OMB Control No. 1024-0018
expiration date 03/31/2026

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

___X___ New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Detroit's Latinx Communities

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Introduction to Detroit's Latinx Communities
- Use of the Latinx Term
- Geographies of Detroit's Latinx Communities

Making a Nation
- Migration of Latinx Peoples to Detroit, 1915-1980
- Repatriation Movements in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American Communities, 1921-1932

Making a Life
- Establishing Latinx Neighborhoods in Detroit, 1915-1980
- Religious Institutions in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980
- Cultural Movements: Arts and Media in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980

Making a Living
- Labor in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980
- Commerce and the Importance of Latinx Businesses in Detroit, 1915-1980

Making a Democracy
- Women in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual, and Additional Identities (LGBTIQA+) Culture in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980
- Politics in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980
- Education in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980

C. Form Prepared by:

name/title: Katie Cook, Architectural Historian; Cassandra Talley, Architectural Historian; Lillian Candela, Architectural Historian and Project Architect
organization: Kraemer Design Group
street & number: 1420 Broadway Street
city or town: Detroit state: MI zip code: 48226
e-mail: hello@thekraemeredge.com
telephone: 313-965-3399 date: September 22, 2025

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of Multiple Property Listing

Michigan
State

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Signature of certifying official	Title	Date
	SHPO	December 4, 2025

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
James Gabbert	1/20/2026

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.
Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

	Page Numbers
E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	E1
Introduction to Detroit's Latinx Communities	
Use of the Latinx Term	E1
Geographies of Detroit's Latinx Communities	E2
Making a Nation	
Migration of Latinx Peoples to Detroit, 1915-1980	E2
Repatriation Movements in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American Communities, 1921-1932	E7
Making a Life	
Establishing Latinx Neighborhoods in Detroit, 1915-1980	E14
Religious Institutions in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980	E17
Cultural Movements: Arts and Media in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980	E20
Making a Living	
Labor in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980	E27

Commerce and the Importance of Latinx Businesses in Detroit, 1915-1980 E30

Making a Democracy
Women in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980 E34
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual, and Additional Identities (LGBTIQA+) Culture in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980 E36
Politics in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980 E38
Education in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980 E41

F. Associated Property Types F1
(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

Districts F1
Significance F2
Registration Requirements F4
Buildings F5
Significance F7
Registration Requirements F9
Sites, Structures, Objects F9
Significance F10
Registration Requirements F11

G. Geographical Data G1

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods H1
(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

I. Major Bibliographical References I1
(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

Appendix A Appendix A1

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1: 60-100 hours (generally existing multiple property submissions by paid consultants and by Maine State Historic Preservation staff for in-house, individual nomination preparation)
Tier 2: 120 hours (generally individual nominations by paid consultants)
Tier 3: 230 hours (generally new district nominations by paid consultants)
Tier 4: 280 hours (generally newly proposed MPS cover documents by paid consultants).

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting reports. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of Multiple Listing

Detroit, Wayne County, MI
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 1

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Introduction to Detroit's Latinx Communities

The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) provides a local context for many of the broad, national themes outlined in the National Park Service's report, *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*.[1] The study identified four broad themes related to Latinx heritage: Making a Nation, Making a Life, Making a Living, and Making a Democracy. Several subthemes were also identified such as immigration, religion, labor, business, and education. The subthemes important to Detroit's Latinx communities have been identified and are discussed in this MPDF, illustrating ways that Latinx histories are represented in Detroit's built environment. Finally, the methods used to identify, develop, and evaluate historic contexts will be described followed by a bibliography of key source information. This MPDF can serve as a basis for the nominating places for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) that are significance within Detroit's Latinx communities.

It is acknowledged that this MPDF is an outgrowth of Latinx communities' long history of acknowledging, collecting, preserving, and celebrating their cultural traditions and heritage. The creation of this MPDF is but one example of the varied and numerous ways that individuals, organizations, and businesses have already come together—dedicating time, energy, and resources—to preserve Latinx heritage in Detroit. As such, this MPDF draws upon work that community members have already accomplished to develop a document that can be used to further the preservation goals of the city's Latinx communities.

Use of the Latinx Term

The term "Latinx" is a relatively modern, panethnic term identifying various groups of people whose ethnic heritage connects to Central and South America and the Caribbean. Panethnicity relates to the maintenance of subgroup labels—such as Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban among others—while simultaneously identifying with a broader group of people—such as through the use of the terms Latinx, Latine, Latino, or Latina.[2] "Latinx" first appeared in Google searches 2004 and began appearing in printed, mostly academic, publications in 2015.[3] Scholars of ethnoracial labels and

[1] National Park Service, *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study*, 2013, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/latinothemestudy.htm.
[2] Dina Okamoto and G. Cristina Mora, "Panethnicity," *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (2014), 219.
[3] G. Cristina Mora, Reuben Perez, and Nicholas Vargas, "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'? The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels," *Social Forces* 100, no. 3 (2022), 1176.

community identity suggest that, "individuals collect a range of labels, which they use in different settings."[4] Therefore, the Latinx term is a broad, high-level label that encompasses many groups of people that may choose to adopt the Latinx label, reject it, or use it with or without additional labels as they see fit.[5] Additional terminology used to describe Latinx communities may include Chicano and Chicana, which refer to Americans of Mexican descent.[6]

Significant and passionate discourse has surrounded the term since the inception of its use. Supporters of the term argue that the "x" is inclusive as it removes connotations of gender and sexuality implied through the use of Latino or Latina. Those criticizing the term point out that the use of the letter "x" makes the term incomprehensible to Spanish speakers without experience with the English language, as the letter "x" is not part of the Spanish language. Another criticism is the notion that use of the term is a form of linguistic imperialism, whereby use of the term becomes ingrained from the top down, rather than from widespread, everyday usage.[7]

In Detroit, ethnic identities beneath the Latinx umbrella include Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, and many additional ethnic identities.[8] In light of the varied opinions regarding use of the Latinx term, the term will be used throughout the following report when broadly referring to the Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and additional communities in Detroit composed of ethnic identities associated with Central America and the Caribbean. The term's usage is not intended to imply that ethnic diversity and varied histories do not exist within Detroit's Latinx communities. Throughout the text, specific terminology relating to ethnicity will be used to illustrate the diverse histories of the Latinx communities in Detroit.

Geographies of Detroit's Latinx Communities

Detroit's Latinx communities lived in several neighborhoods and areas within the city including east

[4] Mora, Perez, and Vargas, "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'?" 1176.
[5] Mora, Perez, and Vargas, "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'?" 1176.
[6] Antonio Campos, "What's the Difference Between Hispanic, Latino, and Latinx?" University of California, October 6, 2021, https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/choosing-the-right-word-hispanic-latino-and-latinx.
[7] Mora, Perez, and Vargas, "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'?" 1176-1177.
[8] James Harper, "Can They Gain Political Power? 90,000 Latins: Our Forgotten Minority," *Detroit Free Press*, February 7, 1972; John Cruz, "Metro Detroit's Foreign-Born Population," Global Detroit, 45, accessed March 20, 2023, https://globaldetroitmi.org/wp-ontent/uploads/2020/02/Global_Detroit_MetoDetroitForeignbornmar2014full.pdf.

side neighborhoods, Highland Park, Corktown, and Southwest Detroit. A map of these general areas is provided in Appendix A. The map is for general reference only and is not intended to serve as an illustration of the definitive boundaries of any of the neighborhoods. As these areas will be mentioned throughout the MPDF, a general description of their location is provided here. Detroit's east side neighborhoods referenced in this MPDF are located east of downtown Detroit. As such, they are generally north of the Detroit River, south of Gratiot Avenue, east of Woodward Avenue, and west of Mount Elliott Avenue. Through urban renewal programs in the 1950s and 1960s, disinvestment, and suburbanization, these neighborhoods have been subject to extensive demolition and redevelopment, such that the original neighborhood elements are no longer extant. Highland Park is located approximately six miles north of Downtown Detroit along Woodward Avenue. As Detroit annexed surrounding areas throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Highland Park remained its own, distinct city. Corktown is one of Detroit's oldest neighborhoods and is located west of downtown Detroit. The general boundaries include the area north of the Detroit River, south of Michigan Avenue, east of West Grand Boulevard, and west of the John C. Lodge Freeway (M-10). The construction of Interstates 75 and 96 in the 1970s prompted the movement of Latinx residents westward from Corktown into the area known as Southwest Detroit. The general boundaries of Southwest Detroit include the area north of the Detroit River, south of Michigan Avenue, east of Woodmere Street and Central Avenue, and west of West Grand Boulevard.

Making a Nation

Migration of Latinx Peoples to Detroit, 1915-1980

Migration of Latinx people to Detroit, particularly those of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage, began towards the middle of the 1910s.[9] Mexican migration was most pronounced during this time, but a small community of Puerto Rican immigrants also existed in Detroit in the late 1910s. Most came to Detroit after working in New Orleans shipbuilding yards during World War I and after the establishment of their United States Citizenship through the 1917 Jones Act. Following the war, many Puerto Ricans returned to Puerto Rico. However, those who stayed in the continental United States in the South experienced racial discrimination, prompting them to move northward. Many settled in New York City, but some made their way to Detroit where they settled in the Black Bottom neighborhood among Detroit's African American community.[10]

---

[9] Marilyn Florek, *West Vernor Highway Survey Area, Detroit, Michigan*, Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 2002, E15; Norman D. Humphrey, "The Migration and Settlement of Detroit Mexicans," *Economic Geography* 19, no. 4 (1943), 358.

[10] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023.

In the early-twentieth century, a system of peonage in Mexico precluded the advancement of Mexican agricultural workers and members of the working class.[11] Opportunities to earn higher wages working in agriculture or manufacturing, and the political and economic instability in Mexico stemming from the Mexican Revolution of the 1910s made the notion of life in the United States increasingly attractive.[12] Thus Detroit's Mexican immigrants tended to be members of Mexico's working class or rural peasants. Members of the upper classes in Mexican society also migrated to Detroit, but not to the extent that the working class did.[13] The Cristero Revolution of the late 1920s, a counter-revolution to the secularization that occurred following the Mexican Revolution, provided additional motivation for Mexican migration to the United States.[14] Federal immigration acts in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries paved the way for nearly unrestricted immigration from Mexico by establishing quotas capping the number of European and Asian immigrants into the country.[15] These restrictions created gaps in the bottom rungs of the industrial and agricultural labor markets, allowing Mexican immigrants, who were typically young men, to fill the largely unskilled positions that were left open as immigration restrictions were tightened on other groups of people.[16]

Mexican immigrants were frequently introduced to Detroit in the 1910s and 1920s through seasonal agricultural work on Michigan's sugar beet farms. The Dingley Tariff Act of 1897 placed a significant duty on the importation of sugar, which stimulated growth of the sugar beet agricultural industry in the United States.[17] Coupled with restrictions on European and Asian immigration, sugar beet farmers in the Midwest turned to Mexican immigrant contract laborers, as American workers shunned the labor-

[11] Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 358.
[12] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E15; Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 358; Zaragosa Vargas, "Armies in the Fields and Factories: The Mexican Working Class in the Midwest in the 1920s," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 7, no. 1 (1991), 49; Louis Christopher Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia from 1920 to 1932: Implications for Social and Educational Policy," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1981), 23, 89-90, 94-95; Laurie Kay Sommers and Casa de Unidad Cultural Arts and Media Center, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura* (Detroit, MI: Casa de Unidad Cultural Arts and Media Center, 1995), 3; Brian Gratton and Emily Klancher Merchant, "An Immigrant's Tale: The Mexican American Southwest 1850 to 1950," *Social Science History* 39 (2015), 528.
[13] Dylan A T. Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera, La Liga de Obreros y Campesinos and Mexican Repatriation in Detroit," *Third Text* 19, no. 6 (2005), 649.
[14] Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 358; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 38; Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 656.
[15] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 52; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 18-20.
[16] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 48-49; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 18-20, 95.
[17] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 12.

intensive work.[18] Mexican immigrants made up seventy-five percent of Michigan's sugar beet workers by 1927.[19] Companies recruited Mexican men and Mexican families from agricultural backgrounds to work on their farms, providing transportation for them on railroads coming out of Texas and heading towards the Midwest.[20] Michigan's sugar beet farms were concentrated near Saginaw, in the thumb region of the state.[21] The relationship between sugar companies and their Mexican employees could be exploitive. Typically, travel costs, housing, and food were repaid by the employee through paycheck deductions. However, employees typically did not earn enough money to cover all the costs paid by the company, which resulted in sugar companies holding workers beyond their contract period.[22]

During the late 1910s and into the 1920s, the seasonal nature of sugar beet farming introduced Mexican workers to employment in Detroit's burgeoning industries. Mexican workers took advantage of the seasonal nature of both sugar beet farming and the manufacturing industry, oscillating between the two as they deemed necessary and as employment came and went. As such, a circular migratory pattern developed as Mexican workers moved from rural to urban areas, working in the sugar beet fields during the summer and transitioning to automotive and other factory work in the winter months.[23]

Detroit's automobile industry drew Mexican immigrants to the city.[24] Although Mexican people made up roughly just four percent of Ford Motor Company's Detroit workforce, Ford was the dominant employer of Mexican people in the automobile industry.[25] In 1928, almost four thousand Mexican workers were employed at the company's Detroit plants, out of the estimated fifteen thousand Mexican

---

[18] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 52-53.
[19] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 54; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 13-14.
[20] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 52; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 27.
[21] Brett T. Olmsted, "Mexican Fiestas in Central Michigan: Celebrations and Identity Formation, 1920-1930," *Michigan Historical Review* 41, no. 2 (2015), 37.
[22] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 55; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 13.
[23] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 27; Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 51-52, 56, 94.
[24] Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 360; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 25-26; Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E15.
[25] Norman D. Humphrey, "Employment Patterns of Mexicans in Detroit," *Monthly Labor Review* 61, no. 000005 (1945), 919; "Workers Assembling Car Bodies at Ford Rouge Plant, 1932," The Henry Ford, accessed August 1, 2023, https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/118354/; "25,000 Employees at the Ford Motor Company Highland Park Plant, circa 1912," The Henry Ford, accessed August 1, 2023, https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/284009.

residents believed to be living in Detroit at the time.[26] Other automobile companies also hired Mexican immigrants, but not to the extent of Ford Motor Company.[27] Mexican employees worked as assemblers, foundry workers, general laborers, and machine hands.[28] They also experienced discrimination as they were often concentrated in labor-intensive and dangerous departments, where notorious production speed-ups and long hours increased the risk of severe injury.[29]
The draw of employment in Detroit's automobile factories faded during turbulent economic times, prompting the return migration of some Mexican immigrants back to Mexico and Texas. A depression occurred in the automobile industry in 1920 through 1921, following the end of World War I, as service members returned to civilian life and the Federal Reserve increased interest rates to control inflation.[30] Automobile production slowed considerably, resulting in layoffs and diminished work hours, prompting members of Detroit's Mexican community to leave the city to return to Mexico or Texas.[31] The community's population rebounded after the depression and numbered around five thousand people in 1926.[32] Another recession effecting Detroit occurred in 1927. The automobile industry became sluggish while Ford Motor Company retooled its factories to accommodate production of the Model A. During the 1927 recession, laid off Mexican workers found employment on Michigan's sugar beet farms and in other agricultural industries.[33] Following each depression, Mexican migration to Detroit resumed.[34] The Great Depression of the 1930s was another immense influence on Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American population. Mexican immigration to Detroit drastically dwindled during the 1930s, as the ramifications of the Great Depression deeply impacted Detroit's economic stability and Mexican repatriation movements intensified.[35]

After Detroit's Mexican repatriation campaign of 1932, the Mexican and Mexican American population in Detroit did not rebound until the defense industry expanded on the eve of World War II.[36] The growth

[26] Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletariats of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 94-95.
[27] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 69, 94-95.
[28] Zaragosa Vargas, "Mexican Auto Workers at Ford Motor Company, 1918-1933," (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1984), 75-76.
[29] Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 70.
[30] Haelim Anderson, and Jin-Wook Chang, "Labor Market Tightness During WWI and the Postwar Recession of 1920-1921," *Finance and Economics Discussion Series 2022-049* (Washington, DC: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2022), 1-2.
[31] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 84.
[32] Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 360.
[33] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 120.
[34] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 86.
[35] This phenomenon will be thoroughly discussed in the "The Repatriation Movement in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American Communities, 1920-1932" section of this MPDF.
[36] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 200.

of the defense industry in Detroit led to an influx of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans from the Southwest.[37] Mexican Americans coming to Detroit from Texas were known as *Tejanos* who largely settled in and around Corktown, near Most Holy Trinity Church.[38] Michigan Central Station, located at Vernor Highway and 16th Street, connected Detroit, Mexico, and midpoints via rail transportation and was therefore one of the first places experienced by newcomers to Detroit.[39]

Beginning in 1942 and ending in 1965, the Bracero program transported Mexican workers to the United States to work temporarily in agricultural and railroad industries. The program provided workers with guaranteed wages, set standards for living conditions, and with the ability to quit a contracted job.[40] The program was used by the agricultural and railroad industries to contend with tight labor markets—as a World War II draft was in effect—and prevented union organization amongst existing workers.[41] Tens of thousands of Mexican laborers took advantage of the program.[42] Braceros working on Michigan's Central Railroad typically lived in bunk cars as railroad workers had done in the 1920s.[43]

Following World War II, Latinx people migrating to Detroit included Mexican Americans from the Southwest and Texas, as well as additional people from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and small numbers of other countries in Central and South America, namely Brazil, Argentina, and Panama.[44] Puerto Ricans came to Michigan directly from Puerto Rico, or sometimes by way of New York, employed as seasonal agricultural laborers and working alongside *Tejano* and Mexican workers.[45] The passing of Operation Bootstrap in 1947 prompted a wave of migration from Puerto Rico to the mainland United States as rural sugar cane production, a significant economic driver on the island, collapsed.[46] Following the

---

[37] Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 361; Sáenz, "Transnational Life Histories," 29.
[38] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 208; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 22.
[39] Sáenz, "Transnational Life Histories," 30.
[40] Rudolph Valier Alvarado, and Sonya Yvette Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 34-35.
[41] Stacey K. Sowards, *Si, Ella Puede!: The Rhetorical Legacy of Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers*, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2019), 22; Luz María Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration: Engendering Transnational Ties* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010), 11; David A. Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003), 13.
[42] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 35.
[43] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 13.
[44] Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration*, 41; United States Census Bureau, 1940 and 1950 census.
[45] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 25.
[46] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social

pattern of Mexican and Mexican American laborers from the early twentieth century, Puerto Ricans gradually transitioned into steel production and manufacturing jobs which brought them to Detroit.[47] In Detroit, Puerto Ricans settled in established Mexican and Mexican American neighborhoods, rather than establishing a geographically separate Puerto Rican neighborhood.[48]

During the 1950s and 1960s, several thousand Cuban refugees came to the United States fleeing the Cuban Revolution. Supported through resettlement programs operated by the federal government and religious organizations, Cubans from largely white-collar backgrounds were resettled throughout the United States and generally maintained their dislike of Cuban president Fidel Castro.[49] Following the Mariel boatlift in 1980, where Fidel Castro allowed any Cubans who wished to depart the country to leave from the port of Mariel, Cuba, Detroit's Cuban population expanded again to include the *marielitos* who filtered from south Florida to urban areas with existing Cuban populations.[50]

Throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, migration of people from Central and South America increased further diversifying Latinx populations in Southwest Detroit.[51] The 1980 census recorded roughly nineteen thousand people of Mexican descent in Detroit, and roughly ten thousand additional Latinx people including over four thousand Puerto Ricans.[52] Growth has occurred at an accelerated pace such that Southwest Detroit has increased in population three times faster than non-Latinx areas in the city.[53]

---

worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023; "Operation Bootstrap," Center for Puerto Rican Studies, City University of New York, Lehman College, Accessed August 4, 2023, https://lcw.lehman.edu/lehman/depts/latinampuertorican/latinoweb/.

[47] Evelyn D. Ravuri, "Hispanic Population Change in Southwestern Detroit and Surrounding Suburbs, 1900-2000: A Study of the Succession Process," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 26, no. 2 (2009), 203; Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 26-28.

[48] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 27.

[49] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 28-30.

[50] Maximo Gonzalez, "Cubans From Mariel: Fighting For A Foothold In The Barrio," *El Barrio* 1, no. 3 (1982), *El Barrio*, 1982-1983, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI; Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 33; Amanda M. Perez, "40 Years Later, Cuban Americans Reflect On The Mariel Boatlift," University of Miami, April 23, 2020, https://news.miami.edu/stories/2020/04/40-years-later-cuban-americans-reflect-on-the-mariel-boatlift.html.

[51] Jesus J. Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit, a Case of Incremental Re-adaptive Use," *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 5, no. 2-3 (2012), 139; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 50.

[52] Peter Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs Hope to Emulate Greektown Success," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1984.

[53] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 144.

Repatriation Movements in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American Communities, 1921-1932

In response to the 1920-1921 depression, and the Great Depression of the 1930s, the population of Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community ebbed and flowed. Dwindling employment opportunities during the depressions prompted some Mexican and Mexican American to repatriate to Mexico. Repatriation describes the decision of an individual to return to their home country, whether the decision is completely voluntary or the result of coercion. Repatriation differs from deportation in that deportation describes the forced removal of an individual from a country, typically due to the violation of immigration laws or participation in criminal activities.[54] While deportation of Mexican immigrants undoubtedly occurred during the 1920s and 1930s, the 1921 and 1932 Mexican repatriation movements described below are largely representative of voluntary and coerced repatriation.

The 1920-1921 Depression and the 1921 Repatriation Movement

The first significant repatriation movement of Detroiters of Mexican heritage occurred as early as 1921. As the Federal Reserve attempted to stymy inflation at the close of World War I by increasing interest rates, a depression occurred in the automobile industry. Production slowed significantly, resulting in layoffs and reduced work hours.[55] By the end of 1920 over eighty percent of the automobile industry's workforce was laid off. The reliance on the automobile industry for employment made the effects of the depression more acute in Detroit, creating mass unemployment and poverty in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community as Mexican and Black workers were the first to be dismissed due to racist policies at area companies.[56]

The 1920 to 1921 depression also affected Michigan's sugar beet farmers and sugar companies. Farmers could not afford to plant beets in the spring of 1920 thereby dismissing agricultural workers, the majority of whom were Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Sugar companies did not pay travel costs for workers to return home, prompting agricultural workers to migrate to Midwestern cities searching for employment. There they encountered unemployed immigrant factory workers and angry American workers who believed immigrants took their positions.[57]

---

[54] Brian Gratton and Emily Merchant, "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States," *The International Migration Review* 47, no. 4 (2013), 949.
[55] Haelim Anderson, and Jin-Wook Chang, "Labor Market Tightness During WWI and the Postwar Recession of 1920-1921," *Finance and Economics Discussion Series 2022-049* (Washington, DC: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2022), 1-2; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 84.
[56] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 79, 81.
[57] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 79, 81-83.

Public assistance programs for the unemployed were underfunded, and nativist sentiments fueled the reporting of immigrants who applied for public assistance to the Immigration Bureau of the Department of Labor. Immigrants, including Mexicans and Mexican Americans who were presumed to be immigrants, dealt with harassment by agents of the Immigration Bureau, who sought to apprehend immigrants believed to be in violation of their labor contracts and thus living in the United States illegally. Workers who were unable to prove their legal entry into the United States prior to 1921 were subject to arrest and deportation. However, deportation campaigns were not the driving force behind the movement of Mexican people back to Mexico.[58]

The hardship faced by members of Detroit's Mexican community due to diminished employment opportunities in both agriculture and industry prompted some members of the community to choose to leave the city to return to Mexico or Texas.[59] Father Juan Pablo Alanis y Gomeź, Detroit's first Mexican priest who helped establish Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Church in 1923, financially aided repatriations during this time for Mexican people in Detroit, with support from the Catholic church, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and Mexican Consul Luis Vargas Vera.[60] The return to Mexico was promoted due to the "pitiable conditions, both spiritually and material, prevailing in the Mexican colony in Detroit."[61] In 1921, over five hundred Mexican Detroiters were repatriated. They were transported to the southern border of the United States where the Mexican government transported them further into the interior of Mexico. Following the short-lived depression, Mexican and Mexican American migration to Detroit resumed.[62]

The Great Depression and the Origins of Detroit's 1932 Mexican Repatriation Campaign

The success and size of the automobile industry in the 1920s meant that the impact of the Great Depression on Detroit was immense. Production of automobiles fell, profoundly affecting Detroit as suppliers and related industries slashed production and laid off employees. One estimate suggests that two-thirds of the thousands employed in Detroit's automobile industry were without a job by 1932 and small businesses felt the effects.[63] A little over one hundred thousand workers were employed at Ford

[58] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 79, 81-83.
[59] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 84.
[60] "Want In Mexican Colony Relieved," *Detroit Free Press*, March 2, 1921; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 84, 86; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 63; R.L. Polk and Co., *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk and Co., [1921?]), 133; "Detroit Gets New Mexico Consulate," *Detroit Free Press*, June 21, 1921.
[61] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 658.
[62] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 84, 86.
[63] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 112.

Motor Company at the end of 1929 but by the fall of 1931 only thirty-seven thousand workers remained.[64] The effects of the Great Depression were often felt most quickly and most intensely by the working class and immigrants.[65] Many Mexican and Mexican American people in Detroit lost their jobs following the stock market crash in 1929.[66] The instability and uncertainty brought on by the Great Depression prompted a number of Mexican immigrants to return to Mexico.[67]

Like the earlier depression in 1920-1921, the Great Depression fanned the flames of discrimination espoused by members of the White working class against immigrants and minorities who were perceived to be taking much needed jobs away from American citizens.[68] Mexican and Mexican American laborers often had to perform intensive labor for less money than their White, American counterparts.[69]

Responding to widespread unemployment and anti-immigrant sentiment, public officials faced immense pressure to provide support for the unemployed and remove competition for jobs.[70] Detroit's debt exploded as the city tried to keep up with ever-increasing cost of welfare.[71] The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) provided aid to unemployed residents, but Detroit's debt and fiscal crisis during the Depression resulted in significant cuts to the assistance the DPW provided to families.[72] In 1930 Mayor Frank Murphy created the Mayor's Unemployment Committee, which matched unemployed residents with municipal and private sector jobs. Demand for employment greatly exceeded available jobs, and the city's soaring debt made employers wary of hiring people through the program as employers feared they would not be reimbursed for hiring the program's workers.[73] Attempts to reduce competition for jobs involved publishing announcements attempting to dissuade job seekers from migrating to the city for work.[74] Raids on Mexican communities in Michigan by the Bureau of Immigration further instilled the notion that Mexican immigrants were not welcome.[75]

---

[64] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 169-170, 172.
[65] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 113.
[66] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 192.
[67] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 108-109.
[68] Murillo 122-126, 169; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 169; Florek E15.
[69] Murillo 123.
[70] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 112-120.
[71] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 174.
[72] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 174-175.
[73] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 114-116; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 174-175; Public Welfare Commission, *The Department of Public Welfare 1930 to 1940* (Detroit, MI: Department of Public Welfare, 1939), 8.
[74] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 173-174.
[75] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 657; Alex Wagner, "America's Forgotten History of Illegal Deportations," *The Atlantic*, March 6, 2017,

The Reconstruction Finance Agency was proposed by the Hoover administration in December 1931. Managed at the national level, funds were distributed to states and territories for use in providing relief and employment opportunities for the throngs of the unemployed.[76] The City of Detroit applied for money, and some relief was received in the fall of 1932. This prompted an uptick in employment availability and a flurry of competition for jobs, and further engrained the notion that Mexican repatriation would alleviate some of the city's issues.[77] The pressure to reduce competition and the perception that Mexican immigrants were taking advantage of welfare programs instead of American citizens created an atmosphere conducive to forming another coordinated Mexican repatriation campaign.[78] Public officials reasoned that the repatriation of five thousand Mexican immigrants would greatly reduce welfare costs and competition for coveted jobs.[79]

Detroit's Mexican Repatriation Campaign of 1932

Prior to the establishment of an organized repatriation campaign, many members of Detroit's Mexican community found repatriation a relatively attractive option given the extreme difficulty in securing work during the Great Depression, enticement by the Mexican government, and the discrimination faced by Mexican workers in Detroit. Mexican Consul Ignacio Batiza estimated that forty-two thousand of the estimated fifty thousand Mexican people in Detroit had already left the city by 1932, before the repatriation campaign began.[80] However, the true size of the Mexican population in Detroit in the early 1930s is unclear as the transitory migration pattern between industrial and agricultural work made obtaining accurate census figures difficult. Regardless of the actual figures, the Mexican and Mexican American community in Detroit was significantly smaller following the 1932 repatriation campaign and dwindled further as the Great Depression dragged on.[81]

A coordinated repatriation campaign of Detroit's Mexican residents began in the summer of 1932, although repatriation and deportation of small groups of Mexican people occurred before the creation of the repatriation campaign.[82] The 1932 campaign was distinct from repatriation efforts in 1920-1921. The

https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/03/americas-brutal-forgotten-history-of-illegal-deportations/517971/.

[76] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 118-120.

[77] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 120-121.

[78] "No Place Like Home," *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 47, 121.

[79] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 147; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 189.

[80] Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 360-361.

[81] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 189, 194-195, 197.

[82] "Mexicans On Welfare Lists Are Sent Home," *Detroit Free Press*, June 4, 1932; "Around The Town," *Detroit Free Press*, August 26, 1932.

goal of the 1932 campaign was much larger, envisioning the repatriation to Mexico of five thousand Mexican immigrants living in Detroit.[83] Nearby cities like Highland Park and Wyandotte inquired about including members of their Mexican and Mexican American residents in the repatriation program, and repatriation programs were established in other Michigan cities with Mexican and Mexican American populations, such as Saginaw and Pontiac. Pontiac began repatriating small groups of Mexican residents as early as January and February 1932.[84] Repatriation programs likewise occurred throughout the United States.[85] Detroit's Mexican repatriation campaign was carried out by multiple parties, which included city and state government agencies, the Mexican government, Mexican community leaders, and the famed Mexican artist Diego Rivera.[86]

The 1932 campaign involved government agencies in Mexico and the United States. The Mexican government acted through Ignacio Batiza, the Mexican Consul stationed in Detroit. In Mexico, the Mexican government attempted to establish resettlement colonies for *repatriados*—the people who repatriated to Mexico.[87] The colonies concentrated *repatriados* in dedicated areas in Mexico's interior, hampering any efforts of *repatriados* of returning to the United States. Their isolated location also prevented *repatriados* from taking jobs from other Mexicans, as employment opportunities were limited in Mexico as well.[88] The Detroit office of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Services Agency, led by John L. Zubrick, also played a critical role in repatriation efforts.[89] Zubrick was particularly interested in the Mexican repatriation campaign because its success could be used statewide to repatriate Mexicans and other members of immigrant groups considered undocumented. Zubrick and the agency subscribed to the belief that undocumented immigrants were taking jobs from Americans.[90] To assist in the repatriation campaign, the Detroit Public Welfare Department (DPW) and the state level equivalent established a special office to handle the Mexican repatriation campaign. The office became known as the Mexican Bureau and was located at 1422 1st Street (not extant). [91] The department utilized

[83] "Back to Mexico," *Detroit Free Press*, October 11, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 159.
[84] "59 Mexicans Leave," *Detroit Free Press*, January 1, 1932; "Mexicans Deported," *Detroit Free Press*, February 4, 1932.
[85] "Evicted Detroit Families To Be Sheltered And Fed," *Detroit Free Press*, July 12, 1932; "State Will Transport 5,000 Mexicans Back to Homeland," *Detroit Free Press*, October 9, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 156-158.
[86] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 110; Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 360; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 180.
[87] "400 Mexicans To Leave City," *Detroit Free Press*, November 15, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 165-166; Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 657.
[88] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 166.
[89] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 140; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 180.
[90] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 181.
[91] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 140, 160-161.

social workers to promote and coerce Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans to repatriate to Mexico. [92]

Local organizations and individuals were likewise involved in repatriation efforts. Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, the world-renowned Mexican artists, were in Detroit in April 1932 while Rivera painted the *Detroit Industry* murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts. [93] During his time in Detroit, Rivera developed a complex connection to the repatriation campaign.[94] While ideologically supporting labor activism, Rivera viewed repatriation as part of a broader ideology of land and class reform in Mexico, whereby peasants and the working class had the opportunity to obtain land from the Mexican government.[95] He also believed that repatriation offered Mexican residents an escape from the discrimination they faced in Detroit, that it would ease the unemployment situation faced by Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and that it would provide Mexico with a knowledgeable and skilled labor force.[96] Thus, Rivera held rallies intended to inspire members of Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community to return to Mexico.[97] He also donated the proceeds of the *Detroit Industry* murals to the repatriation program, coordinating with Detroit's Mexican Consul and the Detroit office of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Services Agency to help support *repatriados* in Mexico. However, the funding was not enough to provide adequate support.[98]

Rivera also assisted in the formation of the *Liga de Obrero U Campasinos Mexicanos* (League of Mexican Workers and Peasants).[99] Serving as a liaison between government groups promoting repatriation and Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community, the organization provided assistance for members of the community that chose to return to Mexico and those that chose to stay in

---

[92] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16.
[93] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 141; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 178.
[94] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 658.
[95] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 656-658; Benjamin T. Smith, "Cárdenas and Cardenismo," Oxford Bibliographies, last reviewed May 5, 2017, accessed December 23, 2022, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0058.xml.
[96] "State Will Transport 5,000 Mexicans Back to Homeland," *Detroit Free Press*, October 9, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 143.
[97] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 109, 141; Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 658.
[98] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 110.
[99] "State Will Transport 5,000 Mexicans Back to Homeland," *Detroit Free Press*, October 9, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 143; Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16.

Detroit. [100] Members of the *Liga* managed their part of the repatriation effort from the organization's meeting location at the Hispano Unidos building at the northeast corner of West Vernor Highway and 25th Street (extant).[101] Charles C. Benjamin, a local, Spanish-speaking lawyer who was born in Panama and became one of the first lawyers representing Latinx residents in Detroit, also assisted in the orchestration of the repatriation campaign.[102]

The first step in the repatriation process involved caseworkers from the Detroit DPW identifying the heads of Mexican families and referring them to the Mexican Bureau. At the Mexican Bureau, the head of the household had to declare whether the family was returning to Mexico.[103] If the head of household wished to return, return to Mexico was arranged via train to the border, where another train arranged by the Mexican government took passengers to resettlement colonies in Mexico's interior.[104] The first group of *repatriados* left Detroit on November 15, 1932, from the Wabash Railroad Station at the Union Depot, located at Fort Street and 3rd Avenue (not extant).[105] Three subsequent groups departed for Mexico from Detroit and Saginaw in November and December 1932.[106] It is estimated that the entire 1932 campaign repatriated between twelve and fourteen hundred people, the majority of whom were living in Detroit.[107]

The repatriation campaign failed to meet the goal of repatriating five thousand individuals.[108] Many Mexican and Mexican American families wished to remain in Detroit, as they had become accustomed to an urban lifestyle and their possessions they acquired in the United States. Families were reluctant to leave treasured items such as furniture, radios, and sewing machines.[109] They also recognized the false

---

[100] "Park Sleeper Census Taken," *Detroit Free Press*, October 15, 1932; Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 143; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 181.
[101] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 178; "Chips," *Detroit Free Press*, November 19, 1944.
[102] "State Will Transport 5,000 Mexicans Back to Homeland," *Detroit Free Press*, October 9, 1932; R. L. Polk and Co., *Polk's Detroit (Michigan) City Directory 1931-32* (Detroit, MI: R. L. Polk and Co., 1931), 329, Legal C; World War II Draft Registration Card, "Charles Clement Benjamin," Michigan, U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942, Ancestry.com; Patricia Edmonds, "Ex-Attorney Guarded Rights of Hispanics," *Detroit Free Press*, April 16, 1985.
[103] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 161, 164.
[104] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 147-148, 166; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 181.
[105] "400 Mexicans To Leave City," *Detroit Free Press*, November 15, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 148; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 177, 182-183.
[106] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 156-159.
[107] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 159-160; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 189.
[108] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 160-162; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 185.
[109] Clarence E. McConnell, "Poor Man's Paradise Below Rio Grande Beckons Prodigals From Field And Factory," *Detroit Free Press*, November 13, 1932.

promises offered by the repatriation movement.[110] The International Labor Defense (ILD), the legal arm of the Communist party in the United States, distributed flyers in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American neighborhoods decrying the realities faced by *repatriados* in Mexico.[111] *Repatriados* wrote letters from Mexico to Detroit detailing the hardships they faced, such as the difficulty in securing employment and education for their children, the lack of money to begin a new life, and the lack of equipment and farmland that was supposed to be available through government land grants.[112] The harsh realities prompted some *repatriados* to return to Detroit or the towns and villages from which they originally came.[113] As the failure of the repatriation campaign crystallized and the disillusionment of Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American population grew, Consul Batiza and Rivera halted their support for the campaign.[114]

Officials and the *Detroit Free Press* stressed the voluntary nature of the campaign, often referring to the repatriation as "voluntary deportation" that brought Mexican and Mexican American people back "home" to Mexico.[115] However, caseworkers used coercive tactics to pressure people to repatriate. Applications for relief made by Mexican and Mexican American families were intensely scrutinized, making obtaining relief more difficult than it already was and thereby making repatriation appear more attractive.[116] Caseworkers referred people to the Mexican Bureau even though they expressed that they did not want to repatriate, resulting in Mexican residents refusing to go to the Mexican Bureau.[117] Members of the community who were naturalized or born in the United States were also prompted to take part in the campaign.[118] Instances of physical intimidation, and physical attempts to force Mexican people to repatriate were reported.[119] Another coercive method stemmed from the process by which Mexican and Mexican American people received food assistance. For food assistance, applicants were given either grocery orders which they could fulfill at the local grocery store or were told to eat at

---

[110] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 171.
[111] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 656; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 186.
[112] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 659; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 162-165; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 184-185.
[113] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 658-659; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 167.
[114] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 185.
[115] "No Place Like Home," *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1932; "Poor Man's Paradise Below Rio Grande Beckons Prodigals From Field And Factory," *Detroit Free Press*, November 13, 1932.
[116] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 111, 146, 160, 164, 173; Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 360; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 171, 186-187.
[117] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 161-162; Balderrama and Rodriguez 84.
[118] "Poor Man's Paradise Below Rio Grande Beckons Prodigals From Field And Factory," *Detroit Free Press*, November 13, 1932; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 164; Balderrama and Rodriguez 84.
[119] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 188.

designated cafeteria sites throughout the city. The grocery orders were preferred as they made the family's hardship less public. To coerce families into repatriating, caseworkers instructed families to obtain food at cafeterias, where they had to eat publicly.[120]

The city of Detroit's population in 1930 was over 1.5 million people, and the Mexican community was estimated to contain only fifteen to fifty thousand individuals.[121] The Mexican and Mexican American community made up approximately one to three percent of the population, suggesting that rhetoric concerning the drain on government welfare by the Mexican community was overstated. The varied motives of the campaign's organizers resulted in a shared goal of moving people of Mexican heritage to Mexico. Government officials sought to remove Mexican people due to nativist sentiments and the Mexican people's perceived threat to American employment, whereas Rivera and *Liga de Obrero U Campasinos Mexicanos* envisioned the beginning of idyllic workers' collectives in Mexico.[122]

Making a Life

Establishing Latinx Neighborhoods in Detroit, 1915-1980

The earliest neighborhoods that were home to Detroit's Latinx residents were located near manufacturing facilities. The movement of immigrants within Detroit was common, sometimes occurring multiple times a year, as people moved to follow their jobs and sought to settle in more desirable areas of the city.[123] Few Mexican residents in the formative years of Detroit's Latinx communities purchased property as many Mexican immigrants intended to move back to Mexico to open a business or purchase property with their earnings from work in the United States. However, the assimilation of the children of immigrants into American society often precluded returning to Mexico.[124] As employment opportunities in Detroit moved westward, particularly with the construction of the Ford Motor Company River Rouge Complex in Dearborn in 1918, Mexican and Mexican American residents, established neighborhoods towards the west side of the city.

Detroit's East Side, 1915-1930s

Detroit's east side neighborhoods were initially home to Mexican and Puerto Rican immigrants from

---

[120] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 163-164; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 189.
[121] United States Census Bureau, *Michigan* [1930?], accessed April 3, 2023, 534, https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-1/03815512v1ch06.pdf; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 159-160; Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 360.
[122] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 654-655.
[123] Humphrey, "Migration and Settlement," 361; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 125-126.
[124] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 102-103.

around 1915 through the 1930s. Located near Detroit's "port of entry," which describes neighborhoods on Detroit's east side, south of Gratiot Avenue and east of Woodward Avenue, along Congress and Fort Streets near Hastings Street, that were populated with newly arrived immigrants.[125] Mexican and Mexican American people were also dispersed throughout Detroit's east side north of Gratiot Avenue and towards East Grand Boulevard.[126] As the older German immigrant population moved out of the neighborhood, the older buildings they vacated became available to recent immigrants.[127] Mexicans and Mexican Americans made up the vast majority of Latinx immigrants within the east side neighborhood, and they lived in the area while they contemplated where to settle more permanently in the city.[128] The comparatively small Puerto Rican immigrant community stayed in the neighborhood and integrated into the African American communities in the area.[129]

Highland Park, Michigan, 1915-1920

Beyond the east side neighborhoods, small groups of Mexican and Mexican Americans employed at Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant lived in and around the city of Highland Park, Michigan. The plant was located approximately six miles north of downtown Detroit along Woodward Avenue. The Mexican and Mexican American workforce composed of young, single men rented flats and rooms in apartment hotels along West Davison Avenue and near downtown Detroit.[130] As the Mexican and Mexican American community closer to Ford Motor Company's River Rouge plant developed, many Mexican and Mexican American workers transferred from the Highland Park plant to the River Rouge Plant.

Corktown, 1915-1960s

By 1925, Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community had already concentrated in the Corktown[131] neighborhood along Bagley Street, roughly bounded on the north by Grand River Avenue, Fort Street and the Detroit River at the south, 14th Street at west, and Cass Avenue at east.[132] Many

---

[125] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 64; 126-127; Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E15-E16.
[126] "Detroit's Prettiest Mexican," *Detroit Free Press*, September 25, 1927; Laura Chavez-Wazeerud-Din, President and CEO, Southwest Detroit Business Association, CAG member; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 25, 2023.
[127] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E15-E16.
[128] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 64; 126-127.
[129] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023.
[130] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 67-68, 125.
[131] The Detroit area now known as Corktown was named after County Cork, Ireland. Corktown's Irish settlement precedes the Latinx settlement of the neighborhood.
[132] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 65, 125-126.

Mexicans and Mexican Americans were employed at Ford Motor Company and automotive related industries and as Ford Motor Company's plants moved westward towards Dearborn, Mexicans and Mexican Americans moved out of east side neighborhoods to Corktown.[133] It was in Corktown, along Bagley Street between Cass Avenue and West Grand Boulevard that a confluence of commercial, social, and religious spaces serving Latinx immigrants were established.

Latinx migration to the neighborhood continued throughout the 1950s as *Tejanos*, additional Puerto Ricans, and Cubans, moved to Detroit. The role of the neighborhood as a home for people of the Latinx communities was altered as urban renewal projects of the 1960s destroyed large portions of the residential and commercial fabric within the neighborhood. The demolition of housing and commercial spaces hastened the movement of people further westward, into the neighborhood known today as Southwest Detroit.[134]

Southwest Detroit, 1920s-Present

During the late-1920s, a small Mexican community began to establish itself along West Vernor Highway and the surrounding area.[135] Continuing the pattern previously established in the Mexican and Mexican American community's general westward movement into Corktown, Latinx people continued their westward movement as automotive and related industries expanded along Detroit's western edge.[136] By 1929, a distinct congregation of Mexican and Mexican American residents coalesced on Detroit's west side near present-day Southwest Detroit.[137] Similar to the earlier east side neighborhood, the Southwest neighborhood was previously home to German and other European immigrants.[138] The neighborhood's transition between the ethnic communities did not occur overnight, with people of Mexican and Mexican American ancestry living amongst Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian immigrants throughout the twentieth century.[139] As such, members of the ethnic groups intermarried contributing to

[133] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 65; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 22.
[134] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 22-23. The source material sites an interview with Paulina Aguirre, interviewed by Marta E. Lagos , November 26, 1991, Dearborn, MI.
[135] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 126-127.
[136] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 64-65.
[137] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 126-127.
[138] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 126-127.
[139] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 126-127; Carlos Vasquez, "Carlos Vasquez video interview and biography," Digital Collections, Grand Valley State University, July 18, 2012, accessed April 20, 2023, https://digitalcollections.library.gvsu.edu/document/24633.

an increasingly diverse population.[140]

In addition to automobile industry employees, Mexican and Mexican American employees of the Michigan Central Railroad lived in bunk cars near railroad interchanges in Southwest. Employees lived in camps of bunk cars, also known as camp cars, near Michigan Central Station and the nearby railyards.[141] The 1920 census recorded sixty-eight people born in Mexico or children born to Mexican parents living in bunk cars located near the Michigan Central Railroad tracks near Livernois Avenue. A total of 206 people were recorded in the camp, meaning Mexican people made up thirty-three percent of the camp. Mexican men were employed as laborers for the railroad and Mexican women who were employed were listed as housekeepers, presumably for the bunk car camp.[142]

Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community in Southwest grew throughout the 1920s but was stunted by repatriation during the Great Depression. Following the decline of the community throughout the 1930s, Mexicans and Mexican Americans again returned to Detroit, cementing the earlier Mexican and Mexican American neighborhoods along Bagley Street. Development of Detroit's defense industry and the plethora of employment opportunities that came with its development again made Detroit an attractive destination. Throughout the 1940s the Mexican and Mexican American community continued to expand, moving westward towards the southwest border of Detroit with Mexican businesses concentrating along West Vernor Highway.[143] Puerto Ricans and Cuban immigrants that moved to Detroit in the 1950s settled in the predominantly Mexican and Mexican American neighborhoods that were developing in Southwest Detroit.

Significant factors that influenced the westward expansion of Latinx communities to Southwest Detroit include urban renewal projects of the 1950s and freeway construction in the 1970s. These projects forced Latinx communities westward, as the construction of Interstates 96 and 75 and the Ambassador Bridge bisected the commercial corridor along Bagley Street and destroyed large swaths of the commercial area and surrounding residential areas. Latinx businesses on Bagley Street, east of Interstates 96 and 75, became separated from the neighborhoods they served west of the interstates.[144]

---

[140] Maria Elena Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 44.
[141] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 65, 68.
[142]United States Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920*, United States Federal Census, population schedule, sheets 21B-23B, enumeration district 0418, ward 14, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, Ancestry.com.
[143] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 82.
[144] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 82; Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 47; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican*

Neighborhood churches like Most Holy Trinity and St. Anne's Catholic Church east of the interstates were likewise affected with dwindling attendance as their congregations were forced to shift westward.[145]

Latinx Places of Residence

Latinx residents lived in places such as single-family homes, multi-family homes, attic spaces, boarding houses, apartments, and basement apartments with family members or other immigrant families. In the early years of the community, boarding houses operated by Spanish speakers were the most popular among Mexican immigrants.[146] Known as *casas de asistencia*, these boarding houses provided space for working men to rest, socialize, and receive homemade Mexican food. While working and living at the *casa de asistencia*, the young men typically sent money back to Mexico for their families until they married.[147] Two of the most popular in Detroit were *Casa Paloma* and *Casa Española.* Unfortunately, the addresses of these places are not known.[148] *Casas de asistencia* were occasionally named after the place of origin of the proprietors, who were often female. Operating a *casa de asistencia* was one way that the wives and daughters of Mexican industrial workers supplemented the family income. The women procured and cooked food for men coming and going on different factory shifts, laundered their clothing, and cleaned for them.[149]

Religious Institutions in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1920-1980

Religious beliefs held by members of Detroit's Latinx communities vary widely and have changed over time. While large numbers of Latinx residents identify as Roman Catholic, and the Catholic church is typically seen as having a strong influence over the communities, Baptist, Episcopal, Pentecostal, and additional faiths are also practiced throughout the communities.[150] Religious institutions provided space for social and cultural activities.[151] The discussion of religious institutions important to the Latinx

---

Americans in Michigan, 40; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 8; Peter Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs Hope to Emulate Greektown Success," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1984.

[145] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 40.

[146] Norman D. Humphrey, "The Housing and Household Practices of Detroit Mexicans," *Social Forces* 24, no. 4 (1946), 434; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 50, 107-108.

[147] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 50, 54; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 128.

[148] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 134; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 107-108.

[149] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 128, 134.

[150] Florek, *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E16-E17; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 63; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 229; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 147-148.

[151] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 102.

communities is not intended to serve as a monolithic or exhaustive description of the religious beliefs of all people within Detroit's Latinx communities.

An important component of the religious practices of Detroit's Latinx residents stems from their complex synthesis of major religions, such as Catholicism, and Indigenous belief systems, which vary among the communities. The Virgin of Guadalupe, for instance, is a cultural symbol imbued with Indigenous and Spanish histories for Mexicans and Mexican Americans.[152] Regarded as Folk Catholicism, folk practices unique to the various Latinx ethnic groups, such as the dedication of altars and yard shrines to the Virgin of Guadalupe, are often practiced alongside orthodox practices of the Catholic Church.[153] Puerto Rican, and likely additional Latinx residents, relied on local healers practicing *curanderismo*, which describes a diverse Indigenous system of holistic spiritual and medicinal healing practices.[154]

Catholic Churches

While Mexican and Mexican American residents make up the majority of Detroit's Latinx religious communities, other nationalities such as Puerto Ricans and Cubans, worshipped alongside Mexicans and Mexican Americans amongst Detroit's existing European immigrant populations.[155] In the late 1910s and 1920s, Mexican and Mexican American residents worshipped at existing, neighborhood Catholic churches that were established by earlier European immigrants to Detroit.[156] Catholic churches provided social and financial support to Mexican and Mexican American newcomers, and other immigrant groups, with the intent that the support offered would draw people to the Catholic church.[157] Additionally, churches had ties to the Detroit Americanization Committee and sought to Americanize immigrants to become productive industrial employees.[158]

In the 1920s, the growth of Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community and the discrimination parishioners faced at existing Europeans churches prompted the creation of a Catholic

[152] Elain A. Peña, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred With the Virgin of Guadalupe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 6-7.
[153] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 7.
[154] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023; Renaldo Maduro, PhD, "*Curanderismo* and Latino Views of Disease and Curing," *The Western Journal of Medicine* 139, no. 6 (1983), 868-869.
[155] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 145-146.
[156] Vargas, "Life and Community," 59; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 64, 71-72.
[157] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 70.
[158] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 73-74.

church dedicated to the Mexican and Mexican American and broader Latinx community.[159] In the early 1920s, the Diocese of Detroit helped secure funding to establish Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Church.[160] The church and gathering hall, neither of which are extant, were located at the southeast corner of Roosevelt and Kirby Avenues. Established in 1923 and headed by Mexican priest, Father Juan Pablo Alanis y Gomeź, it was the first Catholic church established by the Mexican and Mexican American people in Detroit and the Midwest.[161] In 1938, the U.S. government's mass deportations lead to low church congregation numbers for establishments such as Our Lady of Guadalupe. This is most likely the reason for the absence of the church's presence in modern day Mexicantown. Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, which is still standing at the northeast corner of Porter and 6th Streets, gained Mexican and Mexican American parishioners who left St. Mary and St. Leo parishes.[162]

As the twentieth century progressed and Latinx residents moved westward following employment opportunities, Latinx congregations grew in churches located in Corktown and Southwest Detroit. As in the 1910s, Latinx residents began attending existing European churches.[163] In 1933, Ste. Anne de Detroit Roman Catholic Church, still standing at 1000 St. Anne Street, secured a Mexican priest to perform the mass for the church's Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe celebration. By 1940, Ste. Anne offered a weekly Spanish-language mass.[164] The priest in the 1940s, Father James Barrett, was appointed director of the Mexican Apostolate[165] and travelled back and forth to Mexico.[166] By the 1960s, Most Holy Redeemer Church in Southwest Detroit provided Spanish-language masses and approximately twenty percent of the school's student population was Mexican.[167] When the residential neighborhoods surrounding Most Holy Trinity Church were demolished to make way for the John C. Lodge Freeway (M-10), Latinx communities again shifted westward and the number of Latinx parishioners at Ste. Anne and Most Holy Redeemer Church increased.[168]

---

[159] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 64; Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E15-E16; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 71, 145; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 79.
[160] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 63-65.
[161] Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan* vol. 6 (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1951), sheet 55; Vargas, "Life and Community," 60.
[162] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 145.
[163] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 145.
[164] Sáenz, "Transnational Life Histories," 29.
[165] The Mexican Apostolate is a group of ministries dedicated to the Hispanic community. https://www.aod.org/ministerio-hispano
[166] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E18; Sáenz, "Transnational Life Histories," 29.
[167] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E17.
[168] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 22; Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E17.

The experiences of Puerto Ricans and Cuban immigrants in Detroit is varied based on the time of their arrival in significant numbers in the 1950s and onward. Local Catholic churches were already serving the Mexican and Mexican American communities, and Spanish-language masses were being performed and Catholic priests. Additionally, Father Clement Kern of Most Holy Trinity and Father James Barrett of Ste. Anne already had experience shepherding Latinx newcomers into Detroit's religious scene.

Father Clement Kern was a key religious and community figure amongst Latinx communities during his time as priest of Most Holy Trinity Church from 1943 through 1977.[169] Father Kern organized English language classes at the church, sought to prevent exploitation of temporary and migrant workers, and worked with the League of Catholic Women to organize Casa María.[170] Father Kern supported parishioners in reviving traditional Mexican celebrations and feasts and acknowledged the importance of fostering cultural traditions.[171] Throughout the 1950s, Most Holy Trinity Church organized local Catholic churches with Mexican and Mexican American parishioners to jointly celebrate *Fiestas Guadalupanas*, resulting in popular and well-attended festivities honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe.[172] The church likewise supported the exhibition of artwork created by Mexican and Mexican American residents.[173]

Baptist Churches

A comparatively small segment of Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American population was drawn to the Baptist faith, as the church focused on developing the individual's faith rather than Americanization.[174] While several Mexican Baptist churches existed, the Primera Misión Bautista Mexicana (First Mexican Baptist Mission) has a storied history within the city. Primera Misión Bautista Mexicana opened at 3606 25th Street (not extant), at the southeast corner of the intersection with Magnolia Street, in 1930.[175] The church remained at this location until 1957, when it moved to 6205 West Fort Street (not extant). By 1971 the church was renamed to the First Latin American Baptist Church.[176] Construction related to the Gordie Howe International Bridge prompted the church's second

[169] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 20; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 80.
[170] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, x; Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 20.
[171] "Holy Trinity Slates Fiesta," *Detroit Free Press*, August 3, 1957; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 80-83.
[172] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 84-85.
[173] "Public Exhibit: Fine Mexican Needlework," *Detroit Free Press*, May 6, 1950.
[174] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 147.
[175] Sanborn Map Company, *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan* vol. 2 (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1950), sheet 52; "Mexican Baptist Rites," *Detroit Evening Times*, January 24, 1942.
[176] Keith Matheny, "Displaced Church Opens 113-Year Old Time Capsule," *Detroit Free*

move, in 2017, to 2020 Scotten Street (extant).

Throughout Primera Misión Bautista Mexicana's history, its pastors and congregants have provided Spanish-language religious service for members of Detroit's Latinx communities. The church welcomed guest pastors from around the Latin American world like Cuba, Argentina and the Southwestern United States; promoted the needs of Detroit's Latinx communities; and consistently participated in and hosted conferences of Latinx Baptist churches.[177]

Storefront Churches

Storefront churches describe small, typically tight-knit congregations that worship in commercial buildings previously occupied by businesses. Interior spaces have been adaptively reused to incorporate chairs, pews, and a space for preaching. Storefront churches in immigrant communities developed in northern cities. Outward migration of existing White European communities left commercial spaces in urban areas vacant, immigrant communities took advantage of the opportunity to acquire commercial buildings to create their own religious spaces. Detroit's Latinx residents have followed similar paths to establish storefront churches within Latinx neighborhoods. The presence of the small, intimate churches, often of Pentecostal denominations, reflect Latinx resident's reinvestment in commercial areas of the city. Their presence also indicates the diverse religious beliefs and religious communities that exist within the Latinx communities.[178]

Cultural Movement: Arts and Media in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980

Cultural activities and artistic outlets have deep importance to Detroit's Latinx communities, with several ethnic and community organizations holding a long history of maintaining and celebrating cultural traditions. Typically, cultural celebrations were held at halls, schools, churches, and event centers associated with the communities. Event spaces included schools such as Northern High School

Press, November 19, 2017; "First Latin-American Baptist Church," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1971.

[177] "Baptists Petition For The Oppressed," *Detroit Free Press*, April 28, 1935; "The Rev. Enrique Pina," *Detroit Free Press*, June 4, 1938; "Guests To Talk In City Pulpits," *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1940; "A Series Of Special Meetings," *Detroit Free Press*, July 24, 1937; "Fifteenth Convention," *Detroit Evening Times*, May 24, 1941; Niraj Warikoo and Kathleen Gray, "Life In America Now 'In Danger'," *Detroit Free Press*, September 6, 2017.

[178] "Let the Church Say Amen," PBS, accessed August 23, 2023, https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/letthechurchsayamen/; Asha Kutty, "Sanctuaries Along Streets: Security, Social Intimacy and Identity in the Space of the Storefront Church," *Interior Design Educators Council, Journal of Interior Design* 45, no. 1 (2020), 54-55.

at 9026 Woodward Avenue (extant) and Western High School at 1500 Scotten Street (extant). Community spaces that held events were the International Institute which was located at 2431 East Grand Boulevard (not extant) prior to its move in the early 1950s to 111 East Kirby Street (extant), the Hispanos Unidos building (formerly the Lithuanian Hall) at the northeast corner of West Vernor Highway and 25th Street (extant), and a Ukrainian hall at 4655 Martin Street (extant).[179] As local Latinx organizations established brick-and-mortar locations, festivities began to be held at these locations. Festivities were likewise held outside in places like Clark Park, along the Detroit riverfront, and included parades throughout the commercial corridors of West Vernor Highway and Bagley Street.[180]

These activities fostered the preservation of each community's culture in Detroit throughout the twentieth century, even as local Latinx populations fluctuated due to migratory work patterns, economic downturns, and the challenge of Michigan's winter. Following the Latinx Civil Rights movement beginning in 1968, pride in Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and additional Latinx heritages was celebrated publicly and on larger scales. While ethnic pride was always within the Latinx communities, cultural festivals that were once celebrated in family homes and halls were now celebrated in large outdoor spaces like Clark, Patton, and Riverside Parks.[181] Parades were also common and celebrated significant events such as Mexican Independence and Cinco de Mayo.[182] Providing this cultural support are the countless businesses, organizations, and people who have used music, radio, newspapers, art, books, and other outlets for maintaining and promoting the unique cultures of Detroit's Latinx communities.

Celebrations and Festivals

Culturally significant holidays are numerous and highlight the varied histories of the Latinx communities. Cultural celebrations are the result of individual people, groups, and businesses within the Latinx communities dedicating time, energy, and money to celebrations that typically include specialty foods, social and familial gatherings, songs, and additional activities.[183]

---

[179] Mark Beltaire, "The Town Crier," *Detroit Free Press*, September 11, 1947; "Detroit Mexican Groups To Hold A Fiesta Tonight," *Detroit Free Press*, May 5, 1939; "Woodmen Plan Fiesta," *Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1940; "A Touch Of Old Mexico In Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, July 31, 1949; "Queen A Bride," *Detroit Free Press*, June 25, 1934; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 50.

[180] "Chuck Thurston's Best Bets," *Detroit Free Press*, September 5, 1975; Jocelyne Zablit, "Hispanic Community Celebrates Heritage," *Detroit Free Press*, September 11, 1986; "Joint Hispanic Celebration," *Detroit Free Press*, September 20, 1981.

[181] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 50; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 73.

[182] "City Mexicans To Celebrate," *Detroit Free Press*, September 13, 1951; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 96-97.

[183] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 88.

Celebrations within Detroit's Latinx communities are varied, but generally relate to the religious beliefs of the communities and important events related to their ethnic heritage. Puerto Rico's and Mexico's fight for independence are celebrated in mid-September and have often been sponsored by local ethnic organizations.[184] *El Dia de los Tres Reyes*, a religious holiday stretching from December 16th to January 6th that honors the Three Wise Men who gave gifts to Jesus Christ, is celebrated more widely amongst the Latinx communities.[185] *Las Posadas* is another celebration spanning several days, from December 16th through December 24th, where the Biblical story of Mary and Joseph's search for lodging on their way to Bethlehem is reenacted through candlelight processions, music, and celebrations. Since the 1960s *Las Posadas* has become an increasingly community-oriented holiday, especially as changes in the Catholic church allowed the use of ethnic elements in mass. In the early twentieth century, the holiday was largely celebrated at home amongst family members. *Fiestas Guadalupanas* occurs on December 12th and includes a feast in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe. With organizing guidance of Father Kern from Most Holy Trinity Church in the mid-twentieth century, *Fiestas Guadalupanas* celebrations were widely attended and involved the closure of Bagley Street, allowing processions to fill the street.[186] Guadalupe is a widely revered iconographic figure in Mexican and Mexican American communities, particularly communities composed of laborers or those with rural peasant backgrounds. Guadalupe symbolizes the connections between, "family, politics, and religion; colonial past and independent present; Indian and Mexican."[187] Michigan's winters prompted alterations to traditions, as the people moved activities that normally occurred outdoors inside. *Día de los Muertos* is a primarily Mexican and Mexican American celebration occurring from November 1st through 2nd where people create altars to loved ones who are deceased and visit, clean, and decorate graves. Compared to other ethnic celebrations, *Día de los Muertos* is not practiced as widely as other holidays.[188] Holiday celebrations and festivals typically include parades, music, song, dance, gatherings, and speeches, and help to strengthen social bonds throughout the communities.[189]

---

184 "Joint Hispanic Celebration," *Detroit Free Press*, September 20, 1981.
185 Stanley Brandes, "Sugar, Colonialism, and Death: On the Origins of Mexico's Day of the Dead," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 2 (1997), 274; Stanley Brandes, "Iconography in Mexico's Day of the Dead: Origins and Meanings," *Ethnohistory* 45, no. 2 (1998), 189; Cassandra Spratling, "Christmas' Crowning Glory," *Detroit Free Press*, January 5, 1997.
186 Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 4, 84-85, 115; Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 22.
187 Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 68.
188 Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 4, 120-121.
189 Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 33; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 155.

Arts and Cultural Entertainment

Through art, music, dance, radio, and film, individual members and organizations in Detroit's Latinx communities have been instrumental in maintaining their cultural traditions while in Detroit. Several theaters played Spanish-language movies and attending the theater was a relatively affordable, relaxing pastime.[190] In the 1950s, the Azteca Theater (not extant), once located near Brooklyn and Leverette Streets in Corktown, featured contemporary Mexican movies drawing Mexicans and Mexican Americans from the surrounding neighborhoods and Pontiac, Michigan.[191] Theaters along West Vernor Highway were located within neighborhoods where Latinx communities congregated and catered to the communities by showing Spanish-language films during the 1970s.[192] The Stratford Theater at 4751 West Vernor Highway (extant) and the Rio Theater at 7700 West Vernor Highway (extant) are just two of the several theaters that were once located in Southwest Detroit that played Spanish-language films.[193] Other theaters such as the Clark Park, the Courtesy, the Ferndale, and the Dix were also present in Southwest Detroit during this time.[194]

Ethnic music formed a significant connection between Latinx communities in Detroit and their traditional cultural practices. Tejano music, a synthesis of Mexican and European musical styles, was popular in Detroit and prominent local act Los Primos was one group that gained local and nationwide recognition.[195] Numerous local bands such as Trio Reyna and Panchito and Orchestra (also referred to as Panchito and his Orchestra, Panchito's Orchestra, and Panchito and his Latin Orchestra) played ethnic music at neighborhoods bars and clubs and for community celebrations, quinceañeras, funerals, pageants, and festivals throughout the 1950s and through the 1980s.[196] Panchito and Orchestra was headed by Frank "Panchito" Lozano, a well-known member of Detroit's Latinx communities who not

---

190 Vargas, *Proletariats*, 163-164; "Know Them?" *Detroit Free Press*, May 18, 1952.
191 "Know Them?" *Detroit Free Press*, May 18, 1952.
192 Vargas, *Proletariats*, 163-164; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 42.
193 "Stratford," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 6, 1975.
194 Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E13.
195 Michigan Historical Commission, "Tejano Music," Michigan Historical Marker Program, 2023; Michigan Historical Commission, "Mexican Detroit," Michigan Historical Marker Program, 2023; Frank Solis, son of Martin Solis, pioneer of Detroit's Tejano music genre interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 8, 2023.
196 Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 54-58; "Fourth Medal Presentation Ball," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 20, 1951; "A Mexican Fiesta For Holy Trinity," *Detroit Free Press*, March 27, 1985; "El Tenampa," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 29, 1956; "Nightlife," *Detroit Free Press*, April 25, 1975; "Dancing," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 13, 1953; "Jimi's Show Bar," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1957; "Haig's," advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 25, 1957.

only performed music, but also volunteered extensively in the community and became Detroit's first Mexican American principal at Webster Elementary.[197] Local bands also performed for people outside of Detroit's Latinx communities. For example, in addition to performing for Latinx audiences, Panchito and Orchestra performed throughout the Detroit area, Windsor, and Ohio for non-Latinx audiences.[198]A popular pastime of local Latinx residents was listening to records of ethnic music. Roy's Record Shop was owned and operated by local businessman Rogelio Ramon.[199] Once located at 5432 West Vernor Highway (not extant) and 2628 Bagley Street (extant), the storied record shop stocked instruments and Spanish and *Tejano* records throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.[200]

Different types of dancing often accompanied live music performances and cultural celebrations, and dancers within Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American communities performed at events across the city.[201] Women within the communities were instrumental in preserving cultural traditions through the formation of folkloric dance groups.[202] Some dance groups were composed of young children dressed in traditional, ethnic clothing that was usually homemade.[203] *El Club Artístico Femenino* (The Ladies Artistic Club) was a female dance group for Mexicans and Mexican Americans founded by María Hernández Alcalá, and Corktown Dancers was another group formed by Carmen Cortina.[204] Carmen worked with Father Clement Kern of Most Holy Trinity Church to reach people within the communities that were interested in learned traditional Mexican dancing.[205]

Detroit's Latinx residents were listeners and operators of radio stations and several radio programs. Local radio station WJLB broadcast a Spanish-language radio program in the early 1940s that was

---

197 "Lozano, Frank 'Panchito,'" obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, April 6, 2014
198 "Lozano, Frank 'Panchito,'" obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, April 6, 2014; "In Town/Turnovsky," *Detroit Free Press*, July 28, 1983; Betsey Hansell, "$650,000 Sought To Fix Church, Help Poor," *Detroit Free Press*, March 14, 1985.
199 Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 24.
200 Eric Guzman, "Tejano Music Legend Martin Solis To Receive Mexicantown's First Historic Marker," *El Central*, March 9, 2023; Sandra Bunnell, "Latino Detroit: Despite Problems There Is Pleasure And *Gran Historia* For Non-Turistas," *Detroit Free Press*, January 4, 1976; "Conversations: Angelo Figueroa, Magazine Editor: A People Person," *Detroit Free Press*, May 10, 1998; Frank Solis, son of Martin Solis, pioneer of Detroit's Tejano music genre interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 8, 2023.
201 "Lucy Thurman Branch Y.W.C.A. Notes," *Detroit Free Press*, June 22, 1935.
202 Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 103.
203 Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 87-88.
204 Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 24; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 17, 87.
205 "Carmen Cortina: Champion of the Barrio's Dance Heritage," *El Barrio* 2, no. 1 (1983), *El Barrio*, 1982-1983, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

organized by Jose F. Alfaro and geared towards Detroit's Latinx communities.[206] *Cantares de mi Pueblo* (Songs of My Town) was another popular radio program on WJLB, 97.9 FM created by Roy Flores in 1948. The program operated for several years and broadcast to listeners throughout southeast Michigan and Ohio.[207] On WDET, the *El Grito de mi Raza* radio program was broadcast from the early 1970s through 1994.[208] *El Grito* was organized by local community members who sought to help improve life in Southwest Detroit through discussion of current events, Latinx histories, and ethnic music.[209] Controversy ensued when the show was cancelled by WDET in 1994, and Latinx listeners protested against the ending of the popular program that had lent a voice to their communities.[210] WDET axed ten shows due to government budget cuts. The protest to the Wayne State University board of governors and 200 calls for support did not help save the show. In addition to WDET, radio station WMZK, Detroit's "station of the nations," dedicated airtime to numerous Spanish-language programs six days a week throughout the 1970s. The WMZK program was broadcast from the Las Vegas Bar at 3400 Bagley Street (extant), the present-day location of El Zocalo Mexican restaurant.[211]

Casa de Unidad Cultural Arts and Media Center (1920 25th Street) was a community arts group founded in 1980 with the goal of identifying and preserving Latinx cultural heritage throughout Michigan. Casa de Unidad's members worked tirelessly to promote the publication of community histories, aided in the development of several community outreach programs, provided spaces for Latinx artists to share their work, and coordinated events to bring Latinx communities together. Casa de Unidad's activities revolved around Detroit's diverse Latinx communities acknowledging their histories and unique culture through shared cultural activities.[212]

---

[206] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 14; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan,* 34.
[207] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan,* 37; "Raul Roy Flores: Latino Commmunity Came First with Him," obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, May 19, 1982.
[208] "'Radio Free Detroit' Needs Listeners to Pay Some Dues," *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 1972; "No Tears For El Grito," *Detroit Free Press*, February 13, 1994.
[209] Carmen Garcia, "The Barrio's 'Shout' Gets Stronger," *El Barrio* 1, no. 3 (1982), *El Barrio*, 1982-1983, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
[210] "'Radio Free Detroit' Needs Listeners to Pay Some Dues," *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 1972; "FM Radio Highlights," *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1973.
[211] Michigan Historical Commission, "Tejano Music," Michigan Historical Marker Program, 2023; Sandra Bunnell, "Latino Detroit: Despite Problems There Is Pleasure and *Gran Historia* for Non-Turistas," *Detroit Free Press*, January 4, 1976; Bob Talbert, "Tired of Humdrum? Get Out, Get with It," *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1974; Peter C. Gavrilovich, "On the Station of the Nations, The World's at Peace, But Not Without the Help of Some Audio Watchdogs," *Detroit Free Press*, November 9, 1975.
[212] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, xiv-xv; Osvaldo (Ozzie)

Newspapers and Printing

Several community newspapers have circulated amongst Detroit's Latinx residents through the twentieth century. Newspapers dating to the 1920s, when Mexican and Mexican American neighborhoods first began forming in Detroit, were often short-lived due to the transitory nature of a significant portion of Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American populations. The earliest newspaper is believed to have been *El Eco de la Patria* (The Echo of the Mother Country) which circulated in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American communities in the early 1920s. Additional newspapers went into and out of print through the 1920s.[213]

Highlighting the diverse ideologies within Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American communities are two newspapers—*Prensa Libre* (the Free Press) and *La Chispa* (The Spark). *Prensa Libre* was established in 1929 by Luis G. Gasca who collaborated with Diego Rivera to establish the newspaper which had socialist leanings and was critical of the Catholic church. The newspaper covered local and international issues, included an editorial page, and printed a gossip column. Headquartered at 4326 Toledo Street (not extant), the newspaper shared headquarters with *Liga de Obreros y Campesinos* (League of Mexican Workers and Peasants) which was also established with assistance from Rivera.[214] Reporting on similar topics but from a conservative standpoint was *La Chispa,* which was established by Simón Muñoz in 1930. *La Chispa's* reporting praised the Catholic church and often countered reporting in *Prensa Libre*.[215] Both newspapers were short lived and collapsed following the Great Depression.[216]

Since the Great Depression, Spanish-language newspapers serving the Latinx communities have since come into and out of existence. José F. Alfaro, an autoworker and early organizer of Spanish-language radio shows, was deeply involved in the publication of Spanish-language newspapers throughout the mid-twentieth century.[217] Alfaro published iterations of *El Atomo* (The Atom) newspaper from 1933

Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023; *10th Annual Michigan Hispanic Artists Exhibition* (Detroit, MI: [St. Anne de Detroit and Bowen Branch Library?], [2000?]), 1-2, from Box 3, Ana Luisa Cardona Papers, 1973-2011, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

[213] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 22.

[214] Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 655; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 36, 38; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 22-23.

[215] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 23.

[216] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 36, 38; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 23.

[217] "El Barrio Salutes José Alfaro," *El Barrio* 1, no. 2 (1982), *El Barrio*, 1982-1983, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

through 1938 and again from 1956 through 1959.[218] During times when locally published papers have been unavailable, Detroit's Latinx communities have turned to out-of-state papers.[219] Casa de Unidad, a local arts and community organization, published a local newspaper, *El Barrio*, throughout the 1980s.[220] *El Central Hispanic News*, formed in 1988 by Dolores Sanchez, and *Latino Press* are relatively recent additions to Latinx newspapers in Detroit.[221]

Social Clubs and Organizations

People of Mexican heritage in Detroit developed numerous mutual aid organizations throughout the twentieth century, which were intended to assist members of the community and preserve Mexican culture socially and financially.[222] Several organizations operated out of communal spaces at 2620 Bagley Street (extant) and Most Holy Trinity Church at 1050 Porter Street (extant).[223] Different clubs and organizations represented different classes of the Mexican and Mexican American community. Some organizations were composed of elite members of the community whereas others were home to members of the working class.[224] Yet as the Mexican and Mexican American population expanded, so did the creation of religious, fraternal, and social clubs and these organizations were integral to their communities.[225] Festivals were regularly held to raise money for the organization and its members. Members relied on mutual assistance organizations as a form of insurance against illness and death, access to financing, and an outlet for the celebration of Mexican holidays.[226]

---

[218] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 32, 71.
[219] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 41.
[220] *El Barrio*, 1982-1989, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
[221] "WSU Now Home To 3-Year Run of Influential El Central Newspaper," Today@Wayne, May 16, 2019, https://today.wayne.edu/news/2019/05/16/wsu-now-home-to-30-year-run-of-influential-el-central-newspaper-32090; "Latino Press," New Michigan Media, accessed April 17, 2023, https://newmichiganmedia.com/latino-press/; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 55, 106.
[222] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 145; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 151; Parra, "Latinos in the Midwest," 4; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 23-24; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 8.
[223] Albert Mayer, *Ethnic Groups in Detroit* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, 1951), 43.
[224] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 16-17; Parra, "Latinos in the Midwest," 4.
[225] Parra, "Latinos in the Midwest," 4; Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 32; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 35-36; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 8, 103.
[226] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 33; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 149; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 23-24; Parra, "Latinos in the Midwest," 4.

The Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Group, Hispano-American Camp no. 257, held fiestas with folk dancing and folk songs in their social hall on Bagley Street during the 1940s.[227] The exact location of their hall is not known. Cruz Azul was a charity operated by women that focused on providing care to the sick within the Mexican and Mexican American community.[228] As other Latinx communities formed in the city, social clubs and aid organizations were formed to address the needs of each community. The 1967 uprising in Detroit sparked the creation of another generation of organizations dedicated to addressing urban issues faced by Latinx communities. Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development (LA SED) was organized in 1969 to address the varied needs of Detroit's Latinx residents and the Committee for Concerned Spanish Americans (CCSSA) was formed by 1969, serving as a liaison between Latinx residents and Detroit and Michigan's educational system [229] Community Health and Social Services (CHASS) opened in 1970 at 5695 West Vernor Highway (extant) and is in operation to this day as a healthcare agency providing affordable, quality healthcare Latinx residents.[230] Organizations have continued to develop to address needs of Mexican and Mexican American women such as Mana de Metro Detroit, the local branch of the national Mexican American Women's National Association (MANA), which was organized in 1974.[231]

Making a Living

Labor in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980

The automobile and steel industries employed many Mexican and Mexican American people in Detroit throughout the twentieth century.[232] While members of the Mexican, Mexican American, and broader

---

[227] "Woodmen Plan Fiesta," *Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1940; Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 49.
[228] Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 17.
[229] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 145; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 25-26; "About Us," Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development," accessed April 17, 2023, https://www.lasedinc.com/about-us; Sharon Popp, Merlin Steider, Julie Wheeler, Monica Wichorek, and Donna Young, "Exploratory Study of the Mexican-American Community in Detroit, Michigan" (Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1970), 26; William Grant, "Parents Hit New School Allocations," *Detroit Free Press*, February 26, 1969.
[230] Rodriguez, *Detroit's Mexicantown*, 102; Thomas C. Fox, "Poor Moms, Kids To Benefit From Federal Food Plan," *Detroit Free Press*, October 4, 1974.
[231] "About," MANA, accessed April 17, 2023, https://www.hermana.org/about; "MANA de Metro Detroit," MANA, accessed April 17, 2023, https://www.manademetrodetroit.com/.
[232] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 157; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 41.

Latinx communities undoubtedly worked in white collar and creative positions, most community members were employed in the manufacturing sector or were entrepreneurs. Those working in the automobile industry sought employment at Ford Motor Company because of the competitive wages and availability of work. In the automobile industry off-season, Mexican and Mexican American workers sought employment elsewhere such as sugar beet farms, on construction projects, utilities construction and maintenance, and track work for the Detroit Street Car Company, the Detroit Union Railway, and the Michigan Central Railroad.[233]

Participation in Americanization programs often went hand in hand with employment. Promulgated through local churches, Americanization programs promoted Christian ideals as a means to assimilate immigrants into American culture, steer them away from pro-union causes, and mold them into ideal industrial workers. Companies frowned on workers maintaining ethnic and cultural traditions and refrained from providing time off for observance of ethnic holidays. Employers were also uneasy with the development of mutual aid, fraternal, and social organizations as they were believed to facilitate the organization of unions.[234]

As early as 1927, Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community was involved in labor organizing and the creation of worker societies, which continued through the 1930s. Organizations were formed based on ethnicity and the industry within which members were employed, and Mexican labor organizations were often composed of people of Mexican heritage who often came from the same areas of Mexico. Securing an adequate standard of living and ending discrimination drove workers of Mexican heritage to join the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). CIO members working at Ford Motor Company met at lunch, discussing union membership in secret. Those that attended pro-union activities wore masks to conceal their identity from the company's "stooges."[235]

Labor organization in Detroit was limited in membership and influence prior to the Great Depression.[236] But during the Great Depression, the battered economy, mass unemployment, dismal working conditions, and labor unrest stemming from these realities gave rise to the formation of worker's unions. As the Depression continued through the 1930s, workers were subjected to reduced pay rates and work schedules, irregular employment, and speed-ups.[237] Workers of Mexican heritage also faced discrimination at work, often employed in the most dangerous jobs, and believed union membership would alleviate discriminatory practices.[238] In the automobile parts factory, where many Mexican and

[233] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 94-95.
[234] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 70-73, 78, 155.
[235] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 155-157, 194-199, 207.
[236] Mike Smith, "'Let's Make Detroit a Union Town': The History of Labor and the Working Class in the Motor City," *Michigan Historical Review* 27, no. 2 (2001), 157.
[237] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 172-173.
[238] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 196; Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 69.

Mexican American employees worked, conditions were dangerous, with employees routinely exposed to poisonous gases, burned, experienced bouts of pneumonia, and were injured by flying metal.[239]

Thus, by the 1930s, Mexican factory workers became increasingly involved in union organizing. They were active in pro-union marches, demonstrations, and strikes and promoted union membership.[240] As people from Puerto Rico and Cuba made their way to Detroit during the mid-twentieth century and became enmeshed in the industrial workforce, they followed similar paths to their Mexican and Mexican American neighbors in Detroit by taking part in union organizing and membership.[241]

Labor organizing in Latinx communities continued through the 1950s and 1960s. The Latin American Labor Council of Michigan was established in Detroit in 1956. The council sent representatives to farms across the state to ensure migrant workers knew about the services that were available to them through the organization. Amado Gonzalez and Roy Flores were central figures of the organization and were experienced with union organizing through their long-term employment at Ford Motor Company. The council met above La Paloma market at 2620 Bagley Street (extant) and established a welcome center at 3423 Bagley Street (not extant).[242]
In 1962 the Farm Workers Association (FWA) was organized by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta.[243] Following the end of the Bracero program in 1965, and a successful partnership between the FWA and the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) during a 1965 strike by agricultural laborers who harvested grapes in California, the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) was formed as part of the AFL-CIO in 1966.[244] Known as *la huelga,* strikers demanded fair compensation, access to affordable and adequate housing, and the right to unionize for collective bargaining, which was not afforded to agricultural laborers under the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).[245] The UFWOC advanced the strike by implementing consumer boycotts of

---

239 Vargas, "Armies in the Fields," 69-70.
240 Vargas, *Proletariats*, 196-199.
241 Ravuri, "Hispanic Population Change in Southwestern Detroit," 203; Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 26-28; John Mueller, "Detroit Cubans Rejoice at Rally," *Detroit Free Press*, January 12, 1959.
242 "Detroiters Try Own Good-Neighbor Policy," *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1956; "Raul Roy Flores: Latino Commmunity Came First with Him," obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, May 19, 1982.
243 Sowards, "*Si, Ella Puede!*" 20, 23.
244 Sowards, "*Si, Ella Puede!*" 22, 25; Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration*, 11.
245 Jaclyn Reilly, "Agricultural Laborers: Their Inability to Unionize Under the National Labor Relations Act," Penn State Law, 1; "Are You Covered?" National Labor Relations Board accessed March 15, 2023, https://www.nlrb.gov/about-nlrb/rights-we-protect/the-law/employees/are-you-covered.

California-grown grapes in major United States cities, Detroit included, throughout 1968 and 1969.[246] Chávez understood the importance of nurturing support for the UFWOC in Detroit because the city was a significant consumer of California produce and boasted a long history of unionization.[247] Father Clement Kern of Most Holy Trinity Church was an early supporter of Chávez's work in Detroit.[248] Largely led by Mexicans and Mexican Americans who previously worked in agriculture, the UFW developed strong connections with Mexican and Mexican American communities throughout the country. By 1972 the organization dropped the "OC" from its name, becoming the United Farm Workers (UFW).[249] Through the early 1970s, the UFW organized a series of boycotts of grapes and iceberg lettuce across the country pressuring grocers to halt the sale on non-union grapes and lettuce.[250] The UFW struggled to maintain labor contracts with produce growers as the Teamsters union, one of the largest in the United States, began competing with the UFW for union membership.[251]

UFWOC Grape and Lettuce Boycotts

Former farm workers who became UFWOC activists began coming to Detroit from California in June 1968 to facilitate a boycott of grapes picked by non-union workers.[252] It was not always clear whether grapes were picked by union or non-union labor, so the UFWOC often promoted the boycott of all grapes.[253] From the UFWOC's Detroit office at 2500 Howard Street (not extant), activists and local volunteer groups assisted in the implementation of successful boycotts. Organizational meetings were held at Most Holy Trinity School, located at 1229 Labrosse Street (extant), which was affiliated with Father Clement Kern, an early supporter of the UFWOC.[254] In 1968 a grape boycott was organized that halted the sale of grapes in four of Detroit's largest grocery store chains—Kroger, A&P, Wrigley, and Chatham. Boycotters showed their support through picketing stores, refusing to purchase grapes, and

---

[246] Sowards, "*Si, Ella Puede!*" 25; William S. Welt, "Cesar Chavez in the City of Unions: Of UAWs, UFWs, Teamsters and Exceedingly Sour Grapes," *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 1974.
[247] William S. Welt, "Cesar Chavez in the City of Unions: Of UAWs, UFWs, Teamsters and Exceedingly Sour Grapes," *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 1974.
[248] Badillo, *Latinos in Detroit*, 20.
[249] Sowards, "*Si, Ella Puede!*" 26-27.
[250] Whitney Young, "To Be Equal," *Michigan Chronicle*, December 26, 1970; "Solons Supporting Lettuce Boycott," *Michigan Chronicle*, October 14, 1972.
[251] Maryanne Conheim, "Stores Put on Spot by Unions' Grape War," *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1973.
[252] Tom DeLisle, "Senator Vows Hunger Strike," *Detroit Free Press*, May 11, 1969.
[253] Patrick J. Owens, "Faith Keeps 'Living Saint' Fighting for Grape Boycott," *Detroit Free Press*, September 27, 1968; "Action Line," *Detroit Free Press*, November 5, 1968.
[254] "Action Line," *Detroit Free Press*, November 5, 1968; Badillo, *Latinos in Detroit*, 20; Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 41.

urging shoppers to do the same.[255] The UFWOC garnered support from local unions, religious leaders, and municipal leaders.[256]

In addition to boycotts and picketing, UFWOC supporters sought support from local and state politicians, engaging in debates and actions to further their cause.[257] On May 10, 1969 a rally was held in downtown Detroit's Kennedy Square, just west of the present-day location of Campus Martius, for International Grape Boycott Day as part of a national effort to gain support for grape strikers.[258] UFWOC representative Hijino Rangel spoke at the rally alongside State Senator Roger Craig.[259] Rangel, Craig, and Reverend Robert Baldwin, executive director of the Churches on the East Side for Social Action, all participated in an eleven-day hunger strike following the rally to pressure local A&P stores to make a pledge to stop selling California grapes.[260] During a press conference with Chávez and Mayor Jerome Cavanagh, Rangel stated he would begin another hunger strike, "to use every non-violent means available to us to convince A&P of its moral responsibility to struggling farm workers and concerned consumers."[261] As part of a continued national campaign in 1973, protestors in support of UFW lettuce and grape boycotts picketed the A&P market at 5858 West Vernor (extant).[262]

Commerce and the Importance of Latinx Businesses in Detroit, 1915-1980

The development of commercial establishments devoted to serving Detroit's Latinx communities throughout the twentieth century reflects the presence and purchasing power of the surrounding Latinx residents.[263] Situated amongst Latinx residential neighborhoods, Latinx businesses opened to meet the growing needs of Latinx people. Detroit's Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other communities beneath the Latinx umbrella developed commercial establishments in similar fashions. Family-owned grocery stores, eateries, food manufacturing facilities, and social and entertainment

---

255 "4 Food Chains OK California Grape Ban," *Detroit Free Press*, November 22, 1968.
256 Clark Hoyt, "'Jim Jim' Unhappy Over Grape Ban," *Detroit Free Press*, August 10, 1968.
257 "Grape Boycotters, Opponents Stage Debate in Church," *Detroit Free Press*, September 22, 1969.
258 "Grape Boycott Rally," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 10, 1969; Tom DeLisle, "Senator Vows Hunger Strike," *Detroit Free Press*, May 11, 1969.
259 "Hike Backs Grape Boycott," *Detroit Free Press*, May 7, 1969.
260 "Craig Eats," *Detroit Free Press*, May 22, 1969.
261 Susan Holmes, "Chavez Supports Store Picketing," *Detroit Free Press*, November 8, 1969.
262 "A&P Picketed," *Detroit Free Press*, March 11, 1973; Raymond Lozano, Executive Director, Mexicantown Community Development Corporation; community elder and historian; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 24, 2023.
263 Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 141, 144.

venues provided space for members of each community to connect to their ethnic culture while providing income to the local business owners. While early-twentieth century Latinx businesses reflected the majority Mexican and Mexican American population in Detroit, the increase of Puerto Rican and Cuban migration to the city during the 1950s prompted the establishment of businesses catering to these groups. Many of these establishments still operate today, while others have come and gone as members of each community left Detroit or moved throughout the city. The prevalence of family-owned and small-scale commercial establishments is a significant characteristic of Detroit's Latinx communities that is worthy of research.

Bagley Street in Mexicantown and Corktown

The earliest commercial corridor with a distinct association with Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American residents was Bagley Street, from 6th Street west to 24th Street, in neighborhoods known as Mexicantown and Corktown. Originally called Baker Street, this section of Bagley Street was part of the Baker Street Line of Detroit's crosstown streetcar system. Mexican and Mexican American businesses were housed in commercial spaces initially occupied by European immigrants, as European immigrants moved out of the area and were replaced by Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Regarded as the core of the Latinx communities, Bagley Street became home to grocery stores, bakeries, restaurants, bars and a theater.[264] Bagley Street was where a member of Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American communities, "lives, shops, drinks and dances."[265] The area's commercial success facilitated the congregation of Latinx people in the surrounding neighborhoods, and the spillover of Latinx communities westward along West Vernor Highway.[266]

In 1970, the neighborhoods along West Vernor Highway in Southwest Detroit were cut off from Mexicantown and large sections of Bagley Street by the construction of the Fisher Freeway (Interstate 75). Construction of the expressway created a physical gulf between Mexicantown and the growing Latinx neighborhoods of Southwest Detroit, west of the Fisher Freeway.[267] Construction displaced hundreds of people as homes and numerous businesses were demolished to make way for the

[264] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E5, E16; Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023.
[265] Evelyn S. Stewart and Dorian Hyshka, "Food Is Exotic, Delicious in Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, September 22, 1957.
[266] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E10.
[267] Peter Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs Hope to Emulate Greektown Success," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1984.

expressway.[268] Moreover, Bagley Street did not cross the expressway, meaning that people had to go north to West Vernor Highway or south to Porter Street to travel between Mexicantown and Southwest Detroit. The detrimental effects of significant construction projects did not end, as almost one hundred more homes in the area were demolished between 1981 and 1997 to construct facilities supporting the Ambassador Bridge.[269] Demolition of large swaths of the neighborhood destroyed the interconnectedness between residential neighborhoods and the Bagley Street commercial corridor, making it difficult for business owners to maintain their once profitable businesses.[270]

West Vernor Highway in Southwest Detroit

Historically, Dix Road served as the commercial corridor in Southwest Detroit and was initially established as a commercial area by German immigrants in the 1880s, when the area was known as Springwells Township. German and other European immigrants, such as the Irish and English, worked at the local brickyards and manufacturing facilities. By 1873, the section of Dix Road between 24th Street and Detroit's west boundary was part of the Baker Street Line, a section of Detroit's crosstown streetcar system.[271]

By the 1920s, Detroit had grown so large in population and sheer size that a crosstown thoroughfare was needed to efficiently transport people across the city and relieve traffic congestion.[272] Ford Motor Company constructed the River Rouge plant in 1918, drawing thousands of workers from the company's Highland Park plant through Southwest Detroit to the River Rouge plant in Dearborn.[273] In 1919, Detroit's City Plan Commission recommended the construction of a crosstown transportation route to alleviate congestion in the downtown business district and connect industrial facilities along the east boundary of the city, Ford Motor Company's River Rouge Plant on the west boundary, and the Michigan Central Station.[274] Originally known as the Dix-High-Waterloo Highway before it was renamed to Vernor Highway in 1926, construction of the thoroughfare involved the widening of existing

[268] Louis Cook, "Street-Closing Is No Easy Decision," *Detroit Free Press*, June 15, 1977.
[269] Nancy Costello, "Area Hopes to Be Safe Investment," *Detroit Free Press*, March 21, 1994; Wayne State University, DTE Aerial Photo Collection, 1981; Wayne State University, DTE Aerial Photo Collection, 1997.
[270] Nancy Ann Jeffrey, "Mexican Town Hopes to Cash in on Festival," *Detroit Free Press*, June 24, 1991.
[271] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E3-E5, E8.
[272] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E7.
[273] Ralph J. Christian, "Ford River Rouge Complex," Dearborn, Wayne County, Michigan, National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmark #78001516.
[274] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E4-E5; "Commission Plans East, West Street," *Detroit Free Press*, September 28, 1919.

streets and the condemnation of approximately four hundred properties throughout the late 1920s.[275] Throughout Southwest Detroit, Ferndale and Dix Avenues were widened and the thoroughfare was cut diagonally to the northeast across existing streets to reach the Michigan Central Station.[276] From Michigan Central Station, High Street was widened until its intersection with Gratiot Avenue, on Detroit's east side, at which point Cleveland Street was widened to accommodate the thoroughfare.[277] Following the completion of Vernor Highway, property owners along the highway complained that the tax assessments imposed on adjacent properties were prohibitively expensive. In 1930, Clifford Prevost of the *Detroit Free Press* described how some Detroiters considered the highway a "back alley" that did not alleviate the crosstown traffic as intended and resulted in decreased rental opportunities for building owners along the highway.[278]

However, construction of West Vernor Highway and the thousands of employees taking the Baker Streetcar line to the River Rouge Complex encouraged commercial development along Bagley Street (originally called Baker Street), Dix Avenue, and West Vernor Highway. Commercial development along the highway occurred from east to west in clusters at several intersections of West Vernor Highway.[279] Over time the clusters diminished such that two districts are present today—one between Interstates 75 and 96 and Livernois Avenue and the other between Waterman Street and Woodmere Street. The West Vernor Highway commercial corridor began serving the Latinx communities in earnest following the bisection of the Bagley Street corridor following the construction of the Fisher Freeway (Interstate 75) in 1970. As businesses along Bagley suffered from the severing of their connection to growing Latinx neighborhoods in Southwest Detroit, Latinx businesses were established along West Vernor Highway.[280]

---

[275] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E7; "Crosstown Route Named for Vernor," *Detroit Free Press*, July 1, 1925; "Condemned Houses Ordered Torn Down," *Detroit Free Press*, July 28, 1926.
[276] "4 Routes of 47 Miles Initial Links in Chain," *Detroit Free Press*, August 22, 1926.
[277] "4 Routes of 47 Miles Initial Links in Chain," *Detroit Free Press*, August 22, 1926; William C. Sauer, *Map of the City of Detroit, Michigan* ([Detroit, MI?]: William Sauer, 1915) Michigan State University Map Library, https://lib.msu.edu/branches/map/MSU-Scanned/Michigan/843-d-1915-Detroit300/; National Lithograph Company, *New National Authentic Map of Detroit and Environs* (Detroit, MI: National Lithograph Company, 1930) Michiganology, https://michiganology.org/uncategorized/IO_a8a7781d-c5b9-4277-ac39-f894ce7f0173.
[278] Clifford A. Prevost, "Will Settle Widening Proposal on Tuesday," *Detroit Free Press*, December 28, 1930.
[279] Florek *West Vernor Highway Survey*, E5-E6, E8, E17.
[280] Peter Brown, "Latin Entrepreneurs Hope to Emulate Greektown Success," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1984; Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023.

Commercial Establishments Serving Detroit's Latinx Communities

Commercial establishments serving Detroit's Latinx communities were integral components of the Bagley Street and West Vernor Highway commercial corridors. The role of ethnic businesses in the maintenance of cultural practices, particularly those surrounding food, is significant to Detroit's Latinx communities. Businesses included several grocery stores, restaurants, bakeries, bars, and tortilla factories that were typically owned by Latinx residents from the surrounding neighborhoods. These businesses served as places where members of Detroit's Latinx communities can, "meet, find their favorite Latin foods and feel like a part of the community."[281]

As Mexicans and Mexican Americans made up the majority of Detroit's Latinx population, the majority of businesses were owned, operated, and generally catered to residents of Mexican heritage. Similar establishments operated by Puerto Rican, Cuban, and additional Latinx ethnicities were likewise present albeit in smaller numbers. A common thread amongst Latinx businesses was their establishment and operation by local immigrants and their specialization in the procurement and sale of ethnic foods and preparation of dishes and baked goods that connected fellow immigrants to their place of origin. Entrepreneurs often lived nearby or in the same building as their business, meaning they were deeply ingrained in the neighborhood within which their business operated. Employees are usually people of the same ethnic heritage from the surrounding community. This trend has continued to the present as Latinx people operate eighty-five percent of the businesses in the West Vernor Highway corridor, and the majority are small, owner-operated businesses that employ two to four people from the local community.[282]

It was not uncommon for locally owned, owner-operated establishments to begin as home-based businesses in apartments, flats, or houses.[283] As business expanded and strengthened, the business typically moved to a dedicated commercial space. Some businesses carried on in an informal fashion without a brick-and-mortar component, such as a food cart that is brought to social events.[284] Food trucks and food carts that have become commonplace in Southwest Detroit are a relatively recent

[281] Alejandro Bodipo-Memba, "Bakeries Thrive, As Does Community," *Detroit Free Press*, October 1, 2002; Alejandro Bodipo-Memba, "Rising Fortunes," *Detroit Free Press*, October 1, 2002.
[282] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 142-143.
[283] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 140 Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 22.
[284] Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration*, 7.

addition to the commercial landscape, developing after the 1980s.[285] Financing for commercial endeavors was largely sourced from family and friends, as traditional lenders such as local banks often turned away immigrants.[286]

As businesses in Detroit's Latinx communities largely cater to locals from the surrounding neighborhoods, the presence of Latinx businesses indicated that people from the various Latinx communities lived nearby. Near Ford Motor Company's Highland Park plant, El Buen Gusto Restaurant and Everybody's Pool Hall served Mexican and Mexican American automobile workers. On Detroit's east side during the 1910s through the 1930s, restaurants, bakeries, barbershops, pool halls, tailoring businesses, and boardinghouses serving the Mexican and Mexican American population were located along East Congress Street. Local establishments were owned and operated by Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and people from other ethnic groups.[287]

The types of businesses and their location can also inform the demographics of the communities and when Latinx groups came to Detroit. The prevalence of pool halls, barber shops, and boardinghouses in Detroit's east side neighborhoods suggests the presence of young, single men. As Mexican, Mexican American, and other Latinx communities established families and moved out of the east side to Corktown, businesses such as Latinx grocery stores catered to a less transient clientele. The location of Latinx businesses within the city also informs when Latinx communities were established. As Mexican, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican communities in Detroit date back to the late 1910s, the locations of businesses associated with these communities mirror the westward movement of Latinx people from the east side neighborhoods, into Corktown, and into Southwest Detroit.[288] During the 1950s, when Cuban immigrants began settling in Detroit, their businesses were established in Southwest Detroit because by that time, the broader Latinx communities were moving to that area. Therefore, the location of businesses established by various Latinx communities helps illustrate the movement of Latinx communities within Detroit.

Due to the different timeframes within which Latinx people operated their businesses, Latinx entrepreneurs experienced different difficulties. When Mexican and Mexican American businesses were first established in Detroit in the late 1910s and 1920s, business owners contended with population fluctuations as residents oscillated between agricultural employment during the spring and summer

[285] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023; Frank Solis, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 8, 2023; Maria Elena Rodriguez, Author (Detroit's Mexicantown), CAG member interview by Lillian Candela, Kraemer Design Group, June 27, 2023.
[286] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 142.
[287] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 140-142.
[288] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 140-142.

months and industrial employment during the winter.[289] Likewise, the series of depressions during the 1920s, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and Detroit's Mexican repatriation movement in 1932 made it difficult to operate businesses that were dependent on the continued presence of Mexican and Mexican American residents. As a result, the majority of grocery stores, restaurants, and bakeries, owned and operated by Mexican and Mexican Americans, and Latinx residents in general date to the mid-twentieth century when Latinx populations within Detroit stabilized and increased. Additionally, the continued growth of Detroit's Latinx population in the 1990s and through the 2000s has not only supported existing Latinx businesses, but also spurred the creation of new businesses reflecting the increasing diversity of Detroit's Latinx communities.[290]

Making a Democracy

Women in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980

Throughout ethnic and community histories in the United States, the role of women and their contributions tends to be overlooked by the activities of men. However, the contributions of Latinx women are nonetheless worthy of illustrating. Contributions range from participating in the workforce, politics, establishing businesses, to the daily contributions women made, and continue to make, to their communities through child rearing and household management. Women were also the driving force behind holiday festivities, dedicating their time to organizing activities, creating costumes, cooking food, and decorating altars.[291]

While specific examples of women's roles largely relate to Detroit's female Mexican and Mexican American population, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and women identifying with additional Latinx communities likely occupied similar roles. Typical contributions included women preparing food for their families and marketing their cooking skills to bring in additional income for their family. Women likewise took on the responsibility of laundering clothes and managing family activities.[292] As mentioned in the "Latinx Immigrant Neighborhoods in the Twentieth Century" section of this MPDF, the management of

[289] Vargas, *Proletariats*, 139.
[290] Ravuri, "Hispanic Population Change in Southwestern Detroit," 216.
[291] Laura Chavez-Wazeerud-Din, President and CEO, Southwest Detroit Business Association, CAG member; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 25, 2023; Raymond Lozano, Executive Director, Mexicantown Community Development Corporation; community elder and historian; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 24, 2023; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 88-89, 128.
[292] Rosemary Schofield, "Rosemary Schofield," Southwest Detroit community elder; interview by Matthias Reed, Detroit Historical Society, November 1, 2018.

casas de asistencia was primarily done by women.[293] In addition, women established their own businesses and supported family businesses with their labor.[294]

Commercial establishments were often managed solely by women or by a husband-and-wife team.[295] Olivia Galan, part owner of El Patio bar at 3331 Bagley Street (not extant) and Las Vegas bar at 3400 Bagley Street (extant) during the 1950s and 1960s, also hosted a Latin radio show, *La Hora de Olivia Galan* (The Olivia Galan Hour) on local Detroit radio station WMZK.[296] In the late 1950s, Maria Villarreal supported her family by making and selling tamales when her husband went on strike from Great Lakes Steel.[297] Her business flourished and she eventually expanded from her family's home to a dedicated commercial space in 1963 in the building at 2661-2669 Bagley Street (extant). The tamaleria she started, known as Tamaleria Nuevo Leon and now operated by her daughter Susana Villarreal-Garza, is still in business today.[298] Puerto Rican immigrant Idi Colon operated the El Punto Alegre Social Club at 4049 West Vernor Highway (not extant) with her husband in the 1980s. Idi helped manage the club and cooked traditional Puerto Rican food for visitors.[299] In the early 2000s, author, professor, and researcher Luz María Gordillo observed Mexican and Mexican American women gathering in Patton Park on Sundays to socialize and set up food carts selling Mexican food and goods while men play soccer.[300]

Beyond working as proprietors of local businesses, Mexican and Mexican American women were employed throughout industries in Detroit. In the service industry, women were employed as maids, waitresses, cooks, and bakers. Mexican and Mexican American women also found employment in

---

293 Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 12.
294 Zaragosa Vargas, "Life and Community in the 'Wonderful City of the Magic Motor': Mexican Immigrants in 1920s Detroit," *Michigan Historical Review* 15, no. 1 (1989), 54.
295 Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration*, 40; Jeremy Iggers, "The Food Is Exotic And So Is The Journey," *Detroit Free Press*, July 8, 1981; "Galan, Olivia," obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, March 8, 2002.
296 "Galan, Olivia," obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, March 8, 2002; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 50.
297 John Tanasychuk, "Tamales Heat Up December's Cold," *Detroit Free Press*, December 7, 1988; Tom Nicholson, "Great Lakes Steel Corp. And Union Schedule Talks Sunday," *Detroit Free Press*, December 23, 1959; David Rodriguez Muñoz, "Detroit's Tamaleria Nuevo Leon Has Been Serving Tamales For Over 60 Years," *Detroit Free Press*, March 24, 2023.
298 David Rodriguez Muñoz, "Detroit's Tamaleria Nuevo Leon Has Been Serving Tamales For Over 60 Years," *Detroit Free Press*, March 24, 2023.
299 Jeremy Iggers, "The Food Is Exotic And So Is The Journey," *Detroit Free Press*, July 8, 1981.
300 Gordillo, *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration*, 7.

Detroit's factories as inspectors, packers, and machine operators.[301] Women were among the strikers of the 1933 Briggs strike, and were described as, "the most militant fighters" for better working conditions.[302] Although not explicitly referenced, Mexican and Mexican American women, and those from additional Latinx communities, likely participated in these strikes. Likewise, women participated in the grape and lettuce boycotts in support of the UFWOC in the 1970s.[303] Women were also found outside of the factory floors in sales, clerical, and administrative positions.[304]

Latinx women also contributed to the professional and creative classes in Detroit. As discussed in the "Cultural Movement: Arts and Media in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980" section of this MPDF, Latinx women led several folkloric dance groups that performed at local festivals and gatherings.[305] Latinx women also contributed to their communities through their involvement in the arts, especially during the 1970s as the Latino Civil Rights movement flourished. Numerous Latinx female painters, multimedia artists, ceramicists, and additional artists have been based in Detroit. Several female artists worked with local organizations, such as Casa de Unidad, to not only display their work but also conduct creative workshops for community members.[306] From Southwest Detroit, Cindy Estrada has achieved labor organizing success as the United Autoworker's Vice President and is the highest-ranking Latina (and female) in the UAW. In the 1980s and 1990s, she was drawn to union organizing following her work with the United Farm Workers (UFW) and her work towards unionization of local industrial company, Mexican Industries.[307] Women likewise contributed to Latinx education. They assisted with the creation of the Center for Chicano-Boricua Studies at Wayne State University in 1971. Working as teachers and counselors in Latinx neighborhood schools, they advocated for the creation of bilingual education programs in Detroit's schools.[308]

---

[301] Vargas, "Life and Community," 55; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 23.
[302] "Briggs Strikers in Biggest Picket Demonstration of 15,000," *The Daily Worker*, January 31, 1933.
[303] Jane Briggs, "81 Farm Union Pickets Arrested at 3 A&Ps," *Detroit Free Press*, December 2, 1973; William S. Welt, "Cesar Chavez in the City of Unions: Of UAWs, UFWs, Teamsters and Exceedingly Sour Grapes," *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 1974.
[304] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 23.
[305] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 24; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 17, 87.
[306] *10th Annual Michigan Hispanic Artists Exhibition* (Detroit, MI: [St. Anne de Detroit and Bowen Branch Library?], [2000?]), 1-2, from Box 3, Ana Luisa Cardona Papers, 1973-2011, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
[307] Greg Gardner, "Auto Talks: A Winding Journey to The Bargaining Table," *Detroit Free Press*, May 18, 2015; Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023.
[308] "Spanish-Americans Make Accusations," *Detroit Free Press*, November 28, 1969;

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual, and Additional Identities (LGBTIQA+) Culture in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980

LGBTIQA+ people have always been a part of Detroit's history, even if archival and documentary sources related to their histories are scant, and assuredly members of Detroit's Latinx communities have identified, and identify, as LGBTIQA+. Therefore, the timeline associated with this context of the MPDF mirrors that of the other major contexts. Social groups, community organizations, neighborhoods, and social spaces such as bars served, and continue to serve, core functions within LGBTIQA+ communities providing safe, supportive spaces.[309] LGBTIQA+ is an evolving acronym standing for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and/or questioning, asexual, and additional identities.[310]

Voguing and Ballroom Culture in Detroit

Detroit's decades-old voguing and ballroom scene has provided a safe space for local LGBTIQA+ people to express themselves and their identities. Voguing describes an expressive art form conveyed through movement, creating a highly stylized dance that originated in the Black and Latinx LGBTIQA+ communities in Harlem in New York City beginning in the 1960s. Musical artist Madonna was influenced by the stylized dance moves and brought voguing to the cultural mainstream with her 1990 hit, "Vogue."[311] Voguing became part of an active underground scene where "balls" were held and "houses," composed of Black and Latinx voguers, engaged in voguing competitions as part of the ballroom culture. Ballroom culture differs from historical ballroom dancing in many ways, such as the expressive, stylized nature of ballroom culture dancing and the culture's orientation towards LGBTIQA+ people. Many members of the ballroom culture have experienced ostracization from their

---

"Haney's People," *Detroit Free Press*, July 25, 1971; *Norwester* (Detroit, MI: Northwestern High School, 1965), yearbook, Ancestry.com, 14; *Norwester: Northwestern High School* (Detroit, MI: Northwestern High School, 1966), yearbook, Ancestry.com, 20; *Norwester* (Detroit, MI: Northwestern High School, 1967), yearbook, Ancestry.com, 46.

309 Jesus Ramirez-Valles, *Compañeros: Latino Activists in the Face of AIDS* (Urbana: IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 82.

310 "What does LGBTIA+ mean?" La Trobe University, accessed March 30, 2023, https://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/support/wellbeing/resource-hub/lgbtiqa/what-lgbtiqa-means.

311 "The 100 Best Dance Songs of All Time," *Slant*, June 15, 2020, accessed August 22, 2023, https://www.slantmagazine.com/music/100-greatest-dance-songs/.

birth families because of their identities and turn to the ballroom scene for a support system.[312] While Detroit's scene is largely composed of Black people, a small number of Detroit's voguers identify as Latinx.[313] The balls provided a space for LGBTIQA+ Black and Latinx people to express themselves freely and become part of a broader community accepting of their identities.[314]

Locations that developed an association with Detroit's ballroom culture were typically home to bars, clubs, and spaces already frequented by members of the LGBTIQA+ communities. The Woodward, located at 6426 Woodward Avenue, opened in 1954 and soon became a space frequented by Wayne State University's LGBTIQA+ communities.[315] As ballroom culture evolved in Detroit by the early 2000s, the bar hosted ballroom events. Sadly, a severe fire burned the longstanding bar in June 2022.[316] A building on Detroit's east side became an "iconic" space in the early 2000s for hosting several major ballroom gatherings.[317] The Ruth Ellis Center, located at 77 Victor Street (extant) in Highland Park, is a LGBTIQA+ community center where members of Detroit's LGBTIQA+ gather, and where many

---

[312] Sachin Bhola, "Meeting the Inspiring LGBTQ+ Youth Behind Detroit's Ballroom Vogue Scene," Highsnobiety, accessed March 30, 2023, https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/adidas-forum-detroit/; Ellen Shanna Knoppow, "How Two Detroit Ballroom Godmothers Made Sure VICE Got the Whole Story About Murdered Trans Woman Kelly Stough," Pride Source, July 26, 2021, accessed March 30, 2023, https://pridesource.com/article/detroit-ballroom-godmothers/; The Neighborhoods, "Vogue in Detroit: Leaving it all on the Floor," video, 2019, Facebook, accessed March 31, 2023, ttps://www.facebook.com/storiesfromdet/videos/669077333506018/?locale=ur_PK.

[313] Marlon M. Bailey, "Performance as Intravention: Ballroom Culture and the Politics of HIV-AIDS in Detroit," *Souls* 11, no. 3 (2009), 273 n31.

[314] "A Brief History of Voguing," National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian, accessed March 30, 2023, https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/brief-history-voguing.

[315] Serena Maria Daniels, "Historic LGBTQ Spot Woodward Bar & Grill Destroyed in Fire," Eater Detroit, June 15, 2022, accessed March 30, 2023, https://detroit.eater.com/2022/6/15/23169587/lgbtq-woodward-bar-grill-destroyed-in-fire.

[316] Sachin Bhola, "Meeting the Inspiring LGBTQ+ Youth Behind Detroit's Ballroom Vogue Scene," Highsnobiety, accessed March 30, 2023, https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/adidas-forum-detroit/; Serena Maria Daniels, "Historic LGBTQ Spot Woodward Bar & Grill Destroyed in Fire," Eater Detroit, June 15, 2022, accessed March 30, 2023, https://detroit.eater.com/2022/6/15/23169587/lgbtq-woodward-bar-grill-destroyed-in-fire.

[317] The exact location is not listed out of protection for members of the LGBTIQA+ communities. Sachin Bhola, "Meeting the Inspiring LGBTQ+ Youth Behind Detroit's Ballroom Vogue Scene," Highsnobiety, accessed March 30, 2023, https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/adidas-forum-detroit/.

members of Detroit's Ballroom and Vogue scene congregate.[318] The center opened in 2000 and serves as an event and practice space for balls.[319]

Politics in Latinx Detroit, 1915-1980

Class-based, political, and religious groups existed, and exist, within Detroit's Latinx communities. The communities are not a singular entity but are composed of distinct yet related groups that support various viewpoints on issues related to the broader community.[320] Yet subgroups within Detroit's Latinx communities have traditionally organized to advance the broader interests of Latinx communities.[321] As Latinx communities grew in Detroit throughout the twentieth century and participated in the Latinx Civil Rights movement, community leaders acknowledged the importance of political action. As such, political organizations promoting the needs of Detroit's Latinx communities have developed to promote political involvement, awareness, and education.[322]

From the Latinx community's beginnings in the early twentieth century people within the communities have held opposing viewpoints. Diego Rivera's work in Detroit's Mexican and Mexican American community in 1932 and the socialist ideology he espoused made those who were devoted to the Catholic church uncomfortable with the "communist activity" related to Rivera.[323] During the 1950s and 1960s, several thousand Cuban refugees came to the United States fleeing the Cuban Revolution. Supported through resettlement programs operated by the federal government, Cubans from largely white-collar backgrounds were resettled throughout the United States and generally maintained their dislike of Fidel Castro. However, Detroit's Cuban community was discordant in that a celebration of around three hundred people celebrated Castro's defeat of Fulgencio Batista at Hispanos Unidos Hall at 1920 25th Street (extant) alongside representatives of the 26th of July Movement, the revolutionary organization associated with Castro's political party.[324]

An influential organization in Detroit's Mexican American community was Mexican American Legion

---

318 "Ruth Ellis Center," Ruth Ellis Center, accessed March 30, 2023, https://www.ruthelliscenter.org/.
319 Alexa Capeloto, "Ruth Ellis: Set Example For The Gay Community," *Detroit Free Press*, October 6, 2000; Gus Burns, "Underground Dance Trend Unites Homeless Detroit-area LGBT Youth," MLive, August 21, 2013, accessed March 30, 2023, https://www.mlive.com/news/detroit/2013/08/vogue_underground_lgbt_dance_c.html.
320 Miner, "El Renegado Comunista Diego Rivera," 655.
321 Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 37.
322 James Harper, "90,000 Latins: Our Forgotten Minority," *Detroit Free Press*, February 7, 1972.
323 Vargas, *Proletariats*, 180.
324 John Mueller, "Detroit Cubans Rejoice At Rally," *Detroit Free Press*, January 12, 1959.

Post #505 located at 3600 Cicotte Street (not extant).[325] The post was founded in 1946 by Mexican American veterans of World War II in response to discrimination they faced upon returning to civilian life after the war.[326] In 1966, *Seglares en Accíon* (Laymen in Action) organized a protest on Easter Sunday through Mexicantown in support of securing livable wages for Michigan's migrant farm workers. Around two hundred residents and members of the Mexican American Post #505 took part in the protest.[327]

Prior to the Latinx Civil Rights movement in the late 1960s, national organizations concerned with Latinx issues, particularly those of Mexicans and Mexican Americans as they composed the majority of Detroit's Latinx population, established local Detroit offices. These included the American G.I. Forum and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).[328] Another politically oriented group, La Raza Unida, was a "coalition of Mexican American groups in Michigan."[329] Through political action and activism, the group sought to address issues faced by Mexican Americans in Michigan, hire Mexican Americans in government positions, and address the needs of farmworkers and those in need of adequate housing.[330] Several other groups formed at the local level through the efforts of Latinx citizens using experience gained through unionization and with assistance from local churches. In 1969, the social service agency Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development (LA SED) was formed through the work of Latin Americans United for Political Action (LAUPA) and federal funding. Several other smaller agencies were developed targeting the needs of distinct ethnic groups beneath the Latinx umbrella.[331]

The Brown Berets and the Young Lords were two progressive groups formed alongside the Latinx Civil Rights movement that were largely driven by younger people who sought to address issues faced by Latinx people in urban areas throughout the United States.[332] Modeled after Black organizations like the Black Panther Party, the Los Angeles-based Brown Berets acted to gain equality in housing, education,

---

[325] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 145; "Legion Post To Hold Dance," *Detroit Free Press*, June 14, 1962; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 36.
[326] Lara, "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit," 145; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 86; Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 36.
[327] Patrick J. Owens, "Latins Protest Farm Pay," *Detroit Free Press*, April 11, 1966.
[328] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 46.
[329] "Mexican-American Workers Seek Talks with Milliken," *Detroit Free Press*, August 23, 1969.
[330] "Mexican-American Workers Seek Talks with Milliken," *Detroit Free Press*, August 23, 1969.
[331] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 46-47.
[332] Badillo, *Latinos in Michigan*, 46.

and employment for Mexican and Mexican American people through their Detroit branch.[333] The Detroit branch was involved in various activities such as picketing the headquarters of the Detroit Police Department, supporting the UFWOC grape boycotts, and calling attention to substandard housing.[334] The Young Lords was a local group that originated in the Old Town neighborhood of Chicago in the late 1950s. It developed to address needs of Chicago's Puerto Rican residents with issues such as access to education, political power, and equal opportunity.[335] The Young Lords expanded throughout the 1960s and some Puerto Rican Detroiters were affiliated with the organization.[336]

The political activist work of Detroit's Latinx communities continued. During the 1980s, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Educational Fund (PRLDEF) and additional Latinx groups fought for redistricting to allow Latinx residents to have political representation.[337] As undocumented immigration became a significant topic in the United State political discourse in the 1980s, 1990s, and into the twenty-first century, Detroit's Latinx political activists have fought for the rights of undocumented immigrants with the communities. Protests, pickets, and community engagement have been utilized to support undocumented immigrants within the communities.[338]

Latinx Civil Rights Movement, 1968-1980

The Latinx Civil Rights movement described in this context references the Chicano/a Civil Rights movement. The terminology Latinx has been used in place of the term Chicano/a to include the varied Latinx communities that took part in the movement. The term "Chicano" is thought to have originated in the 1920s and may have been used by Mexican immigrant laborers. Beginning in the 1940s, the term

---

[333] "Chicano Movements: A Geographic History," Mapping American Social Movements Project, University of Washington, accessed April 19, 2023, https://depts.washington.edu/moves/Chicano_geography.shtml; Darrel Enck-Wanzer, ed., *The Young Lords: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 27-28.
[334] "Brown Power," *Detroit Free Press*, April 11, 1969; "Grape Boycotters, Opponents Stage Debate In Church," *Detroit Free Press*, April 11, 1969; George Cantor, "Tenants Black Prefabs As 'Shoddy' Housing," *Detroit Free Press*, August 7, 1970.
[335] Enck-Wanzer, *The Young Lords*, 27-29.
[336] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023.
[337] Ricardo Parra, "Latinos in the Midwest: Civil Rights and Community Organization," in *La Causa: Civil Rights, Social Justice and the Struggle for Equality in the Midwest*, ed. Gilberto Cárdenas (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2004), 13.
[338] Raymond Lozano, Executive Director, Mexicantown Community Development Corporation; community elder and historian; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 24, 2023.

gained usage from young, second-generation Mexican Americans, particularly those aligned with countercultural movements.[339] While the Latinx Civil Rights movement is largely associated with Mexican Americans, as they made up the majority of Latinx people in the United States, the movement was nonetheless perpetuated by members of additional communities beneath the Latinx umbrella.[340]

Inspired by the Black Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and Detroit's 1967 rebellion, activists in the Latinx Civil Rights movement, many of whom were young adults and students, called attention to the neglect, mistreatment, and discrimination faced by Mexicans and Mexican Americans and additional Latinx residents. Key issues included the need for bilingual education programs in area schools and the need for representation of Latinx people in local and state government. Residents became a part of existing political action groups like the Brown Berets, the Young Lords, La Raza Unida party, while forming several local groups to address these issues. The Committee of Concerned Spanish Speaking Americans (CCSSA) was one local group composed of Mexican, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Cuban activists who tackled issues in education by working to increase the number of Latinx teachers in Detroit's public schools and incorporate Latinx history into the curriculum.[341]

A direct outcome and one of the greatest achievements of the Latinx Civil Rights movement was a renewed sense of pride in Latinx cultures and the establishment of Latinx studies programs at universities throughout the United States.[342] Wayne State University's Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies was born from the Latinx Civil Rights movement in Detroit. Established in 1971, the original name for the department was Latino En Marcha, which was changed to the Center for Chicano-Boricua Studies shortly after the department was established.[343] Establishment of the department is a direct reflection of the actions of Detroit's Mexican and Puerto Rican communities. Supporters from the two communities worked together to develop the program. New Detroit and LA SED were two local organizations that aided in the creation of the program. New Detroit was an organization created following the 1967 uprising to address urban issues in Detroit, and LA SED, formed in 1969, is another community service organization based in Southwest Detroit.[344] In 2011, the department's name was

[339] Mario T. García, "Introduction: The Chicano Movement, Chicano History, and the New American Narrative," in *Rewriting the Chicano Movement: New Histories of Mexican American Activism in the Civil Rights Era*, ed. Mario T. García and Ellen McCracken (Bielefeld, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2021), 3.
[340] García, "Introduction: The Chicano Movement," 6.
[341] Alvarado and Alvarado, *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*, 44-45.
[342] García, "Introduction: The Chicano Movement," 5-6; Sommers and Casa de Unidad, *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*, 24-25.
[343] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 7, 2023.
[344] Ozzie Rivera, "Pensamientos y Recuerdos: The Center for Latino and Latin American

changed to the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies to reflect the multifaceted Latinx communities within Detroit.[345]

Other achievements of the movement include the creation of bilingual educational programs and addressing inequalities in housing.[346] Organizations within Detroit's Latinx communities had to fight for the development of bilingual education programs for their children and access to bilingual officials in government offices.[347] Gloria Lopez McKnight, a social worker and activist associated with the Latin American Coordinating Council of Detroit and other organizations in Detroit, testified to a United States Senate subcommittee on the prevalence of substandard Federal Housing Administration (FHA) homes available to the poor and working class in Spanish-speaking areas of Detroit.[348]

Education in Detroit's Latinx Communities, 1915-1980

Detroit Public Schools

During the early twentieth century when Latinx immigration and migration to Detroit increased, Detroit's public school system had a large and successful series of elementary, middle, and high schools located throughout the city. Educational opportunities available in the United States helped draw Latinx immigrants across the border. Yet integration into the public schools was initially difficult due to language barriers and because many Mexican and Mexican American immigrants coming to Detroit often had little formal education as opportunities were limited in many areas of Mexico.[349] Additionally, newly arrived children typically spoke little English as Spanish, or other dialects, was the primary language used at home.[350] Common practice was to place students who could not speak English in

Studies Celebrates 50 Years in October!" *El Central*, April 22, 2021; "New Detroit Adds 10 New Members," *Detroit Free Press*, September 3, 1968.

[345] "About," Latino/a and Latin American Studies," Wayne State University, accessed March 31, 2023, https://las.wayne.edu/about.

[346] García, "Introduction: The Chicano Movement," 5-6.

[347] Judy Sarasohn, "City's Latins Seek Reforms," *Detroit Free Press*, August 3, 1971; Raymond Lozano, Executive Director, Mexicantown Community Development Corporation; community elder and historian; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 24, 2023.

[348] "Angry Poor Ask Housing Reform," *Detroit Free Press*, May 2, 1972; John Flynn, "Hispanic Meet Gets Off to Slow Start in Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, June 30, 1983.

[349] Norman D. Humphrey, "The Education and Language of Detroit Mexicans," *The Journal of Educational Sociology* 17 (May 1944), 534.

[350] Murillo, "The Detroit Mexican Colonia," 45.

remedial or special education classes, regardless of their actual need for these types of classes.[351]

In an effort to help alleviate the language barrier, education programs in the local schools and community centers were established. In 1929, the International Institute created language programs and coursework to teach English to non-native-speaking children and adults. The City of Detroit also sponsored night school classes at Highland Park High School. The schools where most Latinx children attended were predominately located in the neighborhoods where they lived. Therefore, schools in Southwest Detroit and Corktown largely served the Latinx communities.[352]

A common theme in the early twentieth century were educational programs that sought to focus on "Americanizing" Latinx immigrants. This phenomenon was widespread, happening not just in Detroit but in other Midwest cities like Chicago.[353] Assimilation was the end goal.[354] To combat these indoctrination efforts, some Latinx community groups organized classes to teach children about their heritage, language, and history.[355] By 1941, the principal of Northeastern High School, which had a sizable Mexican and Mexican American population, spoke about encouraging students to embrace their heritage.[356]

Although educational programs by organizations like the International Institute were helpful, the sporadic application of bilingual education inside Detroit's public school system became a longstanding and significant issue. By the mid-twentieth century Latinx community members, who, increasingly, had more organizational and political capital with which to protest the educational deficiencies, began campaigning for better schooling facilities, bilingual educational programs, and more Latinx representation within the schools. In the 1970s local activists successfully fought for greater representation of Latinx faculty in the school system.[357] In 1975, due in large part to the practice of

---

[351] Raymond Lozano, Executive Director, Mexicantown Community Development Corporation; community elder and historian; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 24, 2023; Laura Chavez-Wazeerud-Din, President and CEO, Southwest Detroit Business Association, CAG member; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 25, 2023.
[352] Humphrey, "The Education and Language," 541; Vargas, *Proletariats*, 155.
[353] Juan R. Garcia, *Mexicans in the Midwest 1900-1932* (University of Arizona Press: Tucson, AZ, 1996), 168.
[354] Vargas, "Mexican Autoworkers at Ford Motor Company," 69-70.
[355] Garcia, *Mexicans in the Midwest 1900-1932*, 168; "International Y Comes of Age," *Detroit Free Press*, October 6, 1940.
[356] Paul M. Deac, "Center is Hub of 40 Nations," *Detroit Free Press*, January 19, 1941.
[357] "Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools: A Status Report, U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, National Institute of Education, February 1979,"

placing Spanish speaking children into special education classes, LA SED filed a lawsuit against the Board of Education. The lawsuit sought to stop the longstanding practice and instead place Spanish speaking students into language classes where their needs could be adequately addressed.[358] Local Latinx activists were important advocates pushing for more equitable educational facilities, courses, and programs for Latinx youth. It was also in the 1970s when the Bowen branch of the Detroit Public Library began offering bilingual services and content to better reach the Latinx residents in the surrounding community.

Parochial Catholic Schools

Being that Detroit was founded by French Catholic settlers, parochial Catholic schools have a long history in Detroit. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Detroit experienced significant influxes of Catholic immigrants, including Catholic Latinx immigrants beginning in the early 1900s. Immigrants often brought their Catholic faith and religious customs to Detroit when they settled in the city, and the tremendous population growth of Catholic residents to the city created a need for Catholic-centered education in the city. By the time Latinx people came to Detroit, parochial Catholic school systems were already established. Latinx families often preferred sending their children to Catholic schools since their faith was intertwined with their culture and identity. The parochial schools at Most Holy Redeemer Church and Most Holy Trinity Church had significant Latinx student populations through the twentieth century.[359] These parochial schools were important components of the educational landscape. However, by the 1960s and 1970s Catholic parishes, struggling with declining enrollment, began closing some of their parochial schools, thus forcing Latinx students to travel longer distances to other Catholic schools or attend local public schools.[360]

---

accessed August 28, 2023, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fu
lltext/ED167688.pdf.

[358] Raymond Lozano, Executive Director, Mexicantown Community Development Corporation; community elder and historian; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, August 24, 2023; William Grant, "Latino Group Sues Schools," *Detroit Free Press*, August 14, 1975.

[359] Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 13, 2023; Maria Elena Rodriguez, Author (Detroit's Mexicantown), CAG member interview by Lillian Candela, Kraemer Design Group, June 27, 2023.

[360] Marla O. Cullum, Barbara E. Krueger, Dorothy Kostuch, ed., *Detroit's Historic Places of Worship* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2012), 177; Osvaldo (Ozzie) Rivera, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, June 13, 2023.

Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of Multiple Listing

Detroit, Wayne County, MI
County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number E Page 55

Conclusion

The survey report and the survey inventory forms for this reconnaissance and intensive survey are intended to provide a baseline of historic analysis of the Latinx community in Detroit, Michigan. The survey spanned from March of 2023 to October of 2023 with the final deliverable tendered to the City of Detroit's Historic Designation Advisory Board's (HDAB) office on October 4, 2023. This survey report is not definitive but rather it is a starting point for analysis and future planning and research. The survey report, the survey inventory forms, survey photographs, archival resources, historic photographs, and the GIS shape files have been provided to HDAB as a primary deliverable of this project.

As a significant constituent population of Detroit, the Latinx community has made an indelible impact on the history of the city which are ripe for future study and preservation planning. Further research is important as historic preservation planning efforts that are based on sound data can have significant positive economic and cultural benefits for the recipient communities. Moreover, historic preservation efforts can help build a positive local identity by recognizing the cultural heritage that makes the studies sites unique. Recognizing and revitalizing historic sites and neighborhoods which have a long history of importance to the Latinx community can create a sense of place that can be a catalyst for further planning and preservation efforts. Historic preservation creates construction jobs and studies show that properties in historic districts appreciate faster than those outside of designated districts—in fact, rent data released by PlaceEconomics indicates that density is higher in historic district versus other areas of the studied cities.[361] Heritage tourism, while relatively new, is a burgeoning area to explore especially since the Latinx community's social, cultural, and architectural legacy is so rich.

With a goal of researching and documenting sites of importance to the Latinx community the project progressed from initial research to fieldwork, to survey analysis, to, finally, drawing conclusions from the data found and writing this survey report. This report attempts to integrate all of this information and is intended to provide a basis upon which the City of Detroit, interested citizens, and the State of Michigan can continue to build as planning progresses. It is the intent of this survey to provide recommendations for additional research and to identify areas that would most benefit from intensive level study and/or future preservation planning activities, whether a National Register nomination, creation of a local historic district, or other preservation mechanisms.

[361] "Population Density in Historic Districts vs Rest of City," PlaceEconomics, accessed February 4, 2022, https://www.placeeconomics.com/.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
County and State Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

F. Associated Property Types

Places related to Detroit's Latinx communities are wide-ranging but are drawn together through their shared significance to the histories and experiences of Detroit's Latinx communities and their location within the present-day boundaries of the City of Detroit. This Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) is not the definitive text on Latinx histories in Detroit but provides broad thematic outlines relating to Latinx histories that can be used to evaluate districts, buildings, sites, structures, and objects for significance within the themes identified in this document and to nominate significant places to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) at the local level. This document can also function as a starting point for evaluating important places at the state and national levels. The MPDF can aid in the creation of local historic districts as it identifies broad historic themes related to Latinx histories and identifies property types that may be significant under the National Register criteria.

While Latinx communities are largely concentrated in and around Southwest Detroit and Corktown, property types located anywhere within Detroit's boundary may be nominated under this MPDF if the district, building, site, structure, or object has direct and significant connections to one or more of the themes and periods identified within this MPDF and meets the registration requirements described in this MPDF. Additionally, some buildings may already be listed in the NRHP, and the existing nomination can be amended to document the property's significance under this MPDF.

To establish the significance of properties under this MPDF, properties must be compared to other properties with similar historical associations within the same historic context. However, a property need not be the first, best, or most within a theme, but must directly express an important aspect (or aspects) of a particular theme. The themes, trends, or events directly expressed through the property that are most significant to Latinx histories should be selected when evaluating historic significance.

Additional information regarding the selection of criteria, areas of significance, and the evaluation of integrity are published in National Register Bulletin 16A, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*; National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*; and property-type specific bulletins, which are all available from the National Register of Historic Places website. In addition, *General Guidance and Requirements for National Register of Historic Places Nominations in Michigan* and other guidance is available from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) website and are intended to be used in conjunction with the registration requirements for each property type discussed below.

The property types described in this MPDF represent the most common property types identified through a survey of fifty sites associated with Latinx histories in Detroit. Additional property types not listed may be significant under this MPDF through direct and significant relationships to one or more of the themes discussed in this MPDF, and by the retention of integrity as described in National Register Bulletin 15.

Districts

Subtype: Commercial District

Districts reflect a concentrated group of properties that illustrate their significance to important historic themes through the collective significance of resources within the district. Detroit's Latinx residents established several commercial districts that met the varied needs of Latinx residents and may be significant in terms of their importance to historic themes within this MPDF. Commercial spaces include markets, restaurants, tortilla factories, bars, theaters, offices, record stores, and other commercial spaces. Latinx residential neighborhoods typically developed in older, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and spurred the development of local commercial corridors that served the surrounding Latinx communities. Therefore, Latinx commercial spaces tend to be clustered along older commercial corridors such as West Vernor Highway and Bagley Street. Additionally, commercial districts can contain other property types such as residences, religious buildings, schools, and community spaces.

Within a commercial district, architectural styles and forms of buildings typically correspond to the period within which the building was constructed, but it was not uncommon for Latinx business owners to modify the exterior of their buildings incorporating architectural elements reminiscent of the Spanish Revival, Pueblo Revival, and Mission Revival styles. Modifications may include the application of stucco to the building's exterior, addition of cast iron decoration around windows and doors, incorporation of red clay tiles onto roof features, alteration of existing window openings, and the creation of murals. The presence of such alterations will not automatically disqualify a property from contributing to a district. Rather, such modifications may be important features that help to convey the significance of the resource within the district. Research will be required to determine the date of alterations and who made the alterations.

Subtype: Residential District

Detroit's Latinx residents have established several residential neighborhoods that have been, and continue to be, home to members of the Latinx communities. Districts reflect a concentrated group of properties that illustrate their significance to important historic themes through the collective significance of properties within the district. A residential district containing significant Latinx residences that is connected to one or more of the historic themes identified within this MPDF may be eligible for listing in the NRHP. Additionally, residential districts can contain other property types such as commercial buildings, religious buildings, schools, and community spaces.

Architectural styles typically correspond to the period within which the building was constructed. However, Latinx property owners may have modified the exterior of their buildings to incorporate architectural elements reminiscent of Spanish Revival, Pueblo Revival, and Mission Revival styles.

Alterations may include the application of stucco to the building's exterior, the addition of cast iron decoration around windows and doors, and the addition of wrought iron fencing around the perimeter of the property. Additions to residential buildings and the enclosure of porches were also common due to the modest size of houses and the desire for more interior space, and research will be required to determine the date of alterations and who made the alterations. The presence of such alterations will not automatically disqualify a property from contributing to a district as long as the ability of the building to convey its significance to the district remains. Cultural landscape elements in the residential districts include religious iconography such as statues of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as well as the Virgin Mary. These cultural landscape elements are diminishing in numbers today.

Significance

Criterion A

Commercial, residential, religious, educational, and community buildings as part of a district that have a direct and significant connection to the themes within this MPDF will be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for their direct association with significant events that have made an important contribution to the broad themes of Latinx histories in Detroit. The district may relate to multiple areas of significance including Commerce, Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Religion, and Education. Additional areas of significance based on associations with historic contexts within the MPDF may be applicable.

Individual resources will contribute to the collective significance of the district. Commercial districts that are significant will reflect the confluence of Latinx businesses and institutions and the ability of Latinx people to establish their own businesses catering to the unique needs of Latinx residents. Districts with commercial buildings containing businesses providing access to foods, baked goods, music, and other goods and services nurtured the connection between Latinx residents and aspects of their cultural heritage. Businesses also provided income to local Latinx residents, many of whom lived in the neighborhoods around their business, and job opportunities to local Latinx individuals. Significant residential districts will reflect a direct connection to significant themes in Latinx histories. Examples may include neighborhoods that were home to concentrations of residents actively involved in historic themes discussed within this MPDF, such as significant musicians or politically active residents.

Criterion C

Criterion C will apply if a district embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic value, or is both significant and distinguishable although the buildings within the district may lack individual distinction. For example, a commercial or residential district containing a collection of buildings constructed or altered by an

important Latinx builder, architect, or artist, may be eligible under Criterion C. Additionally; to be nominated under this MPDF, a district's significance will directly and significantly relate to the Latinx themes within this MPDF. It is important to note that districts eligible under Criterion C can contain buildings that have been altered, as long as the ability of the building to convey its significance to the district remains. It is possible that the alteration of the buildings creates the "distinguishable entity." Older Detroit Latinx districts, whether commercial or residential, may have the imprint of the new Latinx occupants in the form of alterations that reflect heritage. Criterion C intersects with Ethnic Heritage in these districts; and can be interpreted as important physical qualities (Criterion C, perhaps with art or architecture as the Area of Significance) that are associated with Ethnic Heritage (Criterion A).

Registration Requirements

For a district to be eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance under this MPDF, four requirements must be met. First, the district must have a direct and significant connection to one or more of the historic themes within this MPDF. Second, a district must be located within the city of Detroit, but it does not need to be located in a specific area of the city. Third, the time period within which the district achieved significance must be within the period of significance of the applicable historic context. Finally, the district must, as a whole, retain integrity such that the significance of the district is conveyed.

Key characteristics of historic districts under this MPDF include physical proximity and shared events, patterns of events, persons, or organizations, be they commercial, social, civic, education, and so forth that are related to important aspects of the Latinx experience in Detroit. A historic district will be important for its historical connections, its architectural linkages, or both. When a district is significant for its historical associations, the resources of the district must be able to express how significant individuals, events, or organizations contributed to the development of the district.

For a building within a district to contribute to the district, a building must meet three requirements. First, a contributing building will illustrate a direct and significant connection to the significant themes that are associated with the district's history, second, the building will have acquired significance during the period within which the district is significant, and third, the building must retain integrity.

Outbuildings may be present within a district, and include sheds, garages, and other small-scale buildings and structures. Outbuildings may be considered contributing resources if they were constructed during the period of significance, are related to a primary resource, and possess integrity. Outbuildings no longer associated with a primary resource may be a contributing resource if they have a direct and important association with historic events or patterns of events distinct from its primary resource and it must retain integrity. Although unlikely, an outbuilding no longer associated with a primary resource, but that exhibits important or rare design characteristics may also contribute to the

significance of the district, depending on the significance of the district itself.

Not every aspect of integrity must be present for a district to retain integrity. Each aspect of integrity present—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—work together to illustrate the district's connection to important Latinx historic themes. The significance of a district must be understood to determine which of the seven aspects of integrity are most important to convey the district's importance. The district's associative qualities are evaluated to directly convey its significance to Latinx historic themes. The analysis of integrity must consider that the criteria selection influences the aspects of integrity that are most important. For instance, the retention of integrity in terms of design, materials, and workmanship acquires greater importance to districts qualifying for the NRHP under Criterion C.

Under Criteria A, B, and C, the retention of physical, character-defining features from the period of significance that illustrate the district's direct and significant connection to Latinx historic themes are important components of assessing integrity. Physical features of districts such as their spatial organization including street intersections, roads, sidewalks, lot sizes, setbacks, and other physical components provide a visual connection to the historic themes. Retention of physical features of resources that contribute to the district are also important and provide a visual connection to the past. This is especially relevant to Criterion C, and therefore, the retention of entrances, porches, windows and fenestration patterns, exterior cladding (such as wood siding, brick, brick veneer, stone veneer, etc.), of individual resources is important. Exterior features such as cladding may be important if they have been altered in a way that reflects Latinx heritage, for example, the use of stucco.

Areas with several commercial spaces or residences that have an association with Detroit's Latinx communities are not automatically significant or eligible for listing in the NRHP. Districts must directly illustrate important aspects of the themes within this MPDF and retain integrity that conveys the district's significance. Additionally, the district must be documented at an appropriate level and compared to similar districts within the city to illustrate the relative significance of the district within the broader contexts of Latinx histories.

Buildings

Subtype: Commercial Buildings

Most individual commercial or institutional buildings will be eligible under the Latinx themes using Criterion A. Commercial buildings that have a direct and significant association with the themes identified in this MPDF may include markets, shops, restaurants, bakeries, tortilla factories, bars, nightclubs, theaters, offices, record stores, and other commercial spaces. Additionally, commercial districts will be eligible under the Latinx themes using Criterion A. Latinx residents typically operated businesses out of older, existing commercial buildings, but others may have constructed new buildings for their businesses within existing commercial areas. Therefore, Latinx commercial buildings tend to be

located along older commercial corridors and the intersections of major streets in commercial blocks or standalone buildings. This reflects the tendency for Latinx commercial spaces to be housed in older areas of Detroit, along pedestrian-friendly commercial corridors that were constructed prior to the proliferation of the automobile. Commercial buildings nestled in residential neighborhoods are typically one or two stories tall and are of small-to-moderate size. Additionally, residential buildings were sometimes used as early commercial spaces by Latinx entrepreneurs. Thus, residential, and other types of buildings or sites, may have functioned as commercial spaces. When this is the case, evaluation of these buildings should include an analysis of significance under Commerce.

Architectural styles and building forms of repurposed buildings typically correspond to the period within which the building was constructed, but it was not uncommon for Latinx business owners to modify the exterior of their buildings incorporating architectural elements reminiscent of the Spanish Revival, Pueblo Revival, and Mission Revival styles. Modifications may include the application of stucco to the building's exterior, addition of cast iron decoration around windows and doors, incorporation of red clay tiles onto roof features, alteration of existing window openings, and creation of murals. Research will be required to determine the date of alterations and who made the alterations. However, the presence of such alterations will not automatically disqualify a property from listing in the NRHP as long as the ability of the building to convey its significant relationship to Latinx histories within this MPDF remains. It is possible that an individual building can meet Criterion A under this MPDF but also independently meet Criterion C. One area of significance can associated with the Latinx theme, in addition to others.

Subtype: Residential Buildings

Single-family homes, multi-family homes, apartment buildings, or other buildings utilized as living spaces illustrate residential building types that may have a direct and significant connection to the themes within this MPDF. Residential buildings may have been constructed during the period of significance of the applicable historic contexts or earlier as Latinx residents typically lived in Detroit's older, working-class residential neighborhoods. These neighborhoods became available to Latinx residents when existing residents moved to the suburbs or newer neighborhoods in the city. As such, Latinx residential buildings tend to be located around Detroit's downtown core and near older commercial corridors. Residential buildings will typically be modest in scale, size, and architectural ornament. Residential buildings were sometimes used as early commercial spaces by Latinx entrepreneurs before moving to dedicated commercial spaces, while some entrepreneurs may have kept their business within a residential building.

Architectural styles typically correspond to the period within which the building was constructed. However, Latinx property owners may have modified the exterior of their buildings to incorporate architectural elements reminiscent of Spanish Revival, Pueblo Revival, and Mission Revival styles.

Most likely Criteria A or B are most likely to apply to individual residential buildings. Criterion C would apply when there is a conscious decision to reflect Ethic heritage through the initial design or modification. Alterations may include the application of stucco to the building's exterior and the addition of cast iron decoration around windows and doors. Additions to residential buildings and the enclosure of porches were also common due to the modest size of houses and the desire for more interior space. The presence of such alterations will not automatically disqualify a property from listing in the NRHP as long as the ability of the building to convey its significant relationship to Latinx histories within this MPDF remains. Research will be required to determine the date of alterations, who made the alterations, and whether such alterations have impacted the integrity of the property.

Subtype: Religious Buildings

Religious buildings with a direct and significant connection with the themes within this MPDF may be significant under this property type. These buildings provided space for residents to perform religious practices, connect with members of their communities, and maintain traditional cultural practices. Support for Latinx communities often flowed through Detroit's religious institutions, with churches providing social services, holding cultural celebrations, and advocating for Latinx residents. As the proportion of Latinx residents in neighborhoods grew, neighborhood churches usually responded by offering Spanish-language masses and hosting cultural activities.

Religious buildings may date to the period of significance of the applicable historic contexts and earlier as Latinx residents typically attended existing churches within their neighborhoods that were constructed by earlier European immigrants. Given the limited funding available to the majority of Latinx residents, religious buildings constructed by the Latinx communities are typically more modest in scale and ornamentation compared to already established churches. For example, Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Church (not extant) was a modest, rectangular church with a white clapboard exterior. Therefore, the size and appearance of religious buildings associated with the Latinx communities can vary widely. Architectural styles of existing churches and those constructed by Latinx communities typically correspond to the period within which the building was constructed. Criteria A and B are most likely to apply to religious buildings in the Latinx communities of Detroit.

Subtype: Educational Buildings

In the Educational Buildings subtype, it is likely that National Register Criterion A will be relevant, and secondarily that Criterion C will be relevant for these properties. Educational buildings not only provided Latinx residents with learning opportunities but also provided space for cultural activities. Educational buildings with a direct and significant connection to the themes within this MPDF may be significant under this property type. Teachers, principals, and other school employees also played significant roles in the Latinx communities through their advocacy work securing bilingual educational programs for Latinx students. Educational buildings include local schools such as Western High School

at 1500 Scotten Street (extant) and community spaces that provided educational services, such as Casa Maria at 1500 Trumbull Avenue (extant). Educational buildings may also be in the form of rooms in larger complexes, such as an event space within a church or community center. Architectural styles typically correspond to the period within which the building was constructed.

Subtype: Community Buildings

In the Community Buildings subtype, it is likely that Criteria A and B will be relevant, it is unlikely that Criterion C will be relevant for these properties. Community buildings contain spaces where Latinx residents engaged with one another as headquarters for political action groups, meeting spaces, centers for social activities, halls that held cultural celebrations, and other functions. These spaces have helped to maintain the vitality of the Latinx cultures in Detroit and shaped the political and cultural landscape of the Latinx communities. Community buildings may include halls, such as the Mexican American Legion Post #505 located at 3600 Cicotte Street (not extant) and Hispanos Unidos Hall at 1920 25th Street (extant). Buildings that housed important community functions that hold a direct and significant connection with the themes within this MPDF may be significant under this property type. Architectural styles typically correspond to the period within which the building was constructed, and the buildings may have been constructed during the period of significance of the applicable historic contexts or earlier as Latinx residents typically utilized existing buildings constructed by earlier European immigrants. For instance, the building containing Hispanos Unidos Hall was originally known as the Lithuanian Hall.

Significance

Criterion A

Commercial, residential, religious, educational, and community buildings that have a direct and significant connection to the themes within this MPDF will be eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for their direct association with significant events that have made an important contribution to the broad themes of Latinx histories in Detroit. These buildings may relate to multiple areas of significance including Commerce, Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Religion, and. Additional areas of significance based on associations with historic contexts within the MPDF may be applicable.

The various building types will illustrate their direct and significant connection in different ways and may be connected to different themes within the MPDF. Individual properties may be considered for the National Register of Historic Places if they housed long-term "anchor" businesses that were significant to the community. Commercial buildings that are significant will reflect the ability of Latinx people to establish businesses that catered to the unique needs of Latinx residents. Commercial buildings containing businesses providing access to foods, baked goods, music, and other goods and services nurtured the connection between Latinx residents and aspects of their cultural heritage. Businesses also provided job opportunities and income to local Latinx residents, many of whom lived in the neighborhoods around their business. Significant residential buildings will reflect a direct connection to

significant themes in Latinx histories. Examples such as a residence that contained the practice space where a significant Tejanos band developed their music, or a residence where UFWOC supporters regularly met to strategize grape and lettuce boycotts, may be eligible under Criterion A. Religious buildings may have gained significance under this MPDF for their importance in supporting Latinx cultural traditions, offering Spanish-language services, and providing social support for Latinx residents, and offering educational programs. Educational buildings with direct connections to significant events and themes described in the MPDF may include local schools that continually hosted cultural events and celebrations. Community buildings where local groups met to formulate action plans to address political, educational, labor, or support cultural heritage and additional issues affecting the Latinx communities may be significant under this MPDF.

Criterion B

Criterion B will apply to buildings with a direct and significant connection to a Latinx person or group that has significance within one or more of the historic contexts within this MPDF, and the specific contributions of the individual or group must be identified and documented. Determining whether a building is significant under Criterion B involves assessing and documenting the importance of an individual or group within at least one of the historic contexts within this MPDF. An association between a building and individual or group is not enough to merit listing under Criterion B—the individual or group must be significant within a historic context for Criterion B to apply. Additionally, comparative analysis is required to identify related resources with significance to the individual or group to determine whether the building is significant when compared to other related resources. Finally, buildings with significance under Criterion B will derive significance through their ability to directly illustrate the important activities of the individual or group. For this reason, birthplaces, graves, and commemorative properties are typically not eligible under Criterion B as these resources are not illustrative of the significant group's productivity or an individual's productive life. Such places may be eligible, however, if they reflect important aspects of a person's early or later years or if no other associated places survive. Examples of places that are typically eligible for listing in the National Register include a building that held an office utilized by Father Clement Kern of Most Holy Trinity Church where he met with Latinx residents to develop cultural and bilingual education programs, or a building containing classroom space that was used by an important bilingual educator.

Criterion C

Most resources under the building type and its subtypes will typically not be independently significant under Criterion C, as their physical characteristics usually do not directly relate to the Latinx theme. However, buildings may be significant under Criterion C in addition to their significance under Critia A and/or B. In this case, Criterion C will apply if a building contributes to a surrounding historic district or embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value. For example, a building, building addition, or alteration that

represents a significant work by an important Latinx builder, architect, or artist, may be eligible under Criterion C. Additionally, to be nominated under this MPDF, a building's significance will directly and significantly relate to the Latinx themes within this MPDF. It is important to note that buildings eligible under Criterion C can include alterations, as long as the ability of the building to convey its significance remains.

Criterion D

Criterion D is not applicable to buildings associated with Detroit's Latinx communities.

Registration Requirements

Buildings that have an association with Detroit's Latinx communities are not automatically significant or eligible for listing in the NRHP. Buildings must directly illustrate important aspects of the themes within this MPDF and retain integrity that conveys the building's significance. Additionally, the building must be documented at an appropriate level and compared to similar buildings within the city to illustrate the significance of the building within the broader contexts of Latinx histories.

For a building to be eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance under this MPDF, four requirements must be met. First, the building must be located within the City of Detroit, but it does not need to be located in a specific area of the city. Second, the building must have a direct and significant connection to one or more of the historic themes within this MPDF. Third, the time period within which the building achieved significance must be within the period of significance of the applicable historic context. Finally, the building must retain integrity such that the significance of the building is conveyed.

Outbuildings may be present and may include sheds, garages, and other small-scale buildings and structures. Outbuildings may be considered contributing resources if they were constructed during the period of significance, are related to a primary resource, and possess integrity.

Not every aspect of integrity must be present for a district to retain integrity. Each aspect of integrity present—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—work together to illustrate the building's connection to important Latinx historic themes. The integrity of a building must be analyzed to determine which of the seven aspects remain and whether the building's associative qualities are able to directly convey its significance to Latinx historic themes. The analysis of integrity must consider that the criteria selection influences the aspects of integrity that are most important. For instance, the retention of integrity in terms of design, materials, and workmanship acquires greater importance to buildings qualifying for the NRHP under Criterion C.

The retention of physical features from the period of significance that illustrate the building's direct and

significant connection to Latinx historic themes are important components of assessing integrity. Therefore, the retention of entrances, porches, windows, exterior cladding (such as wood siding, brick, brick veneer, stone veneer, etc.), on buildings is important.

Sites, Structures, Objects

National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, uses the definitions below to describe sites, structures, and objects.

Site: A site is the location of a significant event, prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure or building.

Structure: A structure is a building used for purposes other than human shelter.
Object: An object is primarily artistic in nature, small in scale, and simply constructed, and has an association within its specific setting and environment.

Significance

Criterion A

Sites, structures, or objects that have a direct and significant connection to the themes within this MPDF will be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for their direct association with significant events that have made an important contribution to the broad themes of Latinx histories in Detroit. Multiple areas of significance may apply, including Commerce, Ethnic Heritage, Social History, and Religion. Additional areas of significance based on associations with historic contexts within the MPDF may be applicable.

Sites, structures, or objects will illustrate their direct and significant connection in different ways and may be connected to different themes within the MPDF. A site, such as Clark Park, or structure with significance to an important UFWOC protest, picket line, or event may be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. A mural is an example of an object that may have significance related to Latinx historic themes. Murals express Latinx heritage in Detroit, and many examples of significant Latinx murals can be found throughout southwest Detroit. Depending on the mural's age, a mural might have its own importance under A or C, but in many cases more modern examples serve as cultural markers and are well documented in a recent website titled *Mexicantown's Murals*. Additionally, the Catholic churches throughout southwest Detroit display mosaics, paintings, and statuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the national symbol of Mexican Catholic identity and faith. This is also a significant cultural marker.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
County and State Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Criterion B

Criterion B will apply if a site, structure, or object with a direct and significant connection to a Latinx person or group that has significance within one or more of the historic contexts within this MPDF, and the specific contributions of the individual or group must be identified and documented. Determining whether a site, structure, or object is significant under Criterion B involves assessing and documenting the importance of an individual or group within at least one of the historic contexts within this MPDF. An association between a site, structure, or object and individual or group is not enough to merit listing under Criterion B—the individual or group must be significant within a historic context for Criterion B to apply. Additionally, comparative analysis is required to identify related resources with significance to the individual or group to determine whether the site, structure, or object is significant when compared to other related resources. Finally, sites, structures, and objects with significance under Criterion B will derive significance through their ability to directly illustrate the important activities of the individual or group. For this reason, birthplaces, graves, and commemorative properties are typically not eligible under Criterion B as these resources are not illustrative of the significant group's productivity or an individual's productive life. Such places may be eligible, however, if they reflect important aspects of a person's early or later years or if no other associated places survive. An example of an object may be a significant mural created by a Latinx artist that illustrates the artist's response to a significant event.

Criterion C

Criterion C will apply if a site, structure, or object is reflective of the heritage of the maker or the audience. Scholarly study and documentation is usually key to determining eligibility. For example, a significant object created by an important muralist within the Latinx communities may be eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C. Additionally, to be nominated under this MPDF, the significance of the site, structure, or object will directly and significantly relate to the Latinx themes within this MPDF. It is important to note that sites, structures, or objects eligible under Criterion C can include alterations, as long as their ability to convey significance remains.

Criterion D

Criterion D will apply if two requirements are met. There must be the potential for sites to physically yield information relating to areas of significance associated with Detroit's Latinx communities, and the potential information that may be found must be important. Potential information is considered important if it addresses gaps in knowledge (such as providing important knowledge about a district or historic theme) or if it has value in supporting or disproving existing knowledge or hypotheses. Archaeological activities related to significant sites in Detroit's urban setting, where the themes discussed in this MPDF apply, may assist in gaining important information about historic themes in Detroit's Latinx communities. Examples include sites which have a likelihood of possessing artifacts, structural remains, or natural or cultural features that allow for addressing gaps in knowledge or may

exhibit a local construction technique which may yield important information about historic materials and construction expertise.

Registration Requirements

For a site, structure, or object to be eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level of significance under this MPDF, four requirements must be met. First, the site, structure, or object must be located within the City of Detroit, but it does not need to be located in a specific area of the city. Second, the site, structure, or object must have a direct and significant connection to one or more of the historic themes of Detroit's Latinx community. Third, the time period within which the site, structure, or object achieved significance during the context period of Detroit Latinx history. . Finally, the site, structure, or object must retain sufficient physical integrity to the theme to convey its significance.

Not every aspect of integrity must be present for an eligible Latinx district to retain integrity. Each aspect of integrity present—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—work together to illustrate the building's connection to important Latinx historic themes. Integrity is analyzed to determine which of the seven aspects remain and whether the associative qualities are able to directly convey the site, structure, or object's significance to Latinx historic themes. The analysis of integrity must consider that the criteria selection (criteria A, B, C, or D) influences the aspects of integrity that are most important. Sites should retain integrity in terms of their relation to the urban fabric of Detroit and their neighborhood or area setting. An individual site should retain integrity from the context period/period of significance. Common alterations such as building materials, small scale features individual plantings, etc. will not generally diminish the historic integrity of a site, while significant alterations to its setting and spatial organization. The intrusion of large-scale features may negatively impact integrity if they occurred after the period of significance. Structures and objects should retain integrity in relation to their historic setting, design, and materials.
Special consideration should be given to understanding the ongoing impacts of discrimination when evaluating the integrity of sites, structures and objects in Detroit's Latinx neighborhoods. Particularly in the case of sites, events often took place in public spaces that are considered common property, and cities are subject to constant evolution and change. Additionally, sites connected to Detroit's Latinx history have often undervalued by those responsible for maintaining them. This is part of the legacy of discrimination in the city of Detroit.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
County and State Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

G. Geographical Data

The geographical limits of this Multiple Property Documentation Form are the municipal boundaries of the City of Detroit as of October 2023.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
County and State Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Kraemer Design Group prepared this Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for the City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board (HDAB). HDAB received an Underrepresented Communities Grant through the National Park Service and contracted with Kraemer Design Group to complete an MPDF of Latinx histories in Detroit, complete a reconnaissance and intensive-level historic resource survey of up to fifty sites in Detroit related to Latinx histories, and complete a historic resource survey report.

Stakeholders included HDAB, Latinx residents within Detroit, Latinx residents who used to live in Detroit, other interested residents, and local organizations. HDAB formed a Community Advisory Group (CAG) composed of several local Latinx residents with an interest in the project. Likewise, members of the Mexicantown Community Development Corporation, the Southwest Detroit Business Association, and the MotorCities National Heritage Area were also involved. Interactions between Kraemer Design Group and stakeholders included two public engagement meetings, regular meetings with HDAB, regular meetings with the CAG and HDAB, the completion of oral histories, and communication amongst all stakeholders throughout the project.

Community engagement, oral histories, and research occupied integral functions in developing the MPDF. The selection of important historic themes and continued refinement of the MPDF developed out of several discussions with local Latinx residents, meetings and feedback from the CAG, and research in archives, newspapers, and texts. Members of the CAG, HDAB, and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) provided significant and informative feedback on the MPDF and other project items. Residents sharing their experiences, insights, and opinions through the completion of oral histories were instrumental in guiding research. In conjunction with oral histories, research of primary source material in archives and reading newspapers, permit cards, journal papers, and books provided the source material for information within the MPDF.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan
County and State Detroit's Latinx Communities
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

I. Major Bibliographic References

Books and Journal Articles

Alvarado, Rudolph Valier and Sonya Yvette Alvarado. *Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Michigan*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003.

Anderson, Haelim and Jin-Wook Chang. "Labor Market Tightness During WWI and the Postwar Recession of 1920-1921." Finance and Economics Discussion Series 2022-049. Washington, DC: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 2022. https://doi.org/10.17016/FEDS.2022.049.

Badillo, David A. *Latinos in Michigan*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2003.

Balderrama, Francisco E., and Raymond Rodriguez. *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.

Brandes, Stanley. "Iconography in Mexico's Day of the Dead: Origins and Meanings." *Ethnohistory* 45, no. 2 (1998): 181-218.

Brandes, Stanley. "Sugar, Colonialism, and Death: On the Origins of Mexico's Day of the Dead." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 2 (1997): 270-299.

Enciso, Fernando Saúl Alanís. *They Should Stay There: The Story of Mexican Migration and Repatriation during the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Enck-Wanzer, Darrel, ed. *The Young Lords: A Reader*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Florek, Marilyn. *West Vernor Highway Survey Area, Detroit, Michigan*. Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 2002.

García, Mario T. "Introduction: The Chicano Movement, Chicano History, and the New American Narrative." In *Rewriting the Chicano Movement: New Histories of Mexican American Activism in the Civil Rights Era* eds. Mario T. García and Ellen McCracken. Bielefeld, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2021.

Gordillo, Luz María. *Mexican Women and the Other Side of Immigration: Engendering Transnational Ties*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010.

Gratton, Brian and Emily Klancher Merchant. "An Immigrant's Tale: The Mexican American Southwest 1850 to 1950." *Social Science History* 39 (2015): 521-550.

Hoffman, Abraham. *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1973.

Houtman, Loren Henry. "Response of Detroit Public Schools to Immigrant Groups." PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1965.

Humphrey, Norman D. "The Education and Language of Detroit Mexicans." *The Journal of Educational Sociology* 17, no. 9 (1944): 534-542.

Humphrey, Norman D. "The Housing and Household Practices of Detroit Mexicans." *Social Forces* 24, no. 4 (1946): 433-437.

Humphrey, Norman D. "The Migration and Settlement of Detroit Mexicans." *Economic Geography* 19, no. 4 (1943): 358-361.

Lara, Jesus J. "Patterns and Forms of Latino Cultural Landscapes: Southwest Detroit, a Case of Incremental Re-adaptive Use." *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 5, no. 2-3 (2012): 139-159.

Miner, Dylan A T. "*El Renegado Comunista* Diego Rivera, *La Liga de Obreros y Campesinos* and Mexican Repatriation in Detroit." *Third Text* 19, no. 6 (2005): 647-660.

Mora, G. Cristina, Reuben Perez, and Nicholas Vargas. "Who Identifies as 'Latinx'? The Generational Politics of Ethnoracial Labels." *Social Review* 100, no. 3 (2022): 1170-1194.

Murillo, Louis Christopher. "The Detroit Mexican Colonia from 1920 to 1932: Implications for Social and Educational Policy." PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1981.

Okamoto, Dina and G. Cristina Mora. "Panethnicity." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (2014): 219-239.

Olmsted, Brett T. "Los Mexicanos de Michigan: Claiming Space and Creating Community Through Leisure and Labor, 1920-1970." PhD diss., University of Houston, 2017.

Parra, Ricardo. "Latinos in the Midwest: Civil Rights and Community Organization." in *La Causa: Civil Rights, Social Justice and the Struggle for Equality in the Midwest.* ed. Gilberto Cárdenas. Houston: Arte Público Press, 2004.

Popp, Sharon, Merlin Steider, Julie Wheeler, Monica Wichorek, and Donna Young. "Exploratory Study of the Mexican-American Community in Detroit, Michigan." Master's thesis, Wayne State University, 1970.

Ravuri, Evelyn D. "Hispanic Population Change in Southwestern Detroit and Surrounding Suburbs, 1900-2000: A Study of the Succession Process." *Journal of Cultural Geography* 26, no. 2 (2009): 199-222.

Rodriguez, Maria Elena. *Detroit's Mexicantown*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011.

Sáenz, Gabriela. "Transnational Life Histories: Mexican Origin Elderly in Southwest Detroit, Michigan." Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 2009.

Smith, Mike. "'Let's Make Detroit a Union Town': The History of Labor and the Working Class in the Motor City." *Michigan Historical Review* 27, no. 2 (2001): 157-173.

Sommers, Laurie Kay, and Casa de Unidad Cultural Arts and Media Center. *Fiesta, Fe, y Cultura*. Detroit, MI: Casa de Unidad Cultural Arts and Media Center, 1995.

Sowards, Stacey K. *Si, Ella Puede!: The Rhetorical Legacy of Dolores Huerta and the United Farm Workers*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2019.

Valdés, Dennis Nodín. "Mexican Revolutionary Nationalism and Repatriation during the Great Depression." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 4, no. 1 (1988): 1-23.

Vargas, Zaragosa. "Life and Community in the 'Wonderful City of the Magic Motor': Mexican Immigrants in 1920s Detroit." *Michigan Historical Review* 15, no. 1 (1989): 45-68.

Vargas, Zaragosa. "Armies in the Fields and Factories: The Mexican Working Class in the Midwest in the 1920s." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 7, no. 1 (1991): 47-71.

Vargas, Zaragosa. "Mexican Auto Workers at Ford Motor Company, 1918-1933." PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1984.

Vargas, Zaragosa. *Proletariats of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917-1933*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.

Websites/Collections

"American Latino Heritage Theme Study," National Park Service.

Benson Collection at The Henry Ford, Dearborn, MI.
Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library, Detroit, MI.
Detroit Public Library Collections, Detroit, MI.
Michigan Historical Collections available through HathiTrust.
Wayne State University Collections, Detroit, MI.
Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Newspapers

Detroit Free Press

Interviews

Chavez-Waeerud-Din, Laura, – President and CEO, Southwest Detroit Business Association, CAG member, 2023 "Oral History interview Latinx Communities in Detroit" Interview by Katie Cook, 25th August, 2023

Lozano, Raymond, Executive Director, Mexicantown Community Development Corporation; community elder and historian; 2023"Oral History interview Latinx Communities in Detroit" Interview by Katie Cook, 24th August, 2023

Rivera, (Ozzie) Oswaldo, activist, community elder and historian, retired social worker, faculty member at WSU and University of Michigan; 2023 "Oral History interview Latinx Communities in Detroit" Interview by Katie Cook, 7th June, 2023

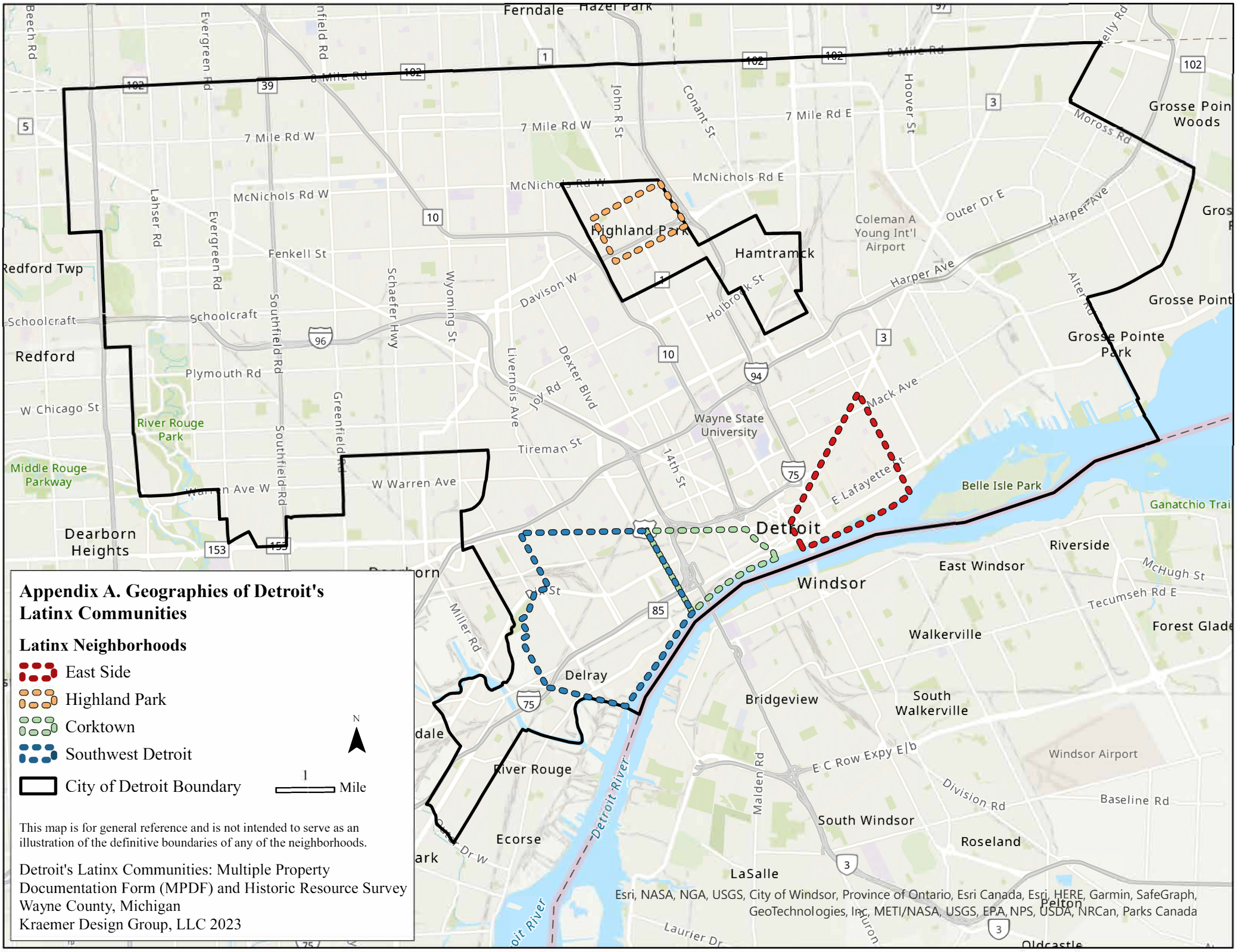
Rodriguez, Maria Elena,Author (Detroit's Mexicantown), CAG member; 2023 "Oral History interview Latinx Communities in Detroit" Interview by Lillian Candela, 27 June, 2023

Rosemary (Solano) Schofield, Southwest Detroit community elder; 2018 "Neighborhoods where Detroit Lives" Interview by Matthias Reed, 1st, November, 2023

Solis, Frank, son of Martin Solis, pioneer of Detroit's Tejano music genre; 2023 "Oral History interview Latinx Communities in Detroit" Interview by Katie Cook, 8th June, 2023

Appendix A

Appendix A contains maps delineating the approximate locations of the neighborhoods discussed in the "Geographies of Detroit's Latinx Communities" section and throughout this MPDF. The map is for general reference only and is not intended to serve as an illustration of the definitive boundaries of any of the neighborhoods.


Appendix A. Geographies of Detroit's Latinx Communities
Latinx Neighborhoods
East Side
Highland Park
Corktown
Southwest Detroit
City of Detroit Boundary
1 Mile
N
This map is for general reference and is not intended to serve as an illustration of the definitive boundaries of any of the neighborhoods.
Detroit's Latinx Communities: Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) and Historic Resource Survey
Wayne County, Michigan
Kraemer Design Group, LLC 2023
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, City of Windsor, Province of Ontario, Esri Canada, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, NRCan, Parks Canada
Detroit
Windsor
Highland Park
Hamtramck
Wayne State University
Delray
River Rouge
Ecorse
Redford
Redford Twp
Dearborn Heights
Belle Isle Park
Riverside
East Windsor
Walkerville
South Walkerville
Bridgeview
South Windsor
Roseland
LaSalle
Pelton
Oldcastle
Grosse Pointe Park
Grosse Pointe Woods
Coleman A Young Int'l Airport
Windsor Airport
Forest Glade
Ganatchio Trail
Detroit River
Ferndale
Hazel Park
8 Mile Rd
7 Mile Rd W
7 Mile Rd E
McNichols Rd W
McNichols Rd E
Fenkell St
Schoolcraft
Plymouth Rd
W Chicago St
Warren Ave W
W Warren Ave
Tireman St
Davison W
Joy Rd
Dexter Blvd
Livernois Ave
Southfield Rd
Greenfield Rd
Schaefer Hwy
Wyoming St
Lahser Rd
Evergreen Rd
Beech Rd
John R St
Conant St
Hoover St
Moross Rd
Outer Dr E
Harper Ave
Holbrook St
Mack Ave
E Lafayette St
14th St
Miller Rd
Malden Rd
E C Row Expy E/b
Division Rd
Baseline Rd
McHugh St
Tecumseh Rd E
Laurier Dr
Outer Dr W
Alter Rd
Kelly Rd
Middle Rouge Parkway
River Rouge Park

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	COVER DOCUMENTATION
Multiple Name:	Detroit's Latinx Communities MPS
State & County:	,

Date Received: 12/8/2025
Date of 45th Day: 1/22/2026

Reference number: MC100012598

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	__ PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

__**X**__ Accept _____ Return _____ Reject __**1/20/2026**__ Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: Provides a historic context for LatinX settlement and life in Detroit, broken down into themes that relate to the LatinX experience. These themes include broad patterns such as immigration and settlement as well as work. They also include themes related to institutions that can serve as both avenues of assimilation and cultural retention, such as schools, religious practice, and commerce.
Property types are provided, including district and various building types. The Cover recognizes the way immigrant groups might adopt and then adapt older building stock. Registration requirements for district, individual building, and sites and structures are provided.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept Multiple Property Cover

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments: No see attached SLR: No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

QUENTIN L. MESSER, JR.
PRESIDENT

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed files contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for **Detroit's Latinx Communities Multiple Property Documentation Form, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a __X__ New Submission ____Resubmission ____Additional Documentation ____Removal.

1 Signed National Register of Historic Places Documentation Form
0 Locational maps (incl. with documentation form)
1 Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s)
1 Pieces of correspondence (incl. with correspondence file)
0 Digital photographs
____ Other (incl. with documentation form): _____

State Historic Preservation Review Board

The Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the documentation form at its meeting on _Monday, September 22, 2025_. The Review Board voted _9_ to _0_ to approve the documentation form under National Register Criterion/Criteria _n/a_ and recommended the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the documentation form and transmit it for approval.

Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits

n/a This property is not utilizing the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits
n/a This property is being rehabilitated using the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits. A preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

MICHIGAN SHPO STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

300 NORTH WASHINGTON SQUARE • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48913
michigan.gov/**shpo** • (517) 335-9840

Notifications

_X_ Notification of the documentation form was sent to the property owner(s) and chief elected official(s) on: _August 20, 2025_.
_X_ No objections to the documentation form were submitted during the public comment period.
____ One or more objections to the documentation form were received during the public comment period.
____ One or more letters of support to the documentation form were received during the public comment period.

Federal Property

_n/a_ The nominated property ___ does ___ does not contain federally owned or controlled Resources.
_n/a_ Notification of the nomination was sent to the Federal Preservation Officer(s) of the affected agency/agencies on: _____.

Certified Local Government

_X_ The geographical area addressed in the documentation form _X_ is ___ is not located in a Certified Local Government community.
_X_ The local commission _X_ does ___ does not concur with the eligibility of the documentation form.
_X_ A copy of the local commission's review ___ was _X_ was not received within 60 days, and ___ is _X_ is not included with the correspondence file.

NPS Grant-Funded Submissions

____ Not funded with an NPS grant
_X_ Underrepresented Communities Grant
____ African American Civil Rights Grant
____ History of Equal Rights Grant
____ Tribal Heritage Grant
____ Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant
____ Disaster Recovery Grant

Questions concerning this documentation form should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 331-8917 or WalshT@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Ryan M. Schumaker
State Historic Preservation Officer