marxism since championing the worker and praising a worker’s paradise were two different ideas. Even so, for Delano it seemed that the work was paramount to race, despite a

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208 Henry Chávez interview by author, 17 December 2010, Albuquerque, NM, tape recording.
209 Lutgarda Apodaca-Gonzales by the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 29 November 2001, Albuquerque, NM, tape recording.
brief mention in his autobiography that, “in the West, there were many Indian and Mexican workers...In the Albuquerque shops, about half the workers were Mexican American.”

Noting such employment trends without necessarily photographing them made the work palatable to supporters of the OWI, as no singular ethnicity was condemned to this type of labor. While traveling through Amarillo, TX, just hours before arriving in New Mexico, Delano even noted that for once the slums common along the railroad tracks do not belong to the, “Negro section, [but] it’s where the Mexicans live; not segregated by law as the Negroes but segregated nonetheless.”

As it was throughout Delano’s photographs, all of the workers pictured were covered in the same black dust and ingested the same filthy air.

His images of the workers within the shops and on the sidelines – in the form of mothers, wives, and daughters – highlighted a type of productivity, pride, and progress almost unmatched in Barelas’ long history through the present day despite the brewing negativity surrounding their community. With the exception of a stunning image of two female African American locomotive workers in Clovis, NM [Fig. 2.9], Delano pictures an entirely male industry with women on the sidelines seen

210 Delano, 94.
211 Ibid., 92.
only once during his brief trip through Albuquerque. With each whistle’s scream, Bareleña women knew when to expect their husbands, brothers, and sons home for lunch and dinner. Two images taken within moments of each other show the movement of women close to the gates as the workers exit the grounds and back into the barrio [Figs. 2.10 and 2.11]. This is the only time we see women pictured in any of Delano’s Albuquerque photographs; perhaps they were eliminated, overlooked, or irrelevant as appropriate subject matter in subsequent frames because of the labor that went on behind the shop gates.
Figure 2.10. Jack Delano, “Albuquerque, New Mexico. Men coming out of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad shops at the end of the day's shift.” March 1943. LC-USW3-022228-D

Figure 2.11. Jack Delano, “Albuquerque, New Mexico. Men coming out of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad shops at the end of the day's shift.” March 1943. LC-USW3-022229-D
Though a boy in 1943, Mr. Chávez, like other residents interviewed, had childhood memories of the shops and saw for the first time Delano’s photos of the work that took place. Mike Orona, another long-time Bareleño with ties to Northern New Mexico, reflected on the photographs similarly to Mr. Chávez, though with a much more stunned response as he often spoke with stammered speech. While shown Delano’s photograph of men exiting the shops, Mr. Orona looked on with amazement as it was the first time as an adult that he had seen the shops in full production before they were effectively dismantled and out of production by the 1970s. Seeing this photograph triggered memories of the shop whistle as it had not only dictated the men’s workday but also controlled organization of community life. As Mr. Orona recounted, the whistle sounded throughout the day: signaling fifteen minutes till starting time, when the time clock actually begun, lunchtime, a warning when lunch was over, and the end of the work day.\textsuperscript{212} Similarly from an interview conducted in 2001, lifelong Bareleña Lutgarda Apodaca-Gonzales mentioned that “Men went to work in the morning at five and would come out with black faces, and my idea of a parade was to sit on the curb and watch all the cars come out when they came out of the shops.”\textsuperscript{213} As a collection of images from a specific time and place, these images serve as much to document the type of labor necessary in the 1940s, but the collection also preserves a history of the community that seems only preserved in individual memories.

\textsuperscript{212} Mike Orona interview by author, 17 December 2010, Albuquerque, NM, tape recording.
\textsuperscript{213} Apodaca-Gonzales NHCC interview.
What also, then, is absent from these images? The primary function of the OWI was to capture the American public in their daily lives in labor and leisure without any images disruptive to the war effort. While photographers Russell Lee and John Collier Jr. worked to document other everyday elements of New Mexico and southwestern life, Delano framed workers at their best.\textsuperscript{214} Perhaps this explains the elimination of men who were maimed or blinded from the railroad industry. Based on the nature of the job, the viewer can only imagine the volatile and hazardous conditions under which laborers worked. For obvious reasons Delano did not show the suffering, the accidents, or the trauma associated with the labor.

Bareleña Laura Garcia wrote in 1989 that her, “Primo Joaquín also worked for the AT&SF as did most of the men in the vicinity. He worked in the roundhouse where the noise was almost deafening and as a result he became a little disoriented. He would visit the whole neighborhood after his retirement, and cry out that he was going back to “El burro” (his birth place).”\textsuperscript{215} These men remain hidden from view.

\textsuperscript{214} As a photographer for the FSA, Russell Lee documented life in parts of eastern and northeastern New Mexico from 1939-1940. Most of his photographs were of white New Mexicans in the small communities of Pie Town, Wagon Mound, and Hobbs, although he was also recognized for his work photographing Mexican Americans in Texas. John Collier Jr. joined the FSA in 1941 and stayed on with the government photography bureau until it changed names to the OWI. He photographed northern New Mexico from those early FSA days through the 1950s and focused mostly on Nuevomexicano agricultural and home life in the villages of Taos, Peñasco, Questa, and others. See \textit{Far from Main Street: Three Photographers in Depression-Era New Mexico, Russell Lee, John Collier, Jr., and Jack Delano} (Santa Fe, NM: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1994).

\textsuperscript{215} Laura V. Garcia, \textit{Brief Recollection of South Barelas}, Barelas Community Project Records, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, 1993. p. 50.
Delano glorified the worker [Fig. 2.12] – and the industry by default – as the audience saw men pictured in active, aggressive stances, framed as royalty with the light cast on their faces and their hands over their machinery, seizing ownership of the very machines that control them. This worker, LR Anderson, was the only one to be photographed in such a way, although Delano does pay attention to individual Nuevomexicanos as seen in the earlier photo of Andrew Santiago. Perhaps Delano referred to Anderson’s position in yard hierarchy with this composition; perhaps Delano’s photograph of Anderson was simply about race.
Unlike LR Anderson’s portrait, perhaps Delano’s close-up shots of boilermakers Santiago and Joseph Pina [Fig. 2.13] were less about what they did at the shops and more about who they were as men. Paired with Tortilla Flat, these photographs and the memories associated with them present a contradictory image of Barelas. While not every laborer resided in Barelas and spoke Spanish, most of them were Nuevomexicano and were subjected to the same treatment simply because their communities were similar to Barelas in demographics and dollar power. Inside the shops, Delano framed the laborers with dignity and admiration, while outside
academics framed them into an inescapable circumstance of ignorance, complacency, and immobility.

The academics operating in the 1930s through the 1950s were confronted with sheer exoticism and fascination that both World Wars afforded them. They often looked for explanations as to why ethnic populations seemed to trail in the successes of their white counterparts and why Euro-Americans seemed to fare better in attaining a respectable middle class livelihood. That Nuevomexicanos and Mexican Americans were culturally determined to engage in behaviors suggesting laziness because of their “inexperience” with capitalism was reinforced in the popular culture and academic inquiries of the period. Thus, Steinbeck’s ridicule of Mexican Americans in his book, in the first and second editions, are all the more damning when read alongside prevailing trends in the academe, particularly for social scientists that worked through “objective” data collection methods to comment on the plight of ethnic Americans without offering any real solutions to issues they faced.

Developments in popular culture and academia undoubtedly influenced the way marginalized Americans were seen and treated in their larger communities. In this case, Barelas was framed on two fronts that seemed to reinforce one another. Jack Delano’s OWI photographs provide an alternative view of the community who faced scrutiny beyond the shop gates. Among the three, however, only the damning images and designations survived for generations, except in the memories of Barelas residents themselves. As Bareleños and other Nuevomexicanos were pushed further
to the fringes of American social membership, their communities increasingly came under fire and were threatened with renovation and removal.
Chapter Three: “I was Framed: Nuevomexicano Vernacular Photography, 1930-1960”

I was framed, oh framed, I was blamed.
Framed, framed, framed.
Well I never do nuthin,’
but I always get blamed.
--Ritchie Valens, “Framed”

Writing in 1943, noted Nuevomexicano scholar George I. Sánchez reflected on the boiling racial tensions in his article, “Pachucos in the Making.” Here, Sánchez quotes a Spanish-speaking Californian as he stated that “the so-called ‘Mexican Problem’ is not in fact a Mexican problem. It is a problem foisted by American mercenary interests upon the American people. It is an American problem made in the USA.”²¹⁶ Sánchez, who worked against sociological claims of Mexican

Americans’ biological inadequacy, was acutely familiar with ethnic discrimination of Spanish-speaking people in the Southwest. In fact, Sánchez grew up in Barelas and was aware of a long-standing racial antagonism between Nuevomexicanos and whites in New Mexico. By the time of Sánchez’ publication, many Mexican American youth were targeted for their manner of dress, whether or not they were pachucos and pachucas – so-called gang members that challenged American social and cultural conservatism [Fig. 3.1]. Wearing the zoot suit was criminalized; it was seen as an admission of guilt and criminal intent regardless of the wearer’s actual gang affiliation. They, in reference to this chapter’s epigraph, were framed due to their youth, ethnicity, fashion, and socioeconomic status. Sánchez’ commentary on the rise of perceived juvenile delinquency among Mexican Americans was in fact a broader critique of American society in conflict with their ethnic populations resisting assimilation. By framing them into a racialized, criminalized identity, preemptive

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217 Indeed, Sánchez, a professor of education at the University of New Mexico, had organized a 1933 survey with Dr. Richard Page of 3,000 English-speaking high school students regarding hostile race relations between Anglo and Nuevomexicano students. The survey sought to understand the growing “anti-Spanish sentiment” among the city’s population. The fallout over the survey resulted in Sánchez’ dismissal from the university. “Questionnaire on Attitude Toward Spanish Speaking People Stirs Row,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 27 April 1933; “Give Governor 24 Hours to Oust Those Responsible for Racial Questionnaire,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 28 April 1933; “Race Issue Inquiry will Open Wednesday at University,” 30 April 1933. See Phillip B. Gonzales, *Forced Sacrifice as Ethnic Protest: The Hispano Cause in New Mexico and the Racial Attitude Confrontation of 1933* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001) and “‘La Junta de Indignacion’: Hispano Repertoire of Collective Protest in New Mexico, 1884-1933,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 31:2 (2000): 161-186 for thorough examination of the race survey, Sánchez, and ethnic tensions among UNM students, faculty, and fraternities.
measures were justified to control and contain Mexican Americans and other communities of color.

The idea of being framed, both photographically and criminally, speaks to the broader experience of racial and ethnic discrimination of non-white communities. In the earliest days of the photographic technical revolution in the mid-nineteenth century, beginning with the daguerreotypes, people of color have largely faced the camera lens rather than peer through its viewfinder. This is true as cameras accompanied Europeans and Americans on explorations of their colonial landholdings and newly acquired territories. Photographs of the conquered and “exotic” populations routinely made their way as postcards and other forms of travel souvenirs. The historiography of these early photographic imperial practices in the United States, while expansive, typically focuses on the systematic categorization of Native Americans and African Americans and their visually documented transition of assimilation from barbarian to citizen, without showcasing the brutal and violent means through which that transition was achieved.

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219 In the case of Native Americans, photography was also a tool used to document a “vanishing race.” See Shamoon Zamir, The Gift of the Face: Portraiture and Time in Edward S. Curtis’s the North American Indian (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Hays Peter Mauro, The Art of Americanization at the Carlisle
Americans experienced a photographic project that indexed phenotypical features apparently accounting for their “degenerate” behavior and justified exclusionary immigration policies and practices.\textsuperscript{220} Photographic representations of these communities of color contributed to their visual criminalization and actual persecution in everyday life.

This practice of late nineteenth-century racial and ethnic categorization and analysis lasted well into the 1940s, as the academic movement to identify biological factors of poverty and illiteracy needed photographic evidence to justify claims. Just as artists’ renderings of news events were necessary in early print media to aid in the visualization of a narrative, so too was the photograph indispensable for turn of the


\textsuperscript{220} In the case of Mexican Americans, the process of visual criminalization and the racialization of crime can in part be traced to early Spanish colonial \textit{casta} paintings depicting the deplorable social behaviors of non-white people. For a discussion on these representations, see Magali Carrera, \textit{Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013) and Ilona Katzew, \textit{Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). Robert M. Buffington offers a critique of photography in Mexico used to identity potential criminals. See his \textit{Criminal and Citizen in Modern Mexico} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). In the case of photography for immigration purposes, see Anna Pegler-Gordon, \textit{In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of US Immigration Policy} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
century newspapers. While illustrations provided a visual with which to imagine a person or news event, photographs left a carefully chosen, deliberate image for all to see. Thus, when photographs of ethnic minorities made their way into the newspapers, especially when paired with paternalistic headlines, readers could participate in communal stereotyping and vilifications of those pictured. With few stories published to the contrary of those damning news reports and opinion pieces, Mexican Americans existed in a media environment in the 1930s and 1940s that actively encouraged their disenfranchisement.

This chapter explores how Barelas residents visually framed themselves despite the favorable or oppressive environments in which they lived. Bareleño family photography – vernacular photography – is used to illustrate, support, and counter constructed representations of them or other people in similar communities. Although studio portraiture was common among most people since the 1920s, and even prior, handheld cameras gained momentum and assumed a privileged role in the American families that could make such a purchase. Barelas and other working-class communities of color, by and large, eagerly embraced this new personal photographic technology in the 1940s – decades after small portable cameras were invented. Armed with handheld cameras, Mexican Americans challenged their vilification and framed themselves as they saw fit and for their own satisfaction; they photographed themselves when, where, and with the company of their choice. As a counterpoint, part of this analysis speaks to the official media representation of Albuquerque’s Nuevomexicano youths – and Mexican American youths more broadly – as criminal,
juvenile delinquents that were “framed” or photographed in their guilt. The framed analysis as ethnic representation also speaks to the Bareleños’ history of being visually framed and assigned an identity over time – framing of their agricultural community, the transition to urbanization, and their descent into abject poverty. By the postwar period, those who did not leave the barrio were framed – perceived guilty and criminalized – in the public consciousness purely due to their circumstance as low-income Nuevomexicanos.

Photography in the early twentieth-century was, for many socioethnic minorities, a delight restricted to the middle and upper classes. Affluent families could – and did - photograph themselves beyond the standard wedding or family portrait to include more spontaneous casual photography, especially as the technological developments in the cameras themselves allowed for an increased mobility, as transportation of camera equipment became less of a burden. The most common large format cameras, which produced negatives of 4x5 inches at the very least, were the standard cameras used in highly orchestrated, composed portrait photography. The long exposure time constrained the photographic subjects into often painfully stiff and unnatural poses for a long duration. Although family and special occasion portraiture increased in popularity by the late 1800s, the privileges were overwhelmingly reserved for affluent families, and even increased among women taking pictures of themselves and their subjects.221 Not only could they afford to be photographed at any given moment, unlike lower income families, who often

saved for months to afford one portrait, they also had the opportunity to be photographed in private. Trips to the photographer’s studio were unnecessary much of the time, and being photographed leisurely at home afforded a type of freedom of self-representation unmatched in images of working-class people of all ethnicities.

The turn of the nineteenth-century changed all of this. In 1900, after Kodak’s gains in transforming sheets of film into a more convenient roll format, the company came out with its easy to use and relatively affordable Brownie camera. In this instance, many people could become both subject and photographer.

Despite the technological evolution of the handheld camera in the late nineteenth-century, no other camera reached the remarkably high popularity of the Brownie. George Eastman’s primary camera engineer, Frank Brownell, made accessible the practice of snapshot and casual photography. Eastman wanted a cheap, mass-produced camera that was easy enough for children to use and was specifically marked toward that audience. In naming his new camera the Brownie, Eastman capitalized on an already popular character of the same name that appeared in children’s stories and poems. Author and illustrator Palmer Cox’s Brownies were gnome-like, mischievous, but lovable little beings who soon became part of the early Kodak advertisements [Fig. 3.2].

At two dollars per camera in 1902, minus the

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many extras that doubled the retailer’s “complete photographic outfit,” families expected to pay the 2012 equivalent of nearly fifty-five dollars for a camera marketed toward children. Clearly, an expense such as the one illustrated above immediately determined the consumer demographic that would enjoy such a product. From 1900 until the 1960s, including the release of various movie cameras in the 1950s, Kodak’s Brownie was a standard and common way to create and reproduce material culture of
self-documentation. The Brownie and other handheld cameras assumed a specific, yet unrecognized, responsibility in American society.

*The Brownie for Brownies: Mexican American Family Photography*

On point with trends in areas with a high Mexican American population, Nuevomexicanos who could afford Kodak Brownies purchased them by the 1930s and ‘40s. As the camera became another member of the family, it belatedly documented in their households what it had documented years prior in white households. This new advancement in technology visually captured the material gains of commodity affordability. Entrance into the middle class was indexed with photographs of the car and house, regardless of their age or condition. In Los Angeles, Mexican Americans took their cameras to the beach and bore witness to interactions between youth who challenged conservative family structures. The camera continued to document spontaneous instances – akin to what photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson described as the ‘decisive moment’ – in between studio shots as babies received baptism, couples engaged in holy matrimony, and children were filled with the Holy Eucharist for the first time. The camera also materialized memories of the fiesta queen, school plays, and even captured groups of young men and women in social interactions outside the church or school.

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223 The Eastman Kodak Company was not the only manufacturer of cameras and photography supplies, although they were among the most popular and prosperous until the late twentieth century and the dawn of digital photography. Other popular manufacturers included Leitz, Nikon, and Polaroid, who varied in their own contributions to photographic technology.

224 Lupe Anguiano Collection, Anthony Beltramo Collection, and Yolanda Retter-Vargas Orphan Collection, Chicano Studies Research Center Library, University of California – Los Angeles.
Portrait photography in Albuquerque typically took place in the well-known Brooks, Cobb, or Milner studios downtown, although this formal method was but one with which families had their pictures taken. Cástulo Moya, a Bareleño who resided at 608 Cromwell Avenue, was a photographer to many Nuevomexicano families as early as the 1930s. Andrés Armijo’s investigation of his own family history and portraiture led to a discussion of Cástulo, the man who photographed his relatives and others in Albuquerque. Called a retratrero, Cástulo left the confining photographer’s studio to his competitors. Rather, he was an on-site, local traveling photographer who embraced the bosque’s natural beauty as a backdrop against his staged, yet unrestricted, photos of children and their families outside. Part of his photographic charm was allowing natural facial expressions and relaxed, even fun, poses. Cástulo’s appeal as a local Nuevomexicano photographer aided in his business, especially for families in San José, Barelas, and other nearby communities. He was sympathetic to their cultural needs for accurate self-representation. Although these were staged sessions, Cástulo captured Nuevomexicanos as they were – every day Americans enjoying their families. A typical photographic session with children included them atop finely dressed ponies with appropriate props to finish the images

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226 Andrés Armijo finely weaves together his genealogy with family photographs and discusses the documentation practices of local Nuevomexicanos in print and on film. He notes the specific differences in New Mexican Spanish when describing photographs and photographers, as retrato (portrait) is the typical word for fotografía (photograph) more commonly used in other Spanish-speaking communities. Andrés Armijo, Becoming a Part of My History Through Images and Stories of My Ancestors (Los Ranchos, NM: LPD Press, 2010): 14.
of these would-be *vaqueros* and *vaqueras* in the barrio. This is not to suggest that Cástulo’s Nuevomexicano patrons all dreamed of a ranching lifestyle for their children, nor did many of them have such a lifestyle themselves, especially in Albuquerque. But, this type of *vaquero* stylization was quite popular at the time due to spaghetti western films, and cocked sombreros, chaps, and neckerchiefs must have been more appealing and light-hearted than the static backdrops featuring Venetian landscapes and Greek mythology so common in formal studios. Photographing people inside their homes or on their property allowed for a more relaxed and natural-looking portrait [Fig. 3.3]. In two examples from Armijo’s research, his family members are depicted at leisure – children on ponies and young adults surrounding
their elders – as they all appear to enjoy the photo session. Their smiles appear to be genuine and happiness emanate from all within the frame. Cástulo, above all else, represented Nuevomexicano families as they chose, whether in casual poses or formal compositions. When a professional photographer was unavailable, or when that service was simply unnecessary, Mexican Americans picked up their own cameras and shot film from everyday life.

The following family photographs were collected as part of the National Hispanic Cultural Center’s exhibit on Barelas in 2001. It is unclear if the owners of these photographs voluntarily released them, or if another person did so on their behalf. This raises interesting questions concerning the process and acquisition of archival material, as issues of ownership, personal reputation, and ethics come to the fore. While acknowledging those issues, this analysis takes the position that the individual or the immediate families of the Bareleños discussed here donated the photographs and chose specific images they felt best represented their lives in Barelas. These are images of Mexican American daily life as they worked, socialized, and celebrated with friends and family. They offer another perspective of race, class, and gender beyond how Mexican Americans were constructed at that time in the public consciousness.

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227 Future research on this topic will include contacting the families of those represented in this analysis.
One Barelas resident, Carmen Rodríguez, took fondly to the camera in the 1940s, just any young person might. In select photographs, we see her grow from a young woman into a wife in a span of a short few years. In the first photograph of Carmen [Fig. 3.4], she is with her girlfriends Dolores and Sofie somewhere along Central Avenue in downtown Albuquerque. Standing just in front of her companions, Carmen holds an oversized white purse and wears saddle shoes; their sandals and bare arms indicate good weather. The three are caught squinting in the sun and face a sign that casts a shadow across them. Our only indication of the photographer is seen in a shadow at the bottom of the photograph. The photographer looks to be male, as the shadow suggests closely cropped hair so that the ears are visible. While women certainly wore their hair pinned back and out of the way, at that time very few
cut their hair as short as typically seen on men. Carmen has a youthful energy that is reflected in her clothing as it is in her facial expression. Like her companions, she appears to be having a delightful afternoon downtown as represented in this snapshot.

In another photograph [Fig. 3.5], Carmen again stands with two women, but appears much more mature than in the previous image. This time, each of the women carry large purses and are dressed for a special occasion. Again, Carmen is the focus of this photograph, with the help of her height, as she stands in the center of her girlfriends. Each of the women looks in different directions, perhaps at their viewers standing around the unknown photographer. The women stand under an arch in the wall and in front of a half-circle that extends outward from what looks like a religious
statue’s grotto or a shine. Dated March 1944, Carmen was likely courting or engaged to her future husband, Fred Chávez Jr. Indeed after the end of WWII, Fred was discharged from the Navy and returned home to Albuquerque. The two married on April 29, 1946.

A third photograph [Fig. 3.6] is emblematic of a common snapshot in the 1940s as it shows Carmen attempting to pull Fred toward her for a quick photo. Both laughing, Carmen stands a bit behind her husband with her hands on his shoulder and arm while Fred holds a child’s ball in his right hand. Carmen is pregnant in this photograph; the bright sun allows for a shadow to appear underneath her growing belly and is visible despite her wearing a black skirt. Carmen wears a long-sleeved
blouse tucked into a long skirt that can cater to her changing figure and has her hair pinned back. Fred is also dressed casually with a loose, crisp white t-shirt and pleated slacks with razor-sharp creases down the center of each leg. The two are engaged in a playful embrace outside against a backdrop of barren tree branches. Her bright smile and eye contact with the photographer communicates genuine happiness. Fred, with a toy in his hand, smiles also and though his eyes are closed, we can almost hear their laughter that accompanied that shot. They are at home here with the perchas (clotheslines), barrels of trash waiting to be burned, and other houses are seen in the immediate distance.

Fred and Carmen eventually relocated to the Griegos community in the North Valley, where they raised three children of their own and took in another two. The pair was active in the St. Therese of the Little Flower parish, and their dedication to the Church was rewarded with a St. Francis of Assisi medal from former Archbishop Michael Sheehan. Fred and Carmen led happy lives, and any setbacks they might have faced in their personal lives never revealed themselves publicly. They celebrated their sixty-sixth wedding anniversary in 2012, just three months before Fred passed away. Carmen’s photos demonstrate the possibility for a woman of color to maintain, or perhaps build, a middle-class life in the post-war era. She, like other Bareleños, moved away from the neighborhood by the 1950s. Although Carmen and Fred avoided the areas of white flight occurring east of the University of

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New Mexico, they settled in the North Valley, an area quite the opposite of urban Barelas in both reputation and history.

*The Brownie for Bareleños: The Contreras Family*

Like Carmen Rodríguez Chávez, Margarita “Margaret” Contreras, an off-and-on Barelas resident, often documented herself and her family in and around her neighborhood. She, more than the others discussed in this analysis, had quite a tragic story that played out in the newspaper. But like many others during her time, Margaret seemed to enjoy asserting herself through her camera, despite the narrative constructed of her and her family in the media. Born Margarita Tapia in 1915 to Francisco and Aurelia in Albuquerque she grew up in Albuquerque as the third of seven children. She later went on to meet and marry Faustino Contreras, another Nuevomexicano who grew up in Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, a village nestled in the North Valley. By the late 1930s the couple lived in the Five Points barrio, just west of Barelas across the Rio Grande and had six children together. Margaret suffered the tremendous and sudden loss of her older sister Julia Tapia in January and stillbirth of her daughter Juliana, possibly named for her late sister, later that

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229 *United States Census, 1930, Albuquerque, Precint 5, Bernalillo County, New Mexico. Household of Francisco Tapia.*
230 *United States Census, 1920, Ranchos de Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico. Household of Joe and Rosa Contreras.*
231 Julia Tapia passed away on January 8, 1937 from an illness at her family home in Barelas on 1591 South Third Street. She was twenty-nine years old and was married to Antonio Jurado, although her obituary only lists her parents and siblings as her survivors. She was buried in the nearby San José Cemetery. *New Mexico Deaths, 1889-1945.* Her obituary is listed under “Tapia,” *Albuquerque Journal,* 9 January 1937.
same year in August 1937. It is unclear when exactly the Contreras family moved to Barelas, but when they did Margaret was in the company of her Tapia brothers and sisters. The possibility for Margaret Contreras to have her picture taken with loved ones was endless; like many other Bareleños, Margaret had a number of family members in close proximity. One of her brothers, Henry “Kiki” Tapia, lived in 1328 Fourth Street’s rear home, less than five hundred feet away from his sister prior to leaving for the war, though by the time he was discharged, Henry moved to the 1316 Barelas Road property.

In a series of three available photographs taken at 1316 Barelas Road, estimated in the very early 1940s, it seems that Margaret, and perhaps Faustino as well although he is absent from view, are responsible for and control the day’s impromptu photo shoot. New Mexico’s abundant sunlight made snapshot photography a possibility outdoors, as lighting conditions within the home were probably incompatible without an intense flash component or sufficient lamps nearby. In one image [Fig. 3.7], we see Margaret pictured with her older sister, Onofre López, younger brother, Frank Tapia, and her daughter, Gloria “Chata” Contreras. Arms crossed, perhaps as a shield from the chilly weather – as the bare branches indicate

232 Juliana Contreras, 7 August 1937, New Mexico, Deaths, 1889-1945.
cooler temperatures – Margaret huddles together with the others for a quick, family portrait outside her sister’s home. Onofre looks as though she was pulled from working inside, as her apron indicates, though she is as ready as the others for her picture to be taken, and offers a half smile. We can see from the tan on her right arm that Onofre also labors outside the home, possibly in maintaining a garden, continually hanging laundry outside to dry, chopping wood, and general upkeep of the property. Unlike her sister, Margaret is not dressed for work in the home – she lacks an apron – although she certainly could go about her daily life without that material marker of domesticity. Although the younger Frank Tapia is pushed to the
background in the presence of the two women, he has his arm around Margaret’s waist and appears just as content as she. Wearing a longer suit jacket, though without a dress shirt underneath, Frank was likely preparing to head downtown or was simply readying himself for a social occasion. In a later photograph, Frank and Margaret pose together again, but this time he is pictured wearing a Navy uniform, perhaps just as he headed to war or upon his return. The little girl, Gloria, looks like she is in the middle of talking, or even yelling to her baby brother William, and may have stumbled into the photograph accidentally. The unidentified photographer, presumably Faustino, gracefully captures the subjects as the wavering cottonwood tree branches create delicate shadows over the four Bareleños.

Another striking composition in this series is a shot of Margaret alone [Fig. 3.8], the focused center surrounded by a blurred periphery. Here, Margaret is pictured at the center of the composition with the home’s stucco wall and window frame serving as the background, unlike the other two photos that partition the background between the home and yard. Margaret squints just a bit in the intense sunlight with her right arm holding her left. This was a typical pose for Margaret in other photographs as she was seen with both serious and relaxed facial expressions.
She stands in the blinding sunlight, clenching her jaw, as she alone guards herself.

The wall of 1316 Barelas Road was her backdrop, the sun provided the lighting, and she stood there, probably with her family as the audience, and posed quite proudly for all to see. In the two photographs of Margaret, clearly taken within seconds or minutes of each other, we see her dominate the composition, both alone and among the group.
The last of the 1316 Barelas Road triptych is a photo of Margaret’s children, Gloria and William [Fig. 3.9]. The brother and sister pair stands together in front of the home’s wall, just as the adults did, holding hands, and smiling at the camera. William, the baby of the two, looks off-center to the right and is dressed in light-colored clothing with his black hair neatly parted on the left side. Gloria is in the direct center of the photograph, her left hand stuck in between her blouse and pinafore dress. Although she has a faint smile, her facial expression mimics that of the adults; she is serious and looking intently at the person, perhaps her father, photographing her. Her right hand actively pulls William’s left to seemingly pull and
hold him close for the few seconds to ready the camera and snap the shot. Because the children are small, their bodies are more out of focus, with little more than their faces captured in sharp detail. It is unclear when this photograph was taken relative to the others; we do not know if this came first, or if it was the last in this series taken at this particular home. The photographer’s positioning of this and the other three images are such that the family members occupy the bottom half of the frames; their feet are eliminated from view and the home’s wall towers over them.

Despite being family photographs, and the sentiments that midcentury “family photography” conjures up in one’s mind – serenity, nostalgia, whimsy, and happiness – these particular images have a somber beauty to them. Facial expressions are kept to a minimum for both adults and children alike. Perhaps this was the nature of the family. What seems most remarkable about these photographs in comparison to those of Carmen Rodríguez Chávez, is that the family made a studio using their home and yard as the backdrop. They posed similar to how they would for a professional photographer huddling everyone together for family and individual portraits. They chose a form and a space of self-representation that could only be captured intimately, for each other and by each other.
Although he is visually absent from the previous images, one photograph of the senior Faustino shows him in the late 1930s with his daughters Gloria and Juanita [Fig. 3.10]. The three sit against a fence outside at an undisclosed location. The bright New Mexico sun blazes down on them as they all struggle to look at the camera with open eyes. The girls’ blonde hair is parted on the left side and secured with a large ribbon, looking ready for their picture to be taken. The smallest of the bunch, Gloria, cannot bear to look at the photographer and instead offers a smile and looks in another direction. Juanita is a bit more focused and tries hard to make eye contact with the photographer while offering a sweet smile as well. Although the photograph is over exposed, the light shining on the left side of Faustino’s face adds to the lighthearted, sentimentality of the photograph. Faustino huddles together with his two daughters and holds them tightly for a quick documentation of fatherhood.
The accompanying image is composed of the two Contreras girls and another woman, perhaps one of Faustino’s relatives [Fig. 3.11]. The three are in a similar composition as the previous photo; only Juanita and Gloria have switched places. The imagery is much more visible in this photo – details in the clothing, the aged wooden fence, and even the camera sitting above Juanita. Again, she is the only one making eye contact with the photographer; presumably her father Faustino, while Gloria and the unidentified woman look elsewhere. None of the available photographs show Margaret and Faustino together, which makes these two images all the more critical in terms of family structure, who determines what and who will be captured on film, and the stories told through visual narrative. Of course, photographs often hide pain and trauma through a veil of happiness and enjoyment.
Other photographs of Margaret, while not with her husband, show her with brother Frank and youngest daughter Gloria. In one of these images [Fig. 3.12], Margaret stands behind her now teenaged daughter out in the cold as they both pose in front of a car. It seems to belong to them as indicated with Gloria’s foot resting on the fender, signaling ownership. Margaret is dressed nicely in an overcoat with her hair done perfectly and her right arm holding Gloria for a sense of closeness and intimacy. At this point and perhaps due to her pumps, Margaret is a bit taller than her daughter, who dresses appropriately for her age in canvas shoes, rolled slacks, and a thick black coat. Margaret looks somewhere in the distance, but as usual Gloria looks
directly at the unidentified photographer. The handwritten message on the back of the photograph, “With love, Chata & Margaret cute or should I say beautiful sister you’ve got huh, you ought to be proud, haha,” was probably meant for one of Margaret’s brothers, probably Henry or Frank, as she was incredibly close with them, as suggested in the collection of images. Another photograph [Fig. 3.13] shows Margaret with both Frank and Gloria. Frank stands behind the two women with his arms around each, physically linking all of them, but Margaret’s relationship to each of them is the reason for the picture. His cariño (affection) for the women is obvious as demonstrated in his pose, especially as Margaret leans back, demonstrating a closeness that the three share. Gloria is noticeably older here than in the previous picture – they all are – and, while still youthful in her saddle shoes, sweater and
multi-gored skirt, by this time her face has thinned a bit and she has surpassed Margaret height. Again, they stand outside in the blinding New Mexico sun with part of a home and the natural landscape serving as the backdrop.

Although the available family photographs are limited in the stories they share, what we do not see are the hardships and trying times families experienced. The 1950s were rather hard on the Contreras family. In May 1952, Margaret’s brother Henry passed away from an illness,\(^ {235} \) and exactly six months later she filed for divorce from her husband and was to gain custody of the five children,\(^ {236} \) although later information indicates that the couple remained married. It is unknown whether Margaret was a wage laborer throughout her adulthood, but by 1954 she worked as a maid in the El Fidel Hotel downtown, while her family relocated to the Sawmill/Wells Park area about a mile north of the hotel.\(^ {237} \) In one instance during her job at the hotel, Margaret was involved in an altercation with another worker, Edith López of the South Martínezstown barrio, as López attempted to cross a picket line but was unsuccessful in doing so, resulting in both women being charged for disorderly conduct.\(^ {238} \) Margaret’s mobility throughout the city demonstrates long-established connections among Albuquerque’s oldest neighborhoods as she migrated from Five Points to Barelas to Wells Park.

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\(^ {238} \) “Hotel Worker, Picket Charged,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 10 July 1954.
Margaret’s son, Faustino Jr., also lived within those networks and formed or maintained relationships he had with other areas of the city. Born in 1938 in the Atrisco/Five Points barrios, Faustino Jr. was baptized at Sacred Heart Church in Barelas the same year, rather than at the Holy Family parish nearby. \(^{239}\)

Little is known about his early life [Fig. 3.14] until the 1950s when he first joined the New Mexico National Guard and then enlisted, served, and was discharged from the Air Force in June 1958. A nineteen-year-old veteran, Faustino Jr. quickly gained employment at Sandia Base and had just enjoyed the summer wedding of his sister Juanita to Noel Baca. \(^{240}\)

Quite unfortunately and unexpectedly, things took a turn for

\(^{239}\) Faustino Ernesto Contreras Certificate of Baptism, José Maria Baca Collection, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.

the worse on August 25, 1958 when, only two months after he was discharged, Faustino Jr. was found deceased at a property in the Atrisco/Five Points area, some three and a half miles away from his family residence in Wells Park. Although Faustino Jr. suffered extensive bruising to the face and body with marks on both arms and sand on his trousers, the immediate cause of death was unknown. The subsequent autopsy report revealed that in fact Faustino died of a heroin overdose. The initial newspaper story of his death in 1958 showed him in his Air Force uniform [Fig. 3.15] and described him as an upstanding, responsible veteran who died an unexpected and tragic death in the South Valley, an area with a rough reputation. Only a week following Faustino Jr.’s death, the Albuquerque Journal offered no celebratory remarks of the youth’s life and instead branded him a heroin addict, dying from “the

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effects of ‘barbiturates and heroin,’” thus relinquishing the positive comments made prior to revelations concerning the cause of death. The article put him in the company of another Bareleño, twenty-year-old Eddie Martínez, who also suffered a lethal heroin overdose on August sixteenth. The newspaper report suggested an alarming trend in drug use as “three young people, one a girl, have been hospitalized here [in Albuquerque] in the past three weeks from overdoses of narcotics,” although Faustino Jr. and Eddie Martínez were the only ones who did not recover. Faustino received full military funeral services at his downtown parish, Immaculate Conception Church, with his uncle, Tony Tapia, and new brother-in-law, Noel Baca, as pallbearers, among other family and friends. Faustino Jr. was buried locally at the Mt. Calvary Cemetery family plot instead of at the Santa Fe National Cemetery with other veterans. In the media, his cause of death forfeited any goodness in his character, any struggle he overcame, or any service he gave to his country. He was Nuevomexicano and a dope fiend, just like the others identified in the Journal piece on Faustino Contreras and the recent wave of overdoses to hit Albuquerque.

The Contreras family embodies the socioeconomic transformations taking place nationwide during the postwar period as both men and women came to grips with their lives once again. Margaret’s photos, while taken before the death of her son, reveal a longstanding hardship in her face and body language. The death of her seventy-year-old mother, Aurelia Tapia, on May 15, 1959, close to a year after Faustino Jr.’s passing, likely gave the family another significant blow. The Tapia and

Contreras families gathered once again at Immaculate Conception Church for funeral mass and proceeded to bury their matriarch near her husband Francisco, who passed away in 1950, and her grandson Faustino. Although there is no evidence of trauma in Margaret’s photos, pairing the visual with a written narrative replicated in the paper reveals a more complex story. It was very unlikely, with the exception of photos taken of deceased relatives as memento mori, that individuals in this time period photographed themselves in distraught situations. On the contrary, Margaret’s collection of photographs demonstrates her family’s love for one another; cariño for each is privileged here. Margaret Contreras was a 1940s woman caring for her family and documented their lives as everyday, working people of Albuquerque.

*Brownies for Bareleño Pachucos and Pachucas*

Of course, not only did parents use the camera to document their growing families, but youths also enthusiastically embraced the technology as a way to assert their place and identity in the world. Some of these young people, like many other midcentury teenagers, were associated with what was considered counter-culture and

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245 Margaret Contreras passed away in May 1965 at forty-nine years old due to an unstated illness. Her obituary indicated that she was in fact still married to Faustino at the time of her death. She was buried on the same family plot as her son and mother; the notice listed all living family members, although it did not state those who preceded her in death. The only other personal detail it gives is her membership to Queen of Heaven Catholic Church. Interestingly, this featured obituary provided a picture of Margaret as well. It is the only one I have seen where she has a full smile. “Mrs. Contreras Services Today,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 22 May 1965. Faustino Contreras passed away in September 1977. Unfortunately, the paper only published a short notice of funeral arrangements without mention of his survivors or any details of his life. “Contreras” in Deaths and Funerals, *Albuquerque Journal*, 4 September 1977.
un-American behavior; many of these youth were pachucos and pachucas. Some would say that zoot-suit culture originated in El Paso, TX, or in Los Angeles, CA, during the late 1930s and early 1940s. It is true that parts of those metropolitan areas had high numbers of working-class youth of all ethnicities who participated in the cultural phenomenon that was as much about fashion as it was about music, dancing, language, and even social resistance. 246 An important element of this and other twentieth century cultural phenomena was its transmission and practice across state lines and even national borders so that, with the help of the radio, print media, film, and simple word of mouth, youth from Los Angeles to Mexico City to Paris could and did share in a culturally imagined community. 247 While the geographical origins of zoot-suit culture and its related pachuco/a communities are uncertain, Mexican American youth from all over the Southwest made it their own while maintaining connection to other practitioners across the landscape. 248


248 Mauricio Mazón associates the rise of pachuco culture with Mexican American migration to the city as youth faced increasing ethnic discrimination from white society’s impatience with their cultural assimilation. See Mazón’s The Zoot-Suit
The zoot-suit and the *pachucada* (pachuco cultural community and its members) were alive and well in Albuquerque during the 1940s despite traumatic instances of public persecution elsewhere in the nation. While a number of scholars have addressed Mexican American and working-class zoot-suiters in Los Angeles, very few have detailed its presence elsewhere in the country, although they acknowledge its existence. Zoot-suiters and pachucos/as were common all over the Southwest, including New Mexico. In one interview from the 1970s, Bareleño Albert Ortega recounted that, “*los chucos y los batos, son igual carnal…Cuando yo me estaba criando allí en Alburque, ése, pues en ese tiempo cuando le preguntaban a uno de qué raza eras, todos los batos decían ‘pachuco.’*” So, instead of replying to the question concerning their racial or ethnic background with “Spanish” as was customary in 1940s New Mexico, the youth, according to Ortega, responded with their primary cultural affiliation as pachucos.

Official representations of Mexican American youth in the media during the 1940s bordered on both the ridiculous and the tragic, due in part to Los Angeles’ Zoot Suit Riots in July 1943. Violent attacks between Navy servicemen – white and

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249 Very often ‘zoot suit’ and ‘pachuo/a’ were seen and used as interchangeable categories of analysis that later give way to analyses of chulos/as of the 1960s onward. For an example of research on pachucos/as outside of California, see Laura Cummings, *Pachucas and Pachucos in Tucson: Situated Border Lives* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009).

250 “The pachucos and the other guys are the same, brother…When I was growing up there in Albuquerque, man, well in that time when somebody asked someone what race they were, all the guys would say ‘pachuco.’” Albert Ortega interview quoted in Richard Griego, “Los Pachucos y su Lenguaje,” *La Herencia: Our Past, Our Present, Our Future* 36 (2002): 8-9.
nonwhite – and Mexican American zoot-suiters and pachucos/as came as a result from the highly publicized Sleepy Lagoon Murder trial, in which seventeen youth were charged with the death of a peer in East Los Angeles. The young men and women apprehended in the police roundup of suspects were dehumanized in the press, sent to prison and reform schools, and further exposed racism against Mexican Americans. As Carey McWilliams noted in *North from Mexico*,

> In Los Angeles, in 1942, if a boy wished to become known as a ‘gangster’ he had a choice of two methods. The first, and by far the more difficult, was to commit a crime and be convicted. The second method was easier, although it was largely restricted to a particular group. If you were born of Mexican parents financially unable to move out of certain specific slum areas, you could be a gangster from birth without ever having to go to all the trouble of committing a crime.251

This was the problem of the zoot-suit for Mexican American youth; their guilt lay in their skin tone, the formal and informal languages spoken, their areas of work and leisure, and in their clothing. The riots, then, were an opportunity to publicly shame and punish wearers of the zoot-suit. These cases of vigilante justice went beyond aesthetic expression to collectively punish and persecute an entire ethnic group, with abhorrent abuses for both men and women alike. Wearing a zoot-suit, especially for Mexican Americans anywhere in the nation, was dangerous. In fact, it was criminal. In one case in Albuquerque during the 1950s, the zoot-suit was no longer needed as a material marker of culpability. In “Breakup of Pachuco Gangs Asked,” a group of so-called pachucos and pachucas in the Martíneztown barrio were accused of loitering,

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harassing motorists, and generally terrifying the public. In this case, the suspected transgressors were “girl inmates” of the nearby Florence Perkinson Girls Welfare Home. The article’s eyewitness offered no physical description of what identified these girls as pachucas; it was their ethnicity, location, institutionalization, and criminal activity made them so.\textsuperscript{252}

Examples of Albuquerque pachucos/as demonstrate similarity and solidarity with other wearers of the zoot-suit style. Men typically dressed in long suit jackets with extreme shoulder padding and nipped waists, high-waisted trousers, and long chains that extended close to the ankle [Fig. 3.1]. Women were also known to dress in suits similar to men, although they often wore skirts above the knee and had their hair ratted into a high pompadour with dark lipstick finishing off their look. Their stylization was deliberate and carefully constructed as an expression of what Catherine Ramírez calls “style politics” and the use of fashion as a form of resistance to the status quo.\textsuperscript{253} A photo of Barelas wisas (girls) [Fig. 3.16] expresses this very look. The three unidentified women pose together arm in arm on what appears to be a porch, and their heavy contrasting shadows might indicate the use of a flash to capture this image. Together with this chapter’s introductory image of vatos locos (crazy guys), these Albuquerque barrio youth looked every bit the pachuco and pachuca in other locations. They listened to the same music on deejay “Pal” Al Tafoya’s rhythm and blues hour, they enjoyed ten-cent wimpy burgers at the Red Ball

\textsuperscript{252} “Breakup of Pachuco Gangs Asked,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal}, 1 April 1956.
\textsuperscript{253} Ramírez, xvii, 56-57.
Café, they cruised the downtown streets looking for action and fun, and they fought with rival barrios. These and other elements connected them culturally to other men and women with the same interests all over the nation.

Even with such extreme forms of violence and ethnic discrimination taking place in Southern California during the 1940s, for many people, the Golden State was the place to be. It symbolized progress and prosperity in a vast array of industries that attracted laborers to its fields, industrial factories, and shipyards. Nuevomexicanos were no different in their desire to head west and unearth a fruitful opportunity in the California soil. Part of that excitement included the vibrant Los Angeles scene as a twentieth century city. Many Nuevomexicanos participated in a
new, more permanent migratory experience in California, and in doing so, created a flexible transmission of culture within their multiple spaces of work, leisure, and residence. Those who could not make the long-term or permanent move out west had the opportunity to visit friends and family already established in the area. Much like Nuevomexicanos utilized kinship links to move from the village to the city within New Mexico itself, so too did they take advantage of links forged across state lines to make frequent visits, work temporarily, or plan for future relocation.

Eric Baca, a Bareleño zoot-suiter, came to participate in the Los Angeles zoot scene and took advantage of his connections there on a visit in 1943. Eric’s images document his good times in Southern California, far away from Barelas. His photographs demonstrate a masculine youth and working-class culture not seen in either Margaret’s or Carmen’s photographs. There is a distinct absence of women in Eric’s photos in both the following examples illustrated here and others in his small collection, although they offer a valuable commentary on the criminalization of youth, fashion as resistance, and masculinity. Going to Los Angeles as a young man, two years shy of graduating from high school was one thing, but going to Los Angeles to participate in the zoot-suit style in the midst and aftermath of rioting was
In the first of Eric’s photos [Fig. 3.17], he stands with five young men, many of whom were also from Albuquerque. Clearly, this is a souvenir photo taken by a staff photographer. Another photo taken at the same time indicates that the group was at the Monarch Studios in Hollywood. Eric Baca stands at the upper left corner, the only one turned away from the group. While his friends Delfin Sánchez, Frank “Kiko” Almaraz, and Albert “Clavitos” Luna each hold bottles of beer, Eric holds a small guitar as a prop. The men are having a great time and are relaxed in their facial expressions and body language. They are also dressed in zoot-

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254 Conflicting information on Eric Baca’s photographs date this particular trip to both 1943 and 1944.
suit fashions popular among working-class, jazz-enthusiast youths. Delfin, Frank, and Albert all wear high-waisted pants that billow out at the knee and are pegged at the cuff. Their fingertip coats finish the look together with high pompadour hairstyles. In another of Eric’s photographs similar to the first [Fig. 3.18], we see him pictured with another friend again in Los Angeles. Eric and Richard “La Richa” Sánchez once again demonstrate their zoot style, though this time in a more casual two-toned gabardine jackets of varying length. These photos both embody and challenge issues relating to local identity, masculinity, criminalization of the youth, and the racialization of fashion at a key moment during ongoing physical and psychological abuses of Mexican Americans.
It is likely that Eric Baca’s trips to the Los Angeles area caused him no problems for the way he dressed depending on the areas he visited. After all, he was a tourist and regularly visited his best friend, Bareleño prize fighter Art “Golden Boy” Aragón; he visited Hollywood movie sets and met celebrities as seen in one picture with Bob Hope. Still, Eric’s presence in Los Angeles at the time of such high racial tension coupled with his use of the zoot suit demonstrates, especially for the viewer, a self-conscious assertion of identity despite the attack on young men and women just like him. He and his friends proudly displayed their buenas garras (clothes or “nice rags”) and the good times they had for their families and friends back in New Mexico, who for the most part did not experience such dramatic public humiliation for wearing zoot suits. For Eric Baca and his friends to willingly confront such a tense racial climate and document their presence in it was quite remarkable for small-town Bareleños visiting the big city of Los Angeles. But then again, perhaps Eric felt that cultural connection with Los Angeles youth in their similar fashion and musical tastes, as he shared with them a similar urban identity and reality, albeit on a much smaller scale. His photos showcase an expressive group masculinity and shared cultural identity that existed beyond New Mexico.
Cameras were the very tools with which people of color challenged decades of detrimental government, scientific, and travel photography that aimed to subordinate and dehumanize them in various official reports, exhibitions, and print culture. The examples provided here illustrate the disparate nature of Nuevomexicano and Bareleño self-expression that went beyond what any outsider could capture concerning the intimacy of daily life. This analysis offers stark revelations of family photography among women in Barelas, and Mexican American women more generally. While they may not have completely controlled impromptu photo sessions, they did control both how they were pictured then and perhaps who would see those pictures in the future. By extension, these photos suggest that Mexican American women had another level of agency and awareness afforded to them through their use of the camera.

Despite Margaret Contreras’ incredibly difficult life filled with personal tragedy, she never failed to step in front of the camera and assert herself so forcefully as she did in her self-portrait taken on 1316 Barelas Road. Indeed, although someone performed the mechanics of the shot, it was Margaret who was the inadvertent photographer. In a similar way, Carmen Rodríguez Chávez documented her own transition to adulthood as she grew up before the camera at the moment when it became affordable to do so. That both Margaret and Carmen had these types of images and they were made available to the public, either by their own hand or that of a relative, exemplifies a type of gendered production of knowledge and an assertion of identity. Just as mid-century notions of domesticity began to fall out of fashion,
those ideas continued to hold a place in the material production of memory via family photography.\textsuperscript{255} The lack of multiple photographs of their children alone also speaks to archival assembly, family privacy, and relevance. While the men and women of this barrio forged their own paths in the post-war period as they remain in Barelas and moved out to other areas, the images shared on their behalf suggest similar values of family, friends, and place.

Out of all the individuals pictured here, it seems that Margaret Contreras and her family confronted firsthand how they were portrayed in the newspaper and how they represented themselves at home. Because so many family events played themselves out publicly, we have a better idea of their struggles that went on when the camera was put away and out of use. Margaret and Faustino continued to take pictures of themselves and their family despite the traumatic instances thrown at them, just as most families do. Their photographs, and those of Margaret more specifically, actively challenged any negativity written about them in the press.

The same is true of Eric Baca’s chosen photographs, although his personal archive highlights what were probably the best times of his youth. As it turns out, Eric had a rather full life after these photos were taken. He put away the zoot-suit and enlisted in the armed forces during WWII to serve in active duty as a paratrooper. After the war, he returned to Albuquerque and married Jessica Montoya, another Bareleña, and worked as a postmaster, car salesman, and even bail bondsman. Certainly, his life was not without it’s own hardships; Jessica and Eric buried two of

\textsuperscript{255} Gillian Rose, *Doing Family Photography: The Domestic, the Public, and the Politics of Sentiment* (London: Ashgate, 2010).
their children during their lifetime together. Still, as his photos and obituary indicate, “he treated everyone like they were very special,” and had a ““life-of-the-party” sense of humor.”²⁵⁶ Perhaps Eric chose to showcase these particular photos as part of the time he lived in Barelas, although they were taken in Los Angeles, to demonstrate another element to barrio life. Indeed, Eric Baca was active in the National Hispanic Cultural Center; he heeded the call for donations of material memories to the institution in his own neighborhood in an effort to showcase Barelas’ previous life as an active, integral part of Albuquerque. His images link Barelas with the broader zoot-suit and pachuco communities, and although the zoot-suit and its wearers were criminalized in the 1940s and 1950s, Eric Baca’s photographic donation in the early twenty-first century carry little of the baggage and persecution associated with the clothing he and his friends wore. What was rebellion transformed into nostalgia.

Bareleños and Nuevomexicanos in the mid-twentieth century had more opportunity to tell their own stories through the use of the camera. Its portability, price, and ease of use almost demanded that every person capable of owning such a machine should do so. The photographs featured here attempted to illustrate the varying nature of everyday life outside traditional, highly stylized, photographic portraiture. Even Eric Baca’s photographs, likely professionally captured, challenged the confines of traditional studio portraiture as he and his friends wore what they wanted and posed how they wanted.²⁵⁷ The women, men, and children shown here

²⁵⁷ Eric Baca was not the only zoot-suiter to have a professional picture taken, though his portraits are the only ones available from Nuevomexicanos. In Los Angeles,
demonstrated the complexity of Barelas. They were daughters, sons, wives, husbands, laborers, lindy-hoppers, caretakers, veterans, and lovers of life. Their images provide an intimate counter-frame to the way Bareleños, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican Americans were negatively portrayed in the media, in print, and on film.

Chapter Four: “The Trees are Still There:” The Post-War and Urban Renewal Reframing of South Barelas

The people of the Flat melted into the darkness.
-- John Steinbeck, Tortilla Flat

The stigma of poverty was an unspoken consequence of the nation-wide urban renewal movement from the 1950s through the 1970s. In New Mexico, the poverty level reached 22.8 percent among the total population in 1969. Communities that fit the characteristics of blight were targeted not only because of their living conditions, but also to prevent the spread of their social ills to other parts of more affluent American cities. The lack of densely populated industrialized areas in New Mexico meant that urban renewal claimed fewer communities than other states; those that it did, however, suffered detrimental economic and emotional effects spanning generations. Albuquerque experienced the War on Poverty on a mass-scale, for every historic neighborhood seemed a perfect candidate for redevelopment and rehabilitation. For city leaders, the terms ‘historic’ and ‘slum’ were synonymous and plentiful throughout Albuquerque’s core. What happened in one such community is similar to the fate of others across the country – demolition and dispersal. But for the

260 This chapter contributes to the growing body of literature concerning urban renewal in the Southwest. See for example, Lydia Otero, La Calle: Spatial Conflicts and Urban Renewal in a Southwest City (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010); Stephanie Lewthwaite, Race, Place, and Reform in Mexican Los Angeles: A Transnational Perspective, 1890-1940 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009); David R. Díaz, Barrio Urbanism; Chicanos, Planning, and American Cities (New York: Routledge, 2005).
Barelas neighborhood there seemed to be a crisis of identity spurred from postwar liberalism and confounded in popular culture. Urban renewal created competing notions of identity in the public and private consciousness as it reified and essentialized what poverty looked like.\textsuperscript{261} Though city officials, academics, surveyors, and affluent citizens acted with concerned, controlled hysteria in removing problem areas, little could remedy their prejudice against Barelas and other similar neighborhoods. Despite the few gains of urban renewal in Albuquerque, the Barelas case largely failed the community, and the stigma of poverty remained while part of the community ceased to exist.

*Domestic Containment and Urban Decline*

The momentum of wartime prosperity eventually caught up with *Bareleños* in the 1950s. Whereas the national focus centered on fighting fascism abroad through much of the 1940s, the end of the war found a new, local enemy. Coupled with growing concern over the spread of communism both in the United States and abroad, early Cold War rhetoric seeped into the discussions of the ideal modern family and community. Much like its foreign policy, as Charlotte Brooks has illustrated in her discussion of Asian Americans in California, the US began a type of ‘domestic containment’ project that called for the redevelopment, rehabilitation, and removal of

\textsuperscript{261} The use of ‘private’ and ‘public’ in terms of identity is very much influenced by Laura Gomez’ work on assigned and affirmed identities in territorial New Mexico. See Laura Gomez, *Manifest Destinies: The Making of the Mexican American Race* (New York: New York University, 2007).
urban poverty. Partly referring to urban renewal, domestic containment encompasses those removal practices but links them with broader ideas of the racialization and criminalization of poverty, fear of low income people moving to the suburbs, and a moral need to prevent that spread from happening.

On the one hand, the McCarthyist panic claimed the careers of suspected communists, while on the other, agencies of urban renewal claimed the lives of whole communities that may or may not have been prone to socioeconomic unrest, rioting, and a possible socialist threat. People of color who worked and sacrificed for the war effort were later seen as a burden on society once the war reached its end and jobs were not as plentiful as they had been before. Although the domestic economy surged during the war and pulled the country from the throes of the Depression, the fact remained that many people nationwide continued to receive government assistance. The end of the war also signaled the beginning of de-industrialization as the economic focus shifted to science and technology from manufacturing.

All over the United States, and in New Mexico, whole communities once valued for their labor and productivity began their descent into unemployment and

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263 In 1960, the federal government paid out $3.8 billion nationwide in welfare payments to needy families and escalated to $11.5 billion in 1969. While the number of elderly people on assistance did not increase above 2.3 million between 1960-1969, the number of dependent children and adults on assistance rose from 3.1 to 7.5 in those years. US Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1970 Washington, DC, 1970, xviii.
despair. This was especially true as returning war veterans who once held employment at the Santa Fe shops suddenly found themselves without jobs in a few years’ time. The heavy movement back into Albuquerque following the war further stressed a delicate economy and exacerbated available social services. From 1940 to 1950 the population in the total Barelas area surged from 1,569 to 3,310 people while Albuquerque as a whole rose 173.1 percent to reach 96,815 in its resident population. Between 1960 and 1970, the city jumped another 21.2 percent to 243,751 residents in the metropolitan area.

The rise in population density was partly due to new census definitions of who or what was considered urban. The 1950 census changed the meaning of urban to include incorporated and unincorporated “densely settled urban fringe” that bordered cities of 50,000 or more. Also included in this new definition were unincorporated towns, villages, and communities of 2,500 people outside the urban margins. The definition prior to 1950 did not account for densely populated yet unincorporated

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264 US Bureau of the Census. *US Census of Population: 1950.* Vol II, *Characteristics of the Population,* Part 31, New Mexico. US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1952. “Population of Counties by Minor Civil Divisions: 1930 to 1950.” 31-7. Here, the Census Bureau included unincorporated parts of Barelas that fell in approximation to the Barelas Bridge and farther south, which is part of the reason for the extensive jump in population figures. While the numbers for unincorporated Barelas are unaccounted for prior to 1950, that area had the highest number of individuals there totaling 1,846 residents compared to 1,464 in North Barelas.


surrounding metropolitan areas and classified them as rural. For barrios such as South Barelas, its inclusion into the census for the first time as an urban population changed the way it was seen in the public consciousness, despite it still being an unincorporated part of the city. No longer was South Barelas reduced to the rural element, when in fact for years prior it had experienced industrialization on a massive scale compared to truly isolated villages scattered throughout the state. In any case, the definition of whom or what was urban mattered little in the daily lives of Barelas residents, for they had more immediate concerns.

Barelas’ economic woes were due to a couple of leading factors. First and foremost, this was a virtual company town dependent on the AT&SF railroad that concentrated into a clearly defined barrio. The majority of Bareleños were railroad families that earned railroad wages. In 1950 1,067 men and twenty-three women in Albuquerque worked on the railroad. Although employment in the shops was high among Bareleños, the city’s construction industry tapped out at 7,496 laboring men and women led the clerical industry with 4,352 workers. But by 1970, the number dwindled to 612 railroad laborers.  

Unfortunately, the change in engine technology

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from steam to diesel in the 1950s required fewer employees - meaning fewer Bareleño laborers. For a community that saw unimaginable industrial transformations in the 1880s, fewer than a hundred years later, Barelas underwent a fateful downward transition. Between 1950 and 1970, the unemployment rate accelerated from 4.7 percent to 5.5 percent in Albuquerque alone,\textsuperscript{268} and Barelas as a working-class community quickly felt those unemployment numbers grow and grow. Those who did not work in the shops provided the services to help this railroad barrio feel like its own small town in the number of nearby corner markets, cafés, record stores, and dance halls.\textsuperscript{269} Unfortunately those small family-owned businesses also suffered immensely during the postwar period, as unemployment in other sectors slowly increased and little disposable income was spent on downtown goods and corner store treats.

The automobile age also was responsible for the railway’s decline and an increase in downtown traffic through Barelas. Fewer train passengers meant fewer engines pulling into the depot and requiring service. Interestingly, the transition from


\textsuperscript{269} Some of the most prominent establishments still in existence today are Ruppe’s Drug Store, Arrow Market, the Red Ball Café, Christy Records, and what was formerly known as Fito’s – now referred to as the Barelas Coffee House.
train to vehicle as a primary mode of transportation had its costs and benefits; the primary benefit for Barelas was that Route 66 ran through the community early in the 1930s, thus encouraging commercial success at every level from travelers near and far. Although Route 66 ran through Barelas along Fourth Street and contributed to much of the community’s early commercial success, suburbanization and the construction of shopping malls on the eastern banks of town led consumers out of downtown and into the more affluent Heights area by the 1960s. To make matters worse, the construction of Interstates 25 and 40 divided the city into four parts and directed traffic away from Route 66 and the city streets into a more streamlined, quick way of road transportation free of stoplights. The coincidence of high unemployment, retail reorientation diverted traffic flow, and Barelas’ predominantly dense Spanish-speaking population seemed to throw the community into the urban renewal mess at a quicker pace than other Albuquerque neighborhoods.

South Barelas and Sacred Heart

For one section of the Barelas community, the stakes of urban renewal proved much higher. While Bareleños regionally identified with their community as a whole, distinctions still existed between the northern and southern ends of the barrio. Prior to 1965, the city limits ended at the Barelas Bridge, and left families in South Barelas under the jurisdiction of the county. This part of unincorporated Barelas looked demographically similar to the residents north of the bridge. The 1950 census reported a majority “native-born white” population of 1,803 – referring to largely
Nuevomexicano men and women – with fifteen African American residents and four “other races.”

For city officials looking to incorporate the area, the elements that were the least attractive about South Barelas – and part of the reason why it was pejoratively called “Tortilla Flat” – were the outhouses, unpaved roads, lack of electricity, livestock, and multi-generational residences on one parcel of land. To make matters worse, a little deeper into South Barelas existed an area known as “Perfume Valley,” an unfortunate reference to the odor emitted from the sewage treatment plant nearby. The houses in this area were constructed with myriad materials, underscoring its visual nonconformity to other areas of town.

The varied nature of barrio architecture reflected the area’s long history, but to some it may have also visually communicated the area’s disarray. Some homes were adobe, Queen Anne, Spanish revival, Pueblo style, and 1950s ranch among others. Because Barelas dates back to at least Spanish colonial times, the barrio became home to an array of architectural styles that reflected disparate migrations into the area. When residents built their own homes, as many often did, these styles and their variations were achieved with any combination of material including adobe,

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270 Careful consideration must be taken when reading these particular census categories, as the native and foreign-born white population included Euro-Americans and Hispanics. In Bernalillo County alone, 649 people foreign-born whites reported Mexico as their place of birth. 1950 Census of Population and Housing, Vol II. Characteristics of the Population for New Mexico. “Table 40. – Race, Age, and Rural-Farm Population, by Sex, for places of 1,000 to 2,500: 1950.” 31-42, 31-51.

271 See chapter two for a more complex discussion of the “Tortilla Flat” moniker assigned to the community and its roots in the Steinbeck novel and film of the same name.

reclaimed wood, and cinderblock. Since many of Barelas residents worked in the rail
yards, they had easy, affordable – meaning free – access to old boxcars, from which
the wood was stripped and used to add rooms to accommodate growing families and
changing needs. According to former resident Pat R. Vigil, employees signed their
names to a long list of people waiting to be called to claim the next available –
unusable – boxcar for him to disassemble himself and transport the wood back to his
property. Mr. Vigil recalled accompanying his father to complete such a task in the
1930s, as he remembered that, “the only tools he had at his disposal to accomplish
this was a hammer, a cold chisel and a crowbar.”273 Unlike Barelas, other newer
neighborhoods accommodating American movement into Albuquerque had less
architectural variety as most were built en mass in the late nineteenth and throughout
the twentieth centuries. These early homes were on clearly defined plots; they
appeared more orderly, current, and structurally sound. Barelas homes, on the other
hand, were often on paved and unpaved windy roads, existed alongside one or more
other homes on the same plot, and appeared to be haphazardly constructed and
organized.

273 Pat R. Vigil memoir, page 12, n.d. Pat R. Vigil Collection, National Hispanic
Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.
Bareleños had a deep sense of attachment to their homes as these were the places of joyous celebrations, where babies were born and raised, and where families supported each other in good times and bad. Of course, much of this emotional attachment was because men and women of this community built their homes alongside friends, compadres, and family members. The people of Barelas extended that determination, dedication, and pride in the construction of the first Sacred Heart Church in 1901 [Fig. 4.1]. There was a remarkable pride in and ownership of the church that existed among those men and women who placed each and every adobe brick into place to create their neighborhood’s spiritual home. The parish was an indispensable part of the community that not only offered spiritual services, but also primary education for many Bareleño children. For over sixty years, the people of Barelas could count on baptisms, First Holy Communions, weddings, and funerals to be celebrated at Sacred Heart. Unfortunately, in 1964 Barelas was hit with the news
that their church was to be condemned and demolished due to claims that the building lacked a sound foundation. The *Albuquerque Journal* concluded that the church was built on an old riverbed, thus creating the conditions for its instability. Its immediate removal forced the parish to conduct Mass and communal rites across the street in the parochial school’s gymnasium. Tearing down the church wounded the community profoundly as many of the residents who built the church in 1901 were alive to see the city destroy it in 1964. Resident Lutgarda Apodaca-Gonzales remembered in a 2001 interview how sad the community felt upon its destruction. She was glad her “mother had passed away by then [since her] parents worked so hard to build it with everyone else.” Even four years later nothing was done to rebuild a new Sacred Heart with what was salvageable from the old; the bells, pipe organ, and pews were somehow lost. This initial instance of trauma in Barelas may have prepared many of them for the demolition that followed; within ten years Bareleños witnessed the removal of their spiritual community only to be met with an equally traumatic erasure of their homes.

Emma Moya, writer for the Nuevomexicano magazine *La Herencia*, tried to find remnants of the old church for her 2000 article on the Barelas church. Moya found that many of Sacred Heart’s components were dispersed throughout Albuquerque, some rumored to have been stolen and repurposed in a Heights

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275 Lutgarda Apodaca-Gonzales interview by the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 29 November 2001, Albuquerque, NM, visual recording.
The site of the former church was empty six days out of the week; on Sundays it served a new function as the barren grounds filled with parishioners’ cars arriving at the gym for Mass. By 1968 the paper declared Sacred Heart an “inner-city” parish, albeit gymnasium, due to its location in a Model Cities neighborhood. Further along in the article, parish priests Patrick Lopez and Eugene Guerin disputed this claim, citing high community participation in Mass as evident of stable moral values in Barelas.\(^{277}\)

Visualizing the “Outskirts of Hope”

Despite the localized renewal projects going on in Albuquerque, a greater War on Poverty grappled the nation as first heard in Lyndon Johnson’s State of the Union Address that marked the beginning of his Great Society legislation. As Johnson “declared an all-out war on human poverty and unemployment in these United States,” he also pledged to fight that war with new homes, new schools, and new libraries to house the nation’s rapidly growing population and silence his Soviet critics. Johnson envisioned a cure to urban poverty that promoted employment and educational opportunities to historically oppressed Americans who often found that because of their ethnicity and economic position were on the “outskirts of

\(^{276}\) Emma Moya, “Sacred Heart Buried in Barelas History,” *La Herencia: Our Past, Our Present, Our Future* 17 (Fall 2000): 79. In reference to the structural condition of the old Sacred Heart, Moya also wrote that city engineers had actually siphoned water from the area using an electric water pump, thus unnaturally lowering the water table. She makes mention that there was no reason as to why this was done.

hope.” Johnson heeded the call to drastically reduce the plight of the working poor, and following his address there began a number of programs under the urban renewal agency to carry out his plans nationwide.

Suddenly the most feasible way to bring awareness to middle class and affluent Americans about these social ills was through visual means. For those who had little contact with the poor, or who did not grasp the depths of hunger and substandard housing, photographing impoverished and struggling communities easily communicated the sad economic reality of many Americans. This had happened before under Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration as the Farm Security Administration (FSA) and Office of War Information (OWI) hired hundreds of photographers to comb the landscape and document the hardworking American spirit throughout the depression and Second World War. Revamped in the mid-1960s, now it was possible to photograph decaying communities with the potential to gain federal funding for redevelopment under the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

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279 Some of these photographers who later gained fame and notoriety included Esther Bubley, John Collier, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Marion Post Walcott, and Arthur Rothstein. For more general discussion on the FSA/OWI movement, see for example, Sara Blair, Trauma and Documentary Photography of the FSA (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Cara Finnegan, Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2003); Nicholas Natanson, The Black Image in the New Deal: The Politics of FSA Photography (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).
Albert Vogel, an education professor at the University of New Mexico, took on such a task in 1966 following a request from the OEO [Fig. 4.2]. The request stemmed from a photographic project linked to an OEO-UNM administered training program for high school dropouts. While Vogel, as project photographer, did not document the trainees in any way, he instead photographed the “special kind of poverty” that existed among many of the residents who were, “direct descendents of the conquistadores and [were] very proud of their heritage.” Published in 1967 under UNM Press, Barelas – Arenal and Los Lunas: A Photographic Essay on Poverty in New Mexico seemed to expose the state’s dire economic situation, and his

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281 “Photographic Poverty Essay Published by U.” Albuquerque Journal, 3 July 1967

text – the written essay portion – attempted to contextualize in words what the photos did visually. The brief written portion attempted to interpret the imagery lest the viewers be in danger of misunderstanding or incorrectly reading the visual story before them. Unlike the typical photo essay with contributing authors, however, Vogel wrote his own introduction. In this case, we read Vogel in a self-explanatory manner, with his words and visuals compiled in a neatly packaged form.

As the one who actively engaged in “seeing” this poverty, Vogel was emblematic of the affluent Anglo population. Reflecting on why people photograph disaster and tragedy, Susan Sontag states that “the feeling of being exempt from calamity stimulates interest in looking at painful pictures, and looking at them suggests and strengthens the feeling that one is exempt.” Those free from circumstance saddled themselves with a type of moral responsibility that Lyndon Johnson demanded, “must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House.” His rallying cry moved Anglo academics, politicians, and city planners to participate in poverty’s eradication even with the simple act of viewing it in a book. Because Vogel directed his efforts toward OEO federal officials, he needed to make New Mexican poverty palatable to the, “easterners who are accustomed to thinking that adobe homes, dirt streets and plazas, the Spanish-speaking villages with the flavor of Old Spain represent[s] the

picturesque and romantic Southwest.” His conception of poverty in New Mexico was immediate, geographically discriminatory, and linked culture with low economic status. His racialization of poverty in the photo essay framed his subjects into an anonymous and problematic identity easy for urban renewal officials to rectify with their removal from the poor landscape.

Vogel did not include any captions or locations of the photographs in his book until the very end, but Barelas as the lead community in the title implies to the viewer that all of these pictures could – and perhaps were – taken solely in Barelas. The elimination of captions creates this type of poverty as indistinguishable from one community to the next. Captions ground photos by and large; they contextualize images and provide factual information on the photograph taken which can include the title, date, and author. By not including this information upfront, Vogel generalized the poverty he sought to expose; none of the families included were afforded their regional identity so important to Nuevomexicanos. Although Vogel chose to exclude Albuquerque in the title to avoid affixing the same label of poverty as he did to the chosen communities, neither did he contextually ground these socioeconomic cases within their specific locations, as they are all removed from each other and have its own distinct history and identity.

This lack of any identifier makes it virtually impossible for the assuming viewer to distinguish one community from the other; all poverty appears the same so much so that it does not need to be named. Vogel’s failure to include the general

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locations of his images proved considerably more detrimental to Barelas than perhaps Los Lunas or Arenal. The photographs in “Barelas” were actually South Barelas in the Tortilla Flat and Perfume Valley areas. Labeling these examples of Bareleño poverty without specifying that they were concentrated instances instead of a community-wide epidemic served to label the entire area as severely impoverished.

At first look, Barelas – Arenal and Los Lunas: A Photographic Essay on Poverty in New Mexico exposes the instance of poverty in three areas marked by a similar ethnic and economic demographic, regardless of their age or proximity to Albuquerque. A more nuanced reading of his text and images, as well as their arrangement in the book suggests that poverty in or near Albuquerque had the potential to physically, biologically, economically, and racially infect other areas and strangle the city’s potential growth.

Vogel’s assessment of the situation in Barelas, Los Lunas, and Arenal – three communities that differ in their historical antecedents, economic development, and relationship to the urban core – are all bound together through images of ethnic poverty. Perhaps troublesome for Vogel was that poverty existed in an area where much of the long-standing Spanish-speaking population identified their roots in the Spanish Conquest of New Mexico. What was alarming to Vogel and others was that the Nuevomexicanos lived in substandard conditions, seemingly content with their circumstance, but proud of their heritage. Their nobility was admirable, but their environment was deplorable. Vogel stressed this contradiction as he said,

They are poor, and unskilled. They speak English poorly and defensively…The families are accustomed to outdoor privies, water pumped
from wells and carried into homes, unsanitary conditions and dirt roads. The children are well fed – a low income diet in the Southwest is nutritious. The communities are homogenous and the people exhibit a communal spirit that is increasingly rare in urban America. They are hard working and valuable political party workers, largely Democratic, and they look to the federal government for assistance in improving their conditions in life.287

Writing and photographing with a sense of moral obligation and the vantage point of a white middle class academic, Vogel sincerely wanted to understand the economic predicament of these three areas, though he mentioned that the individual lives of those pictured were not his foremost concern. What did preoccupy him was why the “American dream passed them by.” He states that, “It was not incumbent upon me as a photographer to concern myself with the lives of people I photographed, but as a human being living in an affluent society, I could not avoid asking some fundamental questions. Why are these courteous, congenial and intelligent people strangers in their own land?”288 After reflecting on his own social standing in comparison with that of the people photographed, Vogel asked the same questions that had plagued Chicano academics years earlier.289 Though he could not provide answers in words, Vogel hoped to remedy this and other questions through his images. Gaining federal funding to redevelop the area was the first of many steps. These were the issues that motivated Vogel’s camera, and this was the perspective that he intended his readers to understand.

287 Ibid.
288 Ibid.
289 One of the first to discuss this notion prior to the Chicano Movement was George I. Sánchez, Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1940).
It seems that the communities pictured all participated in the OEO/UNM program directed to train high school dropouts in the construction industry. There is no evidence or referral to this program in any of the frames, which poses another set of questions and issues concerning the goal and measures of the OEO’s success in eliminating poverty. Why Vogel documented these communities and not the trainee program or its participants is unclear. However, perhaps in an effort to fulfill part of the OEO’s requirements, and perhaps to gain more funding by photographing chronic issues, Vogel eliminated any indication that positive structural changes were occurring in Barelas, Arenal, and Los Lunas. Although Vogel surely directed his project toward OEO and UNM readers, it would be a mistake to assume that all who viewed these photographs knew about the trainee program. It seemed to matter little that Barelas, Arenal, and Los Lunas had trainee programs to teach building skills to young adults with a limited future in gainful employment. This book served as a startling first lesson in Nuevomexicano poverty for those far removed from the university and for those with little clue about their state’s many socioeconomic inequalities.

The fifty images included in Vogel’s study range in subject matter found in most works of fine art and photography - landscape/cityscape, people, and architecture. With the eye of a social documentarian, Vogel caught poverty on the move in the playtime activities of neighborhood children, the midday camaraderie of viejitos (elders), and men repairing homes. Out of these fifty images, thirty-two of

290 “Photographic Poverty Essay Published by U,” Albuquerque Journal, 3 July 1967
them were taken in Barelas, including the cover. Nineteen were in Los Lunas, and
only one was in Arenal. Twenty-six of the total number was of children, and the rest
were mostly landscape with a few pictures of elderly residents. One of the images
that did not make it into the book was of a neighborhood transient whose portrait was
entitled “Insane Man.”291 The photographs’ arrangement in the book suggests careful
craftsmanship on behalf of the photographer, publisher, and anyone else with a hand
in the project. An image titled “Girl standing in the street, Barelas” [Fig. 4.3] is one
of the opening photographs of the photo essay. Here, Vogel shows a little girl alone,
shoeless, in a dirty romper, with unkempt hair framing a dazed look on her face.

291 Albert W. Vogel Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New
Mexico. Out of the “thousand” images Vogel snapped, few beyond those included in
the book are available in the archive. The whereabouts of these unaccounted images
are unknown.
Eliminated from view are her family members and neighbors socializing just steps away from her – as seen in the original, unaltered image. In fact, the original image shows the dire living conditions of the family, and while neither image negates the existence of undeniable poverty for those pictured, “Girl Standing in the Street, Barelas,” suggests that she was abandoned to destitution alone. As one of the first photographs, this was meant to stun – even enrage the viewer over the environmental and social conditions of this little girl’s sad life that seems over before it ever started.

Noticeably lacking in these photographs are any examples of New Mexico’s treasured, if not fabled, “tri-cultural harmony” with the Anglo, Spanish, and Native American coexisting in one space, each supplementing the other’s strengths. No, what we have here is closer to a “bi-cultural poverty” with primarily Nuevomexicanos and African Americans occupying the frames. The only African Americans in the photographs were identified as the Hill children of South Barelas [Fig. 4.4]. Although Barelas had a low African American population at less than four percent, their presence in the book suggested otherwise. The inclusion of these

292 Scholarship of New Mexico history privileges the Hispano, Native American, and Anglo populations, but has ignored the contributions of additional non-white communities. For an introduction to African American New Mexicans, see African American History in New Mexico: Portraits from Five Hundred Years, Bruce A. Glasrud, ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).
293 Mike Orona interview by author, December 2011, Albuquerque, NM, tape recording.
children – several out of nearly two hundred African American Bareleños – misrepresents and disproportionately identifies poverty’s victims in the area.\(^{294}\)

The inclusion of African American children and the absence of their parents verified the existence of not only economic but also social poverty in Barelas, Arenal, and Los Lunas. Identifying a minority community within a community of color suffering the same economic hardship allowed Vogel to visually communicate the detriments of poverty to a broader middle class community. In such cases, urban was synonymous with poverty, and poverty was synonymous with people of color. This is key especially in Barelas as eliminated from view were any Anglo families in these areas, although they comprised about nineteen percent of the community in 1960.\textsuperscript{295} As such, their absence in the book stated loud and clear that Anglos did not in fact live like those pictured; Anglos embraced indoor plumbing, they had lawns, they disposed of their trash in appropriate receptacles, they drove new cars, and they enjoyed a nuclear household. In the second half of the twentieth-century, Anglos were not

\textsuperscript{295} Ibid.
framed into examples of backwardness, filth, and disease despite residing in a low-income community in higher numbers than their African American neighbors in Barelas.

Located towards the end of the book, after other reasonably alarming images, Vogel stuns the viewer with photographs of a small Bareleño boy’s ailing face and feet. “Boy with skin disease, Barelas” [Fig. 4.5] is a portrait of a child suffering from an unidentified physical condition. While the rest of his small frame is hidden from view, the viewer assumes that his lesions cover him from head to toe beyond what is shown. Noticing the blemish on the boy’s nose forces the viewer to carefully examine the rest of his body for similar marks. This child sees the viewer and actively forces the viewer to see him, though he looks much more reserved than the other male subject. There is no facial expression here, let alone a smile. He stands outside with his shoulders back, neck tense, head up, and chin forward, making no
secret of his skin condition. Apart from what the scabs communicate – filth and disease – this child is an elementary-aged young boy like any other in Albuquerque or the US for that matter. His hair is slightly combed, his clothes dusty probably from playing outside, and his polo shirt closed all the way to the neck.

To reinforce the heinous nature of this type of suffering, Vogel included a companion photo that is equally if not more shocking than the previous. In “Feet of the same boy” [Fig 4.6] we see the skin condition take over the child’s entire body, from head to toe. The boy sits, shoeless, with legs slightly bent to reveal the extent of his illness. The sores have taken over his feet and ankles, and seem to render this boy incapable of any of the physical activity children do for fun. Once and for all, the viewer sees poverty as a debilitating disease. Although Vogel never indicated the origin of the boy’s physical pain, all anyone needed to know was that it happened in Barelas, and it happened to an innocent child. If nothing was done about the problem, it – meaning ethnic poverty manifested into physical disability – would become an epidemic throughout the entire city. Like the image of the little girl at the beginning of the photo essay, the attention to this boy’s suffering framed him an innocent victim of circumstance well beyond his control.

On another page [Fig. 4.7], and in sharp contrast to the depiction of most children, viewers meet a nice looking young couple standing before their home in Barelas. The woman’s right shoulder positioned just in front of her companion, as they both look directly at Vogel and his audience. The woman smiles and discreetly hides a cigarette between her thumb and forefinger. She appears to have a slightly
swollen abdomen, perhaps due to pregnancy as her overall appearance suggests an average weight. The man’s plaid, button up shirt is untucked from dark trousers or blue jeans that serves to off-set the woman’s summertime attire of a sleeveless, cropped top and bright white shorts. The two almost seem out of place in front of their home; a well-dressed, kempt couple proudly standing outside a cracked adobe wall, framed with the window’s curtains that have escaped into the open air so as to almost touch the young woman’s arm. The two seem somewhat caught off
guard, as evidenced in the woman’s shielded cigarette, her playful smile, and the man’s active stance. Though the woman stands in a relaxed pose in front of him, her companion’s shoulders are forward, his neck outstretched so that his face aligns with the woman, and his right arm slightly bends with the hand back. Despite his body language, his face does not appear to be aggressive or confrontational; the upturned corners of his mouth suggest a near smile about to appear.

These two individuals are another face of poverty, despite their clean appearance; they are young, low income, and Nuevomexicano. If they are unmarried and expecting a child or already have children, they fit the bill almost completely and will reproduce that cycle of poverty. And yet, this photograph challenges those stereotypical notions of poverty as a racialized circumstance of economic and cultural deficiency. They are a clean, cared for couple standing with dignity and free from shame. They were poor, but their appearance suggested otherwise. Perhaps Vogel’s intention behind this image was to demonstrate that poverty had many forms and that its eradication was possible. All that mattered, in part due to Vogel’s photo essay, was that poverty in New Mexico – and specifically in these areas – was endemic and nearly untreatable. Vogel visually communicated the complex existence of poverty in an area steps away from the center of the city. Because it happened there in Barelas, in what was once a high output community home to many influential Nuevomexicanos, the possibility existed that any number of Albuquerque’s neighborhoods could realize the same fate. *Barelas – Arenal and Los Lunas: A Photographic Essay on Poverty in New Mexico*, revealed the extent of racialized
economic inequality, but it also provided the evidence as to why that condition should be eradicated.

Renewal, Resistance, and Resentment

At this point in the late 1960s, city officials and developers – some residents as well – were ready to move forward. In 1960 the National Association of Real Estate Boards’ (NAREB) Build America Better Committee found that Albuquerque was on track to begin work on its urban renewal plan, considering its extensive growth and overcrowding. The twenty-page report stated that “emphasis can and should be placed on housing and neighborhood renovation instead of wholesale clearance of slums.” The NAREB recommended that Albuquerque should continue studying target areas, create a feasible redevelopment plan, operate its urban renewal program under the city manager’s office, and create an advisory board of business people and residents alike. In the end, this early commission on urban renewal attempted to quell potential apprehensions in stating that, “urban renewal in Albuquerque should not involve extensive family re-location, no vast acquisition of property and no large-scale public construction projects but must have wholehearted support of the public if it is to succeed.”

Newspaper articles at this time seemed to work on behalf of the urban renewal agency to convince the public of its the benefits long before many of the programs had even begun. A 1965 Albuquerque Journal piece followed the city sanitarian Pat

Kneafsey to explore his perspective on city conditions. For Kneafsey, local “eyesores” were not just abandoned commercial and industrial buildings, they also included in particular a small adobe house that had at one time held four generations of one family. As he and reporter Sam Blythe drove through older parts of Albuquerque – including a recently annexed South Barelas – Kneafsey stated that, “the people [he felt] sorry for are the kids.” The vilest of all eyesores for Kneafsey was the abundance of outhouses in plain view of neighborhood traffic. He expressed concern that families did not know how to operate their indoor plumbing, and that they often treated their new toilets as they had treated their outhouses. While carelessness often resulted in clogged toilets, Kneafsey described one family that cared for its outhouse so much that the “walls and floor were covered with colorful carpeting,” in addition to another that was tiled as if it were an indoor bathroom.297 Kneafsey’s assessment of the poor conditions in Albuquerque were not unqualified, as 1959 the census found that 15.3 percent of families in and around the city earned less than $5,000 annually compared to a median income of $6,252. The urban fringe area had a much higher concentration of 21.7 percent of families earning less than $5000 per year.298 In addition, about 7.75 percent of all housing structures in the metropolitan area were considered deteriorating, and another 3.74 were classified as dilapidated. Of the 5,535 deteriorating homes, 31 percent lacked other plumbing


Following a failed renewal plan in the nearby South Broadway community – a densely African American and Nuevomexicano area – Barelas was slated to begin work in 1970 for “clearance and redevelopment.”\footnote{Albuquerque Community Renewal Program: A Community Improvement Program for Albuquerque, \textit{A Summary Report} (City of Albuquerque, 1970): 26-27. Paul Lusk Papers, 1956-1988. Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico} A 1970 publication of the Albuquerque Model Cities Development Data book described target renewal areas as impoverished, “evident in the form of inadequate educational attainment, health problems, unemployment and underemployment, physical deterioration, housing blight, neighborhood decay and \textit{minority group concentration}. 75 percent of the MNA population is Spanish surnamed and 69 percent continue to use Spanish as their
primary language.” While Model Cities was a national program and described all of the renewal areas with similar racialized poverty rhetoric in the public consciousness and in the media, this language was key to the eventual stagnation of Barelas’ growth in the 1970s through the early twenty-first century. Here we might note that the early language of perceived communal and ethnic backwardness and barbarism actually inhibited the success of urban renewal in Albuquerque’s communities of color. This language repeated itself as the program’s failure became apparent for the same reasons that it was initiated. As such, papers began a rhetorical attack on stagnated Model Cities neighborhoods and echoed racist language used in earlier sociological investigations of the areas. Although formal redevelopment plans were still in the works for the Barelas community, the positive rhetoric of Model Cities slowly shifted to reflect growing negative sentiment of its unfeasibility, as poverty was a social disease, incurable with even the greatest amount of money and the best of intentions.

Because this was truly the first “successful” renewal project undertaken in Albuquerque there was not the same level of resistance in Barelas as might be expected, given other cases of removal nationwide. On one level, the Model Cities Program in Barelas required the residents’ participation and vote on whether or not to


303 The Model Cities Program was established in Albuquerque in 1970 and called for active participation and agreement between the residents and employees of the program. Neighborhoods selected for participation voted either for residential or industrial zoning. In either case, homes were treated appropriately based on the final vote.
be slated for industrial or residential development. The conglomerate of voters
agreed on industrial zoning partly due to their proximity to the railroad tracks, the
sewage treatment plant, and the river, as they believed that such a location was
unsuitable for residential rehabilitation or new development. Property owners were
given a supposed fair market value for their homes and were sent to relocate
elsewhere in the city. Of course, those left out of the fray were the renters who had
no choice in the matter, received no compensation, and had to quickly find an
alternative living space with comparable rental rates. Outcry over the South
Broadway and Tijeras neighborhood plans prompted community action to stop
developments. In 1965, Victor Sánchez and Mr. and Mrs. Harold L. Shepard – the
latter being former residents of the Heights area – distributed leaflets, pamphlets, and
organized community meetings to combat urban renewal in Albuquerque. One leaflet
entitled, “Urban Renewal is Legally Giving Away Our Freedom to Bulldoze Down,”
spoke to the concerns of homeowners in the city’s historic districts:

Do you want forced debt or forced displacement?...Wouldn’t it be better to
keep what you have now, own, and add to it as you can? Why not clean, repair, and paint now...It will be harder for the city to prove your home
should be demolished...One part of the government is offering you a handout
[in the form of loans] and the other is right behind the first to destroy your
property. Barelas is a good example...Downtown has been mentioned for
urban renewal. With the evils of urban renewal, no individual property owner
will have a chance to resist; because everything has to be in accordance with
the plan – the city’s plan – or it can be acquired, regardless of its condition.

This two-sided leaflet discussed the promise of FHA insured loans under the city’s
Section 220, and the hopes that homeowners might dissuade urban renewal from

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targeting their property if it was in good, repaired condition. The leaflet also makes clear that, “the city proposes to resell your sub-standard property to developers,” quarterly over the next four years on an average of forty parcels of land per quarter. Finally the leaflet asks for the, “immediate recall (removal),” of the five city commissioners before next spring’s election, as they voted for urban renewal and are not concerned with the voice of the people.\footnote{305}

Victor Sánchez and the Shepards also compiled, or at least distributed, a list of questions that were presumably asked at a proposed meeting with urban renewal officials at South Broadway’s St. Francis Parish Hall on December 1, 1965. The thirty questions restated what was outlined in the leaflet, though some poignantly demanded an explanation of the city’s perception of the homeowners’ capabilities. Question sixteen asks, “We are grown people – why do we need relocation supervisors and relocation employees?” Further down, question twenty-three states: “Why didn’t you tell the university student who stopped in my home [who worked for the urban renewal commission to survey the area] that you intended to destroy my home?” Finally, question thirty reflected the emotional attack felt by many if not most homeowners: “why should we accept forced sale of our property? If we want to live here in our homes, why should we be forced to move? If we are satisfied with our home why should we be forced to make a change?”\footnote{306} Unfortunately, residents of South Barelas did not realize that no substantial plans existed to redevelop and

\footnotetext{305}{“Urban Renewal,” leaflet, 6 December 1965. Vertical file on Albuquerque Urban Renewal, Albuquerque Public Library Special Collections}

\footnotetext{306}{“Questions Against Urban Renewal!,” 6 December 1965, vertical file on Albuquerque Urban Renewal, Albuquerque Public Library Special Collections}
preserve the area in ways that would keep community structure intact. One planning report remarked that, “even with total clearance and reconstruction, it is doubtful that this area could be developed into a satisfactory neighborhood.”

Perhaps no one completely understood how leveling South Barelas would mean more than the removal of dilapidated homes; perhaps urban renewal horror stories occurring in other parts of the nation so that would-be participants had little understanding of the irreparable community damage done under the program. Perhaps more people of South Barelas would have fought for their homes had they known that urban renewal nearly guaranteed economic strife – mortgages – and that many would be dispersed to unfamiliar areas throughout Albuquerque.

This is why soon after South Barelas first felt the pangs of removal, other neighborhoods rallied against urban renewal in much the same way that Bareleños might have initially reacted had they truly grasped the costs of relocation and demolition. In one case, the Martineztown neighborhood north of downtown fought the city soon after redevelopment plans were revealed for that community. In 1971 the Albuquerque Urban Renewal Agency planned to relocate families that resided on land to be used for the new Albuquerque High School campus. Sister Marcella of the community’s San Ignacio Parish led one branch of the Martineztown opposition. When interviewed for the newspaper, Sister Marcella emphasized that, “relocation

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307 Planning Report Model Neighborhood Area for City Demonstration Agency, Demonstration Case Study, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Flatow Moore Bryan and Fairburn Architects, Engineers, Planners Inc. ND, Albuquerque Public Library Special Collections
would be a traumatic experience for the residents,” because most of them were homeowners and were not accustomed to the burden of paying a mortgage on their limited incomes.\textsuperscript{308} Just before a May 16 city commissioners meeting, over five hundred supporters of Martineztown residents [Fig. 4.8] marched over the Grand Avenue (now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue) overpass toward City Hall to protest urban renewal. Marchers received a blessing from Archbishop James Peter Davis as he told the crowd, “I join you wholeheartedly in this matter. Where there is injustice, there can be no peace.” In similar vein, these marchers received a blessing like that of the United Farm Workers in California who walked to protest growers and inhumane working conditions. Archbishop Davis explained further as to his role in the march as he stated, “This is one of those occasions when the social teachings of

\textsuperscript{308} “Residents in Martineztown Plan to Oppose Relocation,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal}, 7 January 1971.
the church are involved. I can’t be absent from a thing like this. It’s a matter of justice.”

Assisted by members of the Black Berets, marchers were peaceful yet vocal about their concerns on their mile-long journey to City Hall. The large crowd forced the meeting location to change from City Hall to the Civic Auditorium. Though the commissioners authorized the Neighborhood Development Program (NDP) to continue work in South Barelas and Martineztown, the city limited the NDP to seizing property that residents wanted to sell. Carrying the US, Mexican, and New Mexican flags alongside crucifixes and homemade signs, the five hundred Martineztown supporters were an example of solidarity throughout the city, especially among those who already suffered the pain of urban renewal.

The few individuals identified in the news coverage of the march were from the Martineztown, Los Duranes, and Old Town neighborhoods and had support from Father Ramon Aragón who “represented all Chicano priests” and Democratic Sen. Anthony Lucero. Barelas was also represented in the letter of a disgruntled, displaced former resident who felt she was unfairly treated during urban renewal negotiations to purchase her home, as she lamented that she “sold the home against her will.” This collective expression of unity appropriately occurred at a moment when

309 Black Berets, separate from the Brown Berets, might be best described as a militant organization dedicated to addressing pertinent issues in Albuquerque’s working class communities, which included fighting police brutality of people of color. Before joining the May 1971 march, lead organizer Richard Moore and members of the Black Berets sponsored a “March for Justice” to City Hall. “Black Berets Protest Police,” Albuquerque Journal 28 February 1971.

Nuevomexicano ways of life were targeted across the city. Not simply Nuevomexicano, supporters identified as Mexican American and Chicano – a far cry from the common Spanish, Hispano, or Hispanic identification among the state’s Spanish-speaking people. Radicalized by the growing Chicano Movement in Albuquerque and across the west, protestors unified under a common struggle to preserve their homes as they saw fit.  

Many of the houses in question would not be saved under the city program. The “primary goal” of the Community Regional Program was, “
decent, sufficient, safe and sanitary housing in well designed neighborhoods available to all age, income, and ethnic groups.” This of course, was based on a Western planning ideal – a grid system – without taking into consideration any long-standing Nuevomexicano organization of community based on religion, familial ties, and other social networks. Albuquerque blight was more specifically dirt roads, areas with significant flood hazard, land used for both agricultural and residential purposes, multigenerational homes, dense traffic, and the lack of basic plumbing.  

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311 The Chicano Movement in Albuquerque, and New Mexico more broadly, is an area that continues to be understudied in the historiography. Apart from La Alianza Federal de Mercedes and Reies Lopez Tijerina, little is known about the goings-on elsewhere in the state. See Dennis Aguirre, a PhD Candidate in History at the University of Texas – El Paso’s dissertation entitled, “¡Grito!: Cultural Nationalism and the Chicano Insurgency in New Mexico, 1969-1979,” in progress.

312 Albuquerque Community Renewal Program Project Completion Report (Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Planning Department, 1972): 2. Italics found in the original source.

313 Ibid, 2.
As urban renewal associates worked to relieve cities of concentrated poverty, some academics – particularly emerging Chicano academics – began looking closer at the problems confronting Spanish-speaking barrios across the country. Albuquerque and other parts of New Mexico were the subjects of growing interest and concern in terms of assimilation, acculturation, bilingual education, urbanization, and poverty in the postwar period. First published in 1967 and then again in 1969, Nancie González’ *The Spanish-Americans of New Mexico: A Heritage of Pride* raised again the issue socioeconomic poverty first introduced in George I. Sánchez’ study years earlier. In fact, Sánchez thought her work to be, “essentially a review of the literature in this field.” González’ study came at the heels of Vogel’s photo essay and offered to its reader an uncomplicated view of the New Mexican circumstance up to that point. While she was in conversation with Vogel, she neither confirms nor challenges his perspective on poverty.

Beginning with a historical background, González traced the ways in which Nuevomexicanos have continued to exist despite conquest and cultural change, the most troublesome element of their condition being the lack of sufficient bilingual education. Echoing Sánchez’ discussion of the same issue decades prior, González found that American colonization of the Nuevomexicano people indeed stifled the community’s ability to progress on the same track as their Euro-American

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counterparts. Sánchez notes in his review, however, that González purely blames the 
educational deficiencies in New Mexico on the students’ lack of English-speaking 
skills, rather than attributing low rates on systematic issues tied to preparation, 
teacher evaluation, and appropriate curriculum. Despite their educational 
performance, the, González traced a certain confidence in Nuevomexicano 
traditionalism despite the pangs of modernization. For González, this was true, even 
if that meant a Nuevomexicano “poverty pride” association with their village-like 
communities within the city.

Still, the author noted a striking disparity between those on polar opposites of 
the socioeconomic scale. González asserted that Nuevomexicanos who progressed in 
the postwar period were more likely to marry Euro-Americans, embrace 
acculturation, and move from their barrios into parts of eastern Albuquerque. Those 
who lacked such comparable economic success remained in their neighborhoods and 
rejected a non-Nuevomexicano lifestyle that included place of residence, language, 
religion, and choice in partner. Writing in the late 1960s, González was aware of and 
acknowledged this radically different element of the Nuevomexicano community that 
unapologetically embraced their ethnic identity. Part of the intention behind her 
analysis was to gage Nuevomexicanos on a scale comparable to the experiences of 
other Spanish-speakers in the borderland states. González’ analysis admitted that, 

“Hispanos as a class have been increasingly dispossessed of their land, their rights, 

316 Ibid. 
317 Here she devotes a portion of her study to Chicano activism including, but not limited to, Reies López Tijerina and La Alianza, the Brown Berets, and UNM student groups. González, 179-196.
and their cultural heritage.” Thus, while demonstrating the degree to which Nuevomexicanos were exceptional among the broader Mexican American population, she carefully outlined that the primary difference was in their identification as Spanish Americans as a distinct socioeconomic class.

González found that discrimination paired with urbanization significantly contributed to the disenfranchisement of Mexican Americans and cultural loss. However, she ended her analysis with the final observation that, “the New Mexican Hispano’s heritage of pride is not only recognized but validated by the participation of the Anglos themselves.” Despite the poverty and inequality in New Mexico, González believed that cultural appropriation in the form of Anglo adoption of Hispanic dress, food, and religious traditions were themselves demonstrations of cultural validation. Interestingly, Sánchez remarked of González that she did not “write from personal knowledge” and, while an acceptable work, was “largely devoid of critical comment.” In his few words, Sánchez casts González as an outsider without the intimate experience necessary for understanding the serious nature facing Nuevomexicanos in the late 1960s and certainly when his own book was published in 1940.

Key to her argument, and most important for this analysis, were the images González used to demonstrate this “heritage of pride.” In fact, fourteen of Vogel’s photographs from his personal collection, many of those published in *Barelas – Los
Lunas and Arenal, were selected for González’ book. Although her survey is one of optimism and genuine appreciation for the population under investigation, the pairing of her analysis with Vogel’s images offer a problematic and contradictory view of urban poverty in New Mexico, as he made those images to demonstrate an acute condition that needed immediate remedying. The images González used to illustrate her case, and the captions to describe them, highlight the disparity in perspective among academics themselves, even for people studying the same regional population of the same generation. Vogel’s image entitled, “View of yard and fields, Los Lunas,” is the same photo in González’ study [Fig. 4.9], though her caption reads, “This adobe house hides a yard full of potentially useful items, including a trailer for
visiting kinsman or a married child.” The image is the same, varying only in size and slight cropping. Although the photo is compositionally identical, Vogel’s and González’ reading could not be more different. Vogel’s captions are informative and brief. The lack of analysis or commentary instead gives the reader that responsibility and judgment. González, on the other hand, explains each of the images and their contents as they function in Nuevomexicano communities. What one might see as junk could serve as daily necessities. The other images in González’ book demonstrated her multifaceted analysis: religion, typical architecture, people, community, education, and activism. All had similar, positive captions that highlighted different measures of survival among Nuevomexicanos in an urbanized, American world.

Unlike Vogel, who sought federal funding to redevelop Barelas, and González, who focused on the “synthetic account of the sociocultural system of the Spanish-Americans” in New Mexico with some mention of Barelas, much more pertinent to the community was Maxine Baca Zinn’s 1970 Master’s thesis on local power and its distribution. “The Power Structure of an Urban Barrio: South Barelas, New Mexico,” explored the role of community action and its relationship to power. For González, Nuevomexicano cultural pride was admirable despite their faltering economic and academic position. Baca Zinn, on the other hand, refrained from such celebratory rhetoric and instead blamed longstanding cultural patterns of power and

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321 Ibid., xiv.
leadership for many of South Barelas’ problems leading up to urban renewal. Because this part of Barelas was, “one of the top three areas of acute deprivation in Bernalillo County,” and because it was targeted as a Model Cities neighborhood, Baca Zinn focused her attention on how community power wielded itself with enough force to gain federal funding.\textsuperscript{323} Identified in her study as a chronic “poverty pocket” in Albuquerque, Baca Zinn quickly noted the many differences between North and South Barelas, the most important being the unqualified “long standing internal political disagreement,” which caused separation of the two parts.\textsuperscript{324}

Because South Barelas demonstrated such significant infrastructural and socioeconomic disparities over North Barelas, Baca Zinn focused her attention on the southern part of the recently annexed barrio into Albuquerque’s city limits. She noted that not only was the area afflicted with a relatively high number of low-income households, it was also, “one of the top three in the Bernalillo County for number of arrests and for amount of truancy. Alcoholism and drug addition also rank disproportionately high in South Barelas.”\textsuperscript{325} Nonetheless, due to South Barelas’ relative isolation and acute economic and infrastructural needs, Baca Zinn treated it

\textsuperscript{323} Ibid., iv.
\textsuperscript{324} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{325} Baca Zinn took her information from David W. Varley, “A Description and Evaluation of the South Barelas Opportunity and Training Center,” \textit{A Report for the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Economic Opportunity Board}, April 1967. This report demonstrated the economic feasibility of a technical and vocational training center in South Barelas. Ibid., 7.
as a community in and of itself. But by Baca Zinn’s estimation, South Barelas was somewhat culturally distinct from both North Barelas and other Albuquerque barrios.

She asserted that the residents migrated there from southern New Mexico “in the early 1900s” and brought with them an agricultural lifestyle that was incompatible with the city’s wage economy. Unclear in her analysis are any concrete conclusions in the differences between northern and southern Nuevomexicanos who settled in South Barelas. Characterizing the people of South Barelas as originating in southern New Mexico, while true in many cases, also suggests that they might have had closer ties to Mexico. Still, people from northern New Mexico who migrated to Barelas also carried with them a history of agricultural work; most Nuevomexicano migrants outside of Albuquerque and Santa Fe did at this time. But for reasons unknown, Baca Zinn carefully identified South Bareleños originating in southern New Mexico as an anomaly in this respect. This agricultural lifestyle – seen as an impediment rather than a skill – was the primary reason for their poverty, as the residents were “lacking marketable skills, [and] they were prevented from adjusting successfully to the urban setting. Further handicapped by linguistic and educational disabilities, and decreasing opportunities for wage-work, residents were forced to rely on government relief.”

The reorganization of residents’ lifestyle in South Barelas from agricultural villages, Baca Zinn attested, “created a barrio characterized by poverty, and all those features which accompany social disorganization.”

What seems particularly unsettling here

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326 Ibid., 8.
327 Ibid., 14.
is Baca Zinn’s assertion that cultural “disabilities” – not systematic forms of exclusion and oppression – were to blame for South Barelas’ social stagnation.

Baca Zinn provided a rather simplistic view of the barrio’s demographics, especially in terms of their work capabilities and time actually spent on government assistance. Absent from her commentary was the railroad’s impact on Barelas in the decades since WWII and how working families suddenly found themselves in a space of higher economic need. Also absent from her analysis were the few African American residents of South Barelas. At the outset, her study appears to firmly establish the socioethnic composition of the community as one of homogeneity, potentially because including other ethnicities in her analysis would create a more complicated system of local power than she was prepared to discuss.

Following her quick demographic explanation, the remainder of her study focused on the execution of power, appropriately enough, during the vote on and transition to resident relocation under the Model Cities Program. That eighty-four residents voted for relocation and sixty voted for rehabilitation owed itself to a number of factors and demonstrates that the community did not overwhelmingly chose to abandon their barrio.328 Because South Barelas in the early 1960s was not incorporated into the city, many homes lacked basic resources and were motivated to establish an association to fight for annexation into Albuquerque. Baca Zinn noted that the Barelas Community Improvement Association eventually won South Barelas’ incorporation into the city in 1965 and subsequently worked with the Albuquerque-

328 Ibid., 78.
Bernalillo County Economic Opportunity Board to create the South Barelas Training Center in 1966. The Center trained women in domestic service and men in landscaping labor. More than an employment institution, the Center also provided maternity clinics, family therapy, legal aid and advice, and was an outpost for the Bernalillo County Planned Parenthood Association.\textsuperscript{329}

Due to the success of these programs, and the fact that the community seemed to support and patronize the Center, some residents of South Barelas entered into a partnership with the Model Cities Program to discuss the future of the area on the basis of a cooperative front. Zinn Baca’s research found that the reason community leaders, or “segments of Barelas’ power struggle” opposed relocation was due to “their social economic, or political identification with the community” and the potential for a loss of power once people moved out of South Barelas.\textsuperscript{330}

She made no case for history or identity as the reasons for residents’ apprehension to comply with the program. That Baca Zinn focused on power, much less the barrio itself, in her thesis was no surprise to the residents whom she interviewed. By the time of her research in the late 1960s, Bareleños were accustomed to analysis from city and university officials investigating socioeconomic realities and perceived disfunction in the community. Baca Zinn noted that during her interview process there was, “one informer who suggested, ‘there have been enough studies done on us. You people pick us over, write your studies, and get rich

\textsuperscript{329} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid., 77.
on government contracts that are supposed to help us. Where is that help now?"  

Rather than delve deeper into the resentment, geographical attachment, or identity issues that prevented some members of the community from immediately relinquishing their ancestral homes, Baca Zinn instead reduced their reservations to fears of losing status and power in their small barrio.  

Investigations such as that of Nancie González and Maxine Baca Zinn were common during the 1960s and ‘70s. Partly due to the War on Poverty and the country’s accelerated transition into deindustrialization, academics concerned themselves with the socioeconomic realities of the new urban poor. The cases illustrated above, as they pertained to New Mexico and Barelas more specifically, were conducted through anthropological and sociological methods that sought answers to the questions surrounding the state of Nuevomexicanos. These two analyses found that Nuevomexicanos did not or could not withstand American encroachment on their traditional livelihoods, thus resulting in significant community issues unseen in white areas of the state and its major metropolitan sector. If taken together, both seemed to heed the call in academia for a deeper understanding of the causes, realities, and effects of urban poverty. Unfortunately for Bareleños – the people who lived this reality – the only process remaining was demolition itself.

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331 Ibid., 37.
In the early 1970s, not ten years after Albert Vogel’s photographic assessment of Barelas, yet another academic inquiry into the barrio began under the direction of UNM education and anthropology professor Rodolfo G. Serrano, although this project was remarkably different from what Vogel produced. In 1976, after a few years of data collection, Serrano released his academic findings on the relationship between school and community in *Los Barelëños: A Photographic Essay*. This was the final element to “A Study of a Junior High School in a Predominantly Chicano Neighborhood,” a two-year investigation of minority education in Albuquerque funded in part by the Ford Foundation. Serrano was chosen to lead the project after his work with a related program organized to train Chicano and Native American university administrators and faculty.

Noting the discrepancies in other studies of school-age youth with regards to their English language skills and attitudes toward learning, Serrano proposed a program that would investigate the high dropout rate among Chicanos in the southwest, paying particular attention to the influence of family, community, and the

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332 Following the completion of this particular project, Prof. Serrano accepted an appointment at CSU-Bakersfield where he remained for the duration of his career.  
335 “UNM Receives $100,000 Grant to Plan Courses,” *Albuquerque Journal*, 17 March 1972.
The five objectives Serrano outlined included the degree to which Chicano families valued education, specific school needs, administration effectiveness, teachers’ opinions of the demographic served, and how students saw themselves at home and in school. In part, data collection came from interviews of school staff and faculty, parents, students, and community members. Serrano chose Washington Junior High School (WJH) specifically because of its proximity to “Barrio Barelas” and because Bareleño youth attended the school. Although Washington – “La Washa” – served other communities in the downtown area, only the Barelas kids and their families formed the study. The project team consisted of Serrano as project director and three UNM PhD students from education and anthropology who were all fluent or native Spanish-speakers. Serrano’s analysis intended to publish two reports on the community and Washington Junior High, while the final academic report was intended for publication.

From 1973-1974, the Barrio-Schools Project worked in and around Barelas interviewing families and school personnel concerning the development of what Serrano referred to as a “contemporary community” in historic Albuquerque, New Mexico. To find the root of the contemporary, and the seemingly recent problems between the barrio and its schools, Serrano began his investigation with the early

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336 Rodolfo Serrano, “A Proposed Program for the Study of a Junior High School in a Predominantly Chicano Neighborhood,” Pat R. Vigil Collection, National Hispanic Cultural Center
history of the community. Although the team combed through Albuquerque’s Spanish colonial history, and ignored its indigenous past, Serrano quickly realized that the most pressing factor to influence community building was urban renewal. Initially, the research team paid little attention to the residential removal and relocation program, but as time wore on, Serrano stated in a draft of the final report,

> Our theoretical concern for the notions of community, vecinos (neighbors), and vecindades (neighborhoods) were closely related, we hypothesized, to some of the problems that were brought about through Urban Renewal and that were currently affecting the community. The uprooting of people from a small section of the southern part of the community brought about a disruption which we felt needed further investigation.338

Serrano and his team quickly understood that the most pressing issue between the school and Barelas was not necessarily the poverty, lack of Spanish-speaking teachers, or academic indifference. Rather, the disruption of the community at its core, was the most obvious, yet understated factor contributing to students’ performance in school.

Not only did this project intend to understand the tedious relationship between the state and the individual – school and student – it sought to explore community closeness and pride. Serrano’s methodology gave him a much deeper understanding of the community than it seemed that city officials and proponents of the Model Cities cared to develop. Simply entering the community, building relationships with the residents, and asking them their problems with the local schools made Serrano’s

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analysis much more personal and less like the typical extractive academic studies conducted on Barelas and neighboring barrios. He understood that for the people of South Barelas, moving to another part of Albuquerque would completely alter their way of life. No longer could they build adobe additions to their homes to accommodate growing families. No longer could they raise chickens for eggs or future consumption, work on their cars in the yard, or simply know that they continued to live on land that they, their parents, and generations prior had cared for and loved. Most importantly, Serrano noted that,

Urban Renewal had broken the closeness of the families and the systems of communication that the people once had. The networks of information processing, the linkages between groups, the solidarity of the group, in short, has been substantially eliminated because of the decision of the members of the community to seek better housing in different parts of the city. For a variety of reasons the members of this community accepted the proposal for Urban Renewal and they in turn will be the ones that will have to decide whether their decision was a correct one.\textsuperscript{339}

Similarly, Eldred Harrington, a highly respected educator at Albuquerque High School and active participant in the school system, commented on Serrano’s draft that, “Many of the youngsters whose families have moved come back in the evenings and weekends to be with old friends and relatives. Also, many of these youngsters ask for transfers to continue in school with their friends or because their family had gone to WJH. They relate to us and we to them.”\textsuperscript{340} Despite urban renewal, many

\textsuperscript{339} Draft of Rodolfo Serrano, “Ethnography of a Contemporary Chicano Community: A Brief Description,” page 8-9, Barelas Project Correspondence, Barelas Community Project Records, 1877-1985, Center for Southwest Research, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.
\textsuperscript{340} Eldred Harrington edits on Rodolfo Serrano draft, “Ethnography of a Contemporary Chicano Community: A Brief Description,” page 9, Barelas Project
Bareleño youth and their families wanted to maintain their connection with the community as it was the only area many had known for centuries. Harrington finely perceived that the relationship between students and teachers was also at stake and was one of many residual effects of urban renewal and relocation. Harrington knew just how delicate and often trying it could be to establish a trusting relationship between teachers and students so that the whole community was behind educational advancement. Surely, displaced students found at least a few individuals culturally familiar to them in their new communities and schools. However, the reliance on those networks for family support and stability was what urban renewal destroyed.

In addition to interviewing Barelas residents, Serrano and his team set out to photograph the area and create a “visual archive” of the community. Robert Dimas and Tim Kimball, staff photographer and anthropology graduate student, respectively, set out to document the community as intimately as possible while still maintaining respect and professionalism. Like Jack Delano in 1943, and Vogel in 1967, the images for what later became published as Serrano’s *Los Bareleños: A Photographic Essay* served to visualize the community that the media, city reports, and statisticians most often described in faceless terms as numbers and problems. Serrano commented in the acknowledgements page that composing a photo essay was a

Correspondence, Barelas Community Project Records, 1877-1985, Center for Southwest Research, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

Draft of Rodolfo Serrano, “Ethnography of a Contemporary Chicano Community: A Brief Description,” page 17, Barelas Project Correspondence, Barelas Community Project Records, 1877-1985, Center for Southwest Research, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

gesture of gratitude to the residents who helped his research project. Additionally, he noted that Dimas deserved recognition distinct from the other staff members, “for the countless hours he spent filming and photographing all aspects of life in Barelas.”

The book documented the everyday lives of Barelas residents in and around their neighborhood, whether that was waiting for the bus, repairing fences, socializing outside, shopping at the local market, or even attending a funeral, Dimas set out on the streets to capture life among the young and old alike.

While some of these photographs are in line with Vogel’s assessment of urban poverty during the late 1960s, in fact most of Dimas’ images could not be further from that damning perspective. Where Vogel saw neglect, Dimas saw pride. It is also likely that many of the children in Vogel’s photographs were the very same youth that attended Washington Junior High at the time Serrano and his team conducted their study. The outcome of each project was rooted in its own intention; Vogel sought to expose urban poverty while Dimas found a thriving community. In either case the South Barelas that each of them photographed finally succumbed to destruction by the mid 1970s. A total of thirty-six images were chosen for the publication, with near equal treatment of both North and South Barelas in visual representation. Perhaps most importantly, Dimas captured South Barelas as it quickly changed from an active neighborhood into a pile of rubble. The photographs serve as a testament to those fighting urban renewal, those who spent generations in the homes facing bulldozers, and those who were subsequently erased from the landscape.

343 Ibid., Acknowledgements unnumbered page.
While many of the structures around them crumbled to urban renewal, Dimas’ portrait of the community demonstrates the resiliency of a population undergoing a severe community transition.

In one of the images that made it to publication [Fig. 4.10] with the caption, “Growing Up,” one young woman is seen leaning over a fence and reading to another youth holding an infant. The three seem to be engaged in a routine activity, and as such, the reader pays no attention to the photographer snapping the picture. Because the reader is the largest figure in the frame, due to her proximity to Dimas, the viewer immediately focuses on her and might imagine what she is reading to her companions. Quickly though, the focus shifts to the next young woman and the baby
she carries, as they both make eye contact with the photographer. These two, despite their age, expose Dimas as the documentary photographer and his method of capturing his subjects spontaneously in the moment. In titling the photograph in such a way to indicate the transition from infancy to adolescence, and especially because it appears that the photograph takes place in the blossoming spring or summertime, “Growing Up” makes clear that these three young people – children – will continue on to achieve greater successes than imagined as evidenced in the simple act of reading to oneself and the people around her.344

Part of compiling a visual analysis of the community included photographing the structures that Bareleños inhabited or frequented on a regular basis. In two of the several photographs that privileged buildings over people, we see examples of residences in North and South Barelas. Despite the goings on concerning urban renewal and the decisions to demolish or renovate, there clearly existed homes in both ends of the barrio that did not fit within the boundaries of popular perception concerning the location of blighted and irreparable structures. The first of these photographs [Fig. 4.11], “A North Barelas Residence,” shows a home that appears to be abandoned, save for the lone dog that occupies the foreground and looks toward the photographer. Homes such as this one were a reality in North Barelas, although this example challenges the notion that South Barelas was the only part of the community under severe disarray. Located on Simpier Lane, spanning a short

344 Ibid., “List of Photographs,” 37. Though the home address is unidentified, Dimas took this shot at a South Barelas housing complex on South Third Street.
distance from the Río Grande to Fourth Street, this home was very close to South Barelas. In fact, one could simply cross nearby Bridge Boulevard (now Avenida César Chávez) to arrive in the so-called Tortilla Flats area. This particular home looks to be a composite of adobe and deconstructed boxcar wood, signaling its history as a modest, laboring family’s home most likely built with the owner-occupant’s own hands. There is no vegetation that grows in this yard despite its proximity to the river. Even the trunk of the tall cottonwood tree appears devoid of any life, especially as other trees in the background frame the desolate house with their full branches. Although all but two homes in South Barelas were destroyed, North Barelas also experienced urban renewal, albeit in a more concentrated and minimal form.
Continuing to challenge the stereotype of poverty in South Barelas, Serrano included this photograph [Fig. 4.12] of South Third Street, just south of the bridge looking north. Unlike the Simpier Lane home, the three structures here demonstrate pride and caretaking of the area. Despite the varied economic reality of Barelas residents, these homes offer a visual counter narrative to the wide perception of the barrio as a downtrodden area. Here we see three residences, each framed with either cinderblock or chain link fencing, and all appearing to be in good condition, as even the sidewalk shows little signs of wear. While none of the residents are in view, these homes were inhabited, evident especially in the middle house with a chair in the porch. This home at 1609 South Third Street was rented out to Amadeo Aragón. Rosalie
Gallegos, the owner of the house on the left at 1611 South Third Street, has flowers growing in front with a few more plants peeking out of the staggered cinderblock wall. All three structures have smaller, tributary wires connecting the homes to the thick power lines above. The home on the right belonged to Adolfo and Sally Romero,\textsuperscript{345} a humble couple who inherited the house from Adolfo’s uncle and aunt, Cleofes and Anita Romero.\textsuperscript{346} Despite Mr. Romero’s modest income as a janitor, the pair and their three sons enjoyed modern technology as seen in the rooftop antenna for the television and/or radio. Poverty, while a reality for many, was not an absolute condition in Barelas that was shared among all. In the end though, none of this seemed to matter, since urban renewal was well on its way into South Barelas. Homes, families, and the community, it seemed, were all on the brink of collapse, and the only way to save them meant the elimination of the very structures that enabled and sustained such an impoverished state. These homes on South Third Street, despite the tremendous struggles overcome and celebrated within their well-maintained walls, could not withstand the bulldozer’s illusion of a better future for their caretakers once out of the barrio.

\textsuperscript{346} Adolfo Romero, like his uncle, was also from Cuyamungue, NM and moved to Albuquerque as a youth. In 1930 his mother passed away two years after Adolfo’s birth, and he was raised in a single father household with his older siblings. This circumstance allowed Adolfo to move in with his paternal uncle and aunt, as the pair did not have any children of their own. Cleofes and Anita Romero’s early history in the barrio is discussed in chapter one of this project.
After showing a few more homes and corner markets, the photo narrative moved on to the local schools and students. In an image titled, “Questioning,” [Fig. 4.13] Dimas photographed a student at Washington Junior High in the middle of a class discussion. This is but one of a few close up profiles of people among Dimas’ shots of the community and its residents. This particular young man is in the middle of speaking, and as such, does not engage with the photographer through any sort of acknowledging eye contact. Other earlier photographs of older Bareleños do this, and in fact, demonstrate that they not only knew the photographer on some level, they probably also invited discussion with him and his assistant in the privacy of their own
homes or at least on their front porches. This youth, on the other hand, was captured as he existed in his academic environment, and perhaps had little idea about both Dimas’ identity and the intention behind the study on his school and community, if in fact he was from Barelas at all. Dimas was in clear proximity to the young man who showed little apprehension at being photographed while speaking to his class. He demonstrates perfect confidence. Furthermore, his physical appearance does not suggest that he and his family are in hard economic times any more than he appears to be an urban child of the early 1970s. The neatly folded, off center bandana keeps the boy’s chin length hair in place, and his jacket’s knitted collar frames his unbuttoned Henley shirt. The slightly darker hair above the lip and prominent Adam’s apple are signs of the youth’s physical transition into adulthood.

Not only does Dimas see this boy as questioning a point in the class discussion, he is clarifying and contributing to a positive classroom environment. In fact, both “clarifying” and “contributing” are captions attributed to two other photos of Washington Junior High students in this series. The photograph and its caption challenge González and Baca Zinn in their estimation of the culture of education in Barelas. In fact, Dimas took photograph after photograph of full school yards, classrooms, and auditoriums. His images assert, not suggest, that students went to class, participated, and were rewarded for their engagement. The caption here, as in the rest of the images, determines how we are to read each photograph and the essay as a whole. If it said, “ Interrupting” or “Dominating,” the reader would see this boy in an entirely different and negative light. Dimas sought to emphasize positive
attributes among area youth as he framed them and captioned them in a positive educational atmosphere as they actively participated in their educational experiences.

The next few photographs finishing up the essay document the physical change in Barelas. Dimas went directly into areas undergoing demolition and captured bulldozers plowing through homes. In four photographs entitled, “Adobe and Wood,” “Urban Development,” “Urban Destruction,” and “Preparation for the Future,” Dimas captures the leveling of South Barelas as it happened in front of his eyes. The stark absence of people, save from the heavy machine operator, privilege the structures and this part of the barrio undergoing their collective death. In Dimas’ proof sheet, however, are a few photographs of an older woman standing in the middle of the rubble. In one of these, [Fig. 4.14] she looks stoic as the remnants of her home, presumably, and her neighborhood are in pieces. It is unclear exactly what she is doing, though it appears she could be attempting to salvage a bit of her home or even aiding the demolition process in some way, just as a hospice nurse would care for the terminally ill. Perhaps, as it seems in this photograph, she is there to witness with her own eyes the conclusion to her life in the barrio. This unidentified woman stands in the doorway, very much aware of Dimas, though looking past him. She would be indoors were it not for the absence of a roof above her. The midday sun
shines brightly, illuminating her powerful stance. It is good weather outside as she wears a short-sleeved housedress, sandals, and a scarf knotted around her head. She is there to witness her adobe home’s last moments before urban renewal casts its final blow and tumbles the walls around her. Dimas was present for this death, just as he was present for much of the life before the homes were destroyed.

*Los Bareleños*, and this collection as a whole, serve as a visual obituary of a physically defunct neighborhood. While Serrano and his team intended to explore education and the supposed strained relationship between Barelas and Washington Junior High, although some of their photographs demonstrated the contrary, Serrano
inadvertently traced the human side to urban renewal as well, a disruption which clearly impacted other areas of neighborhood life. The elimination of the people and their homes left an indelible wound in the barrio, and these photographs document that process. This visual obituary chronicles the community’s last years and highlights some of the people who lived there. Instead of an obituary that celebrates life in South Barelas, we see a visual chronicle of its slow death, even as the one unidentified woman stayed until the very end. These photographs memorialize homes that no longer exist and leave their reader with a sense of helplessness, confusion, and despair. By the end of the published photo essay, the homes are alone and their people have dispersed to other areas. In its life, South Barelas was an active community that survived economic ups and downs. In death, it exists in memory alone with a few relics to remind visitors and former residents of its prior being.

“People Removal”

South Barelas – or rather, Tortilla Flat – fit every one of urban renewal’s qualifications perfectly in photographs and academic inquiry. After a lengthy process, by 1974 all but two homes and the old Riverview Elementary in South Barelas were razed. This was not a “people removal” story in the Chávez Ravine sense that families in Barelas were not dragged out by the police, kicking and screaming just as bulldozers ran through their homes. No, they were paid between $5000 and $15,000 to vacate their homes and disperse throughout the growing city. But this was indeed “people removal” in a spiritual and communal sense of the
phrase. Whether voluntarily, as in the case of some property owners, or involuntary, for renters and others emotionally attached to their land, this “people removal” claimed the homes of two hundred people in South Barelas. Writing her memories of Barelas in 1992, Laura Vigil Garcia remembered seeing her father’s reaction to the leveling of his community in 1974:

My Father had decided to stay a little longer to savor the last moments by himself in the house that had nurtured his youth, and his early married life. He stood now at the back porch screen door gazing out as far as his eyes could see. There were only a few houses left standing, four at the most, but these did not surround his property… Now his gnarled fingers were wrapped around his cane as he looked out and imagined hearing children’s voices and the voices of his neighbors who were all “primos” to him as he was to them…Dad had other recollections of his early years in Barelas. Since the Urban Renewal had been approved, he had spent many a sleepless night remembering, pondering, and deliberating so that he had a complete picture in his mind of what had been in the years past. He had gathered the Past to his heart this last day in this house that soon would diminish into nothingness. All the homes had been razed, the land was flat and what had taken more than 50 years of his life to build was going to be nothing by the morrow.\(^{347}\)

In 1916, Cipriano Leandro “Leo” Vigil married Juanita Mercurio Ross\(^ {348}\) in Littleton, Colorado, and promptly began their life in Barelas at 1620 South Third Street. There, Leo Vigil Sr. became a Justice of the Peace in Bernalillo County for the Barelas precinct and began an active political career, eventually serving as a delegate for New


\(^{348}\) Juanita’s father, Juan Mercurio (1850-1942), was an Italian immigrant who came to Albuquerque for reasons unknown to the family. According to Laura Garcia, Juan Mercurio’s granddaughter, he used the last name Ross for “practical” reasons, usually meaning Americanization and assimilation. In 1882 he married Nuevomexicana Leonarda Serna in 1882 at the San Felipe Parish in what is now Old Town. They lived in South Broadway and Barelas where they raised six children. Garcia, 13-14.
Mexico at the Democratic National Convention in 1964. The Vigil family had nine children, seven of whom survived into adulthood. All were born in the house on South Third Street. For close to ten years, Leo Vigil Sr. lived alone following his wife’s passing in 1965 until their home was bulldozed shortly in 1974. Mr. Vigil died ten years later.

The two homes that survived demolition were under the ownership of Mrs. Adela Martínez. Perhaps the only example of actively visible resistance against urban renewal in Barelas, Mrs. Martínez remained on her property throughout her lifetime despite repeat citations from the city at the height of the Model Cities program implementation in her barrio. Mrs. Martínez’ homes on Manuel Avenue faced Bridge Street looking north to the other side of Barelas, and were only steps away from the old elementary school that most of the children in the community attended in the 1930s and 1940s. Adela and Raymond Martínez raised a family there and always remained tied to that particular home, especially after their twelve-year old son passed away in 1963. According to Mrs. Martínez, the doctors said that the boy died of publicly undisclosed natural causes. The family preserved a footprint their son left in the earth just an hour before his passing and treated it as a private memorial with a sheet of metal over it as protection from the elements.

When questioned in 1974 as to her reasoning for remaining on the property despite Model Cities’ offers to buy her out, Mrs. Martínez bluntly explained to the

349 Mr. Vigil was identified in Baca Zinn’s thesis as “Mr. Villanueva…the local Justice of the Peace [who] was considered the ‘patron’ of the neighborhood.” Baca Zinn, 65.
newspaper reporter that, “We don’t want any money. We live all right on what we make. We don’t take any welfare…All we want is to be left alone.” Mrs. Martínez assured the media that she was not dependent on the state for her survival and marked her distinction from others in the community based on her status as a self-sustaining homeowner. Mrs. Martínez alluded to the growing negativity, stereotype, and scrutiny concerning welfare recipients and tried her best to assert her economic independence. In doing so, she justified living in her homes that posed no threat to anyone, except supporters of urban renewal. By 1978, with the other families out of South Barelas, Mrs. Martínez’ houses were condemned by the city in an effort to make way for a planned industrial park. The city went a step further and turned off her gas in addition to removing the asphalt in front of her homes in a failed effort to force her out. Mrs. Martínez tested the city’s patience for over twenty years and remained on the property until her death in 2000.

351 “Legislator Backs Homeowner,” Albuquerque Journal, 24 June 1997. The city filed a condemnation lawsuit in July 1976, and by 1978 District Judge Gene Franchini ruled in favor of the city. Franchini allowed the family to remain on the property until it was needed, but the city relinquished their claim in November 1980 when it was apparent that the industrial park would not be completed. “Martínez Faced Condemnation in ’76,” Albuquerque Journal, 18 June 1997
353 See chapter five for a more detailed treatment of Mrs. Martínez’ fight with the City of Albuquerque and later with the State of New Mexico concerning her property in Barelas.
Afterlife and Memory of a Dead Barrio

The memories salvaged in newspaper stories lasted long after those residents left Barelas. The evidence of their livelihoods survives in Albert Vogel’s photographic essay, which is in fact, a photo album of a community – a family. The people pictured in Barelas – Arenal and Los Lunas were mostly from the same barrio and had coexisted as vecinos, compadres, friends, and family that shared in a common socioeconomic and cultural circumstance. While Vogel’s photo essay briefly exposes a reality of some Nuevomexicano communities touched by urbanization, underemployment, and discrimination, it undoubtedly essentializes poverty as a primary characteristic of Barelino life – and Nuevomexicano society more broadly. On the other hand, the “poverty pride” Nancie González noted is evident throughout the frames – the subjects’ eye contact with the audience suggests no shame and an acknowledgement that they have finally been seen. Because Vogel wrote both the preface and created the images, the book’s intimate arrangement was at the mercy of its creator, typical of average family photo albums. Out of the thousand or so images at his disposal, Vogel discriminately chose each and every one including their placement, darkroom alterations, and the elimination of captions at the bottom of the photographs.

Intentional or not, the photos included in this album solidified the memory of poverty in the areas identified. Though not a pleasant memory, its bound existence makes it inescapable in the contemporary consciousness. In her analysis of photo albums, Martha Langford reflects that, “the accumulation of photographic moments
does not replace memory; rather, it overburdens recall with visual data that explodes in the retelling.”

I asked two Bareleños their thoughts on the validity of what Vogel found and neither refuted what they – or Vogel – saw. One resident did not deny that extreme poverty in Barelas existed, though he firmly stated that those conditions in Vogel’s album were not what he experienced or saw from his father’s house – that of Leo Vigil Sr. – only steps away from the homes pictured. The afterlife of this album superseded that of what Langford calls “performance” or functionality. It serves now as a painful reminder not only of what was but what could be again. If Vogel’s album is a eulogy, then Serrano’s is a visual obituary for a community and way of life that could not be replicated elsewhere. Few relics remain of what once was South Barelas and the spirit of those that lived there. While Vogel’s photos served to solidify the association of poverty with South Barelas and Tortilla Flats, in a sense, the images justified South Barelas’ death. The razing – the photographic documentation of a total barrio homicide – was captured in Serrano’s publication. Neither of these albums were for the residents to remember, mourn, or preserve their barrio. They were for academics to pour over and assess the cause, treatment, and effectiveness of their research into ethnic working-class poverty.

355 Mike Orona interview by the author, December 2011, Albuquerque, NM, tape recording; Henry Chavez interview by the author, December 2011, Albuquerque, NM, tape recording.
356 Pat R. Vigil interview by the author, 3 August 2012, Albuquerque, NM, tape recording.
The history of urban renewal in Albuquerque, and Barelas more specifically, is similar to many others across the country. Perhaps though, few cities share all of the things that make Barelas extraordinary - its foundational history, the booms and busts of the railroad and automobile, its perception as both Tortilla Flats and the “heart of Aztlán,”357 and the community lost through redevelopment. In 2002 when asked her thoughts on urban renewal, resident Theresa Alarid stated that, “some of the homes needed remodeling – not tearing down – you get attached to where you live. Adobe lasts forever, you didn’t need to tear them down. The way they got rid of them was a sore…[Mrs. Alarid pauses for a moment] The trees are still there.”358

357 Chapter five explores Rudolfo Anaya’s 1973 novel, Heart of Aztlán, that took place in Barelas during the 1950s.
358 Theresa and Jack Alarid interview by the National Hispanic Cultural Center, 9 January 2002, Albuquerque, NM, visual recording.
A. Gabriel Meléndez, noted New Mexico scholar and author, beautifully wrote in his collection of poetry, *Reflexiones del Corazón*, that Barelas offered its people and its visitors lessons in life; its streets carried the history of the people and their struggle. Although the long urban renewal fiasco had ceased in its intensity, for Meléndez, those exceptional elements in life that Barelas embodied should be everlasting and absolute, and they were. He would not know it at the time of his publication, but Barelas still had a battle left to fight. The emotionally and politically charged discussion over the future of South Barelas came to a standstill in the 1970s. By the 1980s, when it was clear that the promises of urban renewal had failed, when tightly-knit neighbors dispersed throughout the city, and when children playing in their yards were replaced with empty lots, South Barelas stood barren and forcibly abandoned, save for two humble homes on Manuel Avenue. After a long, complex struggle over what should be done with the vacant land – either further development of an industrial park or the construction of low-income housing – the uncertain future of South Barelas seemed to stand still, if only for a moment. Manny Aragón, a local

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“A simple walk through Barelas turns into a lesson in philosophy, sociology, theology. It is one way to find out what is and what is not…Some things should last forever,” A. Gabriel Meléndez, “Los Barelas,” *Reflexiones del Corazón* (Santa Fe, NM: Red Crane Books, 1994).
politician, quickly thrust his old barrio back into the spotlight as he campaigned for South Barelas to serve as the site of the highly anticipated National Hispanic Cultural Center.

Once again, the lone homeowner on Manuel Avenue found herself in the middle of an epic political and rhetorical battle over the future of her property. With the physical structures of South Barelas gone, the residents were left to rebuild their community elsewhere, whether that was north of the Barelas Bridge or to other areas in Albuquerque. Much to the dismay of interested parties wanting to imagine a new future for the area, the primary topic of conversation revolved around Adela Martínez’ two homes that remained in the razed barrio. This chapter explores the reframing project taking place in Barelas during the urban renewal period with explicit attention to how politicians, “cultural preservationists,” and everyone in between continued to envision the role of the neighborhood now that the area was freed from blight and its perpetrators. In particular, this chapter demonstrates how Rudolfo Anaya’s book, *Heart of Aztlán*, the National Hispanic Cultural Center, and local memory inadvertently worked together to frame the barrio into a realm of nostalgia, loss, resistance, and Hispano authenticity.

*Creating an Icon*

While Rodolfo Serrano and his team investigated part of Barelas as it was in the mid-1970s, noted Chicano author Rudolfo Anaya wrote and published a story on
the barrio at the same time. Originally called *Barelas*,360 *Heart of Aztlán* is the story of a family moving to the barrio from a rural New Mexico community in the 1950s. Part autobiography, Anaya’s story weaves together his own personal experiences of migration from Santa Rosa, a small town towards eastern New Mexico, to Barelas during his youth in the postwar period. Written on the heels of his first novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*,361 and influenced by the Chicano Movement, Anaya’s second book offers a postwar frame of the barrio that preceded urban renewal’s destruction. It is unclear how or if urban renewal influenced Anaya’s writing of his second novel, since he had long moved out of Barelas and already begun a career in academia at the University of New Mexico. Nevertheless, Anaya’s depictions of the barrio in the 1950s was partly informed by his own experiences there as a youth, and they more generally reflected the type of rural to urban in-migration many other Nuevomexicanos experienced during the mid-twentieth century.

It was appropriate that Anaya chose Barelas as the story’s setting, not just because of his relationship to the community, but because its urbanization was incomparable to most other areas in the state. The Barelas and San José barrios seemed to attract more migrants simply because of their proximity to the locomotive shops and to downtown. Barelas, unlike San José, benefitted from more automotive traffic as Route 66 ran right through the barrio from Central Avenue and connected the community with travelers crossing the Barelas Bridge to the west. Prior to the

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360 Rudolfo Anaya Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico.
construction of Interstate 25 and the redirection of traffic, Barelas enjoyed considerable traffic that patronized any number of the community’s cafés, bars, groceries, other commercial shops, automotive garages, and motels. For many people, such as Anaya’s family, Barelas was the first stop on their journey to the city.

In a 1986 interview, Anaya remarked,

One of the most interesting experiences about coming to Albuquerque in the Fifties was coming from a very small rural town into a big city barrio and being thrown into a completely different lifestyle…I think that [migration is] a progression that has happened in New Mexico. Historically, after World War II you have that exodus from the small towns into the metropolitan areas, especially from the Mexican working community…and my writing reflects that historical pattern.362

The migration of Anaya’s family, just as his characters experienced, is a familiar narrative in the history of Barelas as demonstrated in earlier chapters. The author’s parents, Rafaelita Mares and Martín Anaya, moved their nine children from rural New Mexico – specifically Las Pasturas and then Santa Rosa – to Albuquerque in 1952.

The Anaya family made their residence on 433 Pacific Avenue in North Barelas363. At fifteen years old, Anaya confronted urban life and the post-war boom with curiosity and engagement. His adolescence in Barelas provided the framework for the second novel and took on many of his life experiences to shape his characters

362 “Interview of Rudolfo A. Anaya by John F. Crawford,” pages 1-2, May 1986, Rudolfo A. Anaya Papers, Center for Southwest Research, Zimmerman Library, UNM.
and their interactions amongst each other and with their environment. From pachuco
gangs to baseball games to weekend dances, Anaya’s time in Barelas transformed the
small town Santa Rosa boy into a street savvy young man of the city. There in the
city – in an acequia\footnote{Acequias are irrigation canals that border rivers and branch off to provide much needed water to fields.} – Anaya suffered two fractured vertebrae after a diving
accident that left him temporarily paralyzed for some time. Despite his near tragic
misadventure, Anaya relished in the 1950s and all it had to offer a young man. At the
same time though, he carried within him a deep understanding of the inequities and

Set in the mid 1950s, Heart of Aztlán depicts Clemente Chávez, his wife Adelita and their family’s journey westward from their eastern New Mexican town into Albuquerque’s urban hub. Immediately the family is astounded at the hustle and bustle of the city as they find their way around Barelas.\footnote{Immediately in the first few pages of the story, Anaya orients his characters in North Barelas as he describes the barrio ending at the Barelas Bridge, perhaps reflecting on the destruction of South Barelas during the manuscript phase. Rudolfo Anaya, Heart of Aztlán, (Berkeley: Editorial Justa Publications, Inc., 1976): 10.} Clemente finds employment at the locomotive shops and quickly became outraged over the inability to confront hazardous working conditions. While he struggles with his new role as an industrial laborer, his teenage sons and daughters take full advantage of their new social lives in the city, creating a rift between them and their parents. Clemente is disillusioned with city life; he longs for the days in Santa Rosa when his family stayed together and his work was valued. Soon, Clemente falls deep into depression.
and embarks on a spiritual journey that, unbeknownst to him, will lead to a cultural
and community awakening. He has a path to follow, and by the end of the novel, he
and Adelita lead the Bareleño railroad workers into a strike. While the fires of social
change are ignited, Benjie, Clemente and Adelita’s son, falls off the shop’s water
tower as he tries to escape an attack on his life. He is left paralyzed. Anaya ends
*Heart of Aztlán* and begins *Tortuga* with the struggle of a physical and community
paralysis – a “bondage” – that Anaya believed existed among Mexican Americans.\(^367\)

Working in the midst of a brutal backlash against civil rights activism proved
life-changing for Anaya, just as it was for most marginalized individuals struggling
for their voices to be heard. While *Heart of Aztlán* deals with the complexities of
urban life, especially its transformative affects on the conservative family structure,
the railroad takes on a growing significance as the characters seek to effect change in
oppressive and exploitative working conditions. The long-standing history of
resistance and activism among Nuevomexicanos is evident in their labor disputes
with the railroad, resulting in strikes that often lasted for weeks and even months. A
true product of the Movement, Anaya remarked to his publisher in 1973,

> It is not a new movement, although some of our younger [C]hicanos
think it’s very cool to think that they created the struggle for justice
and equality. No, it’s very old, old like my abuelo, and like the land,
and like the whole history of our raza. Men with huevos were fighting
injustice a long time before us, and so it is to them and their wives and
daughters who fought alongside them that we should dedicate a part of
our present-day struggle. From the valles of Califas to the mines of
Arizona and New Mexico, and from the beet fields of Colorado to the

\(^{367}\) Crawford interview, pg. 10. Rudolfo A. Anaya Papers, Center for Southwest
Research, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.
cotton fields of Texas, and every other place we followed the dignity of work, as migrants and with the railroad, there has always been a [C]hico around who finally said to injustice and oppression, *Ya Basta! Hasta ‘qui nomas!*\(^{368}\)

In this passage, Anaya clearly reflects the goals and conceptualization of the Movement as it was in the 1960s and 70s. For Anaya, tracing the struggle back to his father’s and grandfather’s generations legitimized the civil rights fight taking place at the end of WWII. Wedding together the protagonist’s crisis in moving to the city, the breakdown in the patriarchal family structure, the alienation of wage labor, and spiritual crisis, Anaya finds that in linking together these issues with the quest to find the Mexica homeland – Aztlán – the book serves as a commentary on the contemporary Chicano/a struggle as both historic and centuries in the making, and thus taking place in Barelas. Furthermore, because Anaya positions the ancient homeland in New Mexico, and in Barelas specifically, he alludes to the Chicano Movement in culturally nationalist terms. Though not a separatist by any means, Anaya roots his novel into the New Mexico earth, a land that he fully acknowledges holds the weight of history, emotion, spirituality, and memory.

Taken as a piece of literature and a site of memory, *Heart of Aztlán* explores the trials and tribulations of Nuevomexicano urban life. Anaya does not simply create a story about Chicanos that happens to take place in Barelas. Instead, he connects both place and people in a way that rings familiar with Nuevomexicanos, especially those who had similar experiences in their own families. By the mid-

\(^{368}\) “Enough! It ends here!,” Letter to Quinto Sol Publications, 23 August 1973, Rudolfo Anaya Papers, University of New Mexico.
1950s, migration from village to town to city, and then completely out of New Mexico was a common chapter in family narratives. Out of this movement, families recreated networks throughout California, with the most popular destinations offering work in the shipyards and airline industries. Nuevomexicano families, from Barelas or not, could identify with the struggles occurring in *Heart of Aztlán*, as they were struggles of American modernity and the residual changes to the family structure.

For Bareleños, this novel suspended them and their community in a moment in what Anaya considers the early Chicano Movement of the 1950s. Anaya’s mention of the intra-ethnic dynamic and rivalry among communities such as Atrisco, Five Points, Martíneztown, and Duranes rings familiar to readers from Albuquerque, and especially the Spanish-speaking people who tended to reside in those areas. As a site of memory, Anaya avoids the pitfalls of nostalgia; he gives a fair depiction of Barelas in the postwar period – family, community, labor, petty crime, gangs, baseball, dances, drug use, poverty, and love. In this case, Anaya created memories for his readers, Nuevomexicano or not. Because this story takes place on real Barelas streets, with mention of actual businesses, readers might imagine that those fictional events took place in real life.369 Furthermore for the people of Barelas, *Heart of Aztlán* was a way for them to experience their community in print, perhaps similar to how they remembered it in the 1950s.

Anaya’s piece of literature, a story written from the perspective of someone who lived in Barelas, is hardly similar to Steinbeck’s *Tortilla Flat*, which was based

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369 The exception here was Anaya’s omission of the Red Ball Café, which was easily one of the most recognizable, historic establishments in Barelas.
on second-hand accounts of Mexican Americans. Of course, the differences between these two novels are easy to identify, time period and geographical location notwithstanding. Anaya wrote the story not as an outsider but based on his own lived experiences with friends and family. His novel was not written at the expense of others. While parts of the book took place in South Barelas, it revealed the total barrio’s complexity. Steinbeck’s story of Depression-era Californian païsanos living a life of drunken bliss could not be further from Anaya’s early Chicano Movement narrative of Nuevomexicano migration, labor, and cultural nationalism. What these two novels share, however, is their relationship to and lasting impact on the Barelas community. That South Barelas was called Tortilla Flat(s) from the 1940s onward owes itself to Steinbeck’s stereotype of Mexican American cultural deficiency and poverty. His characters, while in a specific time and place, became easily applicable to Mexican Americans more generally, and his description only became more rampant as the motion picture hit the silver screen.

_Tortilla Flat’s Reprisal_

While John Steinbeck’s novel and film adaptation of _Tortilla Flat_ seemed to drop out of the public consciousness soon after its release in the 1940s, the Mexican American stereotype embedded in the plot continued to infuriate Chicano academics of the 1960s and 70s. They, more so than others at the time, saw the lasting effects of Steinbeck’s work on the Chicano/a population, and this proves especially salient during the Movement years as people of color struggled to define their place in an increasingly hostile Euro-American society. While not a central output of the Barelas
community, localized publications of journals, booklets, and pamphlets discussing Mexican American and Chicano/a issues circulated anywhere that a substantial community resided. Ephemeral print media at this time, like any newspaper or magazine, served the purpose for Chicanos/as in community building just as Benedict Anderson described the use of such materials to forge a national consciousness.  

Publications such as *El Grito* and *Con Safos* served as a platform for Chicano/a academics and community members to express their frustrations and do so in a safe environment with the intention of spreading awareness and even mobilizing people to organize.  

Published in a 1969 edition of *El Grito*, Francisco Armando Ríos’ essay, “The Mexican in Fact, Fiction, and Folklore,” calls out highly recognized American authors for the creation and reinforcement of Mexican American stereotypes. In particular, he notes that for John Steinbeck, “to sentimentalize about people in poverty, to give them exaggerated speech and manners, is not to praise the; especially when these same people are also portrayed as a drunken lot, inundated in

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cheap wine, sleeping in ditches, fighting for the enjoyment of it, stealing at every turn, and living in rampant promiscuity.”  Ríos carefully teases out the situation of the Mexican American community and the alienation felt among its members in the Southwest as one of deep paradox, since “he is easily identified and, once identified, easily categorized and ignored. It is a complaining of Mexicans that they are seen only when they do wrong; otherwise they do not exist.”

Similarly in a discussion concerning the relative academic stagnation of the Chicano/a community, Federico A. Sánchez looks toward literary constructions of Mexican American barrios as the reference point for anti-intellectualism and complacency among its members. For Sánchez, widespread cultural ignorance among Chicanos/as is fostered within the barrios themselves, as they were marginalized, oppressive communities only created during the American period. The negative qualities of the barrios were reworked to offer both inhabitants and outsiders fodder for cultural reimagination. Sanchez notes that the “romanticization of barrio life and barrio characteristics…[are] born again in an idyllic setting like Steinbeck’s Tortilla Flat.” Thus, for Sánchez writing in Con Safos, an early Chicano/a Studies magazine during the 1970s, the barrio – and specifically the one articulated in Steinbeck’s writings – is the first of many problems to plague Mexican Americans, simply because that celluloid imagery went unchallenged and seemed to accurately,

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373 Ibid., 18.
374 Ibid., 25.
376 Ibid., 41.
albeit, nostalgically represent Mexican American barrios of the 1930s and 40s from an American perspective. Although he never discusses the relationship between sociocultural marginalization and economics, Sánchez identifies the barrio as a primary nurturing space for cultural inadequacy and inferiority, as those images of Steinbeck’s Californian paisanos are transformed to represent Mexican Americans nationwide.

While some Chicano academics criticized Steinbeck, others satirized the absurd nature of his description of Chicano/a communities. The “Barrio T.V. guide” in *El Chicano* magazine included *Tortilla Flat* in its weekly movie listings, among other shows that either have Chicano actors or characters. Partly written in a phonetic, yet imagined Spanish-accented speech, the author dually attacks both Steinbeck and the lazy, uneducated Mexican American stereotype his story imparts.

“Channel 11 at 8pm, ‘Tortilla Flat’ 1942 MGM flic about *pobres chicanos* in Monterey area of California. Thees ees thee kyn off feelm that geeves everee juan thee repression that we are passive, shiftless peones. From super-racist John Steinbeck’s novel. Stars Speenzer Trayzee.”377 The author’s critique of Steinbeck, however, is organized alongside the description of a television show on Channel 4 at 10pm, ‘Police Story,’ wherein a, “realistic cop series goes to the East L.A. barrio for (what else) a gang war. Pedro Armendáriz Junior and some real-life batos locos star in routine ‘Mexicans murder Mexicans’ story.” If in fact these television listings were a real schedule, anyone could start an evening with Steinbeck’s fun-loving,

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innocent characters at 8pm and then flip the channel at 10pm to watch the next generation of Mexicans engaged in natural barrio violence. The specific “East L.A. barrio” is never mentioned, but its location is understood in the minds of the readers and viewers, just as the piece on Rudolfo Anaya’s life “in the barrio” is understood as anywhere that urban Nuevomexicanos reside in great numbers.

Although the cases above do not refer to Barelas, New Mexico, or any exact location for that matter, they nonetheless illustrate the ongoing negative presence of *Tortilla Flat* within the Chicano/a popular consciousness despite the story’s relative absence from mainstream American culture in comparison to his more beloved books.

If we are to consider Bareleños as participants in the collective Chicano/a community, then the meanderings found in Movement-era publications warrant our attention as well, for it is certain that each of these publications and others like them enjoyed a wide range of readership and distribution. Furthermore, publications such as the ones mentioned provided Chicanos/as a much needed platform to voice their opinions amongst each other, whether that opinion was rooted in serious academic analysis or sparked critical thinking through humor. Francisco Armando Ríos aptly noted, “society has forged its own myth regarding Mexicans, sanctified that myth in its literature, then, confounding effects and causes, has relegated the Mexicans in its midst to inferior status. What has been said in our literature and folklore about Mexicans cannot now be unsaid.”\(^{378}\) This then, is the power of stereotype and a falsely imposed identity.

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\(^{378}\) Ríos, 27.
Long after the *Tortilla Flat* novel and film ceased to be of any importance in white American popular culture, it remained a nostalgic designator of Mexican American poverty, backwardness, and laziness. It was for these reasons that South Barelas continued to carry the ‘Tortilla Flat(s)’ designation well into the 1970s and even in the present memory, although the area that remained – North Barelas – assumed the more positive ‘Heart of Aztlán’ identity. Just two years after most of the homes were sold and bulldozed, a 1976 *Albuquerque Journal* piece commented “for all that’s left of South Barelas, an atomic bomb might have hit it, instead of the federal government, disguised as Model Cities and Urban Renewal.”

The image

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[Fig. 5.1] accompanying the story certainly confirmed this perspective as the “bomb” catapulted the people of Barelas into unfamiliar parts of Albuquerque, though many of them returned to Atrisco, Arenal, Five Points, and other Nuevomexicano communities from which their families originated. Later, the story even commented on the plight of Bareleño children as they, “would go to school, come back [home] that day and refuse to go again. They were embarrassed by their clothes and accents. They got free school lunches and everyone seemed to know it.” Interviewed in 1982, Bareleño Eulogio Montaño – then seventy years old – lamented, “se desaparecieron todos…my compadres, my relatives, my family – all of us were scattered.”380

Montaño reminisced in this Journal story about the high price of urban renewal,

stating that he raised sixteen children in a home he made out of adobes in 1934 that was demolished close to forty years later. The article’s accompanying image [Fig. 5.2] shows the southwest corner of Bridge and South Second Streets with El Modelo restaurant and tamale factory on the horizon. Its caption, “A Few Trees and a Mexican Food Factory Are All That Remain of the Once-Thriving Barrio of South Barelas,” paints a very different picture of the area some ten years after Model Cities promised to redevelop the land. Arturo Sandoval, the article’s author, aptly noted that South Barelas was indeed a “dead barrio.”

Barelas – Tortilla Flat, Heart of Aztlán, the barrio – reached an iconic position in Albuquerque society because of history and popular culture whether or not it was truly eliminated from memory. The neighborhood, while many residents considered it to be nothing more than their home, quickly became the subject of an intense political debate that called into question the preservation of individual livelihood and the institutionalization of Latino/a culture. Barelas’ long history in New Mexico made it the prime candidate for a multi-million dollar museum intended not only to celebrate the community, but also celebrate the contributions of Hispanics to the nation. Not everyone felt that Barelas should be the site of high class, institutional development. Homeowner Adela Martínez once again came to the defense of her home and her barrio. Regardless of the many names it assumed over the decades, to her it was simply Barelas, icon or not.

381 Ibid.
Adela Martínez, “A worthy opponent”

Successfully fighting off urban renewal and repeated property condemnation attempts for years, Adela Martínez and her family remained the only residents of South Barelas well after her neighbors relocated elsewhere. For years since the neighborhood was leveled, much discussion circulated in the local and state governments concerning the future use of the unoccupied, unexploited land. In 1983, the New Mexico Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) established the Hispanic Culture Foundation under the guidance of a Board of Directors. Ten years later in March 1993 the state legislature passed Senate Bill 739 that created the Hispanic Cultural Division under the OCA and specified that a future New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center would be the primary building of the Division. The bill specified that Albuquerque would host the site and receive an initial $410,000 in design and construction costs. By February 1994 the legislature approved $12 million after the architectural firm of Antoine Predock was hired and quickly moved on a final program for financial consideration. Part of the Foundation’s primary project was to establish a center dedicated to the study and celebration of Hispanic culture in New Mexico. The Foundation evaluated a number of locations in Albuquerque, including

382 The city directory also listed Freddie Ransom as a new homeowner at 419 Manuel Avenue, although he is absent from other documentation. “Street Guide,” Albuquerque Area Wide New Mexico Polk Cross-Reference Directory (Livonia, MI: The Polk Co., 1997): 218.

383 Founding members included Albuquerque lawyer Arturo Ortega and Edward Romero, future Ambassador to Spain.

384 Progress report on the New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center, submitted by Office of Cultural Affairs to Gov. Bruce King, May 1994, pp 1-2, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.
the abandoned railroad shops, space near Old Town, and South Barelas, among others. While the March 1994 site evaluation report named the San Gabriel location\textsuperscript{385} as the “No. 1 site by study” due to its size, minimal environmental risk, and considerably low estimated site cost at $500,940, Barelas won out in the end due to a stipulation in the 1994 state funding bill that specifically required the center be located in the southwest quadrant of the city.\textsuperscript{386} The identified 4\textsuperscript{th} Street and Bridge location had 26.5 acres of nearly vacant space to spare, despite the “special issues” of Adela Martínez’ homes standing in the way. The projected cost to renovate and construct a center was low in Barelas at $1.5 million dollar compared to the Albuquerque Little Theater or Sunset areas with smaller acreage and price tags at $4,259,000 and $5,750,000, respectively. It seemed that Barelas – South Barelas to be exact – was the ideal choice in terms of land, transportation access, visibility, and location. The OCA estimated that the property acquisition process to remove Mrs. Martínez would take less than six months beginning in June and completed by December, or even as early as September of that same year.\textsuperscript{387}

Very quickly, however, supporters of the Hispanic Cultural Center found themselves in a delicate battle with the elderly homeowner over the future of her

\textsuperscript{385} The San Gabriel area was later purchased and used as the site for the Albuquerque Biological Park and Botanical Gardens. These public works, along with nearby Tingley Beach and the zoo (adjacent to Barelas), comprise a two mile stretch of urban green space along the eastern banks of the Rio Grande bosque.

\textsuperscript{386} New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center Site Evaluation, March 1994, Barelas vertical file, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.

\textsuperscript{387} Progress report on the New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center, submitted by Office of Cultural Affairs to Gov. Bruce King, May 1994, p. 3, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.
property and that of the center itself. A failed buyout in 1994 for $108,000\footnote{Michele Jácquez-Ortiz, “The National Hispanic Cultural Center of New Mexico,” \textit{La Herencia: Our Past, Our Present, Our Future} 28 (Fall 2000): 14.} left the OCA with few options except for continuing negotiations and – as a last resort – condemnation of the Martínez homes. Finally, by 1996 the case quickly gained extensive local media coverage and seemed to inject new life into Mrs. Martínez’ plight to stay put. \textit{Albuquerque Journal} staff writer Jeff Scott reported that the struggle between the homeowner and the state was, “a classic drama of American development: The developers of the $38 million New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center need one more parcel of land, and a 77-year-old widow won’t sell.”\footnote{“77-Year-Old’s Home is Last Plot of Land Needed,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal} 18 December 1996} Almost immediately, Adela Martínez became an overnight celebrity in this David and Goliath battle and regularly used the media to state her case. Over the next few years, Mrs. Martínez and various factions under the State of New Mexico sparred with each other in the press, with the former acting on the defensive as support for the Barelas grandmother increased in scope.

The newspaper stories in both the \textit{Albuquerque Journal} and the \textit{Albuquerque Tribune} on the Barelas case reached their peak in the summer of 1997, just as the property war became more intense.\footnote{Together the papers published fifty-three articles on Adela Martínez and the Cultural Center between 1996-2000, with thirty-three of those taking place in June 1997 alone.} This was due in part to the constant negotiations between Mrs. Martínez and John Garcia, the State Tourism Secretary in charge of acquiring land for the Center. In early June, Garcia offered the Martínez
family $119,500 for the parcel of land with the stipulation that either she accept the offer or face condemnation with no financial compensation. In either case, the state would win out. Reacting to this one-sided ultimatum, Hess Yntema, the family attorney working pro bono on the case, also regularly spoke to the media, and in one instance remarked that forcing an elderly woman out of her home would be considered an act of “tyranny [but] by the legislative leaders, it was an act of pride and cruelty, and by the rest of the Legislature, an act of cowardice and servility.” In an effort to further garner support for his elderly client over that of Santa Fe politicians, Yntema brought Senate President Manny Aragón into the media circus, claiming, “the poor lady [Martínez] wants to stay in her home, and she’s being moved out in the name of the greater glory of Senator Aragón,” who wanted nothing more than a “monument” to himself.  

Manny Aragón, as chance would have it, was also from Barelas. Aragón first made headlines in 1961 as an eighth-grader at Sacred Heart Junior High who was quick on the basketball court, scoring the title for the Albuquerque Parochial League championship. Thus began his long relationship with the press, although over time the focus shifted from his athletic skills to those as a defense attorney and then later to his long, dynamic tenure in the state Senate. For his part, Aragón never downplayed his Bareleño roots, nor his broader South Valley community, the district he represented in state politics. Nevertheless, he favored the construction of the Cultural

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391 “Lawyer Calls Efforts to Force Woman out of Home ‘Tyranny’” *Albuquerque Tribune* 10 June 1997
392 “Aragon Wins Parok Title,” *Albuquerque Tribune* 28 February 1961
Center in Barelas, a “poverty-plagued area,” despite Mrs. Martínez’ desire to remain on her property. In reference to her removal or condemnation, Aragón remarked, “The state and this nation have a tremendous amount of precedent for kicking people off their lands, so I’m sure they’ll be able to handle it…The Anglo Saxons have done real well in that area, and I’m sure the court system will be able to handle it.”³⁹³ Here, Aragón seamlessly shifted the attention away from accusations that he and other affluent Nuevomexicano politicians were classist and insensitive to the needs of the poor and working class. Instead, he invoked collective memory of ethnic violence committed against Nuevomexicanos in the seizure of their land grants throughout the Territorial Period. In doing so, Aragón warned the public that Martínez’s fight for her land was misguided and useless, as she was confronting a government that historically mistreated its minority populations in favor of American expansion.

Despite facing major opposition from major players in local and state politics, including everyday Barelas residents in favor of the center, Adela Martínez continued to resist giving up her home, a source of pride and tradition that was constantly reinforced in any article discussing her plight. Her small piece of land on Manuel Avenue measured less than a quarter of an acre but had been her home since 1926, when she moved there as a four-year-old with her parents. She had remained ever since, even as urban renewal came knocking on her door, and after the city tried to condemn her property repeatedly throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Mrs. Martínez made it clear that no amount of money could possibly convince her to leave the land.

³⁹³ “Lawyer Calls Efforts to Force Woman out of Home ‘Tyranny’” Albuquerque Tribune 10 June 1997
on which she had raised a family, the yard where her twelve-year-old son had
suffered an appendicitis attack and later died, or the house whose walls displayed the
many memories of her family history. She was attached to her land in such a way
that seemed to confuse some people. When questioned what she would do if
removed from her home, Mrs. Martínez responded, “I’ll just stay in the street. I’ll be
homeless right where my land is. I’m going to fight it.” She shared the same
sentiment with her daughter, Josie Martínez Montoya, who lived in the second house
on the property, and regularly told the press that only death could take them from
their homes.

In mid-June with both time and options running thin, supporters began
rallying around Adela Martínez’s cause and even called then-Gov. Gary Johnson for
help in her case. Although Johnson did not promise a happy ending for the Martínez
family, he did state that while he favored the Cultural Center, he did not think that
“dislocating” Mrs. Martínez was necessary. Some of Martínez’ supporters included
members of the watchdog group Concerned Citizens of Albuquerque, who even
nominated her for the Governor’s Award for Outstanding New Mexico Woman for
1997. Elizabeth Cook, a member of the group and an Old Town businesswoman, said
that what Mrs. Martínez, “has contributed to the state of New Mexico goes hand in
hand with cultural preservation. She’s raised a family. She baby-sits with

grandchildren. She is playing the role of a Hispanic woman with strong ties to home

394 “Widow won’t Give up Fight,” Albuquerque Journal 12 June 1997
395 “Generous Offer Fails to Sway Landowner,” Albuquerque Tribune 9 June 1997;
“Woman Rejects NM’s offer of $119,500 for her Land – Condemnation is Next
Step,” Albuquerque Tribune 12 June 1997
and family” (my emphasis). That she was nothing more than a passive grandmother, a typical viejita (elderly woman) who accepted and performed conservative gender roles as part of her Nuevomexicana culture was erroneous and an egregious generalization on behalf of Cook, who clearly demonstrated in this statement that she knew little about either Mrs. Martínez or the culture she “preserved.” Cook added that the Cultural Center was a creation of the political elite and felt that the taxpayers’ responsibility was not to teach “our culture” as “[cultural preservation] belongs in the home.” Clearly, Cook did not see beyond her own essentialist remarks regarding Nuevomexicano culture as she not only defended Mrs. Martínez because of her age and ethnicity, but then turned around questioned the need for an institutional recognition of that very same culture she rallied around. Sharing Cook’s sentiment, Citizens member Patrick Chapman remarked, “There’s already Hispanic everything in New Mexico…We really don’t need a cultural center.” Ramoncita Tachias, another member, more succinctly drew attention to the ironic nature of the situation as she stated, “It doesn’t make sense that a Hispanic center is being built to preserve Hispanic traditions, but they’re going to drive a bulldozer over our traditions to do it…Who’s going to share in it? Not the little people. They might have a few people from Barelas to come in and sweep and clean the bathrooms.”

Nearly a week after Adela Martínez declined the buyout, observers patiently waited for a response from John Garcia and the Legislature. Garcia’s assessment of

Mrs. Martínez’ willpower was accurate: “She’s a worthy opponent.” This game of chicken between the two parties was what the *Journal* referred to as a “showdown” that effectively pitted the State on the defense, as Martínez refused to sell her home and was in no hurry to settle the matter, unlike the Cultural Center promoters. Perhaps due in some part to Gov. Johnson’s assessment of the situation combined with increasingly negative public opinion, the State backed off and offered to redesign the Center to accommodate Mrs. Martínez’ property. Of course, that offer was not without it’s conditions. In return for the redesign – estimated at first on the upwards of $500,000 – Mrs. Martínez would have to accept an external renovation of her homes as well, “so aesthetically it would fit into the project.” At that point, Mrs. Martínez would be required to deed the property over to the state, which in turn would lease it back to her until her death. Despite Mrs. Martínez’ insistence that the Center should be moved elsewhere, the State held firm and only offered to build around her homes.

That the State buckled under public pressure angered and frustrated many supporters of the Center, many of them being vocal Barelas residents. Larry Perea, lifelong Bareleño and then-vice president of the Barelas Neighborhood Association (BNA), expressed dismay at recent support for Adela Martínez as he commented to the press that movement to bring the Cultural Center to Barelas was a long process and not some recent development. He added, “everybody supports it…If you’re

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397 “Woman Rejects NM’s offer of $119,500 for her Land – Condemnation is Next Step,” *Albuquerque Tribune* 12 June 1997
talking about the Barelas community, there is probably one person that’s opposing it, and you know who that is.” To be sure, Perea reflected the desires of those involved in the BNA, as they worked with the State to bring the Cultural Center to the neighborhood. He felt surprised and appalled at the “Johnny-come-latelies jumping in,” when there were nearly ten years of negotiations centering around redevelopment of the barrio. Similarly, Bareleña Lucy Sánchez felt the same way about the opposition, stating, “Everybody is happy about it except that woman.”  

Juan José Peña, president of the BNA, also expressed his dismay with Mrs. Martínez’ choice to stay on her land, especially when the economic traffic from downtown to Barelas would help reinvigorate the community. In his letter to the Hispanic Cultural Center Board of Directors, Mr. Peña wrote, “This link would be in the best interest of all concerned, including Doña Adela Martínez, although she may not be aware of it or may not want to be aware of it now.” In his three-page oration, Mr. Peña pleaded his case against Mrs. Martínez stating that upon her death and the uncertain future of her homes, “Barelas will then be left to deal with another blighted property and building…and we will have lost a golden opportunity to improve our community for its current residents and for the children and grandchildren of the barrio of Barelas.” In the remainder of his letter, Juan José Peña detailed the many reasons that Barelas should remain the center’s site of choice, including that the colonial expedition of Don Juan de Oñate “probably” crossed the early establishment

of the area. To be sure, Mr. Peña also recounted the many influential Nuevomexicanos who came from or at least set foot in Barelas at one point or another. For these reasons and many more, the letter described why Barelas should house the Cultural Center and should do so even without Mrs. Martínez’ land.

“It boils down to color”

At least two other Bareleños were opposed to the project and shared similar concerns to those of Adela Martínez, although their reasons were more formally based on race and had nothing to do with championing the elderly homeowner’s cause. In telling Mrs. Martínez’ story repeatedly in the media, little coverage or attention was paid to other members of the barrio who had their own problems with the State and the Cultural Center. It was not until mid-August that property owners Henry and Donnie Terry, an African-American father and son, finally had their minute with the press. At that point in time, the Cultural Center began work on a redesign to accommodate Mrs. Martínez, but it still needed to acquire three parcels of surrounding land that together totaled just less than nine acres. While John Garcia saw complete success buying the uninhabited land from the other two property owners, he was met with great opposition from the Terry family. Unlike the outpouring of support for Mrs. Martínez, often described in terms of Nuevomexicana domesticity, the Terrys were given no such attention. Although they never begrudged

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400 Juan José Peña to the Hispanic Cultural Center Board, 24 June 1997. Barelas file, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM.
Mrs. Martínez, they noted that theirs was an unequal case in the public eye, including the state as well.

Henry and Donnie Terry first appeared in the papers on August 18, over a month after the heavy attention on Mrs. Martínez’ property began. While their property was vacant – estimated at a quarter of an acre near Mrs. Martínez – the Terrys had also engaged in a long-running battle with the city, just like their neighbor. In 1971, just as urban renewal plowed through the area, the Terry’s commercial building was zoned as residential, thus making it on the demolition list in an area with industrial zoning. Five years later, because of the misappraisal and subsequent structural removal – the city condemned the land, although that judgment was dismissed in 1981. The Terry’s problems with the city continued, and by 1994 the city condemned four more buildings on the land and consequently destroyed the small businesses that went on within the walls, including Henry Terry’s home in one of the structures. The state offered a mere $44,000 for the Terry’s quarter acre, just as they were desperate for Mrs. Martínez to accept their offer of $119,500 for her much smaller property. Despite the loss of business and modest residence, Henry Terry regularly visited his property and would even sleep under a nearby tree at night until his son picked him up early in the morning.\footnote{402 “State is Closer to Breaking Ground on Cultural Center,” \textit{Albuquerque Tribune} 21 August 1997} For the Terry family, the issue was more than land.

“It boils down to color…We were the last ones to get a chance to talk to [the state], but we’ll be the first ones they condemn,” remarked Henry Terry to the press
in the first of two articles addressing his plight. Henry and Donnie Terry were one of the few black families in Barelas. The elderly Terry bought land there in 1958 and had raised a family, gotten married and divorced, and lived there until forced out in 1994. At the time of the land dispute, the father and son, aged 76 and 44, respectively, lived together about five miles south of their Barelas property. The Terrys likened their decades-long dispute with the city to the 1991 Rodney King case, asserting, “Rodney King was beat over the head 26 minutes. I [Henry Terry] was beat over the head 26 years.” The Terrys wanted compensation in the millions for years of discrimination and unjust treatment from the city and urban renewal programs. John Garcia rejected any such request beyond the initial offer of $44,000 in defense of taxpayers’ money. He also noted that the Terry’s multi-million dollar buyout had no similarity to the Rodney King settlement and was in fact an insult to the case in its entirety. Moreover, Garcia asserted that the state had no responsibility to the Terrys for past injustices suffered at the hands of the city. As a final shutdown to the discrimination issue, Garcia remarked that he was “considered a minority” himself and that his denial of the Terry’s claim had nothing to do with their race. Despite the delicate negotiations with Mrs. Martínez and the state’s accommodating her refusal to sell, Garcia ironically noted that for the Terry case, the state’s primary interest was in

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403 “Hispanic Center Closer to Going Up Around Foe,” Albuquerque Journal 18 August 1997
404 Ibid.
the land itself, “not other punitive or ancillary issues related to their property…This is not about an unjust act. It’s about a fair offer on a piece of property.”

Much to Garcia’s refusal, this interaction certainly reflected unequal treatment between the Barelas landowners. Henry Terry, an elderly African American gentleman, could acquire no legal representation to argue on his behalf for a fair compensation of the quarter acre of land he wanted to sell. Adela Martínez, a Nuevomexicana just one year older than Mr. Terry, had free legal counsel and remarkable support that rallied around her cause to preserve her significantly smaller property holdings. Mrs. Martínez, unlike Mr. Terry, was given preferential treatment as the media victimized, racialized, and gendered her position against the state and Cultural Center. Mr. Terry, likewise was framed in a similar manner, although his gendered and racialized position did nothing to garner sympathy nor support from anyone. That he revealed long-standing discrimination between himself and the city, that he explicitly referenced race-based police brutality, and that he was an African American man offered a less than desirable companion to Mrs. Martínez’ story as a Hispanic widow who wanted nothing more than to remain on her land. Although the Terrys had lived in the barrio since the late 1950s, perhaps no one considered them Bareleños. Donnie Terry remarked that for his father Barelas, “still feels like it’s home. It’s sentimental value they took from us, and they don’t quite understand it.”

Mrs. Martínez and Mr. Terry, a year apart in age, likely knew each other as they lived

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405 “State is Closer to Breaking Ground on Cultural Center,” *Albuquerque Tribune* 21 August 1997
406 “Hispanic Center Closer to Going up Around Foe,” *Albuquerque Journal* 18 August 1997
in the same barrio for decades and experienced similar issues with the city concerning their respective properties. Although Mrs. Martínez was never referred to as a Bareleña in the media, she certainly asserted her long history of place in the area— not only physically, but culturally as well. Mr. Terry, on the other hand, could do no such thing, for as an African American in Barelas, though not an anomaly, he challenged the public’s framing of the barrio as a historically Nuevomexicano community, a racialized construction in and of itself. Although the Terrys were left out of the Nuevomexicano frame, the memory of another Bareleño opposed the goings-on in his old barrio.
While impending construction of the Cultural Center threatened to displace and/or severely underpay existing property owners Adela Martínez and Henry Terry, respectively, another Bareleño expressed his dismay, though for another reason. Joe Padilla and his family lived in South Barelas decades prior to the 1970s when urban renewal forced them out, along with most other residents. He grew up there along with four brothers, one of whom later became a “Barelas success story.”

Pedro “Pete” Padilla’s story was remarkable in many ways. As a youth, he did well in school and involved himself in music and sports and “shunned the many vices of his hardscrabble neighborhood [of South Barelas], nicknamed ‘Tortilla Flats’ and fought

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408 Pedro Padilla will herein be referred to as “Pete” and/or “Pete Padilla” to reflect both his age and endearing role in the community. The more formal “Mr. Padilla” or simply “Padilla” is not used here the way I address Adela Martínez and Henry Terry, as those individuals were senior members of the neighborhood.
his way, literally and figuratively, toward a better life.” Taking on one of Barelas’ longstanding traditions, Pete immersed himself in the world of boxing and eventually won several city and state titles while still attending Albuquerque High School in the late 1950s. Some years after graduation, Pete joined the Marines [Fig. 5.3] and was deployed to Vietnam. He was killed in the Quang Ngai province on March 28, 1966. Pete had just celebrated his twenty-fifth birthday two days earlier.\footnote{Marine Sgt. Pete Padilla: March 26, 1941-March 28, 1966, “Albuquerque Journal” 21 March 2011} Upon hearing the news of his death, Pete’s South Barelas community decided to commemorate the nearby park in his honor. In March 1968, Barelas residents requested that the Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Advisory Board consider renaming Riverview Park, located in South Barelas near the elementary school of the same name, in honor of their deceased war hero.\footnote{“Two Albq Brothers Back from Vietnam,” Albuquerque Tribune 25 March 1968} City commissioners made short work of the request in early April and approved the name change to Pete Padilla Park.\footnote{“Transit, Land Use Study Pact OK’d,” Albuquerque Journal 2 April 1968}

In 1997, this park was the very issue that unsettled members of the Padilla family. The Cultural Center’s plans threatened to do away with the park in its entirety and turn the community space into a parking lot. When questioned about the park, Hispanic Cultural Center board chairman Edward (Ed) Luján said that he had every intention of memorializing Pete Padilla, and even felt that naming the future amphitheater after him would “draw a lot of people and will commemorate his name every time someone walks in there.” Still, Joe Padilla, Pete’s older brother, said that an amphitheater plaque “won’t cut it [because] it degrades the memorial.”


\footnote{“Two Albq Brothers Back from Vietnam,” Albuquerque Tribune 25 March 1968}

\footnote{“Transit, Land Use Study Pact OK’d,” Albuquerque Journal 2 April 1968}
August, a rally was held at Pete Padilla Park in opposition to its razing and as a show of support for Adela Martínez. Hung in effigy were the most identifiable supporters of the Center: Sen. Manny Aragón, Ed Luján, and Edward Romero – board member and later an Ambassador to Spain under Bill Clinton. While Joe Padilla had no problem with the Center, he did oppose the erasure of his brother’s memory and its replacement with something unfitting for the community. While streets in Barelas were often named for local families who lived on them, the Pete Padilla Park was the only area commemorating the life of an individual member of the community that everyone could access at any given time. The elimination of the park was an erasure of a memory, a hero in a potentially rough barrio, that the community felt was worthy of commemoration.

“She stood her ground”

While John Garcia and the State of New Mexico did their best to resolve other issues concerning the construction of the Hispanic Cultural Center, Adela Martínez never wavered in her demand to remain in her home despite promises of a new and better life elsewhere. At 77 years old, Mrs. Martínez had witnessed changes in Barelas: WWII and railroad prosperity, suburbanization, redirection of commercial traffic out of downtown and into the Heights, the War on Poverty, and urban renewal. She survived these structural transformations in Barelas, raised a family, and buried loved ones all at her home on Manuel Avenue. Joe Padilla understood her dedication

412 “Opponents of Culture Center to Protest Paving of Park,” Albuquerque Tribune 8 August 1997
to preserving memory in Barelas. When asked his opinion of her in light of repeated condemnation efforts, Mr. Padilla remarked, “she stood her ground…We were intimidated and forced out.”

Upon learning more about Mrs. Martínez as her property fight escalated, the media immediately recognized that she was no fool, although they often described her in helpless terms. She had fought the city before, and she won.

Adela Martínez first battled the city in 1976 when urban renewal plowed through her barrio. Back then, the city put forth an offer of $30,500 for the property plus $22,500 in relocation costs. This was an enormous payment compared to the near pittance other received for their homes. She refused and the city sued her.

Although she lost that case, then-District Judge Gene Franchini allowed her to remain on the property until construction for the proposed industrial park would begin. It never did, and the Martínez family stayed put. However, her defiance did not go unpunished. In an effort to force her out, the city turned off Mrs. Martínez’ gas service and destroyed the road in front of the property. From that time forward, Mrs. Martínez used a wood-burning stove to heat her home and cook in the winter with wood she chopped herself. In the summer, when it was much too hot, she used electric skillets and other small appliances to make food for her family. She lived

414 Part of this story appears in chapter four. “Martínez Faced Condemnation in ’76,” *Albuquerque Journal* 18 June 1997
415 “Her Life Centers on This Home,” *Albuquerque Tribune* 21 June 1997
without gas for twenty years until supporters finally reconnected her home in November 1998 when news broke to the public how she lived.\footnote{Elizabeth Cook of the Concerned Citizens of Albuquerque approached the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) about reconnecting Mrs. Martínez’ gas line. “Standing Her Ground,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal} 26 February 1999}

Part of the reason Mrs. Martínez could continue to resist displacement owed itself to more influential supporters that once again invoked history, memory, and culture in their defense of the senior Bareleña. By the end of June, State Rep. Miguel Garcia, a South Valley democrat whose districts included Barelas, Atrisco, Five Points, and Armijo, spoke in favor of moving the Center to another nearby location.

In a firey letter to John Garcia published in the \textit{Journal}, Rep. Garcia wrote:

\begin{quote}
Doña Adela epitomizes the traditional \textit{manito} (native New Mexican Hispano) values and traditions that our families and ancestors have so heroically defended against attacks and annihilation by foreigners, white racists, US government abuse and corruption, and by collusion between the \textit{rico} (rich) class and corporate interests to erode the land and water rights base of native manito communities.\footnote{“Legislator Backs Homeowner,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal} 24 June 1997}
\end{quote}

All at once, this statement implicated supporters of the Cultural Center as predators of an elderly woman – a \textit{manita} – in their willingness to destroy a traditional way of life for their business and political interests. While others discussed the battle with similar rhetorical devices, Rep. Garcia elevated Mrs. Martínez – Doña Adela – to almost revolutionary heights in her resistance of yet another effort to strip the \textit{Nuevomexicano} people of their land, as was done a century earlier. In a \textit{Journal} article published just days prior to Rep. Garcia’s scathing remarks, John Garcia noted that the state’s battle with Mrs. Martínez was about more than just land. Realizing
the delicate nature of the situation, Garcia remarked, “I think how we handle this also talks about how we deal with our people. It’s very symbolic what she’s doing, and it will also be historic how we deal with it. We need to be very careful about this.”

Finally, after significant heat from Adela Martínez’ supporters and a serious bout of bad publicity, the Hispanic Cultural Center board decided during an emergency meeting the morning of June 26, 1997 to build around the Bareleña homeowner. Despite the added financial cost estimated at a half a million dollars, the board unanimously voted to let Mrs. Martínez remain, although they asserted that some compromise would be necessary for allowing her to stay.

Because the Cultural Center plans celebrated the rich architectural heritage in Hispanic and indigenous New Mexico, and Mesoamerica as well, the board felt that Adela Martínez’ homes needed to reflect or at least blend in with the design. In return for aesthetically rehabilitating her property to meet Cultural Center standards,

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418 “Negotiator Reviews Hispanic Center Sites,” *Albuquerque Journal* 20 June 1997
419 Antoine Predock, the original architectural firm spearheading the project, estimated the redesign to cost nearly $800,000. According to the media, both the state and the Predock firm felt it was in everyone’s best interest to find new architects to do a more cost effective redesign and move forward with construction. The state struggled between several highly qualified architectural firms to complete the project, but they eventually decided on Lloyd & Tryk Architects of Santa Fe. “Architect Off State Hispanic Center,” *Albuquerque Journal* 18 September 1997; “Architect Says He’d Use Same Plans for Center,” *Albuquerque Tribune* 18 September 1997; “Despite Controversy, Deep Research Fits Architecture to Culture and Landscapes,” *Albuquerque Tribune* 14 October 2000. At about the same time as the center’s groundbreaking, *La Herencia* magazine falsely reported that the redesign cost in excess of one million dollars. Michele Jáquez-Ortiz, “The National Hispanic Cultural Center of New Mexico,” *La Herencia: Our Past, Our Present, Our Future* 28 (Fall 2000): 17.
420 “Board: Adela, Cultural Center Should become Neighbors,” *Albuquerque Tribune* 26 June 1997
the board asked Mrs. Martínez to deed her land to the state, although it would be leased to her for the remainder of her life. Upon hearing this news, and frustrated that the center would still be built around her, Mrs. Martínez told the press, “When I die, they will leave my family on the street…I’m not giving the deed to anybody. If I want to give up the deed, I’ll give it to my lawyer.”

Despite Mrs. Martínez’ protests, the board continued plans to move forward with the center, including various fundraising efforts and beginning a search for a new director. By the end of 1997 with publicity waning and a solid stance from the state, Mrs. Martínez was forced to accept a new neighbor in the cultural center. After being delayed more than eighteen months, the construction was set to finally begin January 1999.

*Framing a Living Exhibit of Hispano Authenticity*

The original plans had placed the center’s visual arts building on Mrs. Martínez’ land, but the agreement to build around her flipped the design so that the property would instead be between buildings and a parking lot. According to the new architect, the redesign would leave Mrs. Martínez’ “dignity intact. You have to honor the elders. That could be my grandmother.”

Dignity rather than displacement became the issue as construction progressed. To the architects, the State of New Mexico, and the Hispanic Cultural Center Board of Directors, dignity meant encompassing Mrs. Martínez’ property, family, and memories between walls and

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423 Ibid.
parking lots. While Adela Martínez’ daughter had been more active early on with her mother, by the time construction neared, son Lawrence Martínez became more vocal in stating his discontent. Lawrence, a single-father of three, lived with his mother on the property and noted that they would be living in a parking lot.\footnote{424} The “defiant woman”\footnote{425} and her family finally ran out of options. The Cultural Center’s most active supporters gathered together for the groundbreaking ceremony on February 13, 1999 while Adela Martínez remained at home within earshot of the celebration.\footnote{426}

Soon, the relatively peaceful inaugural ceremony gave way to jack hammers and bulldozers. By late July 1999, the \textit{Albuquerque Tribune} described Mrs. Martínez as a “gritty and determined” woman living among construction materials, heavy equipment, and non-stop dust winding its way through the nearby digging site and into her home. With construction of the National Hispanic Cultural Center\footnote{427} in full swing, the Martínez family patiently awaited what each new disruption would bring them, even when that meant the crew’s installation of “temporary” chain-link fencing that reached six feet in height, breaking their water and power lines, or disrupting phone service. Adela Martínez complained that the dust would affect her breathing

\footnote{424}{“Family Funds Fault in Center Redesign,” \textit{Albuquerque Tribune} 19 December 1997}
\footnote{425}{“Cultural Center will go up soon around Defiant Woman’s Home,” \textit{Albuquerque Tribune} 18 November 1998}
\footnote{426}{Included in the groundbreaking ceremony were Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM), Rep. Heather Wilson (R-NM), state Sen. President Pro Tem Manny Aragón (D-Albuquerque), and Mayor Jim Baca. “Celebrating a Dream,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal} 14 February 1999}
\footnote{427}{“Hispanic Center Could Adopt ‘National’ Title,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal} 29 January 1999. By mid-1999 the institution did in fact drop ‘New Mexico’ from its official name in favor of ‘National’ in an effort to broaden its appeal and gain more outside funding.}
and that the noise prevented her any peace and quiet in her at home or yard. Although she had long threatened to sue the state once it was decided to build the Cultural Center around her, Mrs. Martínez seemed to accept the fact that she had little choice other than to be neighbors with the institution. Before long, she was framed within the center itself as a parking lot soon replaced the street in front of her house. The only thing that separated her from the multi-million dollar center was a nine-foot high cinderblock wall at the south end of her property.428

Adela Martínez often said that she would die before letting go of her property, and in fact, she did not live to see the National Hispanic Cultural Center’s completion. Mrs. Martínez passed away on January 29, 2000 at eighty years old. Although she had not appeared in the press as frequently as the summer of 1997 when the battle with the state reached its peak, she continued to make headlines especially as construction on the center continued and it began to take shape. Still, the press referred to her as the Cultural Center’s “foe” and as a “defiant” woman, among other choice words. But upon her death, Adela Martínez was described in more heroic terms both from the press and others who were previously more outspoken against her or were unsympathetic to her cause. Bernardo Gallegos, member of the board of directors who knew Mrs. Martínez for many years said, “I admire her for being a strong person with a good family. She stood her ground. I didn’t agree with her[,] we would have loved to acquire, and would still love to acquire, that property. But

428 “Adela Martínez Lives with the Rumble of the Hispanic Cultural Center,” Albuquerque Tribune 26 July 1999
that’s not saying anything against her.”\footnote{Adela Martinez, who wouldn’t budge for Center, Dies at Age 80,} \footnote{Albuquerque Tribune 31 January 2000} About one hundred and fifty people attended her funeral on February 2, 2000 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Barelas and spoke words of support and admiration for Mrs. Martínez’ long struggle with the State of New Mexico.\footnote{Adela Martinez Praised,} \footnote{Albuquerque Journal 3 February 2000} Carlos Vásquez, director of the center’s History and Literary Arts department, even spoke admirably about Mrs. Martínez and her refusal to leave the property, remarking, “she’s our hero.”\footnote{Cultural Strands – National Hispanic Culutal Center Brings Together Rich History,} \footnote{Dallas Morning News 21 October 2000} At the center’s grand opening on October 21, 2000 state Sen. Manny Aragón, who in 1997 was also partly embroiled in the state’s battle with Mrs. Martínez, warned the crowds to “remember and not forget the plight and the fight of Adela Martínez, who gave us a true, classic example of something that is true for all cultures: that land is important. Adela Martínez lived a life of \textit{tierra o muerte} (land or death).”\footnote{A Day of Pride,} \footnote{Albuquerque Journal 22 October 2000} In fact, she died for her land.

The invented link between Adela Martínez’ fight to stay on her land and the mission of the National Hispanic Cultural Center soon took shape as the news of her death silenced any and all opponents. Ironically, her passing was an opportunity to justify the opening of the center as a monument and dedication to the fighting spirit seen in Mrs. Martínez, and by extension, all Nuevomexicano people. A Journal editorial explained, “Her values at least partly reflect the people the center will honor. This land lured Hispanic families back to an uncertain future after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. And decades of disappointments haven’t stopped New Mexicans from

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item \footnote{Adela Martinez, who wouldn’t budge for Center, Dies at Age 80,} \footnote{Albuquerque Tribune 31 January 2000}
\item \footnote{Adela Martinez Praised,} \footnote{Albuquerque Journal 3 February 2000}
\item \footnote{Cultural Strands – National Hispanic Culutal Center Brings Together Rich History,} \footnote{Dallas Morning News 21 October 2000}
\item \footnote{A Day of Pride,} \footnote{Albuquerque Journal 22 October 2000}
\end{thebibliography}
fighting for the return of land grants they contend were illegally taken.”

Mrs. Martínez, in this case, only continued the centuries of struggle her ancestors embarked upon since the Pueblo Revolt, although her fight was not against Native Americans or whites but against state bureaucracy and the Hispanic Cultural Center. Even her headstone mentioned the many times she defended her land as it reads:

A loveable Heroine, Patriotic woman who had faith in God. He gave her strength [and] all the help she needed to fight against Urban Renewal Politicians, Bureaucrats, and proponents of H.C.C. [Hispanic Cultural Center] to keep her property. She left them the only way she said she would…When God would call her home. Fear God, not men. Her treasures were God, her family, and her land. Mom, you will never be forgotten, your legacy and inspiration will live on. We love and miss you.

Her story soon became “lore” in the long history of South Barelas and the center as a, “monument to the gente [people] of one of Albuquerque’s oldest neighborhoods.”

Once the Cultural Center opened in the fall of 2000, some people wondered what would happen to Mrs. Martínez’ property – a “remnant of Albuquerque’s oldest neighborhood” – now that she had passed away.

433 “Martinez Reflected Hispanic Culture,” Albuquerque Journal 6 February 2000
434 Valerie Gonzales, “My great-grandma’s culture and life,” 2004. Adela Martínez vertical file, National Hispanic Cultural Center. This paper was an assignment for a history class at Albuquerque’s Technical-Vocational Institute (TVI) South Valley Campus (now called Central New Mexico Community College) during summer 2004. The instructor was Carlos Vásquez, sole and current director of the NHCC’s History and Literary Arts department.
435 “Adela Martínez is Gone, but her home, her family and her legacy remain,” Albuquerque Tribune 14 October 2000
The homes were relics of what was once South Barelas; their modest size stood close together, with minimal landscaping that reflected the harsh qualities of a desert climate. Towards the back of the homes stood a shed, clothesline, and other household items stored away for future use. This was all in plain view of course, because the “temporary” chain-link fences that bordered the parking lot became permanent fixtures as time wore on [Fig. 5.4]. Prior to the negotiations and redesign of the center, the Office of Cultural Affairs weighed their options and explicitly mentioned the possibility of a “living exhibit for Mrs. Martinez,” if the state chose to
build around her homes.⁴³⁷ Even during the summer of 1997 when hostilities reached their peak, there was concern over absorbing Mrs. Martínez’ homes as part of the museum’s attractions. In an editorial for the Albuquerque Tribune, Jack Ehn wrote that with all the acreage at the center’s disposal, the proposed redesign should not invade Mrs. Martínez’ privacy, nor should it “turn her into an unwilling ‘exhibit.’”⁴³⁸ Another Tribune article also urged planners to “redesign the center without humiliating Martínez and making her part of the exhibit,” despite her being “bullheaded.”⁴³⁹ Unfortunately, those cautionary calls went unheeded. Mrs. Martínez’ homes remain just as they had when their address was on Manuel Avenue and not the grounds of the National Hispanic Cultural Center. Hers is the one and only living exhibit at the center and immediately greets visitors; it is an unsettling juxtaposition of a former identity preserved at the doorstep of a new one.

Adela Martínez – mother, grandmother, activist, Bareleña – became the National Hispanic Cultural Center’s accidental icon for Hispano resistance. Her homes, then, became physical monuments to a type of what I call ‘Hispano authenticity’ in a barrio that no longer existed. The property did not embody a romantic vision of Hispanic life – charming adobe homes with red or blue wooden trim and doors, chile ristras hanging on the porch, and an adobe horno for baking bread – more commonly seen in highly stylized areas of Santa Fe or Taos.

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⁴³⁷ New Mexico Office of Cultural Affairs, New Mexico Hispanic Cultural Center, n.d., Barelas file, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM
⁴³⁹ “If Redford can back off, so can center supporters,” Albuquerque Tribune 26 June 1997
No, the appearance of the homes reflected more the working-class people and the history that made Barelas a bustling section of Albuquerque in the early twentieth century. The property’s appearance, while well maintained and structurally sound, demonstrated what the barrio looked like prior to the destruction of urban renewal. The homes were artifacts and relics of this period in Barelas’ history, and in this way, they were true examples of how a small, elderly Nuevomexicana lived while battling the state and the Cultural Center [Fig. 5.5]. The Martínez homes embodied an unsettling, raw version of Hispano authenticity that highlights the struggles of Mexican Americans in the postwar urban reality. These homes, when juxtaposed
with the towering National Hispanic Cultural Center in the background, demonstrate current issues surrounding progress, cultural preservation, and the dislocation of communities of color for the sake of their salvation.

Adela Martínez, while she did not speak for every Bareleño/a, came to represent her barrio’s history, for she “lived through several cycles of birth and death on the land.” Barelas, from its earliest moments in the seventeenth century through Mexican then American takeover, also experienced life and death. As quickly as Barelas grew during the 1880s and again in the 1940s, the community suffered an equally tremendous decline in the 1950s and 1960s so that a portion of the barrio was all but extinct by the 1980s. Mrs. Martínez’ death also meant the symbolic death of South Barelas once and for all. In the collective wake of South Barelas, the National Hispanic Cultural Center became what Mrs. Martínez had opposed all along. When asked in February 1999 if she was, “anti-Hispanic or opposed to the preservation of culture,” Mrs. Martínez said, “We never needed a shrine to tell us who we were…We just knew.” But it was no accident that the monument to Hispanic culture took root in Barelas. Perhaps what was so surprising is that it took longer than expected.

The political movement to bring the National Hispanic Cultural Center to the area attempted to reframe Barelas’ negative, impoverished Tortilla Flat identity into one that nostalgically ignored the trauma of the 1960s and 70s. Unfortunately, the public support for Barelas never quite extended itself to other Albuquerque barrios.

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441 “Standing Her Ground,” *Albuquerque Journal* 26 February 1999
Nuevomexicanas/os from other neighborhoods contributing to Barelas’ early success simply went unrecognized and forgotten from memory, especially as the drive to bring the NHCC to Barelas became stronger and stronger. As that political struggle continued through the 1990s, two remaining houses in South Barelas stood in the way, and supporters used Adela Martínez’ cause as an example of the epic struggle between right and wrong. After fighting a losing battle, the NHCC was built around the unavoidable, vocal problem. This spatial organization continues to the present day, and those homes and family members are now incorporated as an unintended, yet profitable living exhibit of the museum. Despite the laborious remake of community identity in the public consciousness – one that favors a Heart of Aztlán over a Tortilla Flat identity – an underlying tone of negativity remains and is apparent in current gentrification battles played out in the city council and in neighborhood association meetings. While Bareleños experienced various visual and social framing projects over time to suit specific city needs, this analysis closes with residents’ oral histories as they expressed dignity in their community. In the words of one resident, “I am from Barelas, and I’m damn proud!”

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Epilogue: Barelas, USA

Bareleños experienced significant change in their community due to socioeconomic forces beyond their control. They were, as this dissertation has attempted to demonstrate, framed outside the bounds of social membership. As the subject of many academic inquiries, including this present study, Barelas has developed an understandable skepticism toward outsiders looking to the community for answers regarding acute ethnic poverty, urban planning, and redevelopment. Although elements of this story are familiar in other areas, Barelas presents a special case as it has been visually documented at various points over the last century.

This community’s story is one of agricultural beginnings, industrialization, prosperity, deindustrialization, and slow decline. Over the course of their history, however, Bareleños have maintained a community pride rooted in memory. Although half of their barrio was severed from the landscape, a community identity and history still persist. The earliest visual recordings of Barelas established the community’s importance to the progress of an American Albuquerque economy and attracted Nuevomexicano migrants from all over the state to live and work there. It maintained its position well into the 1940s, despite the growing socioethnic disparity that affected Bareleños and other Nuevomexicanos. They, despite the negative depictions created of them, affirmed and expressed identities of their own creation. They created their own forms of social membership with the camera.

Barelas has continued to make headlines well after the framing of their Sacred Heart Church bell tower with World Trade Center beams in 2003. Bareleños now,
just as before, have taken an immense pride in their community and have remained organized and committed to rejuvenating their barrio for themselves and future generations. The indispensable leadership from the Barelas Neighborhood Association (BNA) and the Barelas Community Coalition (BCC) has actively worked with the City of Albuquerque and other neighboring communities to redevelop the old railroad shops to provide residents additional retail, housing, and entertainment options. After years of discussion and debate, the AT&SF blacksmith shop was renovated to serve as a central marketplace to purchase locally made edible delicacies – with New Mexico’s iconic red and green chile of course – in addition to locally grown produce and works of art as they listen to live music and watch local performance troupes. The Railyards, so appropriately named, opened in May 2013 and has enjoyed significant success.443

Bareleños, the BNA and BCC, Sacred Heart, and the Barelas Community Center have also succeeded in maintaining cultural links with their barrio’s past. Every year Barelas celebrates its fiestas in the summer and the posadas just before Christmas time. Each occasion is an opportunity to socialize with neighbors, family, and friends. These events also welcome back Bareleños who have since left the community, no matter how long they have been absent. The posadas are especially important for the community as a ritual of memory, history, and tradition. Beginning at the Barelas Community Center and ending at Sacred Heart, residents and visitors

443 See Javier Benavidez, “Defending the Heart of Aztlán,” Master of Community and Regional Planning (MCRP) professional project, University of New Mexico, 2011.
reenact the journey of Mary and Joseph as they prepared for the birth of their son, Jesus Christ. Every year, this event brings the Bareleño diaspora back to its streets as they walk along the neighborhood, from house to house, with paper lanterns – *farolitos* or *luminarias* – lighting their way. Although movement of the barrio was both forced and voluntary for some, everyone is always welcomed back.

Some would say that Barelas is and always was a community in transition. From its earliest days in the colonial period, through the twentieth century, I have attempted to document the many ways in which multiple transitions took place. While I have explored significant events in Barelas’ history in order to tell this particular story, not all people or places were given an opportunity to speak in this dissertation. I was, for example, unable to talk about Barelas’ long-established tradition of baseball and boxing; hardly a word was uttered in regards to elementary education there; the importance of the Barelas Community Center, the Barelas Coffee House and other recognizable and beloved places of leisure and labor. Also important are the rescue missions and soup kitchens there that serve hundreds of Albuquerque’s most destitute residents. Theirs is also an equally important story. It is my hope that this project serves as part of the groundwork needed to truly recognize this community for what it means to Albuquerque. Examining Barelas’ history through acts of visual, academic, and metaphorical framing was a way for me to understand this community that had long my fascination since childhood, but by no means is this the only way to tell the Barelas story.
This project began in July 2010 just weeks after I had completed my doctoral qualifying exams. In June I had prepared and defended an ambitious dissertation prospectus that aimed to trace the lives and communities of people who were both voluntarily and involuntarily deported to Mexico from the United States during the 1930s. It was an idea I felt needed further exploration in the historiography, and its completion promised that those Mexican and American families would be honored. After my exam I returned to my homeland, New Mexico, after a two-year long absence and immediately went to my alma mater, the University of New Mexico (UNM), for some archival inspiration. After I found what I was looking for, or rather, after it found me, my project changed completely and without hesitation.

I wanted to get my feet wet in research, whether or not it concerned to my then-dissertation project. I began browsing the finding aid and typed in, of all names and places, the community I worked with many years prior. The first of many search results that popped up on the finding aid were a collection of photographs and a published book of that study. I requested Albert W. Vogel’s *Barelas – Arenal and Los Lunas: A Photographic Essay on Poverty in New Mexico*, published in 1967 from UNM, and waited for the materials to arrive from storage. When they arrived in the Anderson Reading Room of Zimmerman Library, I carefully and quietly removed the softcover book from its protective case and was horrified by what I saw. At first, I quickly leafed through the pages of the book, in disbelief and angry at the portrayal of New Mexicans and their homes. As I sat with the book and continued to scan it more closely, I became saddened and defensive of this community that I was not from but
had grown to know and love. I knew in that instance that my project had changed from tracing traumatic deportations to identifying Barelas (mis)representation.

My memories of Barelas began from a very early age. On our trips to visit my paternal great-aunt Ofelia and uncle Tony in the Arenal community, my mom and I cruised through Barelas and always remembered another paternal great-aunt of mine. Then and even now, my mom would tell me about Annie and how much she loved me. My mom would always say that Annie crocheted me a beautiful light pink blanket, with a rose in the corner, and that it is still in the cedar chest waiting to go home with me. Although she passed away when I was a small child, I knew from my mother that Annie was a sweet woman; I knew that Annie was from Barelas. Our conversations of her lasted as long as it took to go down Fourth Street from Lead Avenue until we crossed the Barelas Bridge into Sunset Gardens and then into Arenal. But every time we went into Barelas, our conversations always began with Annie.

Years later in high school, I got a job with a summer arts program and was sent to Barelas to work with a local poet. That first day I did not know quite where I was going, as my mom and I had only traversed through the community’s main drag, and I had little familiarity with the many streets that branched off from the primary thoroughfare. I cruised along anyway in my white 1967 Chevrolet Corvair Monza coup that was already so close to the ground that I did not have to drop it any further to make it a lowrider. It was low and loud by nature. Finally after circling around a few times to make sure I was in the right spot, I parked in front of Maria Leyba’s
house not too far from the Barelas Community Center on Barelas Road. A little nervous, but excited to start working, I walked up to her porch, knocked on the door, and waited for her to answer. She was wonderful. She gave me my first lesson on Barelas – not exactly a history lesson but a lesson on the generosity, warmth, and compass of the people who lived there. She was and still is one of those people. We worked with some of the elementary school children to encourage their artistic expression. José, Jocelyn, Cecilia, and others learned to write poetry from Ms. Leyba, and I – at that time so deeply interested in photography that my 35mm SLR Nikon never left my hands – photographed them all working and creating together. That was my initial lesson in love there in Barelas.

A couple of years later as a sophomore at UNM I accepted a position with the ServiceCorps, a division of the nationally recognized Americorps organization. I was hired to conduct an afterschool program in working-class communities that, if linked together on a map, comprised Albuquerque’s “Pocket of Poverty.” Prior to attending the ServiceCorps trainings, I had never heard that phrase, nor did I ever think of those communities as being impoverished. I was sent to Barelas. For three years I worked with a team of other university students to organize our after-school program that would speak to the needs of the children involved. We really did not have the slightest clue as to what we were supposed to do. Nonetheless, we continued on, made mistakes, experienced successes, and formed lasting relationships with the children and their families. It is safe to say that we learned much more from them than they learned from us.
Although I have lived outside of Albuquerque for several years, neither the town nor Barelas has ever left me. The more I learned about Barelas’s history, the more I learned about myself. I did not think that Albert Vogel’s photo essay would lead me to find out about my own family history there. All of the people I came to know in the last four years, including the ones I knew from previous work in Barelas, taught me about community pride, struggle, and sacrifice. They lived hard lives and always tried to make the best out of their situation, whatever the situation was at the time. For one reason or another, I am always led back to Barelas, and I am very thankful for that. It wasn’t until I began research that a former Chicano Studies professor of mine at UNM, Dr. Charles Truxillo, told me that he too spent some of his youth in Barelas. Although I had long left his classroom, Dr. Truxillo and I kept in contact and spoke regularly. When I was in town, he and I would meet for lunch, and I would listen intently as he told me many stories of his youth in Barelas. After he moved back to the neighborhood, he would say, “I spent my whole life trying to get out of Barelas and look where I ended up!”

I attended funeral services for Dr. Truxillo on Tuesday, February 10 and Wednesday, February 11, 2015 at Barelas’ Sacred Heart Church. Going back to the neighborhood was bittersweet as I was happy to be there but incredibly saddened that it was under such heavy circumstances. Over those two days my mind turned to our conversations about Barelas and life in general. Dr. Truxillo inspired me to embrace history; he took students on memorable trips to Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula; he awakened us to life beyond Albuquerque. It was with him and through
his intellect that I began to see my place in the world. He actively encouraged some of us, a small group of Chicanos to forge a new path in Nuevomexicano academic production for our generation. I am proud to be one of six of those students in seven years to earn a PhD. Dr. Truxillo inspired artists, lawyers, health care professionals, and educators; I am happy to call them friends. My cuates – the “santos” as I called them all – were fortunate to share in and witness Dr. Truxillo’s passion for history and New Mexico, and what he gave us, no one can ever replace or extinguish. It is true that, as our friend said of him during the eulogy, Dr. Truxillo’s candle burned twice as bright. We all strive to offer our students what he offered so selflessly to us as a mentor, teacher, and friend.

In many ways, Dr. Truxillo and the individual lives explored in this project were metaphors for the community itself. Like so many residents, his family also participated in the in-migration movement that helped transform Albuquerque into New Mexico’s largest city. His family made their way into the San José and Barelas barrios from Belén, a small town south of the Duke City, as did so many others. His recent passing made me appreciate him as a scholar and friend, but also as a member of the community explored in this dissertation. Although Dr. Truxillo wanted to remain in the background, we always talked about Barelas; in some ways he gave me the best interviews without actually being formally interviewed. He was from a working-class family that, like the families pictured here, just tried to do the best they could with what they had at their disposal. Bareleños and Nuevomexicanos in general lived and survived through struggles that tested their will, brought them
closer together, and forged a greater sense of community and identity. They were and are united in a frame of family, history, pride, and dignity. This project is an attempt to honor Dr. Truxillo, the people of Barelas, and Nuevomexicanos past, present, and future.
Appendix

QUESTIONS AGAINST URBAN RENEWAL!444

1. **QUESTION:** MR. DONALD BAYER AND PERSONELL: ACCORDING TO A NEWS ARTICLE, YOU SAID AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF MISLEADING INFORMATION WAS PUT OUT, BUT YOU NEVER SAID WHAT WAS MISLEADING NOR DID YOU GIVE ANY CORRECT INFORMATION IN ITS PLACE. WHY DIDN’T YOU?

2. **QUESTION:** MR. DONALD BAYER AND PERSONELL: WE HAVE CIRCULATED FOUR INFORMATION FLYERS AGAINST URBAN RENEWAL. THIS INFORMATION WAS TAKEN FROM ALBUQUERQUE’S URBAN RENEWAL RECORDS AND FROM OTHER RELIABLE SOURCES. TONIGHT WE ARE HANDING YOU OUR FOUR FLYERS AGAINST URBAN RENEWAL. WILL YOU TELL US WHAT IS NOT THE TRUTH? REMEMBER WE HAVE THE TRUTH WITH US.

3. **QUESTION:** WILL YOU SHOW US WRITTEN PROOF THAT WHAT WE HAVE SAID AND WRITTEN AGAINST URBAN RENEWAL IS NOT SO? WE WANT ANSWERS TONIGHT.

4. **QUESTION:** WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL EACH INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY OWNER – IN YOUR LETTERS TO THEM – JUST WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO WITH – OR TO – THEIR PROPERTY? NOW! BEFORE ALBUQUERANS ARE BLINDED WITH URBAN RENEWAL AND FORCED OUT OF THEIR PROPERTY, WHETHER THEY WANT TO SELL OR NOT!

5. **QUESTION:** HOW MUCH MONEY ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE EACH PROPERTY OWNER, IF ANY? WHY WOULD YOU GIVE THEM MONEY? WHAT WOULD THEY HAVE TO DO TO GET IT? HOW MUCH RED TAPE? WHO WOULD RECEIVE MONEY? WHY? WE WANT ANSWERS TONIGHT.

6. **QUESTION:** THE PEOPLE HAVE HEARD PROMISES OF GIFTS OF SO MUCH MONEY. DID THE URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITIES MAKE THESE PROMISES? IF SO, DID THEY GIVE WRITTEN PROOF? WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO TO QUALIFY FOR THE $1500 OR OTHER

444 “QUESTIONS AGAINST URBAN RENEWAL!” 6 December 1965, vertical file on Albuquerque Urban Renewal, Albuquerque Public Library Special Collections.
AMOUNTS? TO WHOM WILL THIS MONEY BE GIVEN? WILL EVERYBODY RECEIVE GIFTS?

7. **QUESTION**: WHY DID THEY PAVE HIGH, ROSS, ELM STREETS, ETC., NOW WHEN URBAN RENEWAL PLANS NEW CONSTRUCTION LATER? WHY DID THEY PAVE WHEN 85 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE IN THAT AREA PROTESTED AGAINST PAVING AT THIS TIME? DO YOU THINK THESE FIVE CITY COMMISSIONERS WILL GIVE THESE PEOPLE ANY MORE CONSIDERATION ON THEIR HOMES?

8. **QUESTION**: IF I HAVE A SMALL HOME AND I AM ON RELIEF WHAT PRICE HOME WILL I GET? IF I GET A NEW HOME WILL IT BE FREE, WITHOUT COST TO ME?

9. **QUESTION**: HOW CAN AN URBAN RENEWAL ASSISTANT GIVE A RULING ON URBAN RENEWAL WHEN THE FINAL DECISION RESTS WITH THE CITY COMMISSION?

10. **QUESTION**: ACCORDING TO A NEWS ARTICLE, MR. CORDOVA PROMISED THAT NO PROPERTY WOULD BE DEMOLISHED. WHY DO YOU, MR. DONALD BAYER, ALLOW FALSE STATEMENTS LIKE THIS TO BE PRINTED? ISN’T IT TRUE THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE HAS TO PROMISE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT 25% OR LESS BUILDINGS WILL HAVE TO BE DEMOLISHED BEFORE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL FURNISH ANY MONEY TOWARD AN URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT?

11. **QUESTION**: WHY WAS 58.7 PERCENT OF THE PROPERTY IN THE SOUTH BROADWAY AREA MARKED SUB-STANDARD?

12. **QUESTION**: ISN’T THIS A PROPOSED PLAN – NOT A DEFINITE PLAN? ISN’T A PROPOSED PLAN SUBJECT TO CHANGE? COULDN’T THE WHOLE SOUTH BROADWAY AREA BE BULLDOZED DOWN BEING 51 PERCENT IS MARKED SUB-STANDARD?

13. **QUESTION**: WHAT ASSURANCE DO WE HAVE THAT CITY POWER WILL NOT CLEAR THE ENTIRE AREA? THAT PROPERTY OWNERS WILL REMAIN IN THIS AREA? THE CITY COMMISSION HAS THE FINAL AUTHORITY.

14. **QUESTION**: IF I AM ON RELIEF AND I AM NOW FURNISHED HOUSING, WHY DO WE NEED CONTROLLED URBAN RENEWAL HOUSING? THERE ARE PLENTY OF VACANCIES ALL OVER THE CITY.
15. **QUESTION:** IF I AM ON RELIEF AND I AM FORCED TO SELL MY HOME TO THE CITY FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION, WILL I STILL REMAIN ON RELIEF? WON’T I HAVE TO USE THE MONEY I RECEIVE FROM MY HOME FOR LIVING EXPENSES? AFTER I LIVE UP THE MONEY I WILL BE HOMELESS.

16. **QUESTION:** WE ARE GROWN PEOPLE – WHY DO WE NEED RELOCATION SUPERVISORS AND RELOCATION EMPLOYEES?

17. **QUESTION:** WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO MOVE THE DISLOCATED PEOPLE? IF YOU HAVE RELOCATION OFFICERS, YOU MUST KNOW WHERE YOU WILL MOVE ME?

18. **QUESTION:** IF THE CITY DOES NOT INTEND TO TAKE OUR PROPERTY WHY DO WE NEED SO MANY RELOCATION EMPLOYEES?

19. **QUESTION:** TEMPORARY RENTERS GET NO MOVING EXPENSES. WHAT DO YOU CALL A TEMPORARY RENTER?

20. **QUESTION:** WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TO SELL MY PROPERTY TO THE CITY. WILL I BE FORCED TO SELL?

21. **QUESTION:** I WANT A NEW HOME BUT I DO NOT MAKE MUCH MONEY. WHAT IS THE MINIMUM INCOME REQUIRED TO QUALIFY FOR A NEW HOME? WILL EVERYBODY IN THE URBAN RENEWAL AREA QUALIFY FOR A NEW HOME REGARDLESS OF THEIR INCOME?

22. **QUESTION:** MY HOME IS MARKED SUB-STANDARD ON THE MAP. DOESN’T THAT MEAN THE CITY WILL BUY MY PROPERTY AND PUT IT UP FOR SALE?

23. **QUESTION:** MY HOME IS PUT ON SUB-STANDARD CLEARANCE – TO BE DEMOLISHED. I WILL NOT SELL TO THE CITY. YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE MY PROPERTY. WHY DIDN’T YOU TELL THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT WHO STOPPED IN MY HOME THAT YOU INTENDED TO DESTROY MY HOME? DE DID NOT KNOW HOMES WOULD BE DESTROYED. DIDN’T YOU RELEASE TO THE NEWSPAPER 518 BUILDINGS WOULD BE DESTROYED?

24. **QUESTION:** WILL THE URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITIES HAVE ANY SYMPATHY FOR US, IF WE DID NOT GET THE PROPER INFORMATION FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS?
25. QUESTION: THE CITY KNOWS DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS ARE WORKING FOR URBAN RENEWAL AND IN COOPERATION WITH URBAN RENEWAL OFFICIALS. WILL URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITIES MAKE GOOD THE PROMISES THESE URBAN RENEWAL LEADERS ARE MAKING TO THE PEOPLE?

26. QUESTION: HOW MUCH WILL IMPROVED HOUSING INCREASE OUR COST OF LIVING?

27. QUESTION: WILL MY SHED HAVE TO BE TORN DOWN IF IT IS IN FAIR SHAPE, BUT NOT BUILT ACCORDING TO SPECIFICATIONS?

28. QUESTION: URBAN RENEWAL! WHAT IS IT? IT IS PLACING PRIVATE PROPERTY (WHAT THEY CALL SUB-STANDARD) UNDER PUBLIC USE – BY THE CITY – TAKING IT AT THEIR HIRED APPRAISERS’ PRICE FOR RESALE TO A PRIVATE DEVELOPER.

29. QUESTION: WILL YOU TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THAT MY PROPERTY IS WELL LOCATED AND IN AN R-3 ZONE? THIS INCREASES THE VALUE OF MY PROPERTY – WILL I BE OFFERED MORE MONEY FOR THIS REASON?

30. QUESTION: WHY SHOULD WE ACCEPT FORCED SALE OF OUR PROPERTY? IF WE WANT TO LIVE HERE IN OUR HOMES, WHY SHOULD WE BE FORCED TO MOVE? IF WE ARE SATISFIED WITH OUR HOME WHY SHOULD WE BE FORCED TO MAKE A CHANGE?

WE WANT WRITTEN PROOF AS TO WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE PEOPLE’S PROPERTY IN ALBUQUERQUE BEFORE URBAN RENEWAL IS ACCEPTED IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

MR. VICTOR SANCHEZ, HAROLD L. SHEPARD, AND MANY OTHERS ARE AGAINST THE EVILS OF URBAN RENEWAL.


(Handwritten at bottom)

The home you Save may be Your Own.
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