Identity formation of Mexican-Americans in the West Side community of St. Paul Minnesota

Rani Francesca Salas-McLean

The University of Montana

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IDENTITY FORMATION OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN THE WEST SIDE COMMUNITY OF ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

by

Rani Francesca Salas-McLean

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presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Identity Formation of Mexican-Americans in the West Side Community of St. Paul, Minnesota

The need to understand and determine ethnic identity has become a very highly studied subject, especially with the highly used term “ethnicity” now taking the place of the term “race” in the field of anthropology. The reasons behind ethnic formation are not constant for all populations, but independent by group membership and individuality. I use the West Side community of St. Paul, Minnesota as my study area. I have conducted interviews and analysis, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to demonstrate the driving forces behind their ethnic formation. I hypothesize that because of their location in the Northwest and immigration history that they will fit the theoretical model demonstrated by James Diego Vigil. After testing this hypothesis I conclude that it does fit the model and that even though people labeled as Mexican-Americans are perceived as one cultural conglomeration that they indeed are not and that the differences can be accounted for by their geographic location and immigration history.
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Special gratitude to my family members especially my mother and father, Linda and William, for giving me lasting support and encouragement and always believing in me. And to my cousin Annette who helped me make contact with many of the community members of the West Side.

And a special thanks to the community of the West Side who were gracious enough to talk to me for without their understanding and acceptance of me, this research would not have been possible.
Why and how is an ethnic identity formed? This question is being asked in many different forms. Censuses', racial categories on college applications are just a couple. The motivating factor behind this question differs from who is asking the question and to whom they are asking. This question of ethnic identity has been the root of investigations in the archaeological records as well as social/cultural studies. The reasons and causes for the formation of ethnic identification, and group membership into a culture group are numerous. I have chosen to look at the influences of geographical orientation and immigration history for this study because I believe they give the best insight into the formation of an ethnic identity.

There are many definitions for the term “ethnicity” that are used by different researchers, but the one that I have chosen to use as a model for my research is: “ethnic identity is in essence a past-oriented form of identity, embedded in the presumed cultural heritage of the individual group” (Ross, DeVos 1995:256). This I believe encompasses all of the important attributes that are involved in the process of identity formation, history and culture.

Although other researchers have chosen to include or exclude some variables when conducting their studies to demonstrate how ethnic identity formation occurs. I have chosen to address the importance of immigration history and the location of the west side community of St. Paul, Minnesota. In the first part of this thesis I present and test other ethnic identity formation theories provided in the literature. I address the importance of the development of an ethnic identity, and demonstrate this through the perspective of my informants as well as through other studies conducted. I demonstrate how the theory proposed by James Diego Vigil, in particular, reflects the importance and driving forces behind the process of identity formation.

In the next section I give a detailed account of four very important time periods for the Mexican-Americans living on the west side (Migration, Permanent settlement, the Depression and the flooding of the lower west side). This historical overview demonstrates a shared experience, and gives a reason for the importance and in many cases, the necessity of living in the west side community, which in turn gives good insight into the complexities of the how and why of identity formation and how it is influenced.

This idea of identity formation has always interested me even before my interest in cultural anthropology. The questions of how and why this process takes place cannot be explained by one theory or by abstracting one study onto all cultures. This process is not only unique by individual and cultural standards but by a shared history and locality. Studies are conducted and recorded for the use of other researchers but any new insight that is gleaned from these studies is in a constant state of flux. Just as culture is constantly changing with socioeconomic changes, information has to be updated on a regular basis to
keep pace with the adaptive nature of culture and of all aspects of humanity which renders past studies, overall, true for that specific time and place as a historical overview. As an Anthropologist and a Mexican-American I am interested in learning the processes by which people of my sample population form their ethnic identity, and what that process means.
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Chapter 1
Theory: History, Time, Place and Method
Historical and Cultural Experiences and Identity

Just as culture is constantly changing so is one's identity, depending on history, time, place, and social economic factors. Though the importance of any one of these variables does not have the same effect on all ethnic groups, the presence of these variables is always operant. In the case of the Mexican-Americans living on the West Side, a neighborhood in St. Paul, Minnesota, outside forces has motivated them to continually reshape their cultural perceptions of themselves as they reconstitute cultural characteristics that have been systematically restricted by the dominant American society. For example, in school one could only speak English:

Every morning before school I remember hearing in Spanish, "Mija, vellums que le pongas attention a tu. maestro, have lo que Ella dice"... "(My little one, make sure you pay attention to your teacher, do whatever she says...") My parents headed off to their prized daughter's first Parent/Teacher conference, what a moment to remember. The teacher, her name Mrs. Sun, of course, did not have anything good to say about the child who made her job more difficult and less enjoyable than she bargained for. Her suggestion and her teaching plan included the following, if I were to make it in American school, my parents needed to stop speaking Spanish in the home and I was to be put into Speech Therapy. This was the solution to all my problems. So, my parents, having complete faith in this teacher, because she should know what she's doing, agreed. Three days a week, this little five-year-old girl would spend hours in the school hallway sitting in a little desk across from a speech therapist, so she could learn how to properly pronounce her "ch's" and "sh's" (Juana Alcala 2000).
To analyze the process of identity formation of Mexican-Americans living in the community on the West Side in St. Paul, Minnesota, their history of immigration beginning in 1907 and continuing to present-day will be investigated. This history of immigration, is one of the critical building blocks in the processes of identity formation. This thesis will examine its role in initially establishing and maintaining ethnic identity.

Mexican-American families living on the West Side have fashioned a sense of place within their community. Living on the West Side has helped to maintain identity significantly through cultural retention in a visual and participatory way by emphasizing the importance of being Mexican-American. The concentrated numbers of Mexican-Americans in this neighborhood has formed a sense of community because of their shared history. Also, the strong immediate and extended family ties among the individual families in this community have provided them the ability to retain their cultural knowledge and thus their ethnic identity through the continual contact and exchange with people who have similar cultural roots and social experiences. Thus, place alone is a powerful ethnic force. Many people living in this community do not or cannot move away from the West Side. Many of those who have tried to live elsewhere have returned.

Today there are an increasing number of migrant workers, especially from South and Central America and Mexico, who are following the migration route that was pioneered by the first wave of immigrants several generations ago. The
arrival of new Latino immigrants has caused an interface amongst old West Side community members. They have been forced to interact with one another at community meeting locations on the West Side. An example of this is Our Lady of Guadalupe and El Burritos. Differences in time, history, and social economic factors has greatly aided this discourse, and has increased social conflict amongst a seemingly similar ethnic group. The circumstance behind this interface has been investigated for this thesis.
Methods

Research of the Mexican-American community of St. Paul was chosen for this study because it is a representative microcosm of local identity formation. Preliminary research of the community and its members was executed to provide background information. With this background knowledge and the literature information acquired from the Minnesota Historical Society archives, a research design was formed. A questionnaire was created with 12 questions that would provide insight to investigate the occurrence of a local identity formation.

Semi-structured tape-recorded interviews were administered among 28 Mexican-American community members. Twelve of the people interviewed were female and sixteen were male. Their ages were between 16 and 76. The members interviewed represent different generations living in the community of the West Side.

The questions were open-ended that allowed the informants the freedom to vary their responses. Some sampling of informants was done unsystematically. Other informants were the result of a lead or introduction from a previous informant who recommended a friend or relative that would be willing to be interviewed. This method of sampling provided sound responses that fit the research design.

A large majority of the people interviewed did not have a formal education that went beyond high school. This became noticeable after the first few interviews, when words used in the questionnaire were not fully understood and
sometimes misinterpreted. This made the initial process of interviewing difficult. After changing select terms on the questionnaire and occasionally giving explanations of the terms, the interviews just took on a life of their own.

This was not the only obstacle that I had to contend with. There was also the fact that the community being studied has other economic factors that ignited suspicion about the interview process. The low income economic status and crime rates of this community have, to a considerable degree, helped create a common perception by Anglo-Americans, that this area is a barrio or ghetto. But the West Side community members view their neighborhood as a safe and clean place to live. As a close, kin-based community, they are aware of outsiders and their negative perceptions of their community. Researchers have entered the West Side before and because of their perceived misrepresentations, there was a lot of suspicion. They did not understand why I was asking questions in their community. These suspicions lead to the decision to conceal the identities of the informants. They were given pseudo names for the process of identification.

To alleviate their concerns further, it was also explained to each participant how this project could be beneficial to them, by providing a truthful account of the West Side community that would dispel the outside myths and accentuate the truths about them. Shortly, after the interviews commenced, the participants relaxed and fully answered the interview questions.

After completion of the interviewing process, all of the tapes were transcribed for analysis. There are many different ways to analyze data. In this
study I chose to let the people speak for themselves in their own words. Once all of the interviews were completely transcribed, it was then possible to analyze the responses as a whole and draw conclusions from them. This will be discussed in chapter five.
Reflection of Identity

A variance in populations and culture groups does not allow for a textbook theory that can be used to explain identity formation in all cultures. That is why the decision was made to use history, time, place, ethnicity, and boundaries to develop an explanatory framework for the formation of a local identity. It will be better understood why each of the above variables is significant and necessary to explain identity formation as critical markers in the process of identity formation.

All of these variables are essential ingredients to understanding the ethnic formation of the Mexican-Americans living on the West Side today. This historical information has been passed down as oral history, and is deeply rooted in their memories. These memories have lead to a strong cultural awareness of their heritage. Aiding in this awareness is the social economics of the West Side that has placed boundaries around them. These all exist at a conscious and/or unconscious level and have instilled a thought process that has in a very real sense, affected the formation and perception of the identity of the West Side Mexican-Americans. All of these variables will be demonstrated in more detail in the next few chapters.
Chapter 2:
Literature Review
Literature Review: Local identity Formation

Culture is constantly being produced and reproduced in a dialectical manner, therefore, it is essential to understand how and why these occurrences happen in order to gain a better understanding of identity formation. These cultural changes are brought about both by outside forces as well as internal causes. Outside influences are normally large scale events that can be found documented in the historical record. An example is the Deportation Act of March 4, 1929 which, "rendered aliens liable to deportation on various counts, making it a felony for a deported alien to reenter the US illegally" (Samora 1971:40). These outside forces provide a chronological calendar of historical events that assist researchers when trying to correlate their data with social economic episodes that have occurred throughout history. One example of this type of event can be seen in the Jewish experience as well as in the 1920s when "the uprising of this era sharpened a shared sense of ethnicity, an immigrant Jewish identity in America" (Takaki 1993:297). Events like this one have been recorded in American history and represent many ethnic groups' experiences in the United States that have played an intricate role in the development and retention of their identity.

Macro (involving more than one) cultural changes in a population occur continually, and facilitate identity formation. Individual changes are more difficult to distinguish, because they are internal, personal, and perceived as natural. These micro (individual) changes are not as easily identified in the historical
record. These processes of cultural change are discoverable through interviews and discussions with the living members of the population being studied. This method of qualitative, ethnographic research provides valuable insights from which to understand the dynamics and articulation of culture change variables. Culture change with respect to identity formation is a fluid dynamic process. One major attribute that must be considered is ethnicity. Ethnicity is a combination of language, culture, history, and self-identification.

The colloquial use of the word “ethnicity” has been linked synonymously with race, complicating a clear understanding of it. A solution to this misunderstanding is offered by British social anthropologist, Michael Banton who clarifies this misconception, for the context of this thesis. He states, “membership in an ethnic group is usually voluntary; membership in a racial group is not” (Banton 1983:10). In the United States the act of ascribed membership to a racial group occurs at birth. This is the case for the majority of Mexican-Americans. Along with racial discourse their cultural differences also separate them. These cultural characteristics along with racial categorization contribute to the formation of an identity. Phenotypically they are different from Anglo-Americans, therefore setting them apart. This racial distinction that separates minority groups from Anglo-Americans has added to their awareness of these differences, and therefore they have developed a much stronger consciousness of identity.

Identities express themselves in many different forms, but in order to
obtain a more grounded, rather than generalized, perspective, it is necessary to conceptualize the population in terms of place. Place is a powerful force in shaping local identities. Local identity formation occurs where a group of people who hold a common background live. An example of this formation can be seen in the experiences of a Transatlantic community, 1878-1921, where, "in the realm of a Black Atlantic world, Cape Verdeans forged a collective notion of identity out of their experiences as Portuguese colonials and in response to the bipolarity of American racial identity" (Williams 1999:116). This occurrence is different for every community and ethnic group, but the final outcome is the same, a "collective notion of identity."

Place shapes a common identity by rooting it in a collectivity of social and historical experiences. To better understand these processes, it is essential to focus on ethnicity. Its presence is key in the process of local identity formation of Mexican-Americans living on the West Side in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Mexican Americans who were citizens by birth were often reminded that they were still Mexicans. By "nationality" my son is "American," a father explained but he is "Mexicano" "by blood" (Takaki 1993:338). But for the Mexican nationals, the Mexican-Americans were not viewed in the same way. A local Mexican newspaper criticized some Mexican Americans for not celebrating the sixteenth of September: "To these "Agringados" [Americanized Mexicans] who negate that they are Mexicans because they were born in the United States, we ask what blood runs through their veins?" (Takaki 1993:338). This struggle for identity is
still occurring today with the interface of old and new immigrants.

Ethnicity has been defined by scholars in a variety of ways, by cultural characteristics, social identity, language, or country. Ethnicity and identity have a unique relationship where ethnicity facilitates an identity of a person. I chose Richard Jenkins’ model of ethnicity because it is encompassing and inclusive for the purpose of this study. This model also will help to demonstrate, and clarify the interconnectedness between ethnicity and identity (Table 1: Identity Model).

It is clear from the above model that culture and ethnicity are central to examining the formation of a local Mexican-American identity on the West Side. Their ethnicity plays a large role in the individual’s social identity as well as influencing how each person views and understands the society that they live in. Experiences of prejudice and exclusion are continual reminders of their differences and inability to be completely accepted by the surrounding dominant society. A resistant pride in their cultural heritage therefore has affected the formation process of their local identity. Their experience has been unique, for most of them have lived close to their homeland – a proximity that has helped reinforce their language, identity, and culture (Takaki 1993:8).

There are other differences besides cultural and ethnic ones. I would argue that a strong force in identity formation is economics. Throughout history, social class and economic standing often determines the inclusion or exclusion of an ethnic population at any moment in history. Such social circumstances, whether real or imagined, internal or external, construct boundaries.
The Economics of Boundaries

In his publication of *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Barth (1969) argues that ‘boundaries’ between groups operate to maintain an identity by members interacting with other people of the same ethnicity. These boundaries, Barth argues (1969), are both social and physical ones. This structured interaction among ethnic groups perpetuates the cultural differences that facilitate the criteria and signals for identification (Barth 1969). This premise holds true when looking at the West Side Mexican-American community because their ethnicity has been retained by boundaries that have historically grouped them together in one place. Cultural similarities have formed social boundaries that have aided in their ethnic retention and identity, and keeping them within the physical boundaries of the West Side.

There are varying levels of identity consciousness, both on the individual level and the group level, according to Richard Jenkins in *Rethinking Ethnicity*. Specific ethnic identities, depending upon specific historical circumstances may exhibit ‘weaker’ or ‘stronger’ tendencies among ethnic group members. It is also important to understand and take into account the relationship between specific events and experiences that are not shared as a group and how these increase or decrease an individual’s level of ethnic identity consciousness. The problem of explaining local identity formation can, therefore, be approached through this theoretical framework. Historical events have contributed to the process of local identity formation, both on an individual and group level.
The concepts of 'boundaries' and the model of ethnicity proposed by Jenkins are interrelated and supportive of one another. Jenkins stated identity is always dialectic between similarities and differences and these are both accentuated and brought to the surface by the boundaries that are in place. He also says that ethnicity is rooted in social interaction, within the boundaries of the West Side. These two variables can be used to substantiate and support the theoretical argument that a local identity formation has occurred on the West Side.

The boundaries of the West Side community are defined primarily by historically low economic status and contained location. But more specifically, the immigration of people with different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds has helped to create and maintain a high level of consciousness of 'boundary maintenance' within each group of newly arrived immigrants. This occurrence is both voluntary and involuntary separation of people because of societal biases, difference in language, religion, and of course, color. These boundaries, over time, are institutionalized. Society thinks of them as 'normal'. The community is surrounded by the Riverview Industrial Park to the north and east and wealthy communities such as Highland Park to the west and Mendota Heights to the south. (See Map 3) These 'boundaries' have been created and reinforced by economics and the discriminating treatment that are received outside of their community. Over time it can generate an almost apathetic, hopeless view within the community as it pertains to the "American Dream."
Chapter 3
The Intersection of Time, Place, and History: The Formation of a Mexican-American Identity, 1907 - 1961
Historia de la Migra (Immigration History)

Introduction

The history of new emigrants to the United States is a complex array of differing social experiences. Those differences are dependent on the emigrating population group, arrival time, country of origin, and destination. However, the one variable that all immigrants to America shares, whether they are Mexicans, Jewish, Polish, etc., is that they usually settled in ethnic enclaves. One consequence of living in an ethnic enclave is that it precipitates a communal identity. Most ethnic immigrants followed this settlement pattern and identity formation. This is supported by historical documentation of patterns of newly arriving immigrants into the United States.

Upon taking up his residence in a strange city, he first sought a colony of his own nationality, usually in the poorer districts of the city. He read a foreign language newspaper, attended church in which the services were given in his native tongue and identified himself as closely as possible with his own ethnic group (Pierce 1971:46).

Comprehending how communal identity formation occurs, necessitates the examination diachronically of the following variables: a shared history, time, and place. For this investigation, four very critical historical snapshots have been identified to illuminate the formation of Mexican social identity on the West Side area of St. Paul, Minnesota.

This community, in part, is a microcosm for twentieth century immigration, because it represents the stages of immigration that occurred throughout
America, though each ethnic groups’ experience is unique to them. The reasons and motivations behind the Mexican-American immigration to the St. Paul area are discussed first. Following this section is an explanation of why the community was formed. Then the Depression is discussed in relation to the changes that occurred to the identity and community of the Lower West Side residents. Finally, the centrality of a natural disaster is addressed. The event caused a major disruption in the continuity of their community and, therefore, their identity formation. Each one of these cultural and historical snapshots provide a chronological procession of events that shaped these immigrants as individuals, as a community, and as an ethnicity.
El Migra Norte

The first significant immigration of Mexican and Mexican-Americans to Minnesota occurred in 1907. Their movement northward coincided with the American Crystal Sugar Company’s recruitment of farm laborers. This led to a large influx of Mexican workers to the North but more specifically, Minnesota. “Most of the immigrants that came to Minnesota,” according to Lorraine Pierce (1971:35), mostly came from Mexico itself and from the southwestern states of Texas, New Mexico and Oklahoma, once part of old Mexico.

A variable that certainly influenced the decision of many Mexicans to seek work in industries in the north was the unstable politics of the years preceding the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and the ensuing turmoil that resulted during the purging years that followed.

The development of the sugar beet industry also created an increase in agricultural production in the Great Lakes region. This increase initiated the active migration of Mexican agricultural workers to the North. Agricultural recruitment began largely in border states such as Texas, but business representatives also went recruiting into Mexico. Recruiters made promises to Mexicans of endless work and great pay. Assurances of free transportation to Minnesota and housing when they arrived were used as incentives to entice thousands of Mexicans to migrate to the North to work the beet farms of Minnesota. Mexican laborers were a dream come true for an industry that had a demand for cheap and dependable labor. The demographic features of the
migratory waves were shaped by employment demands in the North and also by the personal choices of the migrants in their search for work (Vargas 1993:14). This chain migration therefore occurred in waves dependent on many differing variables.

Those Mexicans who were lured by the “American dream” wrote letters to their families back home in the border states and Mexico about how prosperous the United States was and about the benevolent working conditions. Exaggerated accounts of the ‘Promised Land’, lured other family members to migrate North, eventually reuniting them with their extended family. The centrality of social networks shaped Mexican migration patterns, this is noted by Zaragosa Vargas, who wrote:

Family and friendship networks thus not only influenced the paths of Mexican migration to the North and decisions about work but also determined settlement patterns within the region and aided adjustment to the new urban, industrial environment (Vargas 1993:21).

Many American agricultural sectors soon became dependent on Mexican labor because their labor was cheap, thus increasing their profits by exploiting this human resource. By 1927, 5,000 Mexicans worked in Minnesota. The following year, 7,000 Mexican migrants were working in the state (Vargas 1993:29). The supplement of 2,000 more Mexican laborers in just a year demonstrates the growing necessity for cheap labor.

Eventually tens of thousands of Mexican immigrants began to seek work
outside of agriculture in the Midwest. Increasing demand for blue collar industrial workers and the desire of other industries to maximize profits by paying as little as possible for labor, was a motivating factor for other corporations in other economic sectors to begin to employ Mexican immigrants. There was a demand for Mexican agricultural workers in more prominent industries such as the steel working factories and the meat packing plants. Industries offered steady year-round employment and better pay which initiated the change away from agricultural work. The large influx of migrant workers into the area provided more options for industries as well as for these laborers.
The Effects of WWI on Mexican-Americans living in the North

The onset of World War I, the increased production demands on the steel industry to meet the military’s needs and the wartime labor shortage stimulated labor recruitment. To fill the labor void, Mexican-Americans migrated from rural, agricultural sectors to industrial urban locales. Their entry into this new industry initiated a dramatic change in the migratory patterns of Mexican workers. “The new migration pattern was prompted by the inexorable search for steady jobs, decent wages, and acceptable working conditions, underscored by personal choices and family preferences” (Vargas 1993:41). These new labor voids to fill came about due to the demand for blue collar workers.

And as a result of the heated political climate prior to and during World War I over immigration, the United States implemented legal restrictions:

...shortly after World War I, European and Asian immigration into the United States decreased as a result of the restrictions established by the Exclusion Law of 1921 and the Quota Act of 1924 (Samora 1971:34).

This severely limited the large supply of European immigrant labor, leaving a void in the labor work force. The United States’ need for laborers doubled in the industrial sector during WWI and something had to be done to satisfy this demand. Therefore, because of this governmental restriction on immigration, a compromise needed to be made. The number of Mexican immigrants in the United States was overlooked in order to satisfy the industrial
need.

The legislature established a quota system that numerically restricted immigration on the basis of a national-origin formula that allocated numbers of visas to specific nationalities. Mexican labor, however, was not overtly limited by the quota system (Maciel 1998: 37).

Mexicans were not included because they did not pose a threat to the American population, unlike the European immigrants, who because of WWI were feared. Thus, the labor void during WWI was satisfied by Mexican migrant laborers, many of which would return home to Mexico, keeping America running during the war years.

Although many Mexican-Americans worked in urban industries, the majority were still largely confined to working in the agricultural sector. They too however, slowly migrated in ever increasing numbers into other industrial sectors. As older immigrants began to climb the economic ladder by leaving work as field hands, a new cohort of Mexicans would come north to replace them in the sugar beet fields. This created a socioeconomic dichotomy that will have implications in the West Side community.

The move to factory work by Mexican laborers was the beginning of a major lifestyle shift from migrant work, requiring an ever-shifting lifestyle to fixed residences and incomes. The establishment of a permanent residence created a sense of community. It also strengthened family ties, as well as reinforced cultural practices. This set in motion a series of events that would redefine the
Mexican culture of the north, and through the years, the cumulative effect of time and isolation from Mexico shaped a unique Midwestern Mexican identity.
Permanent Settlement History of the Lower West Side

One of St. Paul’s working class neighborhood rental areas was the Lower West Side. The label of ghetto or barrio to describe the West Side has been invariant since the first permanent residence moved to the Lower West Side. The change of time has not affected the West Side, it is still a poverty-stricken area and will continue to be so until the residents are forced to move by big business or wealthy outsiders.

Historically, the majority of the Lower West Side residents were the earliest immigrants to St. Paul. Usually they were the poorest economically, as they continue to be today. The French, Germans, Irish, and Eastern European Jews were all among the first immigrants to settle on the Lower West Side of St. Paul.

This neighborhood, as an ethnic enclave, had much to offer the newly arriving immigrants. They had the relative freedom, without persecution to practice their own religion that varied from Christianity, Catholicism, to the Jewish-Orthodox faith, just to name a few. Immigrants brought their cultural traditions, which they expressed through things such as language, dress, foods, and holidays. Their differences were accepted in this community. But what drew immigrants to the West Side was the availability of affordable housing.

As immigrants, different ethnic and cultural origins moved into the Lower West Side, the previous group or groups that lived there began to migrate out, integrating into other areas of the city. An example of this ethnic demographic
shift can be seen in the St. Paul area where the Jews moved to Highland Park from the Lower West Side. This ethnic change started to happen in large numbers at the end of World War I and the beginning of the Depression. Sometime between 1912 and 1917 Mexican-Americans began to settle on the Lower West Side in large numbers, (Pierce 1971:66). At first the settlement numbers were numerically low compared to the majority population of Anglo-Americans but, by the 1920's there were about 70 permanent Mexican-American residents in St. Paul, most of them living on the Lower West Side. The Jewish population on the Lower West Side had been almost cut in half (Pierce1971:44).

The history of the Lower West Side is shared by many immigrant groups, but the Mexican American's search for affordable housing and a complaisant community led them to call the Lower West Side their home. During the 1920s and 1930s, significant population shifts were taking place. The increase in population of Mexicans living in Minnesota during the decade from 1920-1930, were 2,200 people, signifying a major social demographic change in Mexican settlement patterns during that decade. During the 1930s many newly arrived Mexican immigrants made their permanent residence on the Lower West Side, (See Table 2) as did people from other parts of St. Paul or from rural Minnesota who had suffered economic reverses. This was largely because of the low rents, but the Lower West Side was quickly becoming overcrowded and space soon became limited. The neighborhood of the Lower West Side, because of its location on a flood plain, was a very low cost place to live. It flooded seasonally
and would put many residents’ housing under water.
Economic Change

The Depression assisted in the increasing numbers of permanent residents on the West Side. In 1929 the Minnesota Sugar Company stopped recruiting labor from Texas because the state of Texas started requiring a license fee for hiring workers going out of state, causing a shift in residence patterns (Pierce 1971:59). This left many Mexican-American migrant workers out of a job and without transportation back to their home state. Between 1930 and 1933 about 220 Mexican-Americans settled in St. Paul, of whom about 165 settled on the Lower West Side (Pierce 1971:58). This population increase did not parallel the demographic experience of Mexicans in other parts of the United States.

In southwestern parts of the United States the numbers of Mexicans for four years from 1930 through 1933 saw a reversal in immigration due to the acute economic depression in the United States and in spite of continuing depressed conditions in Mexico. The decrease also resulted from programs of deportation (Maciel 1998: 38).

This reversal in immigration during the Depression throughout most parts of the United States is just one example which demonstrates the American perception of Mexican immigrants. Along with this view came an increase in discrimination that was directed toward ethnic minorities and immigrants. This attitude was heightened throughout the United States during of the Depression. The stress that the Depression put on many Americans initiated this increase in
prejudice toward Mexican-Americans. Anglo-Americans needed someone to blame for their economic hardships, and the Mexican immigrants presented an accessible target. In St. Paul, it was directed toward the West Side Mexican-Americans. The increasing number of Mexican-Americans that came to live in the area heightened the ignorance and prejudice of Anglo-Americans toward them. The discrimination toward Mexican-American laborers also was heightened by Anglo unemployment, who began to compete with Mexican and Mexican-American labor. For decades agricultural jobs had been traditionally held by Mexican-Americans. But because of the economic downturn, high unemployment increased the competition between Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans for work of any kind.

In 1933 companies changed their strategy for hiring bulk labor. Instead, they began to hire workers individually, rather than, in groups. Many Mexican-Americans felt alienated because they could not work in certain economic sectors. They increasingly met with "Only White Labor Employed" signs because of the increasing number of Anglo-Americans applying for agricultural jobs (Pierce 1971:59-60). Prejudice came in many forms for Mexican-Americans, but none was more governmentally explicit and continual than the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans to Mexico. Because of the onset of "repatriation" and "deportation" programs, some population shifts of the Mexican residents of St. Paul occurred.

Deportation was implemented as a mechanism to decrease competition
by immigrants in the work force. It also served to satisfy particularly, angry Anglo-Americans, who felt that they had lost their jobs because of immigrant labor.

There was a movement in St. Paul to deport Mexicans who were not legally naturalized citizens of the United States, . . . deportation appeared to some as the ideal way to remove Mexican-Americans from the job market permanently. St. Paul had the dubious distinction of being one of the first cities to deport Mexican-Americans and in 1938, 324 of them were deported (Pierce 1971:60).

It did not matter if the Mexicans being deported to Mexico were United States citizens or not. Being identified as Mexican was reason enough for possible deportation to Mexico. Because they were easily recognized from the dominant "White society" both phenotypically and culturally, they were easily targeted as the scapegoat for why the local economy was in turmoil. Mexican-American citizens, like the Mexican immigrants, soon carried the label of foreigner. It soon became obvious to them that they were somehow different and unwanted by "White society."

Their increasing awareness that Anglo society treated and viewed them differently prompted the further enclavement of the West Side as an ethnic neighborhood. Therefore, in order to cope with the prevailing social conditions, prejudice and discrimination, cultural pride and ethnic identity was reaffirmed through the formation of a strong ethnic enclave.
Rebuilding Era

By the close of the Depression era, Mexican labor once again was in demand by American agricultural sectors. With the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt the era of the Depression was slowly moving toward recovery. The country was behind his decisions and recommendations that formed the basic recovery program of his first 100 days in office. The Tennessee Valley Authority was in charge of building dams and power plants which in many other ways salvage a vast, impoverished region. Other bills passed during the Hundred Days, as well as subsequent legislation, provided aid for the unemployed and the working poor and attacked the problems of agriculture and business (Maciel 1998:37).

Immigration resumed, stimulated in large part by war and post war needs and by the 1942 Emergency Farm Labor Program, the Bracero Program, which was a significant reformulation of the historical labor exchange (Maciel 1998:39).

The hiring of illegal Mexican aliens increased as employers, dissatisfied with the Bracero Program, sought to maximize their profits. (See Table 3). Immigration continued to increase with every decade after the Depression. Though Mexican migration continues to increase, “The movement was probably considered desirable to the extent that the migrants were considered laborers and not settlers.” (Samora 1971:54).

The steady recruitment and immigration of Mexicans to the United States
and to Minnesota, resulted in an increased number of residents on the West Side. The steady stream of Mexican immigrants in the neighborhood strengthened the ethnic enclave that had already begun to form. By 1950 there was a total of 3,305 Mexicans living legally in Minnesota. The gradual rebuilding of the neighborhood and its economy however, was halted suddenly by a disaster that would change the community forever.
Flooding of the Lower West Side:

In the spring of 1952, the West Side Latino community experienced a natural disaster. The worst flood of the 20th century on the upper Mississippi River put most of the Lower West Side under water. Area businesses took an accumulated loss of $5,500,000 which lead to a chain reaction of events that would affect the Lower West Side residents. Because of this tremendous economic loss a proposal was made to protect the area from further flooding damage, by constructing a retaining wall. This also meant that the residents of the Lower West Side would be forced to leave their homes and find a new place to live. That would change the face of their community, not just in locality but in density as well, causing many old residents to leave the St. Paul area and move to find more affordable housing outside the area. (See Table 4)

A 1955 study determined that it would be possible to protect the area from floods with a retaining wall, but the cost would be very high. Also, the state or federal government would not profit by pouring tax dollars into the construction of the wall. This was because it was a poor residential area rather than a commercial area. In 1956, an alternative plan proposed the development of the Riverview Industrial Park, which would be profitable for both the state and federal governments. Unfortunately for the Lower West Side residents this Industrial Park included their neighborhood. After reviewing the plan for four years, the Corps of Engineers approved a $6,500,000 flood wall control project that would protect the area from further flooding. The decision to destroy the
Lower West Side residential area was made and the residents were allotted 120 days to move. This had a tremendous effect on about 1,200 families (mostly Mexican-Americans) that lived on the Lower West Side. The property was appraised and the value amount was considered 'just compensation'. But their idea of 'just compensation' was not that at all as Mrs. Atkins the President of the Old West Side Improvement Associated stated:

They offer $2,000 to 3,000 for homes here. What can you buy with that? A real estate man came down here with some listings. I said, show me what you can buy for $3,000. He laughed at me. There isn't enough public housing . . . The paper said we were mad. We're not mad. The old people are frightened. The young people are worried . . . They worry because they don't feel they get enough money for their houses. And they are sad because they are leaving a little community where everybody knows everybody else. Friendships are being broken (Oliver Towne Column, St. Paul Dispatch, Feb. 14, 1962).

Although this dollar amount for the Lower West Side houses was probably accurate, it was not a fair compensation for what the property was potentially worth and sold to the new owners for the construction of factories and businesses of the Industrial Park.

The details of who would be in charge of each phase of the project were then determined and:

In 1961 the City Council decided that the Port Authority would buy the land for the Industrial Park and both the Port Authority and the Housing and Redevelopment Authority would be responsible for relocating families (Pierce 1971:106).
And in 1961 the Lower West Side was condemned in order to begin construction. The decision was final. The Port Authority and Housing and Redevelopment Authority assisted 410 families relocate from the Lower West Side into other areas in and around the city. (See Table #4)

Oliver Towne described the physical appearance of the area, and the economic situation of residents of the Lower West Side in February of 1962:

I stood in the intersection of Fairfield and Robertson in the ominous silence and the smell of death all around. The death of a neighborhood. Nobody smiled. The only sound was the flapping of an unhinged, rusting door of a house.

The tawdry shabbiness of despair clung to the building I passed. Like an old man who doesn’t care if he shaves anymore. Or a woman who has stopped trying to keep up appearances . . . a faucet leaks, a window is broken, a door squeaks. Let it leak; let it squeak; a knock on the door and the stranger is greeted with furtive looks through the crack in the front door. He may have the paper that bears the doom date . . . Put on your shawl and walk across the Roberts Street Bridge to city hall once more and ask them how to buy a $15,000.00 house with $2,300.00 (Pierce1971:115).

The Lower West Side was quickly becoming a ghost town. Families who had once lived there still had the memories of what it was once like. But it was soon to be no more than just that and by May of 1963 the Lower West Side was described as follows:

A community is dying. In places it resembles the bomb rubble of postwar Europe, in others the
stately ruins of ancient Greece - but it is neither. In the background less than a mile away, rise the towers of the city. Only a handful remain for the deathwatch. The residents of this ghost town listen for the bulldozer's grunt or for a soft crunching sound like a cardboard box being ripped apart. To them, it is a death rattle. Soon there will be no West Side. Where there were dingy store fronts and decaying houses, huge, modern factories will rise . . . But for today, for the few who remain - displaced persons in their own home town - it is still the old West Side (Pierce1971:117).

This forced relocation, because of the right of eminent domain, economically dropped many residents back down to the social-economic status of 'recent immigrant'. Many people could not buy another home and most became renters. This forced some of these residents to relocate to other areas of the city, disrupting their community ties with friends and neighbors. They were also subjected to discrimination when trying to rent in other areas of the city. The pride of owning their own home was taken from them. But the Mexican-Americans held onto their culture and their identity. And as the last days drew near a final picture of the Lower West Side was observed:

The last family was moved from the Lower West Side in January 1964, the last buildings were demolished, and standing on the corner of State and Fairfield one encountered only the flat and level land stretching to the river and an eerie stillness (Pierce1971:118).

The Lower West Side was no longer a residential neighborhood with houses and small businesses. It became a wasteland that was once full of
immigrant history that would no longer unfold. On top of the ruins Riverview Industrial Park was built, like Mexico City was built on the history and ruins of the once flourishing Aztec city of Tenochtitlan. Just as their ancestors before adapted to change and conformed to new surroundings and the influence of a dominant society and culture, so did the Mexicans of the Lower West Side who regrouped and relocated to rebuild their new community.
Chapter 4

Community Reformation and Identity
Change in Community: The New West Side

With the destruction of their original neighborhood, (see map 1) the displaced Mexican-Americans soon reorganized and flourished as they formed a new community. The new area was in close proximity to their old neighborhood. Most could not buy a new home. A few other reasons that influenced their decision were the importance of low rent costs, familiarity, and history of the area. The neighborhood was called the Riverview area, but the new residents started to refer to this new community once again as the West Side.

The new West Side encompasses a large area and is crescent shaped within its boundaries. One boundary is represented by Annapolis Street’s city limits where it touches West St. Paul; the Mississippi River and Riverview Industrial Park form another; and the Robert Street Bridge, the Wabasha Street Bridge, and the High Bridge form the other. The new West Side neighborhood like the old Lower West Side, is actually located in southeast St. Paul (See Map 2). The area of the neighborhood is approximately 3.42 miles square, 2,190 acres. The measure of land mass is not very massive, but it has become the home to new and old Mexican-American immigrants as well as a variety of other Spanish speaking peoples.

In 1989 the West Side was home to 15,207 people. The community is diverse in terms of cultural, ethnic, and economic diversity and is home to one of St. Paul’s largest Hispanic communities; 21.3 percent of the population reports being of Hispanic origin. The median income was $24,543 in 1989; 20.1 percent
live below the poverty line (2,971 people), further emphasizing the low economic status of the West Side community members. Of those who reported being Hispanic, 22.5 percent live below the poverty line. If analyzed by age, 31 percent of 0-17 years-old, 14.9 percent of 18-64 years-old, and 16.9 percent of 65+ years-old live below the poverty line. The largest percentage of people who make up the community is under the age of 17 (young population). This statistical information demonstrates a continual population growth in the community and further attributes to the low economics of the West Side.

Although the area of the West Side extends beyond the Concord Street area and the Riverview Industrial Area, most Mexican-Americans congregate around this small area. One major organization that was established in (1900) is located right in the heart of the West Side. The Neighborhood House has served historically as a multipurpose human service agency to assist the people in the community. It assists in programs for women, seniors, youth, children and people with limited English language skills. These programs played an important role in helping the new Mexican-American immigrants as well as other immigrants who came to live on the West Side. The Neighborhood House has and still is responsible for helping the community members who live on the West Side. At the core of this Mexican-American West Side community is the Catholic church, Our Lady of Guadalupe, which serves as another focal point for the West Side community. Because of the large number of practicing Mexican Catholics the church has been the gathering center since it was first built.
Community Unity Intensified

This largely Latino neighborhood has facilitated a communal identity. This can be attributed in part to the long history on the West Side as well as the large population of Latinos in the area. There is a unique feeling about the West Side of it being a bounded town. This feeling of isolation and separation has intensified this communal identity, and the strong pride in their community is heightened by the geographical location of the West Side neighborhood which is surrounded by natural amenities such as the Mississippi River. This identity is a combination of many components. The two that are very strong in this case are ethnicity and place.

The expression of a Latino ethnicity can be seen in the public art which is drawn on the sides of buildings, corner parks, and bridges. These murals, (See illustrations 1-4) some of them decades old, are the pride of the community and symbolize their heritage and presence on the West Side. Their pride in the West Side is because it is an extension of their history, culture, and strong heritage. This is just one way that Latino culture is expressed. There are also a number of festival and celebrations that the community members participate in drawing in people from outside of their ethnic group to enjoy parts of their culture.

There is a strong feeling of unity held by the residents of this community that is present because of the multiple generations that have remained living on the West Side. This has facilitated a historical acceptance of cultural, ethnic,
and economic diversity among community members which can be seen back in the 1800s when the first European immigrants settled in this area. Today it can be observed when walking around the community where you can see African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Anglo-Americans and Latinos. They live together in one community and have learned a great deal from the diversity of their neighborhood. And because of this, a community understanding has developed: that with diversity comes unity.

This community pride is fueled by their history on the West Side which has kept their culture strong, and therefore effected their identity. These variables enabled them to retain their cultural identity as well as a communal identity. Even through all of the obstacles that the Mexican-Americans have faced throughout their history on the West Side, they have still managed to maintain a strong hold on their identity. They have also become tolerant of people from different backgrounds living in their community.
Chapter 5

Local Identity: Manifested and Retained
Ethnographic investigation was done to answer a central question. How does local identity manifest and retain itself in a particular place? For this thesis an unsystematic sampling of the West Side population was done to explain local identity formation of Mexican-Americans living in that community of St. Paul, Minnesota.

The qualitative data emphasized the importance of history, time, and place when studying identity formation. These three factors are key in unraveling the occurrence of local identity, and provide a better understanding of its significance to those who hold it.

The importance of history, time, and place, has been discussed throughout the previous chapters in relation to the Mexican-American community members of the West Side.

The *time* period reflects the economic, social, and political habits that shape people and events, whereas *place*, such as the neighborhood or school, reflects changing realities. People change over time and in places, and new and different forces, such as immigration or economic restructuring can significantly alter an individual's feelings, thoughts, and actions. As Spindlers have noted (Spindler and Spindler 1990), such shifts can tax and strain enduring (past), situated (present), and endangered (stress between first two) notions of self (Vigil1997:124).

In this chapter each of the three variables will be discussed and explained through the words of the community members. Through these interview accounts a story begins to be unraveled, and the first insight into the importance
of history to this community is discernible.
History as Tradition

The history of these people, according to the records, is composed of around ninety-three years on the West Side. Strong ties to the community can be traced back as far as 1907. There is a generational bridge between the past and the present that is still exhibited, increasing the awareness level of the community members. The importance of the West Side is, without a doubt, conscious and legitimate to the people living there. But there is a difference in those Mexican-Americans, who share this history, compared to those who are new arrivals to the West Side. All those who were interviewed could trace back two or three generations. They still remembered the families that lived on the Lower West Side and their contributions to their history. The transfer of knowledge through oral history is being practiced on the West Side. As Juan remembered the history of the West Side, he stated:

In Minnesota the Hispanic community is growing, but it is primarily based out of St. Paul West Side, and after growing up here and being here I want to be part of that community. I want to make sure that the tradition and the people, the children that grow up here learn originally how we came about to be in Minnesota. If you look at where Mexico is and where Minnesota is, there’s a lot of distance in between and there’s a lot of history on how we got here. I want to make sure that the kids today learn you know, what actually . . .

This long tradition and history have been and continue to be a large part of the lives of the Mexican-American people living on the West Side, and is
passed on orally from generation to generation. Recent dynamics are blending old and new, creating a stronger sense of pride to the old families who trace their history back several generations. During the past five years significant changes have begun to happen. The community has been altered due to an influx of new immigrants into the area and the changes are largely the result of their presence. This has initiated various changes to the West Side but the negative aspects are most apparent. Infighting has slowly been rising. An example of this, a bar fight starts because one person spoke Spanish and the other person did not. This led to an attack on the Mexican-American identity and ended in a physical fight. It is not always seen in this way, but the Mexican-American's are beginning to feel like outsiders in their own community. Being confronted with the reality that they do not speak Spanish and are being confused of not being Mexican. This feeling of alienation becomes stronger everyday as more and more newcomers move into the neighborhood. This has started a friction and division in the community. The lack of a shared history on the West Side has created a separation that is dividing the Mexican-American ethnic population into two groups, old community members and new community members. The new members are challenging the validity of the Mexican-American culture and therefore their identity.

One woman who still remembered the old Lower West Side gives her account on how she sees history repeating itself again, but this time it is not an immigrant group much different from her family. Maria said this about the people
who are coming from Mexico:

It’s been our generation and the one before, that kept the church going. So the church it’s been us all the time, it’s been us, the Mexicans, or the Chicanos of the neighborhood. . . . so anyway the church was fine, it fit us, we fit in the church, so now what you have now is an 11:00 o’clock mass full of people from Mexico now, who financially don’t support the church and who as far as programs, don’t support those either. Yet the church is in a position where they have to expand . . . we’re having to pay for that even though they’re the ones benefitting from it, not us . . . which I’m sorry if you’re an illegal, you should be getting the papers to become legal and not make, that’s what our parents did . . . but it seems they aren’t putting money back in the community, and that’s what the frustration is, is because they’re coming in, stamping us out of our community, making it inconvenient for those who have been here, making us pay the price for something that we didn’t have to pay that price for it anymore. We were done paying the price for that.

It is evident, in this statement, that there is a major separation between Mexicanos and Mexican-Americans. The language difference has affected their place of worship by changing the masses to Spanish and catering to the new immigrants, leaving out the English-speaking Mexican-Americans. But there is a gap of over 90 years of history that has aided in a separation of two seeming superficially similar people. They are very different both culturally and in their way of viewing the world.

A local communal identity has been shaped with the help of a shared history on the West Side. One thing that can be traced back historically is the
loss of their ability to speak Spanish. This is having a greater impact on today's generation when they come into contact with the newly immigrating Latino population. Victoria's experience of this interface on the West Side is described in this way:

...a lot of Mexicans from Mexico are coming here, and this used to be the West Side, a lot of Mexicans lived here, but now that they are coming they are making everything Spanish now. I used to be able to go into El Burritos and order something in English but it was a Hispanic store, they sold everything, tortillas, rice, beans, but now I can't go in there and order without having to order it in Spanish and I can't because I don't speak Spanish. When we were little growing up, we knew Spanish, when we were little, but when we went to school they told us your kids are having a hard time learning, you need to speak to them in English, so our parents thought well the kids are having a hard time learning so they started speaking to us in English... I feel like I am fighting the wrong people... that makes me mad when they ask what kind of Mexican are you? You know I'm Mexican-American. I don't like to be called Latino or Hispanic. I like to be called Chicana.

Historically, the loss of a language is the first modification to be made and for the majority of those Mexican-Americans living on the West Side, this is the case. The majority of Mexican-Americans lost their ability to speak Spanish, which caused a collective transition to occur. And over time it had bonded them together along with their shared heritage. These experiences of language loss have affected the evolution of these Mexican-Americans as a group who have learned to react to external forces. This has served to create a strong unity
between the community members, but it has also drawn a line that is hard to cross if you don’t have historical roots on the West Side.

There is a very large difference between Mexicans from Mexico and those who have been living in the United States for generations. This language difference is a perfect case to illustrate why there is such a strong conflict between the Mexicanos and the Mexican-Americans on the West Side. Victoria, a long time member of the West Side community, said:

...they don’t like me in there because when I go in there I say excuse me, can I get somebody over here that speaks English. So when I go in there now, they know who I am cause I do that all the time. When I go in there and I’ll order something and they know that I don’t speak the Spanish. I notice they don’t serve you as well. But if you’re white and you go in there, they don’t expect you to know Spanish, so they’re okay with that and then they get all the good service.

Circumstances are changing on the West Side. The old immigrants are having a hard time coping with the use of the Spanish language in stores that English was once spoken. And because of the hard struggle to understand and adjust to their changing environment a separation is occurring on the basis of these differences.
Time

This history has lead to present day. Currently a new section of history is accumulating and conflicting with the past. Because of new people moving into their environment there has been an increase in conflict between the newly arriving Mexicans, who are inundating the community. This conflict has increased the old community members’ desire to preserve their ethnicity which is very deeply rooted. Throughout history the level of ethnicity varies, but that does not mean it is not present, it is just not apparent to outsiders. They are holding onto what has been saved by each generation. And they are also trying to relearn what has been lost or forcefully denied them. One way that this is being accomplished was observed by Natalia who stated:

Staying close to my roots and again instilling it in my kids, is something that I want, the only regret I have is that I don’t speak the language. My parents didn’t speak it to us so that’s one big regret. I am trying to get my kids as bilingual as I can. I have my dad speak to them so they at least grasp some of it. So staying on the West Side and having my kids raised here is a big part of our life and has been since I was little.

It is no longer perceived as wrong to be bilingual. Modern American society now places a higher value on the knowledge of more than one language. This is creating a greater desire to make sure the children of the community learn Spanish which has been fueled by the arrival of the new immigrants. It was reiterated many times that it is easier to teach and pass on a cultural
heritage with the aid of visual, audio, and the daily emersion in one’s culture.

Remembering and passing on of a cultural heritage to children has always been important to the West Side community and continues to be true today.
Backlash of Origin

The West Side historically has held the stigma of being a low poverty area, but today it is also described as dangerous. The reality is that the crime level is not very high compared with other areas of the city. The Mexican-Americans that live there cannot escape the labels that are associated with the area. Most outsiders do not know anything about the West Side except for what they hear on the news, read in the papers or the gossip that they hear.

This is how, Westsider, Raquel sees it:

People have the impression that when they hear of the West Side they think of it as a bad area. And so it’s when you tell someone you are from the West Side, or you live on the West Side, it’s like “Oh my goodness” and they right away ask about certain areas, like do you live by such and such a place, or do you know so and so. It’s like anytime they hear something about Mexican people on T.V. or someone is in trouble, it’s like, “do you know him,” or, “do you know her,” because they have a Mexican last name, surname. So it is kind of hard, you feel so slighted but that identification about living in a bad area. That’s the way people react.

It is through these sources that they formulated their opinions. This is making it harder for these Mexican-Americans to step away from their neighborhood and be seen as individuals. This has heightened their need to stay close to the people living in their community.

Along with this media influence comes the issue of labeling. Many of the Mexican-American people see this as a barrier that white society has placed
before them. They are reacting to this labeling by choosing their own label to identify with as other people do. Jaime viewed this process this way:

Society puts everybody more or less in different categories . . . Every morning I get up and look in the mirror and I know I am different. I am not white, my hair is dark, my skin is a little bit darker than everybody else. I don't like to be considered as Hispanic really, myself but I know that they do. A lot of questionnaires that you sign your same up for sometimes it says Hispanic, but if that is all they have then I'll put my name as Hispanic, but no, I don't like to be part of it cause it's like, Mexicans don't like to be called Puerto Ricans and Puerto Ricans don't like to be called Mexicans and we don't like to be called Salvadorians or from South American. I know a lot of people just want to be called Mexicans, Mexican-American.

Because of this labeling, each minority group has chosen a label which to identify each another. This has caused the Mexican people living in this community to do just that. They know that they are defined because of differences such as color, and because society continually reminds them that they are different. This has caused them to look inward and in turn has brought an awareness of their culture to their consciousness and has motivated them to hold onto their differences thus forming a local identity. Juan reacted to the idea of labeling this way:

I don't consider myself as part of an ethnic group. I consider myself part of the Latino community. I consider myself as a Mexican-American. Some people feel strongly about being Mexican or just being American. But you are part of a community, part of a culture.
This view of identity and membership is composed of attributes such as community and culture. In the minds of the community members, there is the belief that there is a visual difference between outsiders and members of the West Side neighborhood. This belief of the community members is argued and supported because, one, the community is very close, two, there is a difference in dress, and three, the dialect is distinct. Because of this there is a common belief on the West Side that Mexicans from the West Side can be recognized and labeled as such. This is an interesting concept that needs to be further investigated, but regardless of how valid this may be to other people outside of the community it is true to these members. But what can be stated and supported is that the Mexican culture on the West Side is a large factor in this categorization and as Carlos describes it:

You can tell when people come, even other Mexicans, when they come here. It's different here, it is, regardless of what you think... there is just a certain way that distinguishes a Mexican from the West Side as far as you can go to Minneapolis and they know right away that you are not from Minneapolis. You can go to the East Side, you can go to the other side of town off of University. They (other Mexicans) know that you are not from that side of town. I don’t know if it is the way we talk, the way we dress. I think our clothes have a lot to do with it. It is our culture, like I have a shirt there right now that says Aztlan, you know, what I mean, now that is different. They (other Mexican from Minneapolis) don’t seem to be into being Mexicans as much as people from the West Side.
These are just a few of the things that are dealt with every day as a community member of the West Side. Nevertheless they have risen to the challenge and are coming to terms with today's society and the pressures that it places on their community. The children live during a time very differently from the times their parents and grandparents grew up. Each time period has its own pros and cons and is dealt with in many different ways.
Juxtaposition

Historically your ethnic background has determined where you set up residency, which of course changes through time. Normally when new immigrants arrive they find neighborhoods to live in that are made up of other people culturally like them. This is a very powerful relationship which has many effects on identity. It is therefore logically necessary to demonstrate the extent to which place contributes to formation of a local identity. In the case of the West Side Mexican-Americans it is instrumental to this process. Many other researchers have used this facet to better understand change in neighborhoods and varying levels of ethnicity. One example of this is from a case study conducted by James Diego Vigil where he observed this:

Thus the concept of place has changed. Urban and suburban locales have become radically altered during this time. For instance, East Los Angeles gradually stopped being the port of entry for immigrants as housing units and neighborhoods filled with newcomers, even in some instances displacing Chicano residents in older, traditional barrios. In turn, third- and fourth-generation families, some of them gang-oriented, moved to suburban residences farther out from the city to replace (or create) the voids left by whites (Vigil 1997:125).

This case study has parallels to the neighborhood of the West Side. But the West Siders have not yet reached the point where old residents are moving out and into other areas of the city. In fact, West Siders who had moved away are returning. But the changes that have started to materialize are apparent
through the observations made by members of the community, and are a common topic of the dialogue when old time community members gather.

The result is a division within the community where the new immigrants perceive themselves as more Mexican than the established families who have incorporated some concepts as well as celebrations of mainstream American culture as their own.

A change is occurring on the West Side and along with this change many old community members are feeling a separation and displacement in their own neighborhood. Carlos describes his experience on the West Side in these words:

I felt really out of place down there. I have felt like I didn't belong on the West Side, in El Burritos only. I've been getting mad about that too, because when I go in there and they act like, you know, I don't belong . . . they don't want to help you right away.

El Burrito Mercado is a store that hires employees to speak only Spanish. The local store caters only to the new growing immigrant population. It is now owned and operated by Mexicans and their clientele are now predominantly Spanish speaking people, ignoring the Mexican-Americans who have resided on the West Side, for practically a century. This has created a feeling of being a foreigner in their own community. Internal conflict is rising between the diverse Latino population. And a division is being established based on differences in culture, conceptualizing the use of us vs. them.
There is a shift in people living on the West Side today that is leading to conflicts of identity. The influx of new immigrants is testing the strength of the local’s bond and sense of identity. As Joseph who lives on the West Side said: "it makes me a stronger person because the culture and the people, they are a strong people, they are together." The source of their strength is being infiltrated but they are continuing to stay strong.

Group strength, culture, and togetherness are values used to describe an individual who lives on the West Side. These ideas are materialized in the populace of interview responses which authenticate their importance. Hector expressed his own experience on the West Side community:

I know growing up myself 20 years ago that there was a bad connotation as far as this community on the West Side. Even in that respect, coming from here and knowing the strength of the community and that it was a bad stereotype that we had. But it is nice to grow up and know all your neighbors' families and a lot of extended families and it has affected me positively.

This community feeling has served more purposes than one and has affected the way that the world is viewed and their thoughts have been formulated through these experiences. The community is interwoven intermittently with concepts such as family, friends, culture and history that assist in strengthening their communal perception of the West Side.
Power of Place

Community strength and support are attained and provide the ability to deal with the harsh reality of the outside world. Through difficult experiences, a consciousness is developed of how intricate the West Side is. Hector’s perception of the West Side community was:

A sense of family and community. You don’t really feel that, going off to the military or even going outside of the cities, you recognize that people consider you inferior and a second class citizen. You just deal with it and are brought up with it. Playing hockey in the city and people are calling you dirty Mexican and everything. It (The West Side community) gives you a sense of strength to deal with the situation.

Living on the West Side has had numerous other effects on people. As Lucie put it, there is a wide range of experiences that go as far as making you “feel like you are more Mexican living down on the West Side,” to a desire to never leave. As Anita put it:

I know the community, the people here and like a lot of times, they have certain things that go on, it’s like nice to see, you know, you always see a face that you know. So it’s kind of nice. I don’t think I’d want to go and live anywhere else far. I’m just so used to just being here on the West Side, where, this is where I enjoy living.

There are many individual explanations for why some people do not want to move to a different area but the one recurring theme was expressed by Victoria who said:
I feel safe here. Every block I go down, I know somebody. I won’t ever move anywhere else. Maybe West St. Paul, that’s just a couple of blocks away, but I’m in a different area, yeah, I like it here because when something happens we all come together, we have that security. I guess I just like to keep together around here, keep all the Mexicans together, so when something like that happens.

The people who live in this community have strong cultural ties to each other and the land. Nedia describes this sense of community this way: “I am Mexican and if there was something that had to do with Mexican people, like if there was some kind of discrimination or something then I would voice my opinion.” When someone in the community is threatened by outsiders, the strong community cooperative that is ingrained in them quickly becomes apparent.
Prejudice as Restriction

External influences that are caused by racism are too painful to confront on a continual basis. And because of the uneasiness that is felt a conscious choice is made to stay inside the community. Maria describes her experiences this way:

I always feel uncomfortable when I am amongst a group of just Anglos, but as soon as a Latino comes in the room. It's like okay, yeah. There is something about the West Side you just don't see in other communities, and it's not in the West Side in general, its in pockets of the West Side. You can't speak of it just generally like that, there's certain pockets over there that are just really good, really nice . . . because of the diversity and because it's closer to the culture that I grew up in and it's closer to the culture that I identify with more.

This is aided also with the fact that by moving to a new place you are also leaving behind your roots along with your family ties. But with the changes that are occurring on the West Side more rapidly than before, it may no longer be a choice. This change as Maria saw it was because:

And room, there is no room on the West Side anymore. So it will be interesting to see what happens in five years. Because it's just like, a lot of people don't like the change that is going on. (Minneapolis) is getting bigger because of housing, economics, cheaper housing.

But even with these intricacies, the conception is still that the West Side is the only place they want to call home, not because they cannot leave but
because the ties to the West Side are so deeply ingrained that they cannot envision living anywhere else. And if they do leave, in the end they come back, as Joseph did:

I moved off the West Side once and I wanted to move back here, this is where my family is, extended and friends are down here. This is where I want to be. In my mind and in my heart.

It is very apparent to both individual and researcher through this statement that there are strong family bonds as well as external forces that reinforce this sentiment, though they are not fully understood.

Culture, comfort and community are very important to the Mexican-Americans on the West Side and are continually expressed as the reasons for continuing to live in their community. These three variables also give them the feeling of being somebody on the West Side, in turn giving them confidence in their person. Living on the West Side has sheltered a lot of the community members from an outside world that is both overtly and covertly salted with racism and hatred as Hector experienced:

Being here you don't feel as, there is discrimination out there, but being here in this community, it has a sense that they have grown up in a Mexican community and that is what it is, a sense of family and community...

The importance of their neighborhood increases and decreases depending on the changing social economics of the time. But because they are
experiencing more separation within their community, changes are going to be made. Up until now their existence on the West Side has provided them with the ability to maintain their cultural identity. But it has also limited their proximity to the West Side which may very well be changing in the future. All of the statements discussed above have provided information and insight to help explain why the West Side is so important.
Conclusion

Once the analysis of the interviews and literature was completed my point was supported fully. It became clear that the effects of history, time, and place were indeed key factors in the lives of the Mexican-Americans who live on the West Side. And because of them a local identity formed. Each variable played a separate, as well as, a combined role in this process. The history of the area started this formation, followed by the social economics of the area then and now, along with the neighborhood being bounded by borders which have facilitated a separation and identity based on all of these contributors. The pressures of society and how they affect minorities are best stated by Maria who said:

I call myself American because I’m glad to be born in this country and a part of this country . . . . I call myself a Mexican because you (white society) are constantly reminding me of that.
Chapter 6

Conclusion
Closing Remarks

The investigation of the formation of a Mexican-Americans local identity was conducted. The location of a neighborhood was chosen, i.e., the West Side, which is located in St. Paul, Minnesota. A research problem was proposed and put in place. Then an extensive literature review was collected which provided large amounts of background information. With this knowledge it was then possible to form a research design and questionnaire to conduct fieldwork. The semi-structured interviews along with open-ended questions allowed for original responses. The informants were selected randomly to minimize biases of the researcher. The informants represented different generations and genders of the community.

This method of investigation provided a better understanding and explanation about the occurrence of a local identity. Other methods could have been used, and should be used in further research of this population strengthening the results. But for the context of this research design, I am confident that the methods of investigation used were the most appropriate for this thesis.

First, an understanding of why and how culture changes occur was needed to explain the formation of a local identity. This was accomplished by defining both the individual internal and outside forces that affected the population. Historically documented events were identified as outside forces and independent experiences were determined as individual internal causes.
The continuing production and reproduction of culture are attributed to the social use of race and ethnicity which also fall into the category of individual and outside forces, where the social economics of a society determines membership. Explanations and definitions of both race and ethnicity is best stated like this: “membership in an ethnic group is usually voluntary, membership in a racial group is not” (Barth1983:10). With these two terms defined for the context of this thesis, the individual was then added to them:

All of these variables were then combined along with the economics of the West Side where boundaries have been placed. A number of determining factors are involved in the permanent settlement into an area, specifically transportation, technology, labor supply, i.e., immigration. These social economic issues have greatly impacted the Mexican-Americans on the West Side. The boundaries of this area have been defined by the historically low economic status and contained location. A local identity occurred because of these social and physical boundaries. These variables were conducted with historical knowledge of the population living on the West Side in order to investigate.

Minnesota’s labor demand in agriculture ignited the immigration of large numbers of Mexican-Americans to the St. Paul area. This immigration north for work was the beginning of about a hundred years of shared history for these Mexican-Americans, which was the first of many variables that helped to shape who and where they are today.
Next, the effect of WWI, which opened up new doors for many Mexican-Americans. Jobs in the industrial sector lead to a more permanent lifestyle that allowed them to put strong roots down in their neighborhood. These cultural roots helped them to survive in the urban industrial area of St. Paul, Minnesota.

The Depression aided in creating discrimination toward Mexican-Americans, which in many ways kept them isolated within the boundaries of their barrio but helped them maintain their hold on their Mexican identity.

The 1952 flooding of the Mississippi River was one of the most disruptive events that they had faced. Because of the damages that area businesses incurred, the Lower West Side residents, mostly Mexican-American, were displaced and their lives were turned up-side-down. The loss of their homes and community set them back forcing them to start all over again. All the years of work that they had toiled to succeed in American society were stripped away from them.

All of these events assisted in the construction of the building blocks, leading to change and a unique communal identity. Community members who live on the new West Side have retained this history, further affecting their lives as they reestablished their roots in a familiar, but new area. With all of this information collected there was only one thing left to do, create a research design that could be implemented.

A method of investigation was conducted to lead to a better understanding of how and why a local identity formation occurs. The qualitative
analysis emphasizes the attributes of the West Side and the importance to each specific community member.

In an attempt to explain local identity formation three facets were focused on. First, the importance and relevancy of history were examined. Through this process it was possible to establish a few things about the population. One, a long standing family history connection to the West Side is essential to the community members, making it is possible to identify with each other through recognition of family name or visual characteristics. Second, the newly arriving immigrants into the area are not accepted as a part of the community, partly because they do not share a common history. Instead the new comers are causing internal problems that are stressing and testing the strength of a unified neighborhood. Third, the historical experience of living on the West Side has transcended into a local identity, and this identity is shared by those with historical roots to the area. And finally, the old immigrants have formed and retained this local identity within the boundaries of the West Side. This has been accomplished even with social economic pressures, increasing a sense of belonging, caring, and order.

Increasing social economic pressures of American society is increasing a need for ethnicity. This has created a level of consciousness for Mexican-Americans, that their culture needs to be retained and passed onto the children. This is reinforcing their cultural roots on the West Side. But with societal pressures, it is becoming difficult to get beyond the stigma that has haunted this
area. Outsiders are increasingly subscribing to stereotypes which are making it harder for individuals to leave the West Side community without encountering discrimination. This is increasing the level of consciousness about identity and labels. A local identity has facilitated, and represents their individuality, unique history, culture, and community membership. This brings us to the last facet of place.

The reality of place is a major contributor in the formation of a local identity. It has been used by other researchers to explain the varying levels of ethnicity. Dr. James Diego Vigil conducted a comparable study using place to describe the changes that occurred in a Mexican-American neighborhood in East Los Angeles. In comparison, the West Side community is experiencing a similar change in their neighborhood makeup due to newcomers into the area.

This, I argue, is increasing the unity of its members to retain a place in their community. A group strength which has materialized in the past is more apparent today. This has created a duality that has increased the desire to remain within the geographical boundaries of this area, providing them with a sense of family, togetherness, culture, history, belonging, and security.

Humans have arrived at who we are today by a complex series of adaptations that have come about in response to environmental and societal stimuli. This is applicable to the Mexican-Americans living on the West Side of St. Paul, Minnesota, who, in their own cultural micro climate, have evolved to become a unique community of individuals who draw their strength and
weakness from the collective consciousness of a shared cultural and communal history. In many ways this isolation, by sheer distance from Mexico, and time has allowed them to become different, with different thought process and values.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the reasons behind the formation of a local identity of the Mexican-American people living on the West Side in St. Paul, Minnesota. This study was based on the consideration of the boundaries placed on the community due to social and economic patterns that have been affected by (1) historical economic factors and (2) the constant social turmoil which has contributed to form a local identity.

Today the social uses of terms such as ethnicity and ethnic groups have resulted in the replacement of racial classification grouping at the surface level. The need for human beings to surround themselves with others like them, either phenotypical characteristics, common interests, or because of similarities in background, have resulted in both internal individual and external segregation, keeping the concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in common practice. This study was conducted to demonstrate the underlying forces which effect this segregation as well as to highlight the benefits that result from a local identity.

There is still much to be learned about this population of people and further research should be conducted in the future that extends beyond the research design of local identity. There is a rich source of information waiting to be collected. With the changing America society today, it is key to understand just how and why these changes occur. Then and only then, can we have a
better understanding of ethnic cultures in a changing America.

The method of investigation that was used to better understand and explain why a local identity occurs was just one possible way to extract this information. It was chosen to provide epistemological evidence about local identity formation of Mexican-Americans living on the West Side that has not yet been explained by the current literature. Enough information was forth coming to answer why a local identity was formed and is continuing to be redefined. More investigation can be conducted to fill in some of the holes that are still there and other issues that were raised through the interviews could also be addressed. A larger sample of individuals may open up new explanations for this occurrence and provide more quantitative information and variables that surely would add to this complex equation and therefore to a final conclusion.

This study that was conducted, which looked at the formation of a local identity of Mexican-Americans living on the West Side, in St. Paul, Minnesota is a great reference point when looking and researching local identity formation. Due to the geography of the Midwest and more specifically Minnesota it is a new and exciting research into an under-represented group of Mexican-Americans. The literature is limited on this subject and much investigation had to be done to encounter the material that was found. This made the process a bit more difficult. Thus, more inferences needed to be proposed, as well as in depth interviews and fieldwork. The fieldwork brought the literature to life and clarified the relevancy and importance of local identity formation, and understanding.
Therefore, future researchers can use this research as a comparison for their research on local identity formation. This study has reemphasized the importance of individuality vs. generalization. We live in a changing world today, but more specifically America. It is becoming more apparent that one study does not describe all people who share a similar heritage. Hence, this study is just one piece of a larger puzzle of a changing American society.

With this in mind, future researchers can redo this study and therefore document new changes and occurrences. It would be beneficial to conduct a cross regional comparison using this study along with one located in a different region of the United States. There is still much to be done in this area, and many other methods and theories can be used to explain this occurrence, which is up to the researcher and their research design.

A larger population could have been used as well as different questions asked. These are just a few things that are suggested to future investigators in this area. The influx in immigration population is a very interesting variable and I believe that in the near future that it will become even more apparent, prevalent, and important to the community members of the West Side as well as citizens of the United States.
APPENDIX
Table 1

**Model of Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity is about a cultural differentiation - although, to reiterate the main theme of <em>Social Identity</em> (Jenkins 1996), identity is always a dialectic between similarities and differences;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity is centrally concerned with culture - shared meaning - but it is also rooted in, and to a considerable extent the outcome of, social interaction;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity is no more fixed or unchanging that the culture of which it is a component of the situations in which it is produced and reproduced;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity as a social identity is collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and internalized in personal self-identification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Jenkins 1997:13-14).
### Table 2

**MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN ST. PAUL AND THE LOWER WEST SIDE, 1933-1938**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mexican-Americans In St. Paul</th>
<th>Mexican-Americans On Lower West Side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-35-36</td>
<td>1,460</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>860</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual Report: 1938:13
TABLE 3
MEXICAN ILLEGAL ALIENS REPORTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>4,614</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>182,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>2,961</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>179,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>4,047</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>278,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>4,495</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>458,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>5,529</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>8,538</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>543,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>18,319</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>865,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>8,409</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>1,075,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>7,116</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>242,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>15,875</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>72,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>8,910</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>44,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>9,139</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>37,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>9,534</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>30,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>9,535</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>29,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>8,684</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>29,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>9,376</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>30,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>8,051</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>39,124</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>6,082</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>43,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>55,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>8,189</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>89,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>26,689</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>108,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>63,602</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>151,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>91,456</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>201,636</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 5,627,371


Annual Report of Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1964:8
### Table 4

**RELOCATION OF FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLDERS BY MONTH AND AREA, 1962-1964**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month &amp; Year</th>
<th>Application for Moving Costs</th>
<th>To West Side</th>
<th>To St. Paul</th>
<th>Outside St. Paul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1962</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1962</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1962</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1962</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1962</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1962</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1962</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1962</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1962</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1962</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1962</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1962</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1963</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1963</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1963</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1963</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1963</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1963</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1963</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1963</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1963</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>October 1963</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1963</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1963</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1964</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS** 410 182 201 27

Notes: These statistics were compiled from data and tables in the records of the Port Authority. It should be noted that there are some months that there are more applications for assistance to move than actually moved, for instance, August and October 1962 and March and April 1963. This indicates that the relocation took place in a different month or that an application was turned down. In June 1961, there were 547 families and individual households on the Lower West Side. These statistics show a total of 410 indicating the other 137 either moved from the area on their own in late 1961 or did not apply for moving costs. These statistics thus cover about 75% of the area’s residents, and of these show 44.4% remaining on the West Side, 49% moving to other parts of St. Paul, and 6.6% relocating outside the city limits.

Port Authority
ILLUSTRATION 2 - MURALS
ILLUSTRATION 3 - MURALS

Salas-McLean photo
1. What generation American are you? (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
2. How long have you and your family lived on the West Side?
3. Why is living on the West Side important to you?
4. How do you think it has affected your life?
5. How do you see yourself, and why?
6. What life experiences do you think shaped that identity?
7. How have others labeled you in past situations, why do you think they did?
8. Do you think that society had influenced how you choose to identify with your heritage? If yes, how so?
9. Do you see yourself as part of an ethnic group, racial group or neither?
10. What is the most important characteristic that makes you part of that group? (Referring to question 9)
11. What things do you do that are Latino/a or Chicano/a?
12. What does the term Chicano or Chicana mean to you?
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Grotevant, Harold D.


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Jenkins, Richard


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Neighborhood House Annual Reports

1938  Annual Report

Pierce, Lorraine Esterly


Rand McNally

1997  Minneapolis/St. Paul Street Map, Skokie, IL.

Salas-McLean, Linda

2000  Photos taken in October.   Permission granted.

Samora, Julian with assistance from Bustamante, Jorge A. and Gilbert Cardenas


Takaki, Ronald

Towne, Oliver

1962 St. Paul Dispatch, Oliver Town Column (February 14th)

Vargas, Zaragoza


Vigil, James Diego


Williams, Dwayne E.