The Role of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in the Adjustment of the Mexican Community to Life in the Indiana Harbor Area

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THE ROLE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE PARISH
IN THE ADJUSTMENT OF THE MEXICAN
COMMUNITY TO LIFE IN THE
INDIANA HARBOR AREA

by
Sister Mary Helen Rogers, O.L.V.M.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Social Work
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Social Work

February
1952
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Setting

The Mexicans came to Indiana Harbor, a regional division of the City of East Chicago, Indiana, in large numbers during the time when the economy of the United States was undergoing a period of prosperity following World War I. Thriving United States industries were in need of additional manpower after the stream of European labor had been stopped. The fact that jobs were available in the Indiana Harbor region of East Chicago, Indiana, quickly became known among Mexicans in other sections of the United States and among those who had become dissatisfied with their lot in their native land. The assurance of jobs was enough to send thousands of Mexicans flooding into the steel-mill district of Indiana Harbor. In this migration they were encouraged by the railroads and the steel mills, both of which needed their labor.¹

Indiana Harbor by this time had grown to be a major United States industrial area. The port of Indiana Harbor in

1925 was handling over twice the traffic tonnage that was being handled by the port of Chicago. By 1927 in East Chicago there were forty-five manufacturing concerns with an assessed valuation of over $100,000,000.

The Mexicans who came to this industrial region encountered something entirely new for them. In their small agricultural communities, they had been used to extracting a meagre existence from the soil. The pace of their daily lives in Mexico had been far more leisurely than that of their new homeland. In Mexico they had known meagre living but the poverty they experienced in the United States was of a type they had never met with before.

The wages which the Mexicans received for unskilled labor both in the United States and in Mexico afforded only the necessities of life. It seemed inevitable that they would become the inhabitants of another American slum district. These unskilled, uneducated, unorganized people living on a subsistent wage fell into a pattern followed by generations of industrial workers. They had to live near the plants that employed them. In the immediate vicinity there were no homes that they could purchase at a reasonable price; they had to


3 Ibid., 230.
huddle together in old, dirty housing in a slum district.

It is interesting to observe the adjustment of the Mexicans in an industrialized environment so foreign to anything to which they had been accustomed. The Director of the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish-Speaking has observed of the Mexicans, "... they feel further that their culture based on the dignity of man and the primacy of God is a higher culture than the materialistic way of living in the United States." 4 Others familiar with the Mexicans have made remarks in a similar vein. At the National Conference of Social Work in 1926 J. B. Gwin made the remark that, "The Mexicans have a deep-seated cultural background totally foreign to anything found in America." 5 The one organization in the United States in which they felt at home and with which they found a common ground was the Catholic Church.

Purpose

There is a vast amount of material for the historian and for the sociologist in the field of study of national groups which have immigrated to the United States. There are many

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interesting questions about them still to be answered. The Mexican group that began to grow in the industrial Indiana Harbor area of East Chicago, Indiana, after World War I, encountered the same kinds of difficulties that had faced other immigrants. For each of these Mexicans the routine of daily life was changed from that which he had known in his native land. In the new environment he had to build a new way of life. But there were certain things in his old way that he could successfully transplant to Indiana Harbor; the most important was his Church. At least, he could establish a parish like the one he had known in Mexico. The Church, in addition to her primary work of serving his spiritual needs, had also helped him in his social life.

The purpose of the present thesis is to study the historical development of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and the part it has played religiously, socially, culturally and educationally in the lives of the Mexican people of Indiana Harbor.

Scope

The study extends from the year 1925 when plans for a parish were formulated until the present year of 1951. The parish embraces all the Mexicans of this area. The United States Census for 1930 numbered 5,343 Mexicans in the City of East Chicago. (See Table I). The vast majority of these were

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### TABLE I

**Composition of Population of East Chicago**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>54,784</td>
<td>54,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>30,616</td>
<td>29,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>24,166</td>
<td>25,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>44,308</td>
<td>46,503#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native</strong></td>
<td>30,515</td>
<td>36,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign Born</strong></td>
<td>13,793</td>
<td>12,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negro</strong></td>
<td>5,088</td>
<td>6,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Races</strong></td>
<td>5,388</td>
<td>3,33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percent native white** | 55.7  | 66.2  |
**Percent foreign born white** | 25.2  | 22.6  |
**Percent negro** | 9.3   | 11.2  |

*Includes 5,343 Mexicans*

#Figures for 1940 revised to include in white Population Mexicans who were classified with "Other Races" in 1930.
heavily concentrated in the Indiana Harbor section.

Method

Beginning in February, 1951, the writer made a number of visits to the libraries of East Chicago and Indiana Harbor in order to gain a thorough knowledge of the area studied in this thesis. She interviewed several long-time residents of the colony to secure information on the establishment of the parish. One of these men had been among the organizers of Los Obreros Catolicos "San Jose." He gave the names of other members, offered a copy of the Statutes of the group together with a number of copies of the newspaper El Amigo Del Hogar. He suggested a source from which many more copies of this paper were secured. The 165 issues that were obtained had to be read in Spanish. They provided an excellent picture not only of the first five years of the parish's existence, but also gave considerable information about social conditions of that time. This was supplemented by reading a number of volumes of the local daily newspapers The Calumet News and The Hammond Times.

The writer, who is a member of a religious community which has worked extensively with the Mexicans in this country, had an undergraduate major in Spanish and had worked in another Mexican parish for a period of four years. From June 6, 1951 until July 25, 1951, she was a participant-observer, taking active part in the work of the parish. The Superior of
the Convent of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters had previously been missioned in Indiana Harbor from 1927 to 1933. Because of her wide acquaintance with the people of the area she was able to give the writer valuable leads and information. The writer also interviewed a number of long-time residents and the priests of the parish.

A complete set of the weekly work reports of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters from 1927 to 1945 were obtained from their motherhouse. These, too, provided a great deal of information about the work carried on in the parish. This material was supplemented by pertinent articles in the daily newspapers, The Calumet News and The Hammond Times, and by conversations with sisters who had been missioned in Indiana Harbor.

The parish paper Hoos Parroquiales published from 1940 to 1943 provided considerable information for that period. The daily newspapers were checked for any items pertaining to the Mexicans of Indiana Harbor. The parish priests and former members of different parish organizations active at this time were interviewed to secure additional information. Visits were made to Catholic Charities, Lake County Department of Public Welfare, The American Red Cross, and the Juvenile Court. A former director of public relief and a former secretary of the Lake County Emergency Relief Committee were interviewed.
CHAPTER II

PERIOD FROM 1925 TO 1930

Living Conditions

The Mexicans in Indiana Harbor settled mainly in the area along Block and Pennsylvania Avenues, between the tracks of the Pennsylvania, the Baltimore and Ohio railroads, and later expanded westward across the tracks. Most of the dwellings in this area are two-story buildings, divided into numerous small apartments, utilizing all basements and attics. Most of the buildings were already deteriorated when the Mexicans moved in. The miserable living conditions of the Mexicans were vividly described in an article published on the first page of The Calumet News giving an account of a tour made by the Chief of Police to check on boarding house licenses in Indiana Harbor. The article pointed out that:

The police Chief on an inspection tour characterized conditions he found along Block and Pennsylvania Avenues as the worse he ever saw. 'It is certainly terrible,' he declared. 'We went into places where we could hardly get the door open. Sometimes there would be three beds in one little room, and in one place we found 11 Mexicans sleeping.' For a minute the chief groped for words to
describe what he had seen, 'Why, your dog or cat wouldn't live under conditions that those people do.' . . . Chief Hegan confessed himself as shocked over conditions he found on his visit and which in the past have been tacitly ignored because of political pressure.

Objections to Mexicans

In addition to the problem of sub-standard housing, the Mexicans faced the problem posed by the presence of other national groups and negroes in the Indiana Harbor region. (See Table II). Although the various groups were not openly antagonistic to one another, there were no friendly ties binding them together. The presence of several dissimilar groups tended to build up a tense and insecure feeling on the part of each group. Many employees of the industrial plants refused to live in this area because they feared close contact with the foreign groups concentrated there. This fact was brought out in a survey made in 1926 at the request of the Chamber of Commerce in East Chicago. In order to obtain information about living conditions in East Chicago, questionnaires were distributed to employees through the managements of the various industries, and 10,054 were returned with answers to

7 The Calumet News, February 6, 1926, 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Foreign-Born White</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Countries</td>
<td>13,793</td>
<td>12,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3628</td>
<td>2728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czechoslovakia</td>
<td>1494</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1551</td>
<td>1386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>1561</td>
<td>1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumania</td>
<td>1242</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Others</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1930 Mexicans were recorded separately under "Other Races," and numbered at 5,343.
some or to all of the questions. On this form question number eleven asked, "If you do not live in East Chicago please state briefly why you do not." Two hundred seventy-four answered this question and furnished 420 objections. Of the complaints 23.81% related to the "presence in excessive numbers of foreigners, negroes, and Mexicans, the two last named forming the subject of numerous specific complaints." The report pointed out that "these classes are somewhat closely restricted to certain portions of the city, notably two districts in Indiana Harbor . . . " The men conducting the survey came to the following conclusions:

In our opinion the untoward influence of these persons can be minimized by segregation to particular portions of the city. If this can be accomplished in such a manner as to assure persons contemplating taking up their residence in East Chicago that such segregation is reasonably permanent, the objections to their presence will be minimized. At least, such is the general experience of city dwellers.

But it will be objected, such segregation is impossible from a legal standpoint. It will be granted that such is the case for any law requiring these persons to dwell in a specific portion of the city would undoubtedly be declared unconstitutional.

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9 Ibid., 24.

10 Ibid., 32.

11 Ibid., 121.
by the courts, as was the recent Indianapolis ordinance which sought similar segregation. However, after mature consideration of the subject we are of the opinion that much can be accomplished through the force of public opinion, which can be brought to bear most effectively through the leaders of the races, education in a way of better living conditions, and the inculcation of higher standards of citizenship.12

An article in the periodical published by the Chamber of Commerce of East Chicago pointed out that "the Walker report is primarily an engineering report."13

A former principal of one of the public schools in the Indiana Harbor section from 1925 to 1936 stated in an interview with the writer that when the Mexicans came to Indiana Harbor they were the newest immigrants and the newest are usually the most discriminated against. He considered the Mexicans as courteous, genteel and not aggressive. He felt that they had been exploited particularly from the standpoint of housing. They were at the bottom of the economic ladder, he pointed out, and lived in miserable homes.

Relations With Police

On almost every street in Indiana Harbor the Mexicans were faced with amusements that led to the degradation of some


of their people. Numerous pool halls, houses of gambling and vice existed in the neighborhood. The attraction of these places of amusement was too great for some Mexicans, who quickly succumbed to habits of evil living which made them dangers in the life of their community.

The criminal elements in the Indiana Harbor area gave rise to another source of trouble for the Mexicans as a group. The police, who often had a difficult task in the area, took a prejudiced attitude toward Mexicans in general. When Paul S. Taylor was making his study of Mexican labor in Chicago and the Calumet region, he asked one Mexican why his people frequently carry guns. This man replied:

One reason the Mexicans carry guns is because of their relations with the police. The latter, especially in Indiana Harbor, shoot the Mexicans with small provocation. One shot a Mexican who was walking away from him, and laughed as the body was thrown in the patrol wagon. They are not so bad as that in Gary.14

This incident marked a bad relationship between the Mexican immigrants and the police that later rose to a more humane level.15 From his investigation Mr. Taylor concluded that:

15 Ibid., 150.
"Naturally and justifiably, the police seek to minimize danger to themselves when making arrests. That they have been unnecessarily severe and indiscriminate in doing this is of course very difficult to prove, but it seems highly probable.\textsuperscript{16}

In addition to their difficulties with the police, the Mexicans were forced to deal with officials who were both dishonest and prejudiced. On July 7, 1925, The Calumet News charged an officer of the Indiana Harbor police force with offering "protection" to a house of vice in this section.\textsuperscript{17} On July 21, 1925, the officer so charged was dismissed from the force. Again, on July 24, 1925, The Calumet News published an article with the headline "Breakdown of Law Here Complete."

The article pointed out that:

What has been characterized as a complete breakdown of law in the Indiana Harbor section of Twin City was revealed this morning when a grand jury in the city found for a defendant in a case asking for possession of a building which was being used, it was alleged by Chief of Police C. C. Struss, for unlawful purposes by its tenants.\textsuperscript{18}

There were vicious elements in the Mexican group who brought criticism upon the entire community, but they also served to bring more sharply to the attention of the large numbers of decent Mexicans the necessity of building healthy influences in

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 155.
\textsuperscript{17} The Calumet News, July 7, 1925, 1.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., July 24, 1925, 1.
their community life. The respectable, intelligent Mexicans longed to find ways to improve the material and spiritual life of their group. Before this could be done some definite organization had to be formed. Only by working according to an orderly plan of procedure could any worthwhile results be achieved for the Mexicans as a group. Towards this end - the formation of an organization - they were aided by an Italian priest, Father Octavius Zavatta.

Establishment of Los Obreros Catolicos "San Jose"

During the early years of the 1920's the Mexicans had been attending Mass at various parishes in Gary, East or South Chicago. This was not satisfactory to them because they wanted to have a parish of their own, not only to satisfy their spiritual needs, but as a means to a greater unity among themselves. Their need was recognized by an Italian priest, Father Octavius Zavatta, of the Italian Community of the Precious Blood, who was at a parish in East Chicago and who spoke Spanish. He made arrangements to say Mass for them each Sunday in the basement of St. Demetrius' Romanian Catholic Church in Indiana Harbor. He met with three men from the Mexican congregation. They were eager to unite the Mexican people and decided to form an organization and found a parish. Their society, which they named El Círculo de Obreros Católicos "San Jose," was established on April 12, 1925. The organizers recognized the need for
a Catholic social group to which the Mexican people might have recourse in time of need and in which they might join their strength not only for the "good of their souls but also for their personal well-being." The motto adopted by the society was "For God, for Country, and for the Worker." Members were urged to see each other as "brothers of a race and as workers far from the fatherland."

Article IX of the Statutes of the society list their purposes as: (1) to collect funds for the construction of a church; (2) to promote the welfare of their fellow-Mexicans and to work for the education of their sons; (3) to raise funds for a library; (4) and to provide wholesome forms of recreation for the members.

The efforts and activities of this group are well reflected in a newspaper which they published weekly from July, 1925, until April, 1930. This was distributed without cost to all members of the Mexican colony. All but the first sixteen issues of this publication entitled El Amigo del Hogar are available. In issue number seventeen the purposes of El Circulo

19 Estatutos del Círculo de Obreros Católicos "San José," Indiana Harbor, 1925, 1.
20 Ibid., 2.
21 Ibid., 3.
22 Ibid., 16.
de Obreros Católicos are more fully stated as follows:

Union, the fundamental basis of societies and towns, has been our primary aim. To reunite in a compact group the members of the great Mexican family, now separated, to form a respectable nucleus that may demonstrate the virtues of a people which has been judged only by its vices.

To ennoble the spirit with Catholic doctrine which makes us see in each man a brother whom we must value and point out to him, if he needs it, the way which leads him to his greatest perfection, in order that he may be able to better fulfill the high destiny we all have before humanity...

The erection of a Catholic Church where our colony may satisfy its spiritual necessities freely and that will become a patriotic and pious monument of the faith of our people.

To foster the desire for a school where our sons may be educated, imparting to them adequate instruction, and teaching them to love and venerate a country whose traditions, heroes, and glories should make them proud to be called its sons.

To tighten through social action the bonds that should unite us to that country, awakening sentiments of a true and open brotherhood that should unite us in our joys and in our sorrows.

To bind together men of good will, particularly young men whose enthusiasm has made them true apostles in spreading in the hearts of our compatriots a common affection that must enkindle in us a love of our country, a country of which we must make ourselves worthy.

El Amigo del Hogar became the organ through which the people worked to obtain the greatly desired church. This paper also became the voice speaking for the Mexican people against

23 El Amigo del Hogar, November 22, 1925.
the injustices they had to endure. By joining together in an organization and by publishing a weekly newspaper the Mexicans made definite progress toward accomplishing their goals.

Accomplishments of Society

One of the first acts of the organized Mexicans was to establish a theatre in which films with Spanish inscriptions would be shown and in which there would be no discrimination against Mexicans. The Mexicans had previously been restricted to one section in a theatre in East Chicago. The new theatre was blessed by the Mexicans' own pastor, Father Zavatta, who was accompanied by the officers of all the local Mexican societies. The manager of the new theatre announced that one day's receipts each month would be contributed to the building fund for the Mexican church which was planned by El Círculo de Obreros Católicos.

Another constructive move was taken on November 22, 1925. Through the columns of El Amigo del Hogar, all Mexicans of the colony were urged to attend a meeting arranged by the Mexican Consul in an attempt to improve relations between the police department and the Mexican colony. It was hoped that this conference might end the "unjust oppressions of many Mexicans."24 The following issue reported that a promise of

24 El Amigo del Hogar, November 22, 1925.
equal justice was made by the local authorities. The paper commented that:

although our relationships with the Chiefs of police have been strained, let us show ourselves as good citizens by respecting the guarantee they have offered and giving them a chance to show that they will abide by it. 25

Los Obreros Catolicos pointed out the great need for wider participation in their program. Readers were forcefully reminded that:

We are all disoriented and alone . . . foreigners fearing us, our own mistrusting us, but bearing together as a perverse inheritance the stigma of crime, the defect of some bad Mexican, who violating the laws of the country that receives him, compromises the honor of his fatherland and his brothers . . . with the bitter experiences gathered in each of our hearts, we have formed a program, an antidote against the poison penetrating our social organism, . . . which is nothing other than Union . . . the joint action of all of us will be the restraint that should deter the criminal, who will flee from a populace united for the common good. Union will form a healthy atmosphere in the social medium in which we live so that the merits of many of us may be made known, who until today have lived forgotten and whose prestige should be a stimulus for the moral elevation of our race.26

The early issues of El Amigo del Hogar are living records of the efforts made by the Mexican people of the colony to keep alive their Faith. With the organization of Los Obreros Catolicos a new medium was provided by which the people could

25 El Amigo del Hogar. December 6, 1925.
26 Ibid. November 22, 1925.
organize for the celebration of their religious and national holidays.

One of these holidays was the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Mexicans of Indiana Harbor like Mexicans everywhere had great devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Since the time of her apparition in 1531 to the little Indian Juan Diego, she had been the beloved Queen and Mother of the Mexicans. There is scarcely a Mexican home that does not display at least one reproduction of the miraculous picture she left at that time. During each year of its existence El Amigo del Hogar dedicated the issue of the week of December 12th to profuse expressions of love and devotion for Our Lady of Guadalupe. The issue of December 13, 1925 is typical. Each article sings her praises and reiterates feelings of gratitude toward her. A column of poems is dedicated to her. A novena preceded the feast, which was celebrated with a solemn High Mass. This was followed by a "solemn session of El Círculo de Los Obreros Católicos, dedicated to our most exalted patroness, Holy Mary of Guadalupe." All the members and their families were invited to take part in the festivities that marked the day. For the children there was a "Piñata" and musical numbers were rendered by the youths who

27 El Amigo del Hogar, December 13, 1925.
formed the "Tipica." In March of 1926 it was announced that the feast of St. Joseph would be celebrated "with all possible splendor." After the Mass of the day the hymn of El Circulo was sung and all members wore their badge of membership. The ceremonies of Holy Week, the festivities of May 5th, commemorating the victory of Mexican armies over the invading French, were given prominent notice. Mexico's "Independence Day," September 16th, was marked by a Mass of thanksgiving. A fiesta was arranged for the children at which some of the history of their fatherland was explained to them, and then gifts were distributed.

Building of Church

The establishment of a parish of their own was taken up as a crusade by Los Obreros. They put forth great efforts in the festivals and "Jamaicas" that were sponsored to raise funds for the church. El Amigo del Hogar published the list of contributors consistently in order to encourage further donations.

The first anniversary of plans for a church was noted in an article entitled, "Illusions That Become Realities," and described the launching of the project in these words:

The desires of a people, the tears of a race, the hopes of this generation began this holy

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28 Ibid., March 12, 1926.
work of accumulating, cent by cent, what was needed for the cost of construction. 29

Now, after one year, they were able to announce that their priest director, Father Zavatta, had purchased the lots upon which the church would be erected. In typical Mexican fashion they expressed their feelings about the first steps towards the new church:

each shovelful of concrete, each brick that is placed in the construction will signify a prayer, an effusion of tenderness, a loving breath with which we will erect the holy altar. 30

The issue of June 27, 1926 carried an editorial on "The Blessing of the Lots," and in glowing words described what the new church would mean to the people. It is interesting to note that the lots selected were between Block and Pennsylvania Avenues in the negro section of the neighborhood.

On January 30, 1927 when the church was completed and dedicated, El Amigo del Hogar had discontinued publication for almost six months. However, on the program of dedication El Circulo de los Obreros Catolicos "San Jose," expressed their satisfaction that their desire for a church dedicated to "the august queen of the Mexicans, Holy Mary of Guadalupe," had been realized. They congratulated their pastor, the members of

29 El Amigo del Hogar, May 2, 1926.
30 Ibid., May 2, 1926.
Los Obreros, and all who cooperated in the work. They felicitated the Mexican colony in general upon the erection of a religious and patriotic monument where they could satisfy their spiritual needs. At the same time they invited "all men of good will who wished to join El Círculo and cooperate in the work of Catholic social action in favor of the colony in general." The program further noted that:

From this date, on which the name of Mexico will appear full of glory for future generations, is opened also for us the blessed refuge of consolation. The patriot will see the monument representative of his race, the believer the sanctuary of his legendary piety ... Let us draw near to the 'Holy of Holies' of our Mother and Queen in order to render to her the tribute of religion and acknowledgment. She merits this because she has been for centuries a fount of love that purifies, elevates, and unites our souls, drawing tighter the cords of our nationality.

That the breasts of all Mexicans may be elevated in one joyful exclamation that becomes a grand hymn of gratitude from a people stirred by pride in its traditions! 31

On the day of dedication, the first Mass was celebrated by His Excellency, Bishop Noll. Members of Los Obreros carrying their banner and wearing their badges of membership filled the front pews of the church. A Mexican band entertained with music outside the church until noon. A parade, made up of some

31 Orden de los Festejos Para la Solemne Consagración y Bendición de la Iglesia Mexicana el Domingo 30 de Enero de 1927, 9.
eight Mexican Societies and a few local American groups, was held in the neighborhood. All families living along the line of march had been invited to decorate their homes as a "manifestation of their joy." The parade terminated at the church with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Article IX of the statutes of Los Obreros had indicated that the church they hoped to build would be called Cristo Rey, with Our Lady of Guadalupe as patroness. When one of the organizers of Los Obreros was questioned about this, he said they had decided on the name Cristo Rey because "Viva Cristo Rey!" was the motto of those defending the Church in the persecution raging in Mexico at that time. He could not explain why the name originally designated had been set aside, but everyone seemed to take it for granted that the church would be called Our Lady of Guadalupe.

To the church on June 19, 1927, came Father Apolinario Santacruz, a Mexican priest seeking refuge from the persecution in Mexico; he was cordially welcomed. Through their pastor, Los Obreros arranged to have Father Santacruz assist in the work of the parish. He resided temporarily with a member of El Círculo. In August of 1927 when Father Zavatta returned to Italy he was replaced as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe by Father Santacruz. Father Zavatta, however, did not forget his recent charges; in an audience with the Pope he spoke of them to the
Holy Father, who extended a special blessing to the Mexicans of Indiana Harbor.32

In September of 1928 the first Board of Trustees was formed in the parish. And in December of the same year, through the columns of El Amigo del Hogar, the colony learned that an Economic Board had been established which would have sole power to authorize any festivals for the benefit of the church. It was pointed out that some social affairs, given ostensibly for the parish, had been promoted by individuals working in their own interest.

Activities Sponsored by Los Obreros

Accounts of the social and cultural aspects of parish life as sponsored by Los Obreros are found in the organ of their society, El Amigo del Hogar. To provide diversion for their members and entertainment for the parish, they established a baseball team in May of 1927. Before the first game the newly acquired baseball equipment was blessed by the pastor. The "madrinas" (patronesses) were the young ladies who belonged to the society's dramatic club. On July 8, 1927, The Calumet News published an article entitled, "We Take Our Hats Off To These Boys," telling of the efforts of some Mexican leaders to provide for their youth healthful social activities that would divert

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them from poor halls and worse places. The article described the work of the team in preparing the ball field, a field owned by a railroad which gave permission for its use as a recreational field. One Sunday, 3000 spectators witnessed a game between "The Mexican Eagles" and "Los Obreros." The Calumet News urged the city authorities to assist in building a baseball park in this section.

The establishment of a library as a cultural center for the colony had not been forgotten and was brought to the attention of readers of El Amigo del Hogar in occasional articles. In May of 1927, a meeting was called to discuss plans for the proposed library. This was followed by an editorial, "Another Effort," commenting that the establishment of a library signified a forward step. The editorial declared that "the library marks the rich and aspiring culture of our race and stresses the desire of our colony for the opportunities of self-enlightenment." Assurance was given that books would be carefully selected and that readers would not be exposed to the:

poison that bold writers, libelers without conscience nor honor, place in many books that they circulate profusely among our workers, degrading and vilifying them. History, literature, science, poetry, art

33 The Calumet News, July 6, 1927.
34 El Amigo del Hogar, May 22, 1927.
sociology, and Religion will have a place in our library because we wish it to be a center of light, flooding and strengthening the spirit with sane ideas.35

In January of 1928 it was announced that the library would be opened in the basement of the church. However, this plan seems to have been changed for the next notice declared that the books would be available at the office of the newspaper. Use of the books was not restricted to members of Los Obreros. Since many non-members had contributed to it, the library would be open to the public and all were urged to use it.36

In a further effort to advance the colony intellectually, Los Obreros arranged a series of conferences to be given after the last Mass on Sundays.37 In 1928 the pastor, Father Santacruz, presided over the first conference. Officers of Los Obreros presided at conferences given on several following Sundays. Also, El Amigo del Hogar reminded the people from time to time of the glories of their fatherland through a series of articles on historical episodes and traditions of Mexico. A Spanish translation of the United States Civic Manual was published in El Amigo del Hogar in order to acquaint the

35 El Amigo del Hogar, May 23, 1927.
36 Ibid., January 23, 1928.
37 Ibid., February 8, 1928.
people with their rights and duties in the United States. 38

In October of 1927 the society arranged Saturday classes for children in which they would be instructed in their native language, in Mexican history, and in civics. Apparently these classes were not well attended because an article published in El Amigo del Hogar lamented the fact that many parents ignored this opportunity for their children. 39 Many of the Mexicans who settled in Indiana Harbor were from the uneducated laboring classes and did not respond to the efforts of their educated leaders.

That this group did strive for the cultural advancement of the colony is further evidenced by the fact that every issue of El Amigo del Hogar carried a number of poems and essays by outstanding Mexican or Spanish authors. Among these were selections from Amado Nervo, Alfonso Junco, Ruben Dario, Gabriela Mistral, Diaz Miron, and Jaime Balmes. Jose Belgas' novel, None, was published in serial form. A section dedicated to the home included such articles as, "Woman's Mission," "The Woman in Society," "The Woman and the Home," "Woman and Virtue," "Congeniality," and "Domestic Economy."

38 El Amigo del Hogar, March 3, 1928.
39 Ibid., March 17, 1928.
There is ample evidence, too, that Los Obreros used their newspaper in the defense of the Church. When the persecution began in Mexico this paper published a series of articles pointing out the debt that Mexico owed to the Catholic religion. All through the years of the persecution El Amigo del Hogar loyally defended the Church in the conflict. When Protestant proselytizers began to infiltrate the colony an editorial entitled, "Alerta!" was published in El Amigo del Hogar. This warned the Mexican people to conserve their Faith and pointed out to them that:

the ambitious North Americans, not content with monopolizing our gold, our industries and our oil, have taken steps to monopolize our ideas of the supernatural. Behind a mask of physical culture, Protestantism intrudes itself, disorganizing our people. Protestant propaganda is today intensely active, seeking to exploit the differences between the Mexican government and Mexican Catholics. Its hope is to supplant Catholicism with Protestantism, a cold religion that can find no root in the warm hearts of those who carry Spanish and Indian blood in their veins... we neither wish, nor are able to be, Protestant.

In 1928 an incident occurred which caused some excitement in the parish. In the early hours of the morning of August 21, 1928, a family came to the home of the parish priest with a three-

40 El Amigo del Hogar, November 25, 1925.
41 Ibid., September 4, 1927.
months-old unbaptized baby. According to one version of the story, the priest refused to baptize the child; however, an individual present at Mass on the following Sunday stated that the pastor mentioned the incident as holding an example for others. He said that the baby was already dead when the family brought the child to him, making it impossible for him to administer the sacrament because the sacraments are "for the living and not the dead." A letter criticizing the pastor for his role in the incident was sent to the Spanish newspaper México, which was published in Chicago. On the following Sunday copies of this paper were distributed outside of Guadalupe Church in Indiana Harbor. The Board of Directors of the parish sent a letter of protest to México; a copy of this letter was reprinted in El Amigo del Hogar. This letter pointed out that the statements of the México correspondent were false because the priest had not refused to baptize a living child. It further pointed out that the parents were blameworthy for allowing three months to pass without having the child baptized. It reprimanded them for permitting the defamation of a Mexican priest and concluded with an exhortation to the newspaper México to ignore letters that served only to divide the Mexican immigrants.42

42 El Amigo del Hogar, September 9, 1928.
Decline of Los Obreros and Establishment of New Society

The establishment of unity among the Mexican immigrants had always been a major aim of Los Obreros Católicos "San Jose." This theme threaded all issues of El Amigo del Hogar. Many efforts were made to unite the different societies of the colony but only temporary success was achieved. Gradually, however, the ranks of Los Obreros were harried by division.

The pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish strongly opposed dances, forbidding them in the basement of the church and refusing them as sources of parish revenue even if given away from the church. Los Obreros disagreed with this policy. Relations between the society and the pastor had been strained by the belief of some members that the pastor dominated the work of the society to an undue degree. Two charter members admitted that the pastor was within his rights in denying them the church basement as a meeting place and also in refusing them recognition as a church society. One of these charter members further agreed that their society may have grown vainglorious because its social affairs attained a level of refinement far above that of the Mexican colony as a whole. El Amigo del Hogar gave no evidence whatever of this discord between society and pastor. Doubtless it was some disagreement with Los Obreros that led the pastor to form a society open both to men and women. El Amigo del Hogar published the statutes of the new society.
which was called "The Mexican Catholic Society of Indiana Harbor."

The ends of the society were stated as follows:

They the ends will be of two classes: moral and material. The first (a) to conserve, to vivify, protect and defend the Catholic faith among the Mexicans residing in the locality; (b) to promote good customs and the good name of the Mexicans. The second: (a) to collect funds for the parish church of the colony; (b) to meet any emergency need in the parish; (c) to establish a department of mutual protection for members, which will be governed by special statutes.43

A notation appended to the published statutes pointed out that the pastor had the right of veto in any election or resolution; over him were only ecclesiastical authorities.44

A large number of the members of Los Obreros left that society to join the new one; others refused to join because they claimed that politics and personalities were discussed at meetings.

When the names of the officers of the new society were published in Al Amigo del Hogar the editors commented that most of the officers were men of recognized ability. The hope was expressed that the worthy social work undertaken by the new society would in a short time be marked by moral and material progress.45

43 Reprinted in Al Amigo del Hogar, February 10, 1929.
44 Ibid.
It is noteworthy that among the members of the new governing board was a man who was a key figure in the quarrel between Los Obreros and Father Santa Cruz. He had established a newspaper intended, it was alleged, to supplant El Amigo del Hogar. According to those who were active in Los Obreros, this man ingratiated himself with the pastor, despite the belief of some members that he had been affiliated with a Protestant sect. From the comments of some individuals who were active in the parish at the time, it appears reasonably certain that the man was a trouble-maker; this became markedly clear a short time later when he wrote openly against the Church. In an extreme illness he sent for a Catholic priest, who refused to absolve him until he publicly retracted his writings against the Church. This retraction, one informant stated, was published in the parish paper, La Voz. Copies of this paper were not available. Weakened by quarrels, El Círculo de los Obreros Católicos "San José" continued to function as a society without Church affiliation.

In July of 1929, after the persecution in Mexico had ceased, Father Santa Cruz returned to his own country. In the parish bulletin, which had been established as the official weekly publication of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and the Mexican Catholic Society, Father expressed his gratitude to all who had helped him during his American stay and granted his
pardon to those who had placed difficulties in his way.46 Upon his departure, he was replaced by Father Jose Lara, another Mexican priest who had sought refuge in this country and who previously had been pastor of a parish in Gary, Indiana.

Beginning of Economic Depression and Disbanding of Societies

In 1930 when the great economic depression blighted the Gary-Indiana Harbor area, as it did all other American areas, many members of the Mexican colony returned to Mexico.47 At this time Los Obreros disbanded; on April 13, 1930 the last issue of El Amigo del Hogar was published. This carried a column written by the pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in which he warned the faithful to guard against the campaign of vilification carried on by anti-Catholics through false accusations against the Church and her ministers.48

The Mexican people of Indiana Harbor were now entering into a period of grave need, but the group which was to come to their assistance and see them through the difficult years ahead was already established in their midst, instructing their children in the truth of the Catholic Faith. To that group, Our Lady

48 El Amigo del Hogar, April 13, 1930.
of Victory Missionary Sisters and their work in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, the following chapter will give particular attention.
CHAPTER III

PERIOD FROM 1930 - 1940

Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters

In the early part of 1927, the Missionary Catechists, who had been teaching in Gary, Indiana, were asked by Bishop Noll to give part of their time to teaching the children in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Indiana Harbor. The Catechists continued to make the trip to Harbor several times a week to hold religious instruction classes in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. In 1929 a convent near the church was opened for them and eight Catechists were sent to teach and visit the people of this section.

The Missionary Catechists, now called Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, had been founded only five years previously in 1922 by a priest of the archdiocese of Chicago, Reverend J. J. Bigstein. With the help of Monsignor John F. Noll (now Bishop Noll), editor of Our Sunday Visitor, the Missionary Catechists were established at Huntington, Indiana. The new community dedicated itself to giving religious instruction to poor and neglected people, to caring for the
sick in their homes, and to engaging in other social welfare work. A very large part of their work was done among Mexican groups in various parts of the United States. In the years after 1927 the Missionary Sisters became an important part of the Mexican parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

As unemployment in Indiana Harbor grew to alarming proportions in 1930, the need for relief became urgent here as in other sections of the country. Many of the Mexican people could not speak English, and many were not eligible for relief from a public agency; others were unfamiliar with social agencies to which they might turn for help. The convent of the Sisters became the social agency to which the people looked for assistance with economic as well as other problems. Mr. Russell Ballard, the former director of the country public welfare agency, commented in an interview with the writer on June 1, 1951, that the Missionary Sisters had been, "the liaison between the Mexican people and the rest of the community - the interpreters of the Mexicans to the community." Mr. Ballard stated that Mexicans were very reluctant about asking for relief. Paul C. Taylor, in his study, investigated this point and recorded the following quotation from an unnamed American charity executive of this region:

Most of our Mexicans are cases that have been reported to us either by social workers, settlement
houses, or landlords. The latter will often go around to look at their houses or collect rent, and find the Mexicans destitute or in need. They are very shy and not on to the ways of this country. In Mexico there is little organized charity, and when they come to this country and are in need they do not know there is a place to help them out; so that is why the landlords and other people report them. The Mexicans are usually glad to be helped with groceries. . . . Charity does not pauperize the Mexicans; they get away from it as soon as they can. But the other nationalities around here - some of them are beggars. The Mexican, as soon as he get well, or as soon as he gets work, is gone; we hear no more of him.49

Mr. Taylor further cites the statements of other social workers regarding the Mexicans:

The Mexicans are very humble people and don't expect any help and are thankful when they get it.50

They won't go alone to ask for charity; they have verguenza (shame). As soon as the Mexicans get work they are independent of charity.51

It was a Mexican social worker who made the following statement:

At first the Mexicans did not know of charity but now they know; and if a man can't find work soon, he goes to charity.52

49 Quoted by Taylor, Mexican Labor in the United States, 129.
50 Ibid., 129.
51 Ibid., 129.
52 Ibid., 129.
The experience of the Sisters in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish bore out these statements about the Mexican people in Indiana Harbor. Although the Missionary Sisters held the confidence of the immigrants, time and again they learned of desperate need only through home visitations.

The Sisters as a Resource for the Material Needs of the People

In visiting the homes in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, the Sisters' weekly work reports indicate that they were constantly encountering Mexican families in dire need. Because many of these people could not speak English, the Sisters took them to the relief agencies and acted as interpreters for them. During 1930 they brought some fifty-six families to the County Trustee or the Community Chest for relief, and twenty-seven families to the steel companies, who provided needy employees with groceries.

Because of contacts the Sisters had been able to establish in Chicago through groups affiliated with the Community, which became known collectively as "Associate Catechists of Mary," they were able to render invaluable material assistance. The donations of money and clothing from these groups enabled the Sisters to alleviate much of the great distress found among the parishioners of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Thus the parish which had been established by the Mexicans to satisfy both their spiritual and cultural aspirations came to serve them in an altogether unlooked-for way by becoming a center at which
the distress visited upon them by the depression was ameliorated. With the assistance of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, the parish played a salient part in assisting the immigrants through a very critical period.

How important that part was is suggested by the Sisters' weekly work reports for 1930 which show that grocery orders were supplied to eighty-six families and clothing to 422 families; new shoes were provided for ten individuals; bread for 101 families; coal for twelve families; milk for six families; medicine for three. Other material relief not specified as to type was given to forty-one families. Furniture, such as beds, stoves, and bedding was obtained for ten families. The Sisters attended meetings held at the office of the relief agency in East Chicago during this year to discuss the social problems of the Mexican colony. 53

During the year fourteen families had come to the Sisters asking for help to return to Mexico. The cold climate of the Lake region imposed hardships on some of them that were beyond their endurance and they felt that at least they would find warmth in Mexico. The Sisters assisted some of them in securing tickets to Mexico through the relief agencies. On one

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53 Unpublished Work Reports of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, 1930.
home visit the Sisters found a young Mexican boy seriously ill. His mother pleaded with the Sisters to find some way of getting him back to Mexico in order that he might die in his own country. Assisted by a Chicago woman who gave a card party to raise the money, the Sisters obtained passage for the boy in a Pullman car and placed him aboard the train at Chicago.

On another occasion the Sisters found a woman in a far-advanced stage of tuberculosis lying on a mattress on the floor of an over-crowded home. There were four children in the family and the father worked irregularly. The Sisters immediately stored the house with provisions and impressed the father with the necessity of making other living arrangements for the children. He agreed to have the children placed temporarily in the orphanage at Fort Wayne. The mother died shortly after their removal from the home. Later, the orphanage called the Sisters to tell them that one of the little girls had already developed a tubercular infection of the eye and an operation to remove the eye was essential. The Sisters drove the child's father to the doctor's office and acted as interpreters while the doctor explained the seriousness of the child's condition. During the same year the Sisters also arranged for the placement of two children from another family when the father asked help in caring for them after the death of the mother.
Arrangements had been made with three local doctors who agreed to care for the indigent people that the Sisters would bring to them. Thirty-three patients were taken to the offices of these doctors. When the mother of a little boy came to the Sisters for help after the child had cut off a finger in a meat chopper, the Sisters drove him to the hospital and arranged for his care there. In October of 1930, the Sisters provided transportation for six people to the sanatorium at Crown Point for X-rays.

Some of the other activities of the Sisters in behalf of the people of the parish included working with the probation officer on three cases, taking two individuals to lawyers, making arrangements for the placement of a delinquent girl in the House of Good Shepherd at the request of a school principal, finding a home for a family that had sought shelter over-night in jail, making funeral arrangements for a Mexican man who died in a Chicago hospital, and furnishing clothing for the deceased. 54

Religious Instruction

Besides this type of social welfare work the Sisters conducted daily religious instruction classes. When Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters came to Indiana Harbor they found

54 Work Reports of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, 1930.
that there was a program for religious instruction in the public schools after school hours. The teachers of these classes were being paid one dollar a class by the Community Chest. The Sisters reported this to Bishop Noll who appointed a priest to organize the Catholic religion classes in all the public schools. The Sisters and forty-four of the Catholic teachers in the schools instructed some 3000 Catholic children. One or two Sisters were assigned to each of the five public schools for these classes. In addition to this, catechetical instructions were given every Saturday afternoon at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Private instructions for adults were arranged at a time convenient for them.

Recreational Activities

In order to provide other activities for the young people of the parish, the Sisters organized a Junior Holy Name Society for the boys, the Children of Mary Sodality for the girls, and a choir for all the children. Once a month the Sisters served breakfast to all the children who received Holy Communion in a body. At the end of 1930 the Sisters spent a week preparing the basement of the Church for use as a recreational center. Four Sisters supervised the activities of the children daily from 4 until 6 P. M. They sponsored classes in manual training, cooking and sewing. For the boys of the parish the Sisters undertook the establishment of a Boy Scout
Material Relief in 1931

Parallel to the religious education program the Sisters carried forward their work of meeting the physical needs of the parishioners. The weekly work reports of the Sisters to their motherhouse through 1931 indicate that those needs grew steadily greater as the depression deepened. One report tells of a crippled child whose need for a brace was neglected; through the help of the Sisters the needed brace was obtained. Other reports tell of nursing care in confinement cases or placements of children in orphanages. During 1931, the Sisters referred ninety-two persons to the local relief agencies, helped nineteen to secure tickets to return to Mexico, took twenty to doctors, secured hospitalization for two, provided groceries for 115, and distributed clothing to 1,914. They also secured the services of several groups of women to make over used clothing sent in for the Mexican people.55

Contacts made in 1932 to Secure Supplies for the People

With the beginning of 1932, the problem of administering relief became more acute. The number of families depending on the Sisters for sustenance increased alarmingly. The work

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55 Work Reports of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, 1931.
report of the Missionary Sisters for the week ending January 15, 1932 carried the notation that many poor people had to be turned away because supplies were exhausted. More supplies came in the following week but again the report carried the notation that many had to be turned away because there was no money in the poor fund. At this time a group of business men in Chicago, calling themselves, "The Twelve Apostles," banded together to secure supplies for the Sisters in their work with the Mexican people. Three of these men were bakery owners who supplied much food from their own plants and other sources. One company in Chicago offered large supplies of various foodstuffs. At first the "Twelve Apostles" transported the relief supplies but turned this task over to the Sisters after buying a used truck for them. A young man in the parish volunteered to drive the truck twice weekly to Chicago to gather and transport supplies; on the truck appeared the sign "Missionary Catechists Relief." The Sisters gained valuable help from the Poor Clare Nuns in Chicago who received many contributions of food and shared much of it with the Missionary Sisters. Money for grocery orders continued to be provided by a number of people in Chicago. In April of 1932, government flour became available for distribution by the Sisters and in May, the Sisters were able to obtain milk daily at the City Hall in East Chicago.

The work of distributing relief grew to such
proportions that it was transferred from the Sister's Convent to
the basement of the church, which then became the distributing
center for relief in this area. Some 400 families depended
almost entirely on what they received here. An idea of the
scope of the work can be gained from the fact that during 1932,
the Sisters distributed 49,460 loaves of bread; 43,813 pounds of
flour, which was used by the Mexicans mostly in making tortillas;
3,361 gallons of sweet milk and 320 gallons of buttermilk; 2,160
ounces of tomato juice; 312 bushels of fruit; 2,700 cakes; 3,119
grocery orders; 1,752 boxes of clothing; and new shoes to 168. 56
The Mexican Repatriation Movement in 1932

During the year of 1932, ninety-nine more were referred
to local agencies for assistance and 149 were helped to secure
charity tickets to return to Mexico. The problem of providing
relief took a very serious turn in the community when township
relief funds were exhausted. In this extremity, the proposal
of deporting Mexicans "en masse" to Mexico, although they were
not subject to deportation, was advanced by some groups.
Members of the Emergency Relief organization helped in processing the people who wished to return to Mexico. While this repatriation was supposed to be on a voluntary basis, a member

of the board which made the decision to assist the Mexicans to return to their native country stated that "there was pressure in back of it, too." While he sympathized with the immigrants he felt that economic conditions were so critical that their return to Mexico was wise. In recalling the departure of the first train, he commented that it was a "sad kind of affair," particularly because leaving under such circumstances prejudiced their opportunities ever to return to this country.57

The Missionary Sisters actively assisted in the repatriation movement; the work report of June 10, 1932 states that they aided many in a group of 308 people who returned to Mexico in a body. The Calumet News described the departure of this large group as follows:

Eight coaches and two baggage cars were used for carrying the Mexicans, the second train load of them to leave the Twin City. Several truck loads have been started back to their old homes and 250 left here by train some six weeks ago.

This movement of local unemployed Mexicans has been a voluntary one on the part of the movers who at the suggestion and expense of the East Chicago Community Chest Association, have taken this means of lessening the community's burden of unemployment relief.

Provision of food for the 308 had been provided before they left the Twin City last night with

57 Statement of Russel Ballard, personal interview.
all their possessions save their household furnishings.

... It has been estimated that there are 2000 unemployed Mexicans in the city, practically all of whom will be returned to Mexico before midsummer. 58

A pamphlet published by the Lake County Relief Committee in December, 1932, devotes one section to the Mexican repatriation movement. It stated in part:

When industries began to slow down these people, like others, had little or no work. Nor had many of them any considerable means. Before long the bulk of the Mexicans had to depend on the townships for relief or were assisted by industrial goodfellowship clubs and other agencies...

Meanwhile relief agencies in Gary and East Chicago, in conjunction with the township and county authorities, had been facilitating the movement of families or small groups of individuals who wished to return to Mexico. Some had little money of their own, others had their fares advanced by the trustees or relief agencies; still others were provided with work by industries to enable them to get means to travel southward. But the big job was how to enable these people to go in 'grain load' lots...

Through the Mexican consular authorities at Chicago the cooperation of the Mexican government and the Mexican railways was obtained. American railways gave a special rate.

The Calumet and North township trustees and advisory boards and the Lake County commissioners cooperated whole-heartedly and authorized the transportation... But the action of the township and county authorities in authorizing the transportation did not mean that the money was available, because the county, lacking cash, could pay only in scrip. The

railroads required cash. He then arranged with the industries of East Chicago to advance the necessary cash to the railroads, accepting the scrip in return.

Thus from East Chicago this year, under this arrangement, there have been moved by a series of special trains, automobiles and trucks, or by individual travel arrangements, approximately 1800 Mexican residents who have gone to Mexico. Of this number 1261 represented persons whose transportation expenses were paid, the balance being aided to get to Mexico by money they had earned or was contributed by other relief organizations. In this movement a special railroad fare to the Mexican border was fixed at $15 for an adult, $7.50 for the half-fare rate. Beyond the border, the arrangement with Mexico provided that the Mexican government furnish trains to take these people, without further cost, to their respective destinations.

It was this latter consideration that imposed particular hardships upon the first groups returning to Mexico; the Mexican government did not make provision for their further transportation. The former secretary of the County Relief Committee, Mr. Alfred Jones, stated that a representative was sent with subsequent groups to insure that the Mexican government would assume care of them at the border. The whole repatriation movement provoked conflicting feelings; while some people looked upon it as a constructive move, others keenly resented it. When one Mexican man was asked about it he countered with the question, "Did you ever hear of anything

59 Lake County Relief Committee, The Story of Unemployment Relief Work in Lake County, Indiana, December 31, 1932.
more inhuman?" While there is no doubt that many of the Mexicans were glad to return to Mexico, others decidedly were not. One of the Sisters assisting at the departure of one group remembers a social worker commenting to her, "We are sending back some of our best Mexicans."

On one occasion the immigration authorities found a Mexican man who had entered this country illegally some years previously. He was to be placed on a train for Mexico immediately. When he objected that his family was in Indiana Harbor, he was permitted to send word to his wife to prepare to accompany him to Mexico and to join him at the railroad station. Distraught the wife appealed to the Sisters, telling them that plans must be made not only for herself but for five children. When the Sisters brought this fact to the attention of the immigration authorities they protested that their only concern was the repatriation of the husband, but finally agreed to defer this until the Sisters could arrange through the Community Chest for the family to return to Mexico as a unit.

**Participation in Child Welfare Program**

However, the major work of the Sisters was devoted to the Mexicans who remained in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish rather than the departing immigrants. Much of their work was directed toward the care of the children. During 1932 a joint resolution of Congress, approved by the President, set aside one day
as Child Health Day. The Governor of Indiana ratified the idea with a proclamation designating May 1, 1932 as "May Day Child Health Day." The proclamation pointed out that:

Scarcity of food and clothing and inadequate housing in less fortunate communities menace the birthright of health, good food and sanitary living conditions, which belong to every child. Only as this birthright is recognized and every effort put forth to enable children to enjoy these God-given blessings can we hope for the future of our race and government. 60

The Governor further urged the churches and other organizations to bring before their people the importance of proper care, nurture and training of children. At this time The Calumet News carried an editorial entitled, "Child Health - Block Avenue." It commented on the rights of the child as set forth in "The Children's Charter," which covers "a wide range of social and individual dangers against which every child should be protected, regardless of race, color or situation, wherever he may live under the protection of the American flag." 61 It then outlined the program devoted to child betterment and raised the question of protecting children in areas such as the Mexican settlement in Indiana Harbor against poverty and disease.

60 Governor's Proclamation published in The Calumet News, April 15, 1932.

61 The Calumet News, April 22, 1932.
In the following issue of this newspaper the plans for Child Health Day were published, including a "Health Conference at Catechists' Mission, 3868 Block Avenue, from 9 to 12 A.M., and 1 to 4 P. M." The Sisters' work report sent to their motherhouse in May of 1932 indicated that at the convent in Indiana Harbor 133 infants and pre-school children were examined by five doctors and four nurses from the nearby Catholic Hospital. They were assisted by seven of the Sisters. The Calumet News printed a report of this clinic, listing the names of the doctors and nurses who participated and pointing out that the Catechists had assisted them with 133 children who were examined. At different times groups of children were taken by the Sisters to the tuberculosis sanitorium for X-rays and examinations.

Also in 1932, the Chairman of the President's Organization on Unemployment Relief issued a statement in which he warned:

It is paramount that the constructive program of a city, its family case work, its child care, its public health, its recreational service must not be allowed to deteriorate because of the winter's extraordinary demands for unemployment relief.

63 Ibid., May 3, 1932.
64 Quoted in The Calumet News, January 15, 1932.
The Sisters attempted to help their people in all these various aspects of social welfare. Because there were so many of the young men in the parish without work, the community center was open all day so that they would have some healthful source of recreation. A radio was obtained and the clubs were kept active. The September, 1932, issue of The Missionary Catechist carried an article which told of the enthusiastic work of a group of young boys from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in erecting a grotto to the Little Flower under the direction of the Sister Superior. These young boys spent weeks at this task and took great pride in their accomplishment. The dedication of the shrine was made a parish affair, with a procession led by the Pastor. Twenty-four little girls dressed in white and each carrying a rose made their way to the shrine while all joined in singing Spanish hymns.65

Relief in 1933

In the early part of 1933, the distribution of food had greatly increased, but by the middle of the year, when industries began to operate again, it was finally discontinued. During this period of 1933 the Sisters distributed 81,125 pounds of flour; 2,630 gallons of milk, and 10,219 orders of groceries.66


66 Sisters' Work Reports, 1933.
Brief Summary of the Work of the Sisters from 1934 to 1939

During 1934 and 1935 the Sisters, through their visiting and religious instruction classes, had reached an increasing number of negroes living in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish. In October of 1936 a club was organized for the negro women.

From 1936 to 1939 the weekly work reports of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters indicate that in addition to daily religious instructions, many activities were carried on for the people of the parish in the community center. Classes in sewing and handwork, singing, practice for plays and programs, frequent free movies, parties for special holidays, picnics, meetings of sodalities and study clubs for various groups were all part of the program. In 1938 the Catholic Youth Organization was established in the parish and became a very active group. In January of 1939 a Rhythm Band was organized, making itself a popular addition to the Community Center.

Coming of the Sacred Heart Fathers and Organization of a New Society

In 1937 the Mexican pastor returned to Mexico and the work of the parish was taken over by the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart with Father Patrick O'Neill, S.C.J., as the new pastor. After a few months he was replaced by Rev. P. Bernard Lick, S.C.J.

In May of 1939, under the direction of the pastor a
new society, affiliated with the Apostleship of Prayer, was formed for the men, taking the name "Los Obreros Catolicos." The purposes of the society were (1) to defend the Faith; (2) to conserve the good customs and reputation of the Mexicans; to raise funds for the parish; to help members in some special need.67

Burning of Church

On August 20, 1939, Reverend Paul Frichtl, C.S.J., was appointed pastor. In less than two weeks after his arrival, on September 2, 1939, a disastrous fire partially destroyed Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The Hammond Times gave this version of the event:

The church was virtually deserted, except for two senoritas who were busily engaged banking the altars with flowers. A Mexican laborer, able to be up and around for the first time following a serious illness, entered the church, used a votive candle near the entrance in thankful acknowledgment of recovery from his sickness, and silently went away. The hour was 3:30.

The little girls had momentarily left the auditorium only to return to see flames rapidly sweeping everything in view - carpets, pews, statuary and finally the pulpits - as they hurriedly escaped and gave alarm.

Mysteriously, the votive candle had apparently tipped to the floor and ignited the dry carpeting. Within 12 minutes fire that was fanned by the cross-draft of open windows caused sufficient damage within

67 Estatutos de Los Obreros Catolicos, Mayo, 1939.
the auditorium of the $18,000 frame structure to necessitate its abandonment as a place of worship . . . .

The fire department had saved the frame building from complete loss. It was found that the basement could be used for Sunday morning Masses. But there were seats for only 200 at a time, and approximately 1000 were seeking admission. 68

After some fourteen years the disaster had thrust the parish back into the same situation it faced in 1925. The pastor immediately set about asking plans for the new church to replace the original building which had been quite small and inadequate to the needs of the parish. Also, the majority of the parishioners had moved west and northwest across the railroad tracks and desired a more central location for the church. Bishop Noll not only gave permission for the building of a new church but promised substantial material assistance in its construction. Lots were purchased at 3520 Decatur Street, about ten blocks northwest of the original church. Father Frichtl secured the help of his brother, who was a general building contractor, and plans for the new church were soon ready. Excavation was to be started on December 11, 1939 and arrangements were made to have two trucks with which to begin the work on that day. A group of men in the parish tried to persuade the pastor to wait one day longer so that work could begin on

December 12th - the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. However, Father told them that plans had been made and would have to go through as scheduled. One of the men took delight in recounting this incident and in telling how they waited in vain for the trucks to arrive. Finally, one of the drivers called to say he was ill and could not work, and the other called to say his truck had broken down. So, today, the cornerstone of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church indicates that building was begun on the 12th of December - feast of the glorious patroness of the parish.

The people of Guadalupe parish now faced the year of 1940 with a common bond to unite them and a common goal toward which they would work in the construction of their new church.

69 Statement of Jose Gonzales, personal interview.
CHAPTER IV

PERIOD FROM 1940 - 1951

The Construction of the New Church

The erection of the new church of Our Lady of Guadalupe became a cooperative project in which many of the parishioners participated. The societies in the parish devoted themselves to the campaign to raise the necessary funds. "Jamaicas" and festivals of all kinds became the order of the day. Several manufacturing and business concerns in the community gave generous help to the Mexican project. The Inland Steel Company provided all steel beams used in the church. Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company donated a large quantity of pipe for use with a heating plant. The Buffington Cement plant supplied 288 barrels of cement at production cost. A nearby factory supplied bricks at cost. Other places of business donated cash and merchandise toward the success of the fiestas.

Practically all of the labor was provided by members of Los Obreros and other parishioners. Some of these men, after a hard day of tiresome labor, would spend several hours each night working at the church. An article published in The
Hammond Times told the story of the construction of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and described how the pastor, Father Frichi, S.C.J., worked:

side by side with his Mexican church-builders. He has donned overalls and work shirt, carried brick, sawed lumber, cut pipe length, laid floors, plastered walls and even worked on the high roof, in carrying out his share of 'the job to be done.'

Later, in an article published in the parish bulletin Ecce Parroquiales, the members of the Catholic Youth Organization recalled the part they had played in the building of the church. They told how they had unloaded lumber, stacked brick, carried cement and plaster, helped put in insulation boards and installed tile for the drainage system.

The young ladies of Our Lady of Victory Sodality described the efforts they put forth in sponsoring bazaars, bunco parties, plays and dinners to contribute their share toward the building fund. In a more mature and reserved manner the women of the Catholic Mothers' Club pointed out that many sacrifices had been required of them in helping with the "Jamaicas" and suppers, but they were proud to have participated

70 The Hammond Times, July 19, 1940, pt. 2, p. 17.
71 Ecce Parroquiales, September 13, 1942.
72 Ibid.
in this work for the church; they attributed the success of their efforts to the direction and assistance of the Missionary sisters of Our Lady of Victory. The Missionary sisters' work reports indicate that they had promoted social affairs to help in fund raising in each of the societies under their direction.

In the loyal and devoted work of the parishioners lies the answer to the question posed by a member of Los Obreros, "How was it possible that a work of cement, steel and brick, constructed by the poor, from the poor and for the poor should be finished in scarcely nine months without sufficient funds, nor good machines . . . ." But after nine months, on September 15, 1940, the new church was ready for use. It was simply constructed to accommodate about 400 people. A ten-room rectory was built in the rear of the church.

The program on the day of dedication began with a final High Mass at 8:00 A.M. in the old church of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Following this Mass the entire parish took part in a procession to the new church. The Hammond Times estimated that approximately 2000 persons participated in this procession. Bishop Heli presided at the dedication ceremony which was follow-

73 *Los Obreros*, September 13, 1942.
74 Ibid.
ed by a solemn High Mass. In his sermon Bishop Noll commended
the people of the parish for their interest in erecting the new
edifice within such a brief space after fire had almost destroy-
ed their old church. He praised the workmen of the parish who
had liberally donated their services as carpenters, brick layers,
plasterers, and masons. 75 Because of their generosity in time
and labor, the church, valued at approximately $35,000 cost
about half that amount. A banquet was held in the basement of
the church and a typical Mexican fiesta continued through the
afternoon and evening. The parish bulletin of the following
Sunday made these comments:

The Mass of farewell in the old church
constituted a touching act because there is no
farewell that is not sad at saying goodbye to a
loved person or on leaving the blessed place that
for some years one has frequented.

The transfer of the image of Holy Mary
of Guadalupe to the new church in long and solemn
procession publicly demonstrated the Catholicity
of this colony, as it passed slowly and as in
triumph through the streets of the city. Blessed
be the Faith of our fathers! 76

The old church of Our Lady of Guadalupe was rebuilt,
renamed St. Jude, and turned over to the negro Catholics of
this section. This parish, too, was served by the Sacred
Heart priests, Father Frichtl and Father Saxon, who resided in

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75 The Hammond Times, September 16, 1940, pt.2, p. 17.
76 Boos Parroquiales, September 29, 1940.
the rectory at Guadalupe.

**Activities for the Youth of the Parish**

A study of the parish bulletin, *Ecos Parroquiales* revealed how the Catholic Youth Organization under the leadership of Father Saxon followed out the religious, cultural, social and recreational aspects of a general program of activities sponsored by the parish from 1940 to 1943. These activities not only provided many diversions for the young people of the parish but also brought them into contact with members of CYO groups from many other parishes. A letter from the Hammond Deanery Council of the CYO to the club at Guadalupe inviting the young people of Guadalupe parish to a skating party was published in *Ecos Parroquiales*. This invitation pointed out that the youths of each of the other thirty parishes wanted to get better acquainted with all other members.77

Reports on all the various athletic activities of both the Senior and Junior CYO and the girls' teams are fully given in *Ecos Parroquiales*. The priests of the parish had been able to make arrangements for their teams to practice in the gymnasium of a nearby public school. The success of the

77 *Ecos Parroquiales*, April 11, 1942.
teams in evidenced by the trophies won by them which are still on display at Guadalupe Social Center. In 1942, *The Mission Call* magazine published by the Priests of the Sacred Heart, told of the Junior CYO boys winning the basketball championship of East Chicago. This article commented that, "These boys from the streets, Angels With Dirty Faces, have breathed the air of sportsmanship and Catholicity of the CYO and have risen to new heights." 78

The Chief Probation Officer of the Juvenile Court of Lake County in an interview with the writer on July 10, 1961, characterized the decrease in Juvenile Court cases in 1942 among the Mexican group as having been "amazing." He thought that the decrease could be attributed to the recreational program carried on in Guadalupe parish and to the cooperation between the priests and Court authorities. The parish priests, he felt, had been particularly helpful in the rehabilitation of some of the parents of children coming to the attention of the Court.

For the first three year period of *Ecos Parroquiales* publication, the young people comprising the staff worked many hours each week. On the third anniversary of the paper's publication the staff was feted at a breakfast after Mass.

Representatives of Los Obreros, Madres Catolicas, Junior and Senior CYO, Our Lady of Victory Sodality, Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, and the priests of the parish were present. Members of the staff who had worked most faithfully were presented with jackets by the pastor, Father Frickl. A member of Los Obreros wrote the following week about this affair and congratulated the young people upon their devoted work. He pointed out that the real value of the gifts lay in the fact that they had been presented by "the highest spiritual representative of all the Mexican Catholics in the city, Father Frickl." 79 The Mission Call noted the anniversary of Ecos Parroquiales and commented that this paper "has become a great power in keeping the people of the parish informed of all parochial news and events." 80 In 1943 the publication of Ecos Parroquiales was discontinued. As far as could be learned the suspension was necessitated by heavy expenses of maintaining the paper.

After World War II ended in 1945 and the young men of the parish who had served in the various branches of the armed forces returned home, youth activities on a large scale were

79 Ecos Parroquiales, March 22, 1943.
80 Saxon, "Harbor Highlights," The Mission Call, XIV, 71.
again initiated. Father Daniel Kennelly, S.C.J. organized the Young Catholic Workers. There is no documentary material available for this period. However, a former member of the YCW told the writer in a personal interview that senior and junior groups for both boys and girls carried out a program of religious, social and athletic activities that attracted large numbers of young people. This informant had been sent as a delegate from Our Lady of Guadalupe parish to the Marian Congress held in Montreal in 1947. He took pride in telling of the report he had given at one of the conferences on the activities of the YCW in Guadalupe parish. When Father Kennelly was transferred to another parish the YCW activities began to diminish. However, one group of girls from this organization continued to hold its meetings and is currently active.

In 1948 when Father Mitchell, S.C.J. was assigned to Guadalupe Church, he was placed in charge of work with the youth of the parish. He organized seven new clubs to accommodate young people of different age groups. Most active among these at the present time are the Glee Club and a group of young men between the ages of twenty and twenty-six called "The Toppers." The Latin-American Veterans are another active group meeting at the church. The Glee Club directed by Father Mitchell has acquired a fine reputation and has given performances before a number of organizations.
The first floor and basement of the store building adjacent to Guadalupe Church were converted into a social center in 1949. According to an article in a publication of the Sacred Heart Fathers, some 200 boys make daily use of this center from 2:00 until 10:15 P.M.\textsuperscript{31} When Father Mitchell is not able to supervise activities he delegates this work to members of "The Toppers" Club. The social center is equipped with pool tables in the basement, ping-pong tables, a television set, and a reading room on the first floor. Each of the clubs has a basketball team. During the 1950 season Our Lady of Guadalupe teams won three trophies: one for the Mexican championship of Indiana Harbor, and two for sportsmanship.\textsuperscript{32}

Besides maintaining recreational activities the priests of the parish work in close cooperation with probation and parole officers in seeking to rehabilitate those individuals who have taken the first steps towards delinquency. In November of 1950, Father Mitchell met with authorities of the Division of Correction of Lake County to discuss the rehabilitation of several parolees for whom he had been appointed parole sponsor. The Juvenile Court has also sought Father's assistance in working


\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
with boys placed on probation. No separate statistics on Mexican children are recorded in the annual report of the Juvenile Court for the year 1949-1950 for East Chicago. In the following figures Mexican offenders are included under "Others".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1949</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chief Probation Officer commented to the writer that he did not consider the Mexican group as constituting any particular juvenile problem at the present time. He felt that this was due not only to the recreational activities for youth but again to the work of the parish priests in dealing with the parents.

**Educational Activities**

In order to afford the people of the parish an opportunity to learn English, classes were held in the basement of the church every Wednesday and Saturday for a period of several years. However, in February of 1941 a member of Los Obreros wrote in *Ecos Parroquiales* an article in Spanish entitled, "Let us Insist on the Practice of Spanish." He rejoiced that young Mexicans spoke English very well but thought they would be losing

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84 Ecos Parroquiales, January 1, 1941.
a great deal by neglecting Spanish. He cited the case of Senator Chavez of New Mexico, a loyal American, who had recently spoken publicly for an hour and a half using the most correct Spanish. 85

When the United States Government initiated the registration of aliens, *Voos Parroquiales* published a notice stating that the English teacher would be present at the church to assist anyone needing help in filling out the required forms. 86

In June of 1941, eighteen boys and girls who graduated from the local public high school represented the largest group to graduate since the establishment of the Mexican colony in Indiana Harbor. These eighteen were feted with a breakfast after a Mass attended by all the young people of the parish. The June 22, 1941, issue of *Voos Parroquiales* carried a page dedicated to the graduates. The CYO took pride in announcing that a scholarship to Indiana University Extension had been awarded to one of their members. 87

In March of 1942, *Voos Parroquiales* published an editorial entitled, "Let's Send A Boy to College." This editorial pointed out that there would be twenty Mexicans

85 *Voos Parroquiales*, February 2, 1941.
86 Ibid., January 15, 1941.
87 Ibid., June 22, 1941.
graduating in June. Scholarships would be provided for graduates of other national groups, but there would be none for those of Mexican descent. Members of the parish were urged to take some action toward providing a scholarship for one of their outstanding students, but there is no indication that this proposal was taken up by any group. Since the War the Latin-American Veterans have provided scholarships for some six or seven Mexican men and women, selected from the local high school on the basis of scholastic ability.

The religious instruction of the children of the parish continued to be given by Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters. Their annual reports give the following enrollments of children in catechetical classes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940-1941</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941-1942</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-1943</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943-1944</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-1945</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In June of 1945 Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters left the parish in order that the convent in which they had been living might be used by the school Sisters who assumed charge of the newly opened school for negro children at St. Jude's parish.

It had long been the hope of the people of Guadalupe parish to have a school of their own. However, the economic depression, the burning of the original church and the necessity
of building a new one had made the construction of a school building financially impossible. In 1947, Father Daniel Kennelly, S.C.J., persuaded the pastor of St. John Cantius' Church to rent one floor of his large school building to Guadalupe parish. Under this plan 189 children were enrolled at the end of September in 1947. This arrangement with St. John's parish has continued up to the present time. One of the parish priests drives a school bus each morning during the school year over a specified route through the parish to bring the children of Guadalupe parish to St. John's school building. The store building adjacent to the church was purchased by Guadalupe parish, and the upstairs rooms of this building became the rectory for the priests, who had turned over the house built in the rear of the church to the Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph who staffed Guadalupe school.

In 1950 it had been necessary to close St. Jude's negro school because of financial reasons, and Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters were asked to return to Guadalupe parish. At this time Father Justin Gross, S.C.J. was pastor of Guadalupe parish, having succeeded Father Julian Lubowieck, S.C.J. During the 1950-51 school year the Missionary Sisters taught some 513 Mexican children attending the public schools.

Family Relationships

A few articles in Boos Parroquiales give a glimpse into
family relationships in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish. A member of Los Obreros wrote that among various families the children, in spite of the example of parents, had developed into fine young people. Many of them worked, giving their checks to their parents. When they asked their parents for spending money, they were given about fifty cents. The writer of the article offered his opinion as follows: "Is this just? No. A youth who earns $50 or $60 has his needs and parents are obliged to know it . . . were they not young also?"88 He believed that most young men did not have grave vices and should be allowed to escort young ladies.

The previous week the same writer admonished parents about the conduct of some of the younger children of the parish. He reminded them of their obligation to know how their children behaved outside the home. He expressed the belief that the children were allowed too much liberty and cited examples of disrespectful behavior toward adults.89 In this same issue the girls of the parish published an article in which they explained their withdrawal from the baseball league because of the difficulty encountered in getting to practice. They complained that the boys had no problem in this matter because they were

88 *Ecos Parroquiales*, October 27, 1940.
free to leave the house any time; girls, on the other hand, had to persuade their parents to allow them to attend practice games. The young lady who wrote the article commented that, despite these inconveniences, they planned to begin practice again and hoped that "our spirit will continue and not die down."90

Boas Parroquiales published a series of articles written in Spanish on "Christian Matrimony." This lay author recalled that in Mexico:

When a civil marriage was effected in the vicinity or some concubinage made public, the neighbors fled from its contact as from a serpent . . . . But in these places there is no such austerity. It appears that refinement and morality are in bankruptcy. Marriages by the civil law generally prove to last a short time since they lack the moral tie that should make them indissoluble.91

He urged that in order to "remedy this anomaly that gravely affects a Catholic colony not only in the social order but in its spiritual structure, Catholics married only by the civil law should see the pastor about having their marriage validated."92

Again in 1942, an article written in Spanish deplored the lax customs in the world that had invaded the Catholic home. The writer warned that, "From the disorder of the Mexican Catholic homes proceeds the decadence of the parish, and in

90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., November 10, 1940.
92 Ibid.
order to remedy the situation the Mexican family must return to its principles."

**Social Problems in Guadalupe Parish**

Conversation with priests, sisters, and social workers who have had close contact with Mexican families in Indiana Harbor revealed that the number of civil marriages among Mexicans has increased greatly. Stories told to the Missionary Sisters in their home visits indicated that the crowding of many boarders in already overcrowded homes has been responsible for the break-up of some families. Agents from the various industries go to one home after another seeking quarters for men they wish to employ.

On December 7, 1950 *The Hammond Times* published a news item entitled, "City Health Officials Are Blocked by Law in Efforts to Improve Housing Conditions." This stated in part that:

Substandard housing in East Chicago, a medium of frustration for health and welfare officials, is something they are powerless to correct.

Although human consideration tells them something should be done to eliminate unbelievably bad conditions, the law says it is not within their jurisdiction to act.

The law hasn't eyes to see the suffering created by inadequate housing facilities. The officials do.

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93 *Boos Parroquiales*, January 11, 1942.
The big problem, of course, is in the thickly populated Indiana Harbor section of the city. It is not unusual to find as many as 25 persons living in single unit dwellings—sometimes two families or even more.

Nor is it unusual to find families paying high rents to live in garages or other "converted" apartments.

In order to illustrate the over-all problem, the condition of one home was described in detail by the city health inspector. After the description:

he added that this case isn't nearly as bad as some in Indiana Harbor. He told of families living in garages with nothing but dirt floors. Whenever such a place is condemned the family moves into an already congested unit or to a place just as bad. That is all there is to be had.

On November 1, 1950, The Hammond Times pointed out that federal housing units are still available to communities that take the proper steps to obtain them. The housing and redevelopment coordinator of Chicago, who spoke at the East Chicago council's annual meeting, stated that "a city badly in need of housing that doesn't take advantage of the federal plan is lax." The City Administration of East Chicago has refused to

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95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., November 1, 1950, pt. 1, p. 2.
consider a federal housing project. A social worker from East Chicago stated that she felt the objections of the city administration were based not only on political reasons but also on the fact that it would be difficult to decide for which group housing would be provided - negroes, Anglo-Americans, or Mexican-Americans.

The housing problem has been further intensified by the fact that the East Chicago City Council terminated rent control in May of 1951. The Labor Sentinel published a few examples of how landlords have taken advantage of this decision. They listed the names of five Mexican families living in one building, the rental of which was raised from $32.50 to $75 a month. A member of one of these families stated that the owner wants the families to move in order that the building can be used to accommodate single men working in the various industries.

The Hammond Times on July 6, 1951, announced that East Chicago plants would employ 10,000 more men. Two of the largest industries in the Indiana Harbor section together will need some 7300 workers by the middle of 1952. In speaking of the Inland Steel plant of Indiana Harbor the article pointed out that:

Inland is planning to construct four open hearth furnaces. Thirty six furnaces are now in use.

The additional furnaces will increase production from 3,750,000 ingot tons of steel annually to 4,500,000 tons. Inland officials estimated the project will necessitate adding 2,300 workers to their current force of 16,000.

Since the end of World War II some of the industries in Indiana Harbor have been turning to Puerto Rico for additional laborers. This trend is having a definite effect on Our Lady of Guadalupe parish. These people, too, are Spanish-speaking Catholics and are establishing themselves in this parish. Conversation with individual Mexicans has revealed that some of the Mexicans have tended to reject the Puerto Ricans, while others, remembering the treatment that they themselves received are attempting to help them in every possible way. A social worker believed that some of the difficulties between the Mexicans and Puerto Ricans can be attributed to the fact that the little property that was available to the Mexicans is also now available to the Puerto Ricans.

Guadalupe parish has continued to grow; at the last three Masses each Sunday many must stand and some are not even able to get inside the door. The average Sunday Mass attendance was estimated at 1250 by the pastor. When the Sacrament of Confirmation was administered in April of 1951, it was necessary to divide the confirmants and their sponsors into two groups.

One group waited in the basement of the church until the other was confirmed. The overflow suggested that Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish has outgrown its second church building and that plans are in order for a larger edifice to stand as the religious symbol and core of the community life of the Mexican and Mexican-American group of Indiana Harbor.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The Mexicans began to settle in the Indiana Harbor section about 1920 lacking a sense of unity or an organization that might shield them, in some degree, against discrimination and exploitation. It was not until 1925 that they were brought together under the direction of an Italian priest and by the leadership of a few Mexicans of some education who had left Mexico because of the persecution of the Church raging in 1925. Most Mexicans who had settled in Indiana Harbor came from the uneducated laboring classes. Despite disparities in education, however, all the immigrants found common ground in their religion and their desire to have a parish church of their own. The church they built became not only a religious center but a core around which grew a considerable social and cultural life. This study revealed the marked degree to which the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe became the center around which the immigrants established their new spiritual, social, cultural, and educational life in the industrial area that differed so markedly from the agricultural background they had known in Mexico.

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Spiritual Life

In a parish church of their own the Mexican people celebrated their religious holidays in much the same way as they had in Mexico. The Spanish newspaper El Amigo del Hogar carried abundant evidence of the devotional and enthusiastic manner in which they followed out the church year with traditional love of colorful ceremonies. Through their organ of publication, El Amigo del Hogar they defended their Faith and informed the people of the persecution in Mexico. In the Church, with the same sacrifice of the Mass and the same sacraments they had a firm basis to which they could cling while becoming adjusted to the new life in the United States.

Social Life

The parish church became the main source of the social as well as the spiritual life of many of the Mexicans of Indiana Harbor. The plays, dances, "Jamaicas," suppers, and festivals of all kinds that were promoted to raise funds for the church also served to meet the recreational needs of the people.

As a united people they were able to secure a theatre of their own where they would be freed from discrimination. They were also able to establish better relations with the police department to such an extent that by 1951 a bitter problem had become a negligible one. Although open discrimi-
ation has diminished, the fact that the Mexicans continue to keep to themselves in a colony suggests that discrimination probably continues in subtle ways.

The high level of unity which they had managed to achieve in 1925 in building their church did not long endure. Because of personal rivalries, differences in education among the people, and the transient character of the population, most of their organizations disbanded. Discord entered into the ranks of Los Obreros Católicos "San José" and the severe economic depression caused the majority of the leaders to return to Mexico.

During the critical years of the depression Our Lady of Guadalupe parish played a vital role in the lives of the Mexicans. Unfamiliar with social agencies and reluctant about seeking relief, these people turned to the Sisters of the parish for they felt sure of being accepted by them. At the Sister's Convent they secured at least the essential requirements for sustenance or were taken to agencies that could provide for special needs. The Sisters made use of every possible resource in order to assist the people depending upon them. Many of the families who were helped at this time are now most loyal in working with the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory.

At almost every period of its existence Our Lady of Guadalupe parish placed special emphasis on activities for the
young people of the parish. During the depression years the community center established in the basement of the church was for many Mexican youths the sole source of recreation.

When the last Mexican pastor returned to his native land the parish was placed in the care of the Sacred Heart Fathers. These were American priests who, while appreciating the cultural heritage of the Mexicans, were able to assist them in the process of Americanization. Through athletic and cultural clubs the parish priests helped the young people to mingle with those from other parishes.

Other studies of immigrant groups have revealed a high rate of crime and delinquency among the second generation.99 The fact that this was not true among the Mexicans of Indiana Harbor can be attributed in large degree to the activities carried on for the youth of the parish at almost all times.

One of the gravest problems that the Mexican people of the Indiana Harbor section has faced— and is facing—is that of housing. The over-crowding of the people has contributed to the breakdown of marriages and family life. The planned in-

crease of employment in the large industries of the area will probably intensify this problem unless more adequate provision for housing is made. Social workers from public and private agencies encounter some difficulties in finding boarding or adoptive homes for Mexican children because of the overcrowded condition of Mexican homes. The Mexican people of Indiana Harbor are no longer reluctant about using social agencies to seek relief.

Cultural Life

The Catholic Faith forms a large part of the cultural background of the Mexican people. The establishment of a parish church of their own gave them something vital upon which they could depend while making the transition to American life. Here they could carry on many of the customs and traditions of their native country and still find the essentials of the beliefs they shared with Anglo-American Catholics.

The rich cultural background of the Mexican people was something of which they were proud and were anxious to preserve. The leaders among Los Obreros Católicos "San José," who possessed a broad knowledge of the literature and history of their country, were eager to extend these values among their people. They used their newspaper El Amigo del Hogar and promoted a library for this purpose. However, these efforts failed because most of the people lacked the education necessary to appreciate
this material. For this same reason, in all probability, the efforts of Los Obreros to foster classes for children in the history and traditions of Mexico achieved little success.

For older people the learning of a new language is usually a very difficult task. Many of these people could continue to feel security in the use of their own language by remaining in the colony settled around the parish church. Here in parish activities and affairs they could find diversion in their own language group. However, the parish provided an opportunity for all to learn English through classes conducted in the church basement.

The process of Americanization among the second generation is best illustrated in the parish bulletin Acos Parroquiales published from 1941 to 1943. The first few pages, with articles by officers of Los Obreros and Madres Catolicas, were written in Spanish. The children and young peoples' pages were written in English - with a liberal use of American slang.

**Educational Life**

In the early days of the organization of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish the educational activities carried on by Los Obreros Catolicos "San Jose" were directed toward intensifying a knowledge and love of Mexican culture. The leaders did, however, recognize the need for acquainting the people with their

Within a few months after the original church of Our Lady of Guadalupe had been dedicated in 1927 Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters came to the parish to instruct the Mexican children in the truths of the Catholic religion. Besides giving religious instructions, the sisters conducted classes in sewing, cooking and various crafts.

For financial reasons a parish school has not been built. It was not until 1947 that arrangements were made for Our Lady of Guadalupe parish to rent one floor of St. John Cantius' school. The large number of children living in Our Lady of Guadalupe parish assures a large enrollment if a parish school will ever be built. This last consideration indicates that the role of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church is a continuing one and that in the future, as it has been since its foundation in 1925, it will be a religious, social, cultural, and educational center to sustain and stabilize the Mexican workers and their children as they struggle to make the difficult adjustments to a strange environment.
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