

Selections from

Charros:

How Mexican Cowboys are Remapping Race and American Identity

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INTRODUCTION

On June 11, 2013, eleven-year-old mariachi star Sebastien de la Cruz – best known for his performance on *America's Got Talent* – sang the U.S. national anthem at San Antonio's AT&T Center, setting the Internet on fire. Introduced by his moniker "El Charro de Oro," de la Cruz opened Game Three of the NBA Finals by belting out a moving rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner.¹ *The Daily Dot* applauded his superb performance and impressive vocal range: "The kid was dynamic. He was theatrical as it gets. He hit all the high notes. He stayed long on the low notes."² But others took to Twitter to express outrage at a Mexican American boy singing the U.S. national anthem, calling him a "wetback," "beaner," and "illegal" with the hashtags #yournotamerican and #gohome.³

The tweeters were especially incensed by de la Cruz's outfit: a perfectly pressed, light blue *traje de charro*. Most recognizable as the suit worn by mariachi musicians, the *traje de charro* references a broad set of cultural forms associated with *lo ranchero* – Mexican ranch life and ranch culture.⁴ Among these are the *charro*, a term sometimes translated as "Mexican cowboy," though the *charro* is better understood as a gentleman horseman associated with Mexico's elite. He is also a deeply nationalist figure. Ranchero cultural forms, including the *charro*, have signified *lo mexicano* (Mexicanness) since the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920); *charrería* (the art and sport of *charros*) is now Mexico's national sport, and the *charreada* (Mexican rodeo) is as popular with some Mexican audiences as soccer.⁵ Yet the *charro* also has evidentiary claims to be the "original cowboy" – the skilled horseman who introduced ranching and rodeo to the region that became the U.S. Southwest. The nativist tweeters intuited the *charro*'s Mexican nationalist history and imbrication with core narratives of American history, even if they didn't know the specifics of its content, to repel de la Cruz's presence and performance at the NBA finals game. One person tweeted: "Is this the American National Anthem or the Mexican Hat Dance? Get this lil kid out of here," while another wrote: "Why was the kid singing the national anthem wearing a mariachi band outfit? We ain't Mexican."⁶

The tweeters may not have considered the collective “we” they invoked to be Mexican, but neither did de la Cruz, who told a reporter, “I’m not from Mexico, I’m from San Antonio born and raised, a true San Antonio Spurs fan.”⁷ Like countless ethnic Mexicans in the United States since at least the 1930s, de la Cruz viewed the charro and lo ranchero as powerful means to express his pride in being Mexican *and* his rights to occupy central spaces in American life; for him, there was no contradiction between these goals. Many reporters, politicians, and entertainers shared de la Cruz’s view of the charro and its symbolic potential for Mexican Americans. San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro, U.S. President Barack Obama, and actor Eva Longoria all rallied to de la Cruz’s defense, appealing for a multicultural America where a brown-skinned boy wearing a charro suit could sing the U.S. national anthem with pride.⁸

The public debate over de la Cruz’s traje de charro was about far more than sports or patriotism; rather, it invoked a historic struggle over the relationships between race, masculinity, and national identity in the United States, particularly in the U.S. Southwest and U.S.-Mexico border region. This struggle has taken shape through contests over the meanings of the American cowboy and the Mexican charro: two iconic forms of masculinity derived from the multicultural ranching societies of the Americas but now firmly associated with the nationalist projects of their respective states. For nearly a century, ethnic Mexicans in the United States have navigated between these two racial and nationalist formations in flexible but strategic ways. Drawing on the figure of the charro – symbol of Mexican identity *and* a distinguished horseman with claims to be the “original cowboy” – they have expressed their attachment to Mexican culture while claiming rights and opportunity in the United States.

This book documents their visions, hopes, and struggles. I focus on the many ways in which ethnic Mexicans in the United States have mobilized the charro in the service of civil rights, cultural citizenship, and place-making since the 1930s. Traversing a range of cities with distinctive histories, geographies, cultures, and social structures, I show how ethnic Mexicans have used the figure of the charro to nurture their cultural heritage, to resist subjugation and challenge inequality, and to transform the landscapes and institutions of the places in which they live. The charros’ work across these domains

has inevitably required them to engage – and sometimes challenge – the presumed whiteness and U.S. nationalism of the American cowboy. Thus, the book considers how U.S. charros have transformed core narratives of American history and identity centered on the cowboy, rodeo, and ranching in order to create more inclusive and equitable conditions.

Although the history of charrería within Mexico is well documented (indeed, romanticized), few have studied its meaning or practice in the United States. This book seeks to fill that silence, by offering the first history of charros in the United States. Those studies of U.S.-based charros that do exist were conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s by anthropologists Kathleen Mullen Sands and Olga Nájera-Ramírez; their ethnographic accounts explain the contemporary expression of charrería, its internal dynamics, and its importance to participants.⁹ Building on this important work, *Charros* contributes a historical and cultural geography of charros and charrería in the U.S. Southwest. Taking the long view, I show that charros have been ubiquitous in Mexican American communities since at least the 1930s, and that they have consistently galvanized ethnic Mexicans' pursuit of equity, inclusion, and belonging. Indeed, the charro has been as important to Mexican American history, culture, and politics as his better-known counterparts, the bracero, the pachuco, and the Chicano activist. At the same time, U.S. charros have played key roles in transforming the Mexican nationalist formation of charrería from abroad, sustaining vibrant transnational cultural linkages amid the waxing and waning of U.S.-Mexico geopolitics and infusing migrant sensibilities into Mexican nationalist culture. Working at multiple scales, then, charros have been crucial agents in the simultaneous co-production of U.S., Mexican, southwestern, and border cultures.

The main protagonists in this story are members of the U.S.-based charro associations. These are formal organizations of 10 to 20 men, often from the same extended family, who ride, practice, and compete together in the regional, national, and transnational circuits of Mexican rodeo. The first U.S. charro associations formed in Texas and California in the 1940s, just after World War Two, and facilitated ethnic Mexicans' early engagement with institutions that had proved key to their racial subjugation since U.S. conquest, namely law enforcement and the capitalist economy. Many other charro

associations formed in the 1970s, at the height of the Chicano Movement and Mexican Americans' struggles for land and dignity, when the charro guided ethnic Mexicans' work to create more responsive and multicultural public institutions. Still more charro associations were established in the 1990s, in the aftermath of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the tremendous migration it unleashed. In the face of discursive constructions of "illegality" and corresponding racial violence, charrería since the 1990s has cohered Mexican migrants with Mexican Americans in affirming their cultural heritage and galvanizing political action. Yet the charro associations have never had a monopoly on the meaning or political utility of the charro, who circulates in popular culture and politics as much as in the *lienzo* (the distinctive keyhole-shaped arena used for charreadas). Thus, while centering the leadership of the charro associations in remapping race and national identity, this book also traces the efforts of public figures such as elected officials, school principals, county sheriffs, business owners, and artists, who have used the charro for a wide range of political, economic, and cultural purposes.

The charro associations and their supporters represent a particular perspective on ethnic Mexican empowerment in the United States – one that is middle-class, masculine, and aligned with Spanish-Mexican histories of colonialism and aspirations to whiteness. The charros' initiatives reflect their position at the intersection of these social identities. Much of their work, as we shall see, has focused on securing ethnic Mexican men's access to institutions from which were historically excluded or targeted on the basis of race and class, such as law enforcement, business entrepreneurship, and public space. Charros have lobbied for inclusion in these spheres by invoking their patriarchal control of family, community, and ethnic identity and by forging masculine networks that transcend ethnicity, race, and citizenship in order to access the privileges of class and whiteness. Still, even those groups who are relatively subjugated within charro culture – women, workers, and indigenous peoples – have sometimes used the charro and other rancharo practices to claim greater power. Women, in particular, have mobilized the charro to create more inclusive public institutions, especially in areas related to social reproduction, such as education. Women have also found in charro culture the expansion of personal opportunities for marriage, family formation, competition, and travel. While ethnic Mexicans' relationship to nation and

colonialism in the U.S. Southwest is complex, *charrería* has been attractive to many ethnic Mexican women because, as Elleke Boehmer explains, the concept of the nation “remains a place from which to resist the multiple ways in which colonialism distorts and disfigures a people’s history.”¹⁰

Incorporating these diverse figures and their work into the fold of Mexican American history requires a capacious sense of politics – one that exceeds a focus on electoral politics, grassroots organizing, or direct action and that transcends neat divisions between liberal and conservative agendas. Until very recently, most members of the charro associations have not been involved in formal politics. However, they *have* nurtured meaningful partnerships with well-known politicians, business owners, and cultural producers, both ethnically Mexican and not, and from across the political spectrum. Using strategies of collaboration and persuasion rather than protest or direct action, they have mostly labored to transform U.S. institutions and spaces from within. As a result, charros often lurk in the background – both literally and symbolically – of the most important struggles for inclusion, equality, and justice that ethnic Mexicans have waged for nearly a century. Many of their goals and accomplishments have corresponded with those of better-known and more explicitly political Mexican American and Chicano organizations, from LULAC in the 1940s and ‘50s to the immigrant rights movement of today. Though quieter and less obviously politicized, their work has been equally important in enabling ethnic Mexicans to claim citizenship, belonging, and rights.

The charro has proven an enduring and transcendent figure for a simple but compelling reason: as a representation of skilled masculinity, economic autonomy, and landownership, he allows ethnic Mexicans to resist the core processes through which they have been racially subjugated in the United States. The U.S. military conquest of Mexican land, people, and culture that began in the 1830s unleashed processes of displacement, migration, proletarianization, and *barrioization* that are still very much in motion, sustained in the present through neoliberal trade arrangements, processes of “illegalization,” and racial violence. In the face of these contentious histories and contested geographies, the charro promises power: power over land, over the conditions and fruits of one’s labor, over the ability to bind family and community, over the meaning of ethnic and cultural identity. As we shall see in the chapters to come, that

power has not always been actualized, nor has it come without struggle even when the outcomes are successful. Nonetheless, identification with and organizing around the charro galvanizes hope for a more autonomous, dignified, and equitable future. It is that sense of hope – and the collective action it guides – that I trace in this book.

The remainder of this introduction proceeds in three parts. First, it documents the social history of ranching in colonial Mexico and its spread north into the region that would become, after 1848, the U.S. Southwest. Generated through the interactions among wealthy hacendados and working-class, often indigenous *vaqueros* (ranch workers), the ranching culture of the Americas became even more complex when it migrated north, where Anglo Americans, African Americans, and indigenous peoples of the north joined the mix. The introduction then explains how, in the early twentieth century, amid industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of the modern nation-state, elite men and the mass culture industries in both the U.S. and Mexico abstracted the working horseman from his hybrid, multicultural origins and constructed the cowboy and the charro as racially and nationally distinct cultural icons. Finally, it gives an overview of how ethnic Mexicans in the United States have used charros and charrería since the 1930s for strategic purposes, detailing the scope of the chapters to come and the methods and sources used for the analysis. Following this introduction is a photographic interlude that describes the spaces, rituals, and competitive events of the charreada, which adapts the historical conditions of ranching to the urban sporting context.

A Social History of Ranching in Mexico and the United States

The charro's origin story begins in the 16th century with the Spanish import of horses, as well as riding equipment and techniques adapted from the Moors, to the Americas. The high costs of equine transport as well as frequent illness and death *en route* meant that the breeding of horses and cattle within the colonies became a top priority. Colonists established vast and profitable cattle ranches on the Caribbean islands and Mexico's central plateau. In 1549, Viceroy Luís de Velasco ordered that cattle ranching be moved north, to spread Spain's economic and "civilizing" missions to what were then the far-flung colonial frontiers of Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Querétaro, and Guanajuato – a region known as the Bajío. The

ranchers who took up this charge, typically creoles born in New Spain, fashioned a group identity and political consciousness as resourceful, rugged, and rebellious subjects; they tended to oppose and resent the Spanish colonial elite's concentration of wealth and power in Mexico City. Despite their sense of marginalization, they benefitted substantially from the domestic labor of women who ran the vast households of the hacienda, and the coerced labor of indigenous and mestizo vaqueros.¹¹ Indeed, it was the vaqueros who developed most of the materials and techniques that made large-scale cattle ranching possible. Denied the luxury goods that the hacendados enjoyed, they invented or adapted what they needed for their craft. These included the magüey rope, which was woven of local fibers; intricate roping techniques, now called fancy or trick roping; and the use of leather chaps to protect the workers' legs.¹²



Map 1. The United States and Mexico, featuring important locations for the development of charrería. By Jennifer Tran and Alexander Tarr.

These materials and techniques were shared and ritualized among hacendados, workers, and visitors during the annual *rodeos* (round-ups) in which cattle were gathered and branded. At the rodeos, hacendados and vaqueros engaged in practices such as the *colas*, or grabbing the tail of a bull or steer and twisting it under the rider's boot or around the saddle horn to flip the animal to the ground; *piales*, which involves roping a running horse around the back legs to slow it down and bring it to a standstill without injury; and *ternas*, or team roping techniques used to down cattle for branding. The rodeos also included other events that had little to do with the work of the ranch but showcased riders' skill and bravery, such as bull and bronc riding, sliding stops, bullfighting, and roping displays. These were social occasions, too, featuring food, entertainment, and music as well as opportunities for courtship that were rare in the sparsely settled, isolated ranching society of colonial Mexico. Collectively, these techniques, materials, and social rituals constitute the pre-histories of *charrería* – the art, sport, and culture of charros.¹³

Although the early rodeos served pragmatic and social purposes, they were also essential opportunities for the performance of masculinity, and for the negotiation (and sometimes transgression) of the class and ethnic fissures that characterized Spanish colonial society. Nájera-Ramírez explains that for the wealthy sons of the hacendado, the *charreada* was an important occasion to prove they were worthy inheritors of their father's land and business, while for the laboring vaqueros, the events were a chance to show they were just as skillful as their social superiors. For these reasons, “*charreadas* were a means by which men of any social class might prove themselves to be worthy charros and thus greatly enhance their status as real men.”¹⁴ This sense of masculine unity across class differences rested on men's shared patriarchal status over women. According to Spanish law, a father controlled his daughters until his death or until they married, at which point their husbands assumed control. The hacendado was expected and assumed to rule and protect his wife and children, just as men of lower social status ruled over women and children within and below their rank.¹⁵

The world of the rodeos/*charreadas* did not exist on the far northern frontier of New Spain – the area that would become the U.S. Southwest – in any meaningful way until the early nineteenth century,

on the eve of Mexican independence.¹⁶ Although Spanish settlers brought horses, cattle, and other livestock on their colonial expeditions to the North, the region's sparse population, near-constant warfare with independent American Indians, the monopoly on land held by the Franciscan missions, and extremely limited access to material goods stalled the development of an elite hacienda society.¹⁷ During the 1820s and especially the 1830s, however, the newly independent Mexican government made extensive land-grants to both Mexicans and foreigners, on the condition they attract settlers and make capital improvements. The Mexican government also liberalized trade and immigration policies, which enriched access to material goods among settlers of the far northern frontier, and permitted mestizos to hold political office for the first time. The net impact of these changes was the creation of a newly propertied, politically empowered class of Mexican landowners in the North, who formed the core of an emergent but tenuous hacienda society by the 1830s.¹⁸

Hacendados and vaqueros, later grouped uneasily under the name charros, created a culture in the Mexican North that was similar, though not identical, to that which existed in central-western Mexico. Like their counterparts farther south, the newly empowered hacendados of *el Norte* depended almost totally on the labor of women, indigenous, and mestizo workers, insisting on their cultural and biological superiority as *gente de razón*. Also like their southern counterparts, they created a world marked by leisure and lavishness – not as extensive as their counterparts in the Bajío, to be sure, but definitively so relative to the vaqueros with whom they were co-creating a distinctly *norteño* version of Mexican ranching and charro culture. The hacendados or charros of the North consumed and flaunted luxury goods such as clothing, imported furniture, and ornately tooled saddles. They constructed and maintained elaborate ranch homes with the red tile roofs, archways, and ornate woodwork that would later be associated with the Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival architectural styles. They also hosted elaborate fandangos and festivals, including rodeos, that sustained a sense of community and kinship among the region's emerging elite class.¹⁹ Through their cultural rituals and efforts to shape the physical landscape, they mimicked what they perceived as the more “authentic” ranching and charro cultures of central Mexico, even as they adapted to the distinct political, economic, and geographic conditions of the

North. This core tension, between the perceived authenticity of charrería in central Mexico and the heterogeneous rancharo practices of el Norte/the U.S. Southwest, has been an enduring feature of charrería ever since.

One key difference in the Mexican North was its intercultural nature, especially the presence and influence of well-capitalized Anglo American men. Concerned more with local issues and private gain than nationalist attachments, elite land-owning men in the North formed families, engaged in business partnerships, and shared political power across ethnic and racial lines. Although the degree of collaboration differed from place to place, elite Mexican men and elite Anglo men were partners, if unevenly so, in shaping the region's social structure and ranching culture both before and after U.S. military conquest in 1848. They mingled together in the homes, ranchos, and plazas of the region's pueblos; they established business partnerships; they campaigned for elected office in roughly equal numbers; and they participated together in violent mobs that criminalized the region's indigenous and working-class inhabitants.²⁰ Laborers, too, joined together in crafting a transnational, working-class ranch culture of significant hybridity. When white and Black American cowboys sought work on the long cattle drives from Texas after the end of the U.S. Civil War, they adopted the style, equipment, language, and ranching practices that mestizo and indigenous vaqueros had been using in Texas and Mexico for decades. It was also common for ethnic Mexicans to compete in events organized by white promoters, and for Anglo American and African American cowboys to cross the newly delineated border line to participate in bullfights and rodeo-style contests in Mexico.²¹

The interculturalism of the nineteenth century U.S. Southwest generally, and of ranching culture specifically, shifted dramatically with U.S. military conquest and the maturation of American capitalism. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848 to end the U.S. War with Mexico, ceded approximately half of Mexico's territory to the United States –the future states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Utah, Nevada, and Colorado. The treaty gave the 100,000 Mexicans living in the region the choice of relocating within Mexico's newly established borders or converting to US citizenship; over 90 percent chose the latter. Though the treaty was supposed to protect the religious, linguistic, civil, and property

rights of those who opted to stay in the new U.S. territories, it usually failed to do so. Much of the land previously held by the hacendado elite was systematically transferred to Anglo corporate ranchers and agriculturalists, who fenced their lands and restricted access to public waterways, ending the era of the open range. Anglo corporate ranchers also adopted scientific breeding methods and modern management techniques, deskilling ranch work and alienating the large pool of working-class, multi-ethnic cowboys and vaqueros.²²

While U.S. conquest and the introduction of American corporate methods affected all cowboys and vaqueros to some degree, they did so in ways sharply delineated by race and citizenship. Native laborers, who had worked extensively in ranching and agriculture at the missions and the ranchos, were routinely subjugated by laws and vigilantes that criminalized their cultural and spatial practices in order to secure a cheap, captive labor force.²³ African American and ethnic Mexican laborers, who made up between one-quarter and one-third of the cowboy workforce, were also structurally subordinated within the industry. They held the lowest-status positions, were frequently paid less than their Anglo American counterparts, had little chance for upward mobility, and faced significant interpersonal hostility and institutional discrimination.²⁴ Ethnic Mexicans experienced these processes in direct relationship to the military conquest and territorial dispossession that framed their racialization in the United States. As the nineteenth century wore on, Mexicans of all class backgrounds, including many members of the elite class, were displaced from the land, concentrated in the region's rapidly expanding wage labor forces (especially in agriculture, construction, and manufacturing), and confined to urban barrios and agricultural *colonias*. These racialized spaces expanded still further when hundreds of thousands of Mexican nationals fled the political violence and economic chaos of the Mexican Revolution in the early twentieth century, seeking political peace as well as work in the Southwest's burgeoning industrial economy.²⁵

All of these changes signaled the modernization and economic maturation of the region, now rapidly urbanizing and industrializing, as well as the institutionalization of white American settler power and the growing rigidity of national borders. But they also created significant and widespread anxiety

about the shifting relationships between race, masculinity, and national identity in the early twentieth century. During the Spanish and Mexican eras, elite Mexican men *and* elite American men in the U.S. Southwest had enjoyed shared social status through their paternalistic control of land, animals, workers, women, and children. After U.S. conquest, this form of patriarchy was replaced by a new conception of manhood defined by control of mobile capital and capitalist industry; ownership of private property; command of republican democracy and the instruments of republican citizenship; and adherence to Victorian gender and sexual ideals. Similar processes were underway in Mexico as dictator Porfirio Díaz opened the Mexican economy, land-base, and natural resources to foreign investment in the name of modernizing the country. Elite and middle-class men in both the U.S. and Mexico struggled to perform the emerging masculine ideals of their respective states in these rapidly changing political-economic contexts. Their collective reaction, remarkably similar in both societies, was to seek a unifying masculine symbol of nationhood: the cowboy in the United States, the charro in Mexico. Along the way, each figure would become racialized and nationalized – the cowboy became “whitewashed” and the charro became “brownwashed” – in ways that elided the significantly more complex, pluralistic, and hybrid social history of ranching in both central-west Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Making Race and Nation through Rural Horsemen

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, elites in both the U.S. and Mexico responded to profound social change via cultural and political initiatives to sanctify the premodern rural horseman as the iconic foundation of emerging national narratives. The point was not to return to the agrarian world of the cowboy or the charro, but rather to celebrate him as part of the nation-state’s origin story, thus freeing the modern nation to chart a progressive course forward under the leadership of a conservative elite.²⁶ In both the U.S. and Mexico, these nationalist cultural projects corresponded with, and mollified resistance to, the hardening of economic and political inequalities along the lines of race and citizenship.

In the United States, the most prominent example of this phenomenon is Teddy Roosevelt's self-fashioning as a "rough rider." Criticized for being genteel and effeminate in his early career, Roosevelt remade himself as a cowboy to restore public perceptions of his manhood. This strategy carried him to election to the U.S. presidency and helped him win support for his foreign policy initiatives, especially those that brought new imperial possessions into the American fold.²⁷ Other elite American and European (especially British) men dressed in "Indian" clothing, coordinated "Indian" spiritual gatherings, and established exclusive hunting clubs throughout the American West as well as Australia, Canada, East Kenya, and other British colonies.²⁸ They also sent their sons to ranch schools in the U.S. West that were, as Melissa Bingmann explains, meant to "inculcate individualism, bravery, strength, democracy, hard work, and fortitude ... at the same time as they preserved boys' status as the next generation of American leaders."²⁹

By the 1930s, the U.S. mass culture industries spread similar practices of "playing cowboys and Indians" to the working-classes, among whom they were meant to inculcate modern notions of masculinity and citizenship through reference to – and implicit distancing from – a shared premodern past. Corporate organizations such as the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA), which formed in 1936, promoted the idea that rodeo was an outgrowth of informal contests among Anglo – and *only* Anglo – cowboys on the Texas open range. In this way, the PRCA's shows and institutional histories of rodeo differed markedly not only from the social history of ranching in Mexico and the U.S. Southwest, but also the Wild West Shows of the 1890s, which had featured charros, vaqueros, and other diverse characters in their casts.³⁰ The country-western music industry likewise transformed the radical, ethnically inflected working-class politics of individual musicians into a collective celebration of conservative, and increasingly suburban, whiteness.³¹ The Western film industry, which reached its height from the 1930s through the 1950s, also depicted the cowboy as a white American figure while relegating Mexicans, African Americans, and indigenous characters to limited and stereotypical roles.³² Collectively, these cultural products and practices mass-produced the idea that the cowboy was a working-class, white,

and American male hero, obscuring the historic and ongoing participation of ethnic Mexicans, other Latinos, African Americans, and indigenous people in rodeo and ranching.³³

At the same time, their Mexican counterparts were engaged in a remarkably similar process via their efforts to “brownwash” the charro. Mexican presidents and political elites from across the ideological spectrum had long called upon the charro’s symbolism to bolster their authority and forge national unity, but this agenda accelerated after the Mexican Revolution (1910-20) amid land reforms, the commercialization of agriculture, industrialization, and the mass migration that these structural changes unleashed.³⁴ In order to consolidate their power and legitimacy while subduing social tensions, the emergent Mexican state and the Mexican cultural elite created elaborate mythologies of the country’s haciendas and ranchos. Popular culture, such as *música ranchera* (ranch/country music) and *comedia ranchera* (ranch comedy, a cinematic genre similar to the American Western) constructed Mexico’s ranch life as a much simpler time and place, where traditional gender roles and family structures held sway and where diverse social classes lived peacefully together under the benevolent leadership of the patriarchal hacendado/charro. These cultural forms elevated the charro to a heroic and quintessentially Mexican national icon, while sweeping the tensions and inequalities of Mexican ranch life – past and present – under the rug.³⁵

Meanwhile, elite men in Mexico’s rapidly growing urban centers institutionalized the sporting culture of charrería in ways that commemorated the historic ranching activities of the hacendado elite, while eliding the roles of vaqueros, women, and people of indigenous and African descent. In 1921, they established the first formal charro association in Guadalajara, Jalisco; others soon followed in Mexico City and elsewhere. In 1932, a coalition of these charro associations successfully lobbied for September 14 to be declared Mexico’s “Day of the Charro,” and in 1933, they established the Federación Mexicana de Charrería (FMCH) in Mexico City to regulate the sport’s practice. Under its elite, urban leadership, the FMCH assumed an authoritative role in defining the structure and culture of charrería. It established measurements for the size and shape of the lienzo and formalized the nine official *suertes* (events) of the charreada, which can be seen in the photographic interlude following this introduction. The FMCH also

developed guidelines for the number and use of the various *trajes de charro*, and passed a code of conduct mandating sobriety, personal dignity, commitment to brotherhood, religiosity, and loyalty to Mexico.³⁶

Equally important, the FMCH's officers wrote and published "official" histories of *charrería*, many of which remain highly influential today. These texts emphasized *charrería*'s evolution as a distinctly Mexican, not Spanish, cultural form and centered on the role of landowning Mexican men, rather than workers and women, in its making.³⁷ These same histories located the origins of the *charro* most decisively in Mexico City and the west-central states of Mexico, especially the Bajío – the states of Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Queretaro, and Guanajuato – and Michoacán; according to Ricardo Pérez Montfort, they "reduced the tremendous regional diversity of *lo mexicano* and emptied *charro* culture of any indigenous signs or traces of class conflict."³⁸ Reductionist narratives of Mexico's ranching history were linked to policy. Wealthy landowners opposed agrarian reform on the grounds that it threatened a treasured way of life that they claimed to protect, via their practice of *charrería* and other *ranchero* cultural forms. Collectively, the FMCH's codes, rules, and histories framed post-revolutionary Mexican manhood around whiteness, social class privilege, and the geographies of central-west Mexico in ways that reproduced historic inequities of race, class, gender, and citizenship into the mid-twentieth century – much like the cowboy narratives and institutions then being created in the United States.

In both the United States and Mexico, then, the elevation of the cowboy and the *charro* to masculine nationalist icons proceeded in strikingly similar ways and toward similar ends. In both nations, the rural horseman channeled nostalgia for a premodern, patriarchal, and colonial past at a time of widening inequality and growing dissent, helping to unify diverse national populations through invocation of a supposedly shared cultural heritage. Though constructed as distinct figures, the cowboy and the *charro* were produced in relationship to each other. Indeed, the parallel construction of each figure reflected and helped to define the prevailing cultural norms and values of each nation-state, as well as their unequal positions within the global political economy. Constructed as an individualized symbol of working-class, white, rugged manhood who guided the nation's divinely ordained western expansion, the cowboy was an emblem of the United States' position as a settler nation, as well as American elites'

growing control of territorial possessions and colonies – including much of Mexico – in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The charro, on the other hand, helped cultivate attachment to Mexico after decades of war, conquest, and revolution, as its leaders struggled to define a modern economic and political system amid debt and corruption, as well as territorial loss and ongoing migration to the United States.

To this day, these historical, cultural, and geopolitical differences are fully apparent in the stylistic differences between the cowboy and the charro. Spectators and journalists who encounter the two cultural forms inevitably comment on their differences. Cowboys embrace a rugged, informal, and utilitarian aesthetic that communicates the cowboy's working-class symbolism and American emphasis on economic efficiency: they wear Wrangler jeans, plaid button-up shirts, and cowboy boots, with only a prized silver belt buckle for ornamentation. Charros, by contrast, wear formal and elegant *trajes de charro*, hand-crafted *sombreros*, intricately tooled leather belts, and boots of the highest-quality calfskin, all of which signal their aspirations to dignity, respect, and cultural pride. Individualism versus collectivism are powerful differences as well: U.S. rodeo cowboys mostly compete as individuals, whereas charros specialize in particular events but ride, practice, travel, and compete as members of teams. In addition, while U.S. rodeo cowboys tend to be professionals who travel a competitive circuit in search of prize money, charros are amateurs who compete primarily for tradition, status, and pride. Aside from prizes such as saddles, belt buckles, or horse trailers (and these are increasing with growing corporate sponsorship of events), winners of charro competitions do not receive money. The stylistic differences between the cowboy and the charro circulate in the spaces and events of the American-style rodeo and the Mexican *charreada*, as well, where the national, racial, and gender identities associated with both practices are performed and negotiated. As Kathleen Sands notes, “in rodeo, speed and strength are dominant values, reflecting the value Americans place on efficiency, practicality, endurance, and power. In *charreada*, style and precision dominate, reflecting the emphasis Mexican culture places on elegance, colorful embellishment, baroque richness, and mastery.”³⁹

The cultural and stylistic differences between charrería and American-style rodeo matter greatly to charros in the United States, as they navigate their complex relationships to both nationalist formations and their associated logics of race, class, gender, and citizenship. For many ethnic Mexicans in the United States, the charro's noble, dignified, communal, and prideful character articulates a defiant Mexican identity that stands in implicit contrast, as well as subtle resistance, to histories of U.S. imperial expansion, economic dominance, and racial violence through which ethnic Mexicans have been persistently subjugated. This is a key reason why the charro has been such a popular figure among ethnic Mexicans in the United States for over a century. For them, the charro is at once the "original cowboy," an elite form of patriarchal manhood, and a revered symbol of Mexican identity. As a composite of these multiple meanings, values, and potentials, the charro has cohered ethnic Mexicans in the United States in their collective resistance to conquest, displacement, and institutionalized racism.

Charros and Charrería in the United States

Like diasporic subjects around the world, both past and present, ethnic Mexicans in the United States have drawn on the figure of the charro to address their distinct needs and experiences in the U.S., while simultaneously shaping the Mexican nationalist project of charrería from abroad.⁴⁰ Beginning in the 1880s but especially after the 1930s, ethnic Mexicans turned to the charro to demonstrate their loyalty to Mexico and their authenticity as Mexican cultural subjects in diaspora, while also laboring to transform their living conditions in the United States. In doing so, they challenged all-too-recent histories of dispossession, alienation, and subjugation and began the work of remapping race and national identity.

This project was, at first, concentrated among elite Mexicans and their descendants living in the U.S. Southwest, especially through late 19th century literature that remembered and honored the world of the hacienda.⁴¹ But such commemorations gained steam in the 1920s and '30s, amid the tremendous transnational migration unleashed by the Mexican Revolution and subsequent efforts to rebuild post-revolutionary Mexico. During this period, Mexican elected officials, diplomats, businessmen, and filmmakers traveled extensively throughout the U.S. Southwest and sometimes beyond, to New York City

and other influential urban centers on the eastern seaboard. As they traveled through the United States, these elite figures tried to cultivate both political and economic opportunities for themselves and loyalty to the nation among Mexicans living in diaspora.⁴² Among them were officers of the newly organized Federación Mexicana de Charrería (FMCH), who were not only charros but also businessmen and politicians.⁴³ Entertainers and performers such as Tito Guízar, Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete, and Antonio Aguilar, to name just a few of the more famous, also traveled extensively throughout the United States during the early and mid-twentieth century, infusing ranchero cultural ideas and practices into American popular culture.⁴⁴

The ranchero nationalism that these Mexican figures promoted during their travels provided a framework within which working-class Mexican migrants in the U.S. Southwest negotiated the complexities of their daily lives. Across the U.S. Southwest during the 1920s and '30s, Mexican migrants and Mexican Americans immersed themselves in charro- and ranch-themed mass culture. They sang along to the *ranchera* songs that played on Spanish radio stations, and watched *comedias rancheras* at Spanish-language theaters in San Antonio, El Paso, Tucson, Los Angeles, and other cities and towns. They dressed as charros and chinas poblanas for Cinco de Mayo and Mexican Independence Day parades, often sponsored by the Mexican consulates, that wound through the streets of the U.S. Southwest's growing Mexican barrios. The expanding class of ethnic organizations and mutual-aid societies that served Mexican migrants and their communities also drew on ranchero cultural forms. For example, they sponsored events at "Spanish"-themed locations, like Olvera Street in Los Angeles or La Villita in San Antonio – many of which had been conceived, designed, and financed by the Anglo elite – where they encouraged Mexican migrants to dress up as charros and dance the jarabe tapatío.⁴⁵

Ethnic Mexicans' embrace of charros, charrería, and other ranchero cultural forms during this period complicates current scholarly understanding of the so-called "Spanish fantasy past." The term was first coined by critic and journalist Carey McWilliams, who used it to describe the constellation of Anglo American cultural projects that glorified the Spanish colonial era and justified indigenous genocide and Mexican dispossession in the U.S. Southwest.⁴⁶ The Spanish fantasy past took many forms, among them a

relentless parade of “Spanish”-themed costume parties, pageants, preservation of the Spanish missions, Spanish Revival and Mission Revival architecture, and mission-themed school curricula. The Spanish fantasy past reached its heyday in the 1920s and ’30s, when it worked to boost local identity and attract tourists and settlers. Institutionalized in civic organizations and concretized in the physical landscape, it persists in the public culture of southwestern cities to this day.⁴⁷ Yet ethnic Mexicans’ attachment to the charro and other rancharo cultural forms from the 1930s onward should give us pause in dismissing the Spanish fantasy past as *only* an expression of white Americans’ imperialist nostalgia or modernist anxieties. Their use of the charro and associated rancharo forms, whether through movie-going, parades, performances, or parties, allowed them to exercise cultural citizenship through the claiming of public space in ways that were otherwise often denied.⁴⁸ At a time when the U.S.-Mexico border was selectively but violently patrolled, and when pressures for Americanization were especially intense, ethnic Mexicans could work within the “Spanish” fantasy past to express their longings for Mexico and the pains of dislocation, migration, and racial subjugation. And they could do so in ways that were supported by powerful Mexican institutions *and* palatable to Anglo Americans, who may not have even recognized the Mexican nationalist impulses at work within the “Spanish” culture they valorized.

Amid widespread economic affluence, the ascendance of postwar liberalism, and the burgeoning Mexican American civil rights movement after World War Two, the charro became a much more focused and intentional conduit for organized political and cultural activity. In this period, middle-class and upwardly mobile ethnic Mexican men – many of them now veterans, parents, homeowners, and business owners – went from watching charros on stage or screen to competing and performing as charros themselves. As they formed charro associations and rode and competed together, ethnic Mexican men used the symbolic power of the charro and the organizational structure of the charro associations to pursue opportunity and inclusion in U.S. institutions. The chapters that follow consider a range of these initiatives, organized by time period, geography, and the kinds of institutions that U.S. charros targeted for change. The first four chapters explore charros’ work at the local level as they labored to transform the institutions that had been key to their racial subjugation in those places, from state violence in Los

Angeles to economic disenfranchisement in San Antonio to school segregation in Denver and suburban public space in southern California. The final chapter then considers how U.S. charros have “scaled up” from the U.S. Southwest and border region to the national level in recent years, becoming formal political actors at the national level as they respond to animal welfare concerns.

As will become apparent, the scope of the U.S. charros’ work has been wide-ranging and diverse. The charro’s flexibility as a symbol of dignity and autonomy has made him useful for a wide range of social struggles, and the opportunities pursued by charros in one city did not necessarily make sense for their counterparts in another. Instead, their initiatives have generally responded to the local geographies of racial subjugation, as well as the unique opportunities born by the particularities of place. In exploring this geographic variability, this book aims to nurture the burgeoning field of Chicanx and Latinx geographies, which explores how the social production of space and place shapes Latinx identity, the location of Latinx people within structures of inequality, and the form and content of their resistance to the spatial conditions of their lives. With regards to this study, it is not only that the social world of the charro was historically more complex than is often remembered, but that the spatial form of the hacienda and its chief protagonist, the charro, developed across the Spanish empire and post-independence Mexico, including the region that became the U.S. Southwest, in highly uneven ways. These differentiated geographies have affected not only *how* ethnic Mexicans since the 1930s have understood and mobilized the charro, but also whether the charro “sticks” at all as a meaningful way of knowing the land, forming collective consciousness, and advocating for change. The diversity and unevenness of these initiatives illustrates sociologist Wendy Wolford’s contention that any social movement “is shaped by – and shapes – the way people internalize and engage with their specific material and symbolic spatial environments.”⁴⁹ Put differently, the historic and ongoing production of space matters to whether and how ethnic Mexicans find the charro meaningful, useful, or effective as an instrument of social change.

The charro emerged first as a unifying force for social change in California and Texas – places where elite hacienda culture developed most fully under Spanish and Mexican rule, where ethnic Mexicans retained significant power for a brief period after U.S. conquest, and where the largest numbers

of Mexican migrants moved during and after the Mexican Revolution. For these reasons, ethnic Mexicans who mobilized the charro in these border states were able to achieve some significant political, economic, and spatial gains. The first two chapters document their efforts, looking at the establishment and early work of the first U.S. charro associations founded in San Antonio and Los Angeles just after World War Two. In Los Angeles, as Chapter 1 shows, working-class charros from the East Los Angeles barrio negotiated an alliance with Eugene Biscailuz, the elite descendant of Spanish-Mexican Californios who headed the Los Angeles Sheriffs Department (LASD) from 1932 to 1958. This relationship allowed the East L.A. charros to join the LASD's mounted posse program and serve as extras in *The Young Land* (1959), an important film about racial justice in California during the transition to U.S. settler rule. These activities enabled working-class and middle-class ethnic Mexican men to claim a limited form of state power, at a time when the city's law enforcement agencies were otherwise targeting Mexicans for harassment and persecution. Meanwhile in San Antonio, as Chapter 2 explains, the city's tiny class of Mexican American businessmen formed a charro association that worked with a wide range of civic groups, in both South Texas and northern Mexico, to build the city's postwar tourist economy. Their focus on entrepreneurship and business networking gave them power over the shaping of San Antonio's culture and landscape in ways denied most other ethnic Mexican groups in South Texas at the time, though their initiatives primarily benefitted middle-class men with a pro-capitalist outlook.

Beginning in the late 1960s and well through the 1980s, a period marked by the rise and demise of the Chicano Movement, struggles for land, and pride in Mexican cultural heritage, charros and their associations operated in the service of ethnic Mexicans' efforts to integrate public institutions and public spaces. Buoyed by an increasingly influential cadre of Mexican American politicians and businessmen, charros began making more direct claims upon American institutions and social spaces, frequently deploying the language of "original cowboys" to do so. In Colorado, as Chapter 3 explains, ethnic Mexicans used the charro as a resource for bilingual education in Denver Public Schools, the integration of the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo, expanded Hispanic participation in celebrations of the American Bicentennial in 1976, and the diversification of public art at the state capitol in Denver. Back in Los

Angeles, as Chapter 4 shows, ethnic Mexican men used *charrería* to make claims upon public space in their new suburban neighborhoods, even while they assumed increasing financial risk as Latino-majority suburbs weathered the worst of southern California's economic restructuring and neoliberal austerity.

In the 1990s, hemispheric free-trade agreements and neocolonial interventions by the U.S. and other nations in Mexico's economy propelled unprecedented displacement and migration to the United States, with many migrants settling in new areas in the interior and Midwest. The expansion of migrant communities and their *ranchero* cultural practices, especially in new locations, made U.S. *charros* subject to a new force of racialization from an unlikely (and progressive) source: the animal welfare movement. Since the 1990s, animal welfare activists in the United States have objected to several events in the *charreadas*, which are now banned and criminally prosecuted in more than a dozen U.S. states. Adopted alongside other high-profile laws directed at ethnic Mexicans, such as California's Proposition 187 or Arizona's SB 1070, these laws have contributed to the production of Mexican immigrant "illegality" by constructing ethnic Mexicans and other Latinos – regardless of citizenship status – as illegitimate, criminal subjects and by curtailing their access to public space. Yet, as Chapter 5 also shows, these same laws have galvanized U.S. *charros* to organize politically for the first time, scaling up to impact the U.S. legislative system while propelling important conversations about the ethics of *charrería* in both the United States and Mexico.

Considered collectively, the initiatives documented here illuminate key historical and spatial processes in the racialization of ethnic Mexicans, as well as transformative moments in their politicization and ongoing resistance via the *charro* and *lo ranchero*. They also offer a number of new perspectives and theoretical insights for American history, southwestern history, and ethnic studies, especially Chicana and Latina studies. Among these are the significance of the ethnic Mexican middle-class in Mexican American history and in the shaping of the Southwest's racial geographies; the tension between ethnic Mexicans' interlocking histories as both colonizers and colonized in the U.S. Southwest; the complex relationships to whiteness and modernity that this tension has produced; and the negotiation of masculinity as it intersects with race, class, citizenship, and place.

One important thread relates to class formation among middle-class ethnic Mexicans in the United States. Most participants in charrería are middle-class, upwardly mobile, even elite. To be sure, “middle-class” is a vast category that includes people with a range of incomes, education levels, and social statuses, and ethnic Mexicans’ experience of middle-class status in the United States has been sharply influenced by their racial position – all of which will soon become apparent in this book. Even so, participation in Mexican rodeo, like other equestrian sports, requires significant disposable income. Charros must pay for their own well-trained horses, saddles, bridles, trajes, horse trailers, travel expenses, and leasing fees for rough stock (steers, horses, and other animals they use in practices and competitions). Though it is still more accessible than in Mexico, where charrería remains the province of the elite, in the United States the sport is limited to those with some degree of economic security and capital. However, it is this same class status, as well as the charro’s symbolism as a respectable and culturally conservative figure, that has given charros and their associations significant institutional power, especially in areas that have been unavailable to their working-class counterparts. It also means that the charros have focused on aspects of social life that are particularly relevant to the middle-class: small business entrepreneurship, home-ownership, and suburban space, for example. In documenting these initiatives with attention to their class politics, this book contributes to a burgeoning scholarship on the Mexican American middle-class, whose experiences, perspectives, and social change strategies have sometimes differed markedly from their working-class co-ethnics.⁵⁰

Charros’ relatively privileged class standing has made them especially effective in transforming racial geographies – the racial organization and meanings of space. Charrería resembles sports like soccer, which, as Juan Javier Pescador has argued, provide an opportunity for players, food vendors, musicians, and spectators to “mexicanize the urban landscape and manifest their right to public facilities.”⁵¹ Charrería accomplishes this same goal to an even greater extent, because the charreada requires distinctive facilities: a large keyhole-shaped arena known as a lienzo, as well as corrals and stables to keep horses and other livestock, grandstands, and other structures. These physical landscapes are both more permanent and more expensive than those required by soccer and other sports in which Latinos

participate in large numbers. As such, they require significant private and public investment. As middle-class figures with connections to Anglo American, Mexican, and Mexican American power structures, charros have played a crucial role in brokering these investments and the relationships on which they rest. In doing so, charros have mexicanized the southwestern landscape via their production of urban lienzos – the modern spatial counterpart of the historic rancho and hacienda – and reclaimed the territorial power of ethnic Mexicans in the region.

In this respect, the practice of charrería in the United States invokes simultaneously a colonial imaginary and a nationalist one. As Chicana Studies scholars Nicole Giudotti-Hernández, Laura Pulido, Rosaura Sánchez, Beatrice Pita, and others have argued, Mexicans in what became the U.S. Southwest were historically both active agents of Spanish and Mexican colonialism before 1848 *and* victims of U.S. empire and racialized class structures thereafter.⁵² When mobilized as sports culture or strategy of civil rights and place-making, charrería celebrates the first process in order to challenge the second. It commemorates historic Spanish and Mexican colonial ranching societies in order to resist the conquest, displacement, and exploitation of Mexicans by U.S. institutions, but it largely ignores the ways in which haciendas and ranchos did the same for indigenous inhabitants. The practice of charrería among Mexicans in the United States has thus involved a process of whitening: claims to power rest on invocations of a violent colonial past. These fissures reverberate with the tensions around social class, race, and region that have long simmered within articulations of Mexican nationalism. Given the charro's roots in the west-central states of Mexico – a region associated with whiteness, haciendas, and the nationalist elite – for example, he has had little appeal to migrants who hail from states such as Veracruz, with its Afro-Caribbean heritage and connections, or the southern, largely indigenous states of Oaxaca and Chiapas.

The tensions related to class privilege, whiteness, and colonialism are also intimately bound up with gender identity and performance, because the charro is an indisputably masculine form of power. The operation of masculinity among U.S. charros is complex and multifaceted, echoing the findings of recent scholarship on Latino masculinities, especially in contexts of migration.⁵³ Although the world of charrería is certainly built on men's violence and control, especially of animals, the men who perform as

charros typically aspire to *caballerismo* – a form of masculinity that values nurturance, protection of the family, dignity, wisdom, hard work, and emotional connectedness. To be a caballero is to communicate a man’s ability to protect, care for, and speak on behalf of his family and community. These aspirations have been extensively critiqued by Chicana feminists, but from the perspective of male charros, they are positive qualities.⁵⁴ The charro also represents masculine skill and dignity in a way that stands in explicit contrast to the image of stoop labor – the bent-over, faceless, laboring brown body – that otherwise frames so much of the Mexican experience in the United States.⁵⁵ Finally, participation in charrería, like other sports popular among Latino men, allows male participants to perform their competitiveness, aggressiveness, and resistance to pain in a public arena, while developing leadership skills, building social networks that transcend geography and generation, and traveling extensively throughout the United States, Mexico, and beyond.⁵⁶ Small wonder that ethnic Mexican men have admired and emulated this figure so consistently across time and place.

Still, the very qualities that make charro masculinity appealing to many ethnic Mexican men also facilitate its reproduction as a patriarchal, aggressive, and violent form of masculinity. As historian José Alamillo and sociologist Michael Messner have both demonstrated, competitive sports like charrería tend to cultivate masculine cultures of violence, risk, and aggression that are damaging not only to women, non-normative men, and animals, but also the male charros themselves.⁵⁷ Despite the codes of conduct developed by the FMCH and individual men’s aspirations to *caballerismo*, drinking, fighting, sexual harassment, and animal abuse sometimes do occur, especially at non-sanctioned charreadas or *jaripeos* and *coleadores* (bull-riding and steer-tailing events, respectively).⁵⁸ Sexism is also woven into the very structure of the sport. Women participate in charrería, but only in highly gendered, stereotypical roles – as queens, *escaramuzas* (female riders), and wives and mothers laboring behind the scenes – through which they reproduce what Rosa Linda Fregoso has called the “masculine family drama” of Mexican cultural nationalism.⁵⁹ Non-human animals, especially cattle and horses but also dogs, sheep, and chickens, play a similar role: they are expected to labor on behalf of the reproduction of Mexican nationalist culture, even when doing so means risking significant violence and harm.⁶⁰

These tensions will figure prominently in this book, as will the challenges levied against charros and charrería on the basis of class and gender. Yet they have also spurred the ongoing evolution of charrería as both nationalist and transnational Mexican cultural practice. The women who participate in charrería as escaramuzas and queens, for example, have found creative ways to exercise agency within the sport, while also pushing for subtle changes to gender roles and structures – changes that at least some male charros also support.⁶¹ Outside the lienzo, in the cultural spheres of literature, reality television, and mariachi music, Mexican and Mexican American artists and writers have used the figure of the charro to imagine productive new relationships between gender, sexuality, and nation.⁶² For all its pretenses to nostalgically represent the premodern agrarian past of modern Mexico, charrería is a living and changing cultural form. It has consistently responded to the shifting realities and perspectives of diverse subjects, both in Mexico and in diaspora, enabling those subjects to engage in remapping the intersections of race, class, gender, and national identity.

Methods, Sources, and Commitments

Before moving on, I want to situate myself more explicitly in relationship to this study. I came to this project through my experiences growing up in a horse-keeping neighborhood in suburban Los Angeles during the late 1980s and early '90s. My family and I lived in Shadow Hills, one of four neighborhoods in the City of Los Angeles where the right to keep and ride horses is protected by municipal zoning. After school and on weekends, my friends and I rode our horses in Hansen Dam, a flood control channel that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed in the 1950s. Because of regulations attached to flood control projects in the mid-twentieth century, Hansen Dam also functions as a regional recreation center. It is full of trails and shallow streams where my friends and I rode our horses, splashing in the cool water and enjoying the shade during Los Angeles's blistering hot summer days. But Hansen Dam was also the site of immense racial tensions between the majority-white residents of my neighborhood, which abutted Hansen Dam to the south, and the Latino residents who lived in residential communities on the northern and western sides of the dam. I documented some of these conflicts in my book, *Making the San*

Fernando Valley: Rural Landscapes, Urban Development, and White Privilege, which explored the relationships between intentional rural landscapes and the reproduction of white privilege in Los Angeles, especially as the city became majority-Latino. Tensions between white and Latino users of public space in that corner of the San Fernando Valley spiked during my young adulthood in the 1990s, amid the anti-immigrant sentiment that gripped California at the time. They continue to simmer today, albeit at a lower boil.

For me, one of the most puzzling tensions at that time centered on the figure of the Mexican horseman – the same figure I now recognize as the charro. Occasionally, while out riding in Hansen Dam, my friends and I encountered Mexican men riders who wore *trajes de charro*, complete with bow ties and wide *sombreros*. They rode prancing, well-groomed horses outfitted in intricately carved saddles and bridles, decorated with flashes of silver. My friends and I, riding bareback and barefoot in our cut-off denim shorts, had no idea what to make of these men; we simply said “hello” as we passed, as we did to everyone we met out riding. Afterwards, though, I can recall my friends saying things like, “those Mexicans – always trying to show off on their horses. Always trying to be macho.” White adults in the neighborhood made similar remarks. These casual comments imprinted in my young mind the idea that cultural conflict was bound up with competing histories of horsemanship, and that those competing histories were connected to contemporary struggles over physical space.

Years later, while doing research for *Making the San Fernando Valley*, I stumbled upon evidence of a group of charros, the Charros Emiliano Zapata, who had sub-leased part of Hansen Dam from the City of Los Angeles during the mid-1970s in order to host *charreadas* for the San Fernando Valley’s growing Latino population. Due to protests from animal welfare and environmental activists, that group lost their lease in 1980 – the same moment when homeowner activists in my own majority-white neighborhood were successfully lobbying municipal officials to create zoning codes that protected horse-keeping and the “rural” lifestyle. I explore the story of the Charros Emiliano Zapata more fully in Chapter Four. But my initial encounter with the archival materials of this group confirmed my childhood impressions: horses, horsemen, and the claims on private property and public space they enabled were

important axes of struggle and inequality in Los Angeles. Later, I would discover that such struggles were not limited to my corner of southern California, nor were they a unique feature of suburban life in the late twentieth century. Quite the contrary: they dated at least to the 1930s, and were rooted in even deeper histories of conquest, racial subjugation, and labor exploitation – all of which still structure life and landscape in the region, though they have never been uncontested.

My formative encounters with the charro, as a young white woman riding horses in a city that was rapidly becoming majority-Latino in the late twentieth century, shape the way I relate to and narrate the stories in this book. This book is not an ethnographic account, and while I am attentive to internal conversations within ethnic Mexican communities about the evolving meanings of the charro and charrería, especially in relationship to gender and animal welfare, my primary goal is to analyze the charro's public-facing work. My focus is on how ethnic Mexicans have mobilized the charro to nurture cultural and social connections with Mexico while transforming the economies, institutions, public cultures, and spatial arrangements of the U.S. cities where they live, work, and play. Given my own background in a majority-white community that was devoted to myths of the "Wild West," where I observed the racialized construction of national history in physical space, I am especially interested in how the charro challenges whitewashed histories of the frontier and the cowboy – how their claims to be the "original cowboys," whether explicit or implicit, enable Mexican Americans' pursuit of equity, access, and inclusion.

To understand these processes, let us begin with Los Angeles, which is both the city where I first encountered the charro in the late 1990s *and* the place where he first emerged as a guiding force for ethnic Mexicans' collective action, more than a half-century before.



Figure 1. The charreada is held in and around the *lienzo charro* – a keyhole-shaped arena consisting of two distinct but connected spaces. A long, rectangular lane measuring 39 feet wide by 200 feet long leads into a circular area, the *ruedo*, which is 130 feet in diameter. The lienzo is usually surrounded by metal bleachers (sometimes covered, sometimes not) and a judges’ platform where officials can safely observe and score the events; a dance floor for entertainment may be nearby. Attached to the lienzo are holding pens for the horses, bulls, and steers, which are released into the lienzo as needed. Outside of the lienzo are stables, practice areas, outbuildings, parking lots, concession stands, and other landscape features. Pictured here is the Lienzo Charro de la Viga in Mexico City, 2014. Photo by Comisión Mexicana de Filmaciones, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.



Figure 2. The first of nine charreada events is the *cala*, a series of reining maneuvers in which the rider races the horse down the long, narrow part of the lienzo to arrive in the ruedo, then brings the horse to a sliding stop, or *raya*. The rider then urges the horse to spin rapidly on one back foot, first in one direction and then the other. Finally, the rider backs the horse all the way out of the arena. The purpose of the *cala* is to show the horse’s dexterity and nimbleness, as well as the rider’s mastery of subtle cues conveyed through leg pressure, shifts in body weight, and near-imperceptible applications of the reins. In this photo, the charro performs the sliding stop while the judge and the announcer look on. Photo by Al Rendón, used with permission.



Figure 3. The second charreada event is the *piales en lienzo*, in which members of competing teams attempt to rope a running mare who is racing down the long narrow section of the lienzo. The riders throw a loop in front of the mare, then allow her to race through it and be caught by the hind legs. Once the horse’s hind legs have been captured – a difficult task – the charro brings her to a slow, gradual stop. He has three chances to do so. The purpose of this event, historically, was to catch a loose horse for branding, feeding, or medical care on the open range. Nowadays, the *piales* serve to demonstrate the charro’s capacity to use exceptionally long ropes in a confined space. It has become one of the more controversial charreada events, and in some U.S. states it is no longer performed. Photo by Louis DeLuca for the *Dallas Morning News*, 2016, used with permission.



Figure 4. The third charreada event is the *cola*, which translates literally as “tail,” and in the context of charreada refers to the practice of “tailing a bull” (or, much more commonly, a steer – a castrated bull). The rider runs alongside a fleeing steer, tries to grab the animal’s tail, and, if successful, wraps the tail around his leg or boot, using both his arm strength and the leverage of his weight to flip the animal to the ground. Like the *piales* and the *manganas*, this activity originated on the Mexican range before the use of ropes, when vaqueros needed to bring loose animals to the ground. Also like these other events, the *cola* has drawn the attention of animal welfare activists concerned about damage to the steer’s spine. However, charros note that the event is equally risky for human riders: the *cola* is a physically demanding event that frequently burns the rider’s hand as the rope sizzles through his palm, and sometimes breaks fingers. Despite the risk of injury, it remains an important and valued event, in both full-fledged charreadas and in separate events called *colederos*, because it allows charros to demonstrate their strength and dexterity. Photo by Smiley Pool for the *Dallas Morning News*, 2015, used with permission.



Figure 5. The fourth charreada event is the *jinete de toro* – bull riding. U.S.-style rodeo has an almost identical event, but requires the rider to stay on the bull for only 8 seconds. In the Mexican version of the event, the rider not only tries to stay on until the bull is subdued, he also earns extra points by spurring the animal when it begins to slow down, thus prolonging the ride. The jinete may also use two hands to hold onto the grab rope, whereas in the U.S. style of bullriding the cowboy may use only one hand. Unlike the other charreada events derived from practical skills required for working with cattle, bull riding is primarily a demonstration of skillful play that developed in the recreational parts of the historic roundup. Photo by Al Rendón, used with permission.



Figure 6. The fifth charreada event, which begins as soon as the bull rider has dismounted in *jinete de toro* and involves the same bull or steer, is the *terna en el ruedo*, or team roping. Much like U.S.-style team roping, this event features teams of riders trying to rope the head and hind legs of the bull, then stretch it on the ground in a subdued position. In American rodeo, team roping is the only event where men and women compete alongside each other in professionally sanctioned competition. In the charreada, it remains an exclusively male event. Unlike U.S.-style team roping, in which a time limit of 30 seconds is imposed, charros also have 8 minutes to complete the task. With the extended time, charros demonstrate fancy and trick roping; the style and execution of the rope flourishes are as important as accuracy in the event's scoring. Judges also award points depending on the distance from which the lasso is thrown to catch the bull. Photo by Al Rendón, used with permission.



Figure 7. The sixth charreada event is the *jinete de yegua*, or bronc riding. Like the bull-riding event, in this event the charro rides a wild mare until she stops bucking, becomes calm, and can be dismounted quietly. Photo by Al Rendón, used with permission.



Figure 8. The seventh and eighth charreada events are the *manganas a pie* and *manganas a caballo*, in which competitors on foot or on horseback, respectively, rope a running mare's front legs in order to bring her to the ground in a shoulder roll. Mounted team members chase the mare around the ruedo to ensure she keeps running. Often called "horse tripping" by critics, the manganas have become the most controversial of the charreada events in the United States; as of this writing, they have been banned by a dozen U.S. states, and U.S. charros have agreed they will no longer perform the event in its traditional form anywhere in the United States. This photograph, by Al Rendón and used with permission, was taken prior to that change.

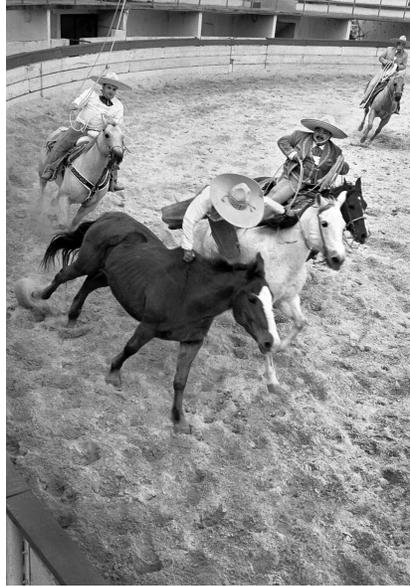


Figure 9. The final competitive event of the charreada is the *paso de la muerte*, which translates as “pass of death” or the death leap. In this event, the contestant races his own well-trained horse alongside an untamed horse around the outside of the *ruedo*, as his teammates try to keep the wild horse against the curving wall. When the two horses are directly alongside each other, the contestant leaps from his own horse to the bare back of the galloping wild mare, with only her mane to grab onto, then rides her to a stop before dismounting. Considered the most dangerous of all the charreada events, the rider is in serious jeopardy of being trampled by the mare or his own teammates. It tends to be practiced and performed by the youngest, fittest, and most daring men on a team. Photo by Al Rendón, used with permission.



Figure 10. Many charreadas also include one event for women: the *escaramuza*. “Escaramuza” translates literally as “skirmish,” but in the context of the charreada it refers to a women’s mounted drill team. Six to twelve young women – usually the daughters, granddaughters, or nieces of male charros – execute complicated maneuvers while riding their horses sidesaddle at breakneck speed. They typically perform their routines halfway through a charreada, as a sort of intermission or exhibit, and their performance is not scored or judged (though *escaramuzas* may compete against each other in separate women-only events). *Escaramuzas* wear the outfit of *Adelitas*, in honor of the women who participated in the Mexican Revolution as officers, combatants, and camp followers. Photo by Al Rendón, used with permission.

Notes

¹ In addition to his performances on *America's Got Talent*, where judges Howard Stern, Sharon Osbourne, and Howie Mandel applauded his talents in "mainstreaming mariachi," de la Cruz had performed at other regional venues including the Mandalay Bay Casino in Las Vegas, elementary schools throughout Texas, several other San Antonio Spurs games, and the retirement gala for the space shuttle Endeavour. Sebastien El Charro de Oro: Official Facebook Fan Page, "Biography," at <https://www.facebook.com/teamsebastien/info> (accessed 29 October 2013).

² "A Mexican American Boy Sang the National Anthem, and Racist NBA fans can't handle it," *The Daily Dot*, June 12, 2013, at: <http://www.dailydot.com/news/sebastian-de-la-cruz-spurs-heat-national-anthem/> (accessed 29 October 2013).

³ Public Shaming, "Racist Basketball Fans Pissed a Mexican-American Boy Dared to Sing their National Anthem," at: <http://publicshaming.tumblr.com/post/52763976629/racist-basketball-fans-pissed-a-mexican-american-boy> (accessed 29 October 2013).

⁴ Donald Henriques, "Performing Nationalism: Mariachi, Media, and the Transformation of a Tradition (1920-1942)," Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2006; Gary Moreno, "Charro: The Transnational History of a Cultural Icon," Ph.D. diss., University of Oklahoma, 2014; Deborah Vargas, "Rita's Pants: The *Charro Traje* and Trans-Sensuality," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 20, no. 1 (2010): 3-14.

⁵ Olga Nájera-Ramírez, "Engendering Nationalism: Identity, Discourse, and the Mexican Charro," *Anthropological Quarterly* 67 (1994): 1-14; Cristina Palomar, "El papel de la charrería como fenómeno cultural en la construcción del Occidente de México," *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe* 76 (2004): 83-98; Kathleen Sands, *Charrería Mexicana: A Mexican Folk Tradition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993).

⁶ Public Shaming, "Racist Basketball Fans."

⁷ “Spurs’ 11-Year-Old Anthem Singer Won’t Let Racist Comments Bring Him Down,” *Fox News Latino*, June 12, 2013, at: <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2013/06/12/spurs-11-year-old-anthem-singer-wont-let-racist-comments-bring-him-down/> (last accessed June 2, 2015).

⁸ Sean Esco, “President Obama and Celebrities Support Sebastien de la Cruz after Racist Bashing!”, *Red Alert Live*, June 14, 2013, at: <http://redalertlive.com/2013/06/14/president-obama-celebrities-support-sebastien-de-la-cruz-racist-bashing-video/> (accessed 29 October 2013); see also Colby Itkowitz, “He endured racist attacks after singing at NBA game; now he’s the opener for Democratic debate,” *Washington Post*, March 9, 2016, at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2016/03/09/he-endured-racist-attacks-after-singing-at-nba-game-now-hes-the-opener-for-democratic-debate/> (accessed October 10, 2016); Eva Longoria, producer, “Go, Sebastien, Go!” (film), online at: <http://www.espn.com/video/clip?id=12832072> (accessed October 10, 2016).

⁹ Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism,” Sands, *Charrería Mexicana*.

¹⁰ Elleke Boehmer, *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation* (Manchester University Press, 2005), 6.

¹¹ Esteban Barragán López, *Con un Pie en El Estribo: Formación y Deslizamientos de las Sociedades Rancheras en la Construcción del México Moderno* (Zamora, Michoacán, MX: El Colegio de Michoacán, 1997), 30-33; see also Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism.”

¹² Sands, *Charrería Mexicana*, 36-37.

¹³ Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism”; Palomar, “El papel de la charrería; Sands, *Charrería Mexicana*.

¹⁴ Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism,” 3.

¹⁵ Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism,” 3.

¹⁶ Cattle, horses, sheep, and other livestock were brought along on the earliest Spanish expeditions to expand empire through livestock production and ranching. Horses were quickly incorporated into American Indian societies across the Mexican North and Great Plains, and by the eighteenth century, the Spanish missions in Texas and California ran many hundreds of thousands of cattle. The missions at first

banned Indians from riding or working horses, but soon lifted the restrictions out of sheer necessity for labor power; mission Indian vaqueros became expert horseman. Sands, *Charrería Mexicana*, 30; Andrew Isenberg, “Between Mexico and the United States: From *Indios* to Vaqueros in the Pastoral Borderlands,” in *Mexico and Mexicans in the Making of the United States*, ed. John Tutino (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 83-109; Peter Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys: Native Peoples and Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 3-14.

¹⁷ Barragán López, *Con un Pie*, 123-124.

¹⁸ E.g., Manuel Gonzales, *The Hispanic Elite of the Southwest* (El Paso: Texas Western Press/University of Texas at El Paso, 1989); David Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981).

¹⁹ Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, 207-241.

²⁰ Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Lisbeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); Leonard Pitt, *Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846-1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); David Torres-Rouff, *Before L.A.: Race, Space, and Municipal Power in Los Angeles, 1871-1894* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

²¹ Mary Lou LeCompte, “The Hispanic Influence on the History of Rodeo, 1823-1922,” *Journal of Sport History* 12, no. 1 (1985): 28; Américo Paredes, “The Problem of Identity in a Changing Culture: Popular Expressions of Culture Conflict Along the Lower Rio Grande Border,” in *Views Across the Border: The United States and Mexico*, ed. Stanley Ross (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 68-94.

²² E.g., Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*; Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*; Jacqueline Moore, *Cow Boys and Cattle Men: Class and Masculinities on the Texas Frontier, 1865-1900* (New York University Press, 2009).

²³ Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), Ch. 1; Michael Magliari, “Free Soil, Unfree Labor: Cave Johnson Courts and the Binding of Indian Workers in California, 1850-1867,” *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 3 (2004): 349-390.

²⁴ Moore, *Cow Boys and Cattle Men*, 40-41.

²⁵ E.g., Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*; Arnaldo de León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (Oxford University Press, 1987); William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*; Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*; Torres-Rouff, *Before L.A.*

²⁶ Robin D. G. Kelley, “Notes on Deconstructing ‘The Folk,’” *American Historical Review* 97, no. 5 (1992): 1400-1408.

²⁷ Monica Rico, *Nature’s Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West* (Yale University Press, 2013).

²⁸ David Anthony Tyeme Clark and Joanne Nagel, “White Men, Red Masks: Appropriations of ‘Indian’ Manhood in Imagined Wests,” in *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West*, eds. Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

²⁹ Melissa Bingmann, *Prep School Cowboys: Ranch Schools in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015).

³⁰ Le Compte, “Hispanic Origins,” 30-32.

³¹ Peter La Chapelle, *Proud to be an Okie: Cultural Politics, Country Music, and Migration to Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

³² Jeremy Agnew, *The Creation of the Cowboy Hero: Fiction, Film, and Fact* (McFarland, 2015); Stanley Corkin, *Cowboys as Cold Warriors: The Western and U.S. History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); LeCompte, “Hispanic Influence.”

³³ For example, the Professional Bull Riders Association, founded in 1993 and headquartered in Pueblo, Colorado, operates in five countries: the United States, Australia, Canada, Brazil, and Mexico.

³⁴ Sands, *Charrería Mexicana*.

³⁵ Tania Carreño King, *El charro: la construcción de un estereotipo nacional, 1920-1940* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 2000); Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism”; Olga Nájera-Ramírez, “Unruly Passions: Poetics, Performance, and Gender in the Ranchera Song,” in *Chicana Feminisms: A Critical Reader*, eds. Gabriela Arredondo and Aida Hurtado (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

³⁶ Carreño King, *El Charro*; Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism”; José Murià, “En defensa de la originalidad,” *Orígenes de la Charrería y de su Nombre* (México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2010), 87-96; and Palomar, “El papel de la charrería.”

³⁷ The definitive text, authored by the most esteemed charro of this period, is Carlos Rincón Gallardo, *El charro mexicano* (México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 1939); see also J. Álvarez del Villar, *Orígenes del charro mexicano* (México: Librería A. Pola, 1968); José Ramón Ballesteros, *Origen y evolución del charro mexicano* (México: Manuel Porrúa, 1972).

³⁸ Quoted in David Luis Brown, *Waves of Decolonization: Discourses of Race and Hemispheric Citizenship in Cuba, Mexico, and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 186; see also Nájera-Ramírez, “Engendering Nationalism.”

³⁹ Sands, *Charrería Mexicana*, 19.

⁴⁰ E.g. Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Routledge, 1993); Albert

Sergio Laguna, *Diversión: Play and Popular Culture in Cuban America* (New York University Press, 2017); Dixia Ramírez, *Colonial Phantoms: Belonging and Refusal in the Dominican Americas, from the 19th Century to the Present* (New York University Press, 2018).

⁴¹ Literary scholar Vincent Pérez argues that the hacienda and its associated cast of characters – especially those who had exercised power and agency, such as the charro/hacendado – offered an important way for elite Mexican American writers such as María Amparo Ruíz de Burton, Jovita González, and Leo Carrillo to negotiate the erosion of Spanish and Mexican agrarian societies by U.S. industrial capitalism. Their texts, like others produced by Mexican nationalist interests, tended to ignore or minimize the ways in which hacienda society and the world of the charro depended on indigenous dispossession, captive labor and debt peonage, and gender and sexual inequality. Vincent Pérez, *Remembering the Hacienda: History and Memory in the Mexican American Southwest* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2006). For a discussion of this tendency among the elite of transnational societies more broadly, see Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound*.

⁴² The Mexican consuls, for example, often tried to mediate labor disputes among Mexican workers in the U.S. Frequently, they called striking Mexican workers back to the fields and factories by reminding them of the need to represent Mexico well in the United States. E.g., George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford University Press, 1993), esp. 108-125; for a more general discussion of how Mexican elites cultivated loyalty among working-classes, see Richard García, “The Exiled Ricos,” in *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 221-252.

⁴³ For example, in 1944, Carlos Rincón Gallardo, an esteemed charro from an influential Mexican family who was then president of the FMCH, as well as the author of numerous Spanish-language books about charrería, visited Los Angeles at the request of the California Trails Conference. The *Los Angeles Times*, after commenting on Gallardo’s “perfect English,” reported that Gallardo “indisputably is Mexico’s most distinguished horseman” and expressed gratitude for his visit. “Horse is Here to Stay, Spatted Charro Hopes,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 1944, p. C1.

⁴⁴ LeCompte, “Hispanic Influence.”

⁴⁵ Rogelio Agrasánchez, *Mexican Movies in the United States: A History of the Films, Theaters, and Audiences, 1920-1960* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, 2006); Miguel Flores, *El Charro en U.S.A.* (Glendora, Calif.: Associated Publications, 1998); Desirée Garcia, “‘Not a Musical in any Sense of the Word’: *Allá en el Rancho Grande* Crosses the Border,” in *The Migration of Musical Film: From Ethnic Margins to American Mainstream* (Rutgers University Press, 2014); Colin Gunckel, *Mexico on Main Street: Transnational Film Culture in Los Angeles Before World War II* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2015).

⁴⁶ Carey McWilliams, “The Fantasy Heritage,” in *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott Co., 1949).

⁴⁷ Matthew Bokovoy, *The San Diego World’s Fairs and Southwestern Memory, 1880-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); Dydia DeLyser, *Ramona Memories: Tourism and the Shaping of Southern California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Laura Hernández-Ehrisman, *Inventing the Fiesta City: Heritage and Carnival in San Antonio* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008); Phoebe Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Charles Montgomery, *The Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico’s Upper Rio Grande* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

⁴⁸ Film historian Desirée Garcia has argued that *comedias rancheras* like *Allá en el Rancho Grande* (1936), for example, appealed to Mexican migrant audiences because of their “ability to attenuate the harsh effects of migration and the pressures of a transnational existence” by featuring “timeless rural settings and communities that shared in the collective expression of folk song and dance.” Garcia, “Not a Musical,” 73.

⁴⁹ Wendy Wolford, *This Land is Ours Now: Social Mobilization and the Meanings of Land in Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 409-410.

⁵⁰ E.g., Geraldo Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Harvard University Press, 2013); Mario García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); R. García, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class*.

⁵¹ Juan Javier Pescador, “*Los Heroes del Domingo: Soccer, Borders, and Social Spaces in Great Lakes Mexican Communities, 1940-1970*,” in *Mexican Americans and Sport*, eds. Jorge Iber and Samuel Regalado (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007), 74.

⁵² Nicole Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence: Remapping U.S. and Mexican National Imaginaries* (Duke University Press, 2011); David Lloyd and Laura Pulido, “In the Long Shadow of the Settler: On Israeli and U.S. Colonialisms,” *American Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (2010): 795-809; Laura Pulido, “Geographies of Race and Ethnicity III: Settler Colonialism and NonNative People of Color,” *Progress in Human Geography* 42, no. 2 (2018): 309-318; Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, “Rethinking Settler Colonialism,” *American Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (2014): 1039-1055.

⁵³ E.g., Matthew Gutmann, *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Aída Hurtado and Mrinal Sinha, “More than Men: Latino Feminist Masculinities and Intersectionality,” *Sex Roles* 59 (2008): 337-349; Cathy McIlwaine, “Migrant Machismos: Exploring Gender Ideologies and Practices among Latin American migrants in London from a multi-scalar perspective,” *Gender, Place, and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 17, no. 3 (2010): 281-300; Alfredo Mirandé, *Hombres y Machos: Masculinity and Latino Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997); Pedro Saez, Adonaid Casao, and Jay Wade, “Factors Influencing Masculinity Ideology among Latino Men,” *The Journal of Men’s Studies* 17, no. 2 (2009): 116-128.

⁵⁴ Guillermo Miguel Arciniega, Thomas Anderson, Zoila Tovar-Blank and Terence Tracey, “Toward a Fuller Conception of Machismo: Development of a Traditional Machismo and Caballerismo Scale,” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 55, no. 1 (2008): 19-33.

⁵⁵ The image of stoop labor is especially resonant in two industries where Mexican and Central American labor has become essential: agriculture and the horse industry. These are highly exploitative industries; for example, horseracing workers frequently compare their subjugation as laborers to the

commodification of the horses for whom they care. Yet, as Gabriela Núñez has argued, their exploitation is disguised by the “Latino Pastoral Narrative,” which characterizes Latino migrants as naturally attuned with land and animals, thus excusing their poor treatment and low pay. Gabriela Núñez, “The Latino Pastoral Narrative: Backstretch Workers in Kentucky,” *Latino Studies Journal* 10 (2012): 107-127.

⁵⁶ Jorge Iber, Samuel Regalado, and José Alamillo, *Latinos in U.S Sport: A History of Isolation, Cultural Identity, and Acceptance* (Human Kinetics, 2011); Jorge Iber and Samuel Regalado, eds., *Mexican Americans and Sport* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007); Pescador, ‘Los Heroes del Domingo.’

⁵⁷ José Alamillo, *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (University of Illinois Press, 1998); Michael Messner, *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

⁵⁸ E.g., Melissa Repko, “A Deadly Ride,” *Dallas Morning News*, March 3, 2016, at: <http://interactives.dallasnews.com/2016/unregulated-rodeos/> (accessed January 3, 2018).

⁵⁹ Boehmer, *Stories of Women*; Olga Nájera-Ramírez, “Mounting Traditions: The Origin and Evolution of La Escaramuza Charra,” in *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change*, eds. Norma Cantú and Olga Nájera-Ramírez (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), Rosa Linda Fregoso, “The Chicano Familia Romance,” in *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

⁶⁰ Claire Jean Kim, *Dangerous Crossings: Race, Species, and Nature in a Multicultural Age* (Cambridge University Press, 2015); Olga Nájera-Ramírez, “The Racialization of a Debate: Charreada as Tradition or Torture,” *American Anthropologist* 98, no. 3 (1996): 505-511.

⁶¹ Ana C. Ramírez, “Escaramuzas Charras: Paradoxes of Performance in a Mexican Women’s Equestrian Sport,” in *The Meaning of Horses: Biosocial Encounters*, eds. Dona Lee Davis and Anita Maurstad (Routledge, 2016), 164-176; Nájera-Ramírez, “Mounting Traditions”; Robin Rosenthal & Bill Yahraus, *Escaramuza: Riding from the Heart*, documentary film, 2012.

⁶² Lyanne Alfaro, “How an All-Woman Mariachi Band is Owning the Genre,” *NBC News* online, May 23, 2016, at: <http://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/how-all-woman-mariachi-band-owning-genre-n577731> (accessed February 14, 2017); Abel Salas, “L.A.’s Only All-Gay Mariachi Band,” *L.A. Weekly*, December 8, 2014, at: <http://www.laweekly.com/arts/las-only-all-gay-mariachi-band-5226910> (accessed February 14, 2017).

CHAPTER THREE

Creating Multicultural Public Institutions in Denver and Pueblo

In the late 1960s and '70s, ethnic Mexicans established dozens of new charro associations in the United States. The expansion of charrería at this time reflected a newly politicized racial identity, most visibly associated with the Chicano Movement, as well as Mexican Americans' upward mobility and their growing access to homeownership, especially in suburbs. By March 1975, there were 58 U.S.-based charro associations formally affiliated with Mexico's Federación Mexicana de Charrería (FMCH), prompting the FMCH to appoint a special executive assistant to the United States for the first time.¹ The charro associations of this era mobilized in the service of creating more responsive public institutions and public spaces for the exercise of cultural citizenship.

The U.S. charros who mobilized in this period worked within a dramatically different political landscape than their predecessors – one marked by the desegregation of public institutions, new federal protections on voting and from discrimination, and the implementation of affirmative action, equal opportunity, and War on Poverty programs. It was a hard-fought and hard-won political order in which American institutions were expected to not only reflect the diversity of the U.S. population, but also right historic wrongs. New and expanded public programs promised to redistribute social and economic resources through the intentional, proactive inclusion of Mexican Americans and other people of color. While public memory tends to focus on the era's social movements, much of this broad shift proceeded through the arduous – and much less visible – work of building and transforming public institutions from within. As in other communities of color, civic-minded Mexican Americans filed lawsuits, joined human relations committees, conducted research, put pressure on their employers, and lobbied their elected officials to ensure that ethnic Mexicans could fully access the new slate of public resources.

These shifts in the political landscape corresponded to, and also propelled, a seismic shift in the ways that charros and ethnic Mexicans more broadly understood and articulated their racial identity in the United States. As the previous two chapters showed, the charros who mobilized in the 1940s and '50s

subscribed to a politics of respectability that rested, in part, on demonstrating Mexican Americans' proximity to whiteness. They cultivated interpersonal relations with Anglos and used tactics of negotiation and persuasion to access white institutional power, whether the police state in Los Angeles or the economy in San Antonio. With the advent of civil rights laws and the expansion of redistributive programs, claiming whiteness or demonstrating respectability was no longer the most obvious strategy for redress. Instead, it became necessary to articulate a coherent identity as an oppressed group – to shift “from pursuing whiteness to claiming brownness.”² Thus, it was in this period that Mexican Americans began to articulate more forcefully their distinct experiences of racialization: conquest, displacement from the land, economic subjugation, and ongoing discrimination on the basis of language, culture, and heritage. They lobbied for redistributive and compensatory programs that addressed their specific needs and experiences, such as bilingual education and publicly financed celebrations of Mexican heritage. Increasingly, they could count on the support of Latino public officials, elected in the wake of civil rights laws and voter registration drives, rather than making overtures across racial lines to politicians who were almost exclusively white, as in years past.

All of this work relied on cultivating a shared racial identity, and the charro provided important grist for the mill. This was especially true in Colorado, the subject of this chapter, which had much weaker ties to Mexico than the border states of Texas, California, and Arizona and where fractured racial identification among Spanish-speaking peoples had long impeded their political mobilization. By the 1960s, much of the ethnic Mexican population of Colorado identified as “Hispano,” not Mexican, and many did not identify with the histories of racialization espoused by the Chicano Movement, especially when emanating from places with large populations of Mexican immigrants and their children. Instead, they traced their origins to what historians have called the Hispano Homeland – an interconnected web of rural villages, sheep-based economies, and mining towns established during the first push of Spanish colonial settlement northward in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though the Hispano homeland expanded and evolved through regional migration, it remained both spatially and culturally isolated from Mexico, and Hispanos were more likely to identify with Spanish histories of settlement and baroque

forms of Spanish culture than anything related to Mexican nationalism.³ It was only in the early twentieth century, when Hispano villagers migrated farther north into Colorado for wage work in railroads, steel mills, coal mines, cattle ranches, and sugar beet fields, that they interacted with Mexican migrant laborers and Mexican culture more regularly.⁴ Yet the number of Mexican migrants to New Mexico and Colorado was small compared to border states, even at the height of the Mexican Revolution, and Mexican cultural nationalism in popular culture never took hold in Colorado to the same degree as it did in places like California or Texas.⁵ As a result, there was little sense of a shared identity *as* Mexicans, and little political movement in the name of a coherent ethnic or racial community.



Map 4. The “Hispano Homeland,” featuring places of origin and urban destinations for many of Colorado’s Hispanos/ethnic Mexicans in the 1970s. By Jennifer Tran and Alexander Tarr.

This began to shift in the years after World War Two, as both Hispanos and Mexican migrants moved to Colorado's cities in large numbers. By the mid-1950s, Hispanos were leaving the rural villages of their historic homeland in ever-larger numbers, seeking work in Albuquerque, Española, Santa Fe, Phoenix, Denver, Pueblo, and other cities. At the same time, migration by Mexican nationals to Colorado's cities also increased, spurred by shifts in seasonal farm labor and the expansion of urban manufacturing and public services.⁶ By 1980, there were 38,000 Hispanos in Denver, making them 7.7 percent of the city's total population, while in Pueblo, 15 percent of the population identified as Hispano and another 17 percent identified as Mexican.⁷ In both cities, ethnic Mexicans' political turnout was low, in part because of long histories of disidentification among those who identified as Hispanos, Spanish Americans, and Mexicans.⁸ Still, as all these groups urbanized in Colorado, their specific origins mattered less than the conditions they now shared: de facto segregation in public schools, inadequate representation in state and local politics, discrimination on the basis of language and cultural heritage, and exclusion from public art and history institutions, to name just a few.⁹

In this context, Hispano and Mexican leaders turned to the charro as a vehicle for forging a shared racial identity, with the goal of building a more inclusive and responsive urban public sphere. Focusing on the cities of Denver and Pueblo, this chapter examines some of their initiatives. After giving an overview of the Pueblo and Denver charro associations, it explores how they pursued more equitable forms of representation in Colorado's public education, history, and art institutions. The first initiative was a 1973 curriculum guide about charros and vaqueros composed by Lena Archuleta, a Hispana educator from rural New Mexico, which was meant to be used for bilingual education in Denver Public Schools. The chapter then considers efforts by charros in Pueblo to craft more inclusive public history through a sister city partnership with Mexican cities, integration of the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo, and expanded Hispanic participation in Pueblo's celebrations of the American Bicentennial in 1976. Returning to Denver, the chapter closes by considering the effort among Hispano and Chicano legislators to diversify public art at the state capitol through their proposal for a bronze charro statue, which failed to materialize.

Not all of these initiatives succeeded, to be sure, but the charro's flexibility as a symbol of economic autonomy and Mexican cultural nationalism was essential to their gaining traction at all. The charro provided a shared reference point, rooted in agrarian histories and cultures, that could motivate and give meaning to ethnic Mexicans' struggles for full participation in urban public life. Among Hispanos, who otherwise lacked meaningful attachment to Mexican cultural nationalism, the charro nonetheless resonated, both because he allowed them to express their longing for rural heritage amid rapid urbanization and because he represented histories of land ownership at a time when Hispanos were struggling to hold onto their village and grazing land.¹⁰ Among those who identified as Chicanos, the charro fit neatly within the Chicano Movement's embrace of icons associated with the Mexican Revolution such as Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, both of whom are remembered and valorized as charros. For more recent generations of Mexican migrants, the charro was a direct symbol of Mexican identity and Mexican nationalism that assuaged the poverty, exclusion, and dehumanization they too often experienced. For all of these groups, the charro represented highly valued connections to rural land and skilled labor that had been disrupted by persistent displacement, labor migration, and urbanization, whether in the U.S. or Mexico. On this basis, he represented a powerful source of unity through which to participate in American urban public life.

The Pueblo and Denver Charro Associations

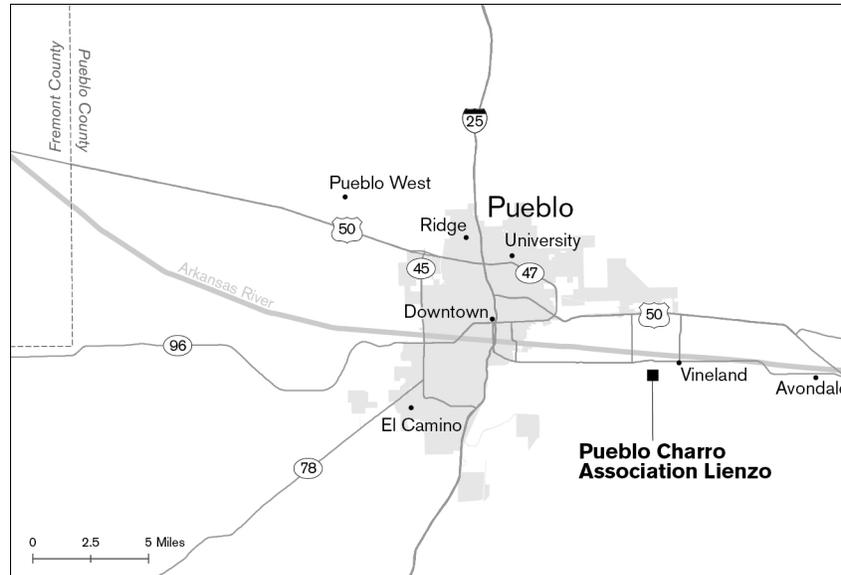
By 1978, there were six charro associations in Colorado: three in Denver, two in Pueblo, and one in Gunnison.¹¹ The leaders of these charro associations were actively involved in the movement to transform urban public institutions and access public resources on behalf of *all* ethnic Mexicans, whether they identified as Hispanos, Spanish Americans, Chicanos, Mexican Americans, or *mexicanos*. This chapter focuses on the Denver and Pueblo charro associations because they often worked together as one unified bloc, but also because their work illustrates well the divergent racial and urban geographies of those two cities.

Colorado's first charro association, the Pueblo Charro Club, was founded in 1967 and received accreditation from the FMCH two years later, at which point they changed the group's name to the Asociación de Charros de Pueblo/Pueblo Charro Association.¹² The Pueblo Charro Association was an indisputably Hispano organization. Its founders and members all had roots in those industries and institutions – mining, mills, and the military – that had drawn Hispanos into southern Colorado's urban industrial economy since the early twentieth century. Many came from Hispano villages across New Mexico and Colorado, then served in the Navy or Marines during World War Two or the Korean War. As adults, nearly all worked at either Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) or the Pueblo Army Depot, the major local employers of Hispanos and Mexicans. They were pro-union and pro-American, with pride in their rural Hispano roots. For example, co-founder Miguel "Torro" Torrez served in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War and then worked for Pueblo's CF&I Coke Plant for 35 years. Ron Codina, who joined the association in 1973 and served as its president from 1979 to 1985, grew up riding horses in Walsenburg and Avondale (both small towns in southern Colorado), and worked at the Pueblo Army Depot for most of his life. Member Leonel "Leo" Arthur Romero served in the U.S. Navy and Seabees, then worked at the Pueblo Army Depot for 28 years. Another early member, Francisco Manuel García, was born in Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1939, served in the U.S. Navy for six years, and later worked as a mechanic in Pueblo. While most of the founders and members were Hispanos who had been born and raised in the villages of Colorado or New Mexico, a handful of Mexican migrants joined the group as well. Usually, though, they had migrated as children and came of age entirely in the United States. For example, founder John Delgado Guerrero was born in Guanajuato, Mexico in 1915 and migrated to the United States with his parents when he was four years old. After a short stay in Kansas, he spent the rest of his life in Pueblo, where he worked at CF&I for 40 years. In the organization's early days, there were as many as 42 members with profiles similar to these: roots in the rural villages of the Hispano homeland evolved into adult lives as urban industrial workers in Colorado's mining, manufacturing, and military industries.¹³

Given their rural roots in the villages and ranches of New Mexico and Colorado, most of the men who joined Pueblo's charro association in the 1970s and '80s were avid outdoorsmen. However, as people removed from more recent histories of Mexican immigration or Mexican cultural nationalism, they did not have firsthand experience with charrería – they had to learn it. Manuel Gallegos, the organization's first president, grew up riding horses and helped his father raise cattle and sheep, but he, like the other men who formed the association, was not exposed to charro culture until he was an adult. He recalled that when the group first started, they used western saddles and American cowboy gear, knowing little about the proper charro dress and equipment, much like their counterparts in Los Angeles a generation before. Gallegos explained: "When this started we had an instructor come from Mexico. He showed us what was right and what was wrong."¹⁴ The Pueblo Charro Association subsequently became a vehicle through which the founders' children and other participants could be socialized into the norms and regulations of charrería and Mexican cultural nationalism writ large. As Gallegos reported, "We've had 36 or 38 families at one time involved in the association. We teach them the culture, the dress, and how to take care of their horses."¹⁵ By teaching other Hispano families how to dress and perform as charros, Gallegos and leaders of the Pueblo Charro Association inculcated an expanded sense of Mexican origins among people who otherwise had little inclination to identify as such.

A few years after its founding, and after extensive fundraising, the Pueblo Charro Association purchased a 20-acre site on 33rd Lane, just south of Highway 50 and nine miles east of central Pueblo. There, they constructed their own lienzo for practices and training. The lienzo was located near the village of Vineland, home to just a few hundred people, and surrounded by a rural area inhabited and worked by both Hispanos and Mexicans. The lienzo thus established the charros' presence within the Hispano homeland's traditional rural, village-based geography. At the same time, however, the Pueblo charros also sustained an urban presence, maintaining an office and conference room inside the Irish Pub at 108 Third Street in downtown Pueblo. The Irish Pub was a dynamic hub of social and political networking, owned and operated by charro Ted Calantino, which brought Hispanos together with the city's substantial population of European and Mexican immigrants.¹⁶ Stretched across the interconnected rural and urban

geographies of the Hispano Homeland, the Pueblo Charro Association provided physical spaces in which a shared racial identity could be forged around the practice and celebration of charrería.



Map 5. Pueblo, Colorado, featuring the location of the Pueblo Charro Association’s lienzo charro. By Jennifer Tran and Alexander Tarr.

In May 1972, with help from the Pueblo charros, Dave Pino and Tony López formed the Denver Charro Association. They immediately sought recognition from the FMCH, which they received in 1973. As with their Pueblo counterparts, most of the Denver charros had been born in Colorado or New Mexico, not Mexico, though some had moved periodically with their families across the Southwest to follow work opportunities. As adults, reflecting Denver’s greater industrial diversity and sharper class inequality compared to Pueblo, they worked in a range of occupations, both blue-collar and professional. Denver charro association founder Tony López was born in 1924 in the “two-lane village” of Rodey, in southern New Mexico, and moved to Denver with his mother when he was a child. He served in the U.S. Army during World War Two and won 13 war medals, including a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart, yet

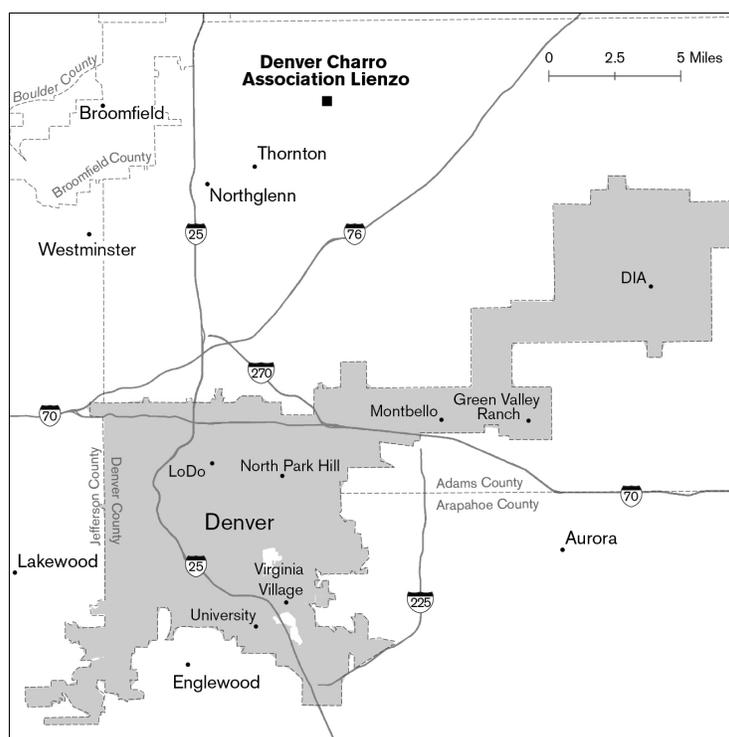
struggled to find consistent work upon his return to the United States. Eventually, he took a course in auto transmissions and opened a repair shop, which he ran until his retirement. He helped form the charro association after achieving economic stability as a small business owner.¹⁷ The Denver Charro Association also had several middle-class professional members, some of whom were the first to integrate the public institutions for which they worked. A notable example is Lena Archuleta, a Hispana woman from rural New Mexico who became the Denver Public School district's first Latina principal. Even more so than her husband Juan, who was also a member of the Denver charro association, Lena became an important spokesperson for charrería in Colorado, as we shall see later in this chapter. Another professional member was Frank Carrillo, who served as the Denver Charro Association's secretary in its early years. Carrillo was born to parents from La Junta, Colorado – a major crossroads for Hispano ranching in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – who later moved to Pueblo, then Denver, where he worked for the Colorado State Patrol and the Adams County Sheriffs Office for 40 years.¹⁸

In November 1972, approximately six months after its founding, the Denver Charro Association held its first charreada. Due to weather, the event had to be moved indoors to the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, and several events had to be abandoned because the space to which they relocated was too small. Nonetheless, the charreada was very well attended, with approximately 1,500 participants and spectators. For Hispanos, the event was clearly an opportunity to express pride in their cultural heritage. One attendee, Rebecca Sandoval Griggs, told a reporter from the *Rocky Mountain News*, "It's about time you started reporting about some of our cultural events. We're proud that someone is finally taking notice of our culture." Her sister, Felima Sandoval Kulinsky, chimed in, "We want other people to know that we're a happy people." But it was not only Hispanos who cohered in the celebration of charrería. The reporter described the audience as "a motley mix of mustachioed Chicanos, cowboy-hatted rural folk, and lollipop-wielding kids."¹⁹



Figure 15. The Denver Charro Association, 1972. Photograph by John Beard for *Denver Post*/Getty Images.

Using the proceeds from this and other events, the Denver Charro Association purchased property on East 128th Avenue in Adams County, almost twenty miles north of central Denver, to build their own lienzo. At the time, Adams County was still largely agricultural, but real-estate developers had begun carving farmland into subdivisions, creating suburban communities such as Northglenn and Thornton. By the early 1970s, these far-flung suburbs were becoming popular destinations for working-class whites, as well as some Hispanics and Mexicans, who sought affordable homes and high-quality schools within commuting distance of Denver.²⁰ The location of the Denver charros' lienzo was thus substantially different from its counterpart in Pueblo: whereas the Pueblo lienzo was located within a prototypically Hispanic geography, the Denver lienzo was located within an emerging hub of white and brown suburban flight, with little history of Hispanic ranching. Indeed, through their decision to build the lienzo in Adams County, the Denver charros helped launch a Mexican presence in suburbia, a process that will also be seen in Los Angeles in the next chapter.



Map 6. Denver, Colorado, featuring the location of the Denver Charro Association’s lienzo charro. By Jennifer Tran and Alexander Tarr.

Anchored in suburbia but with roots in Denver’s urban Mexican communities, the Denver charro association enjoyed the support of a broad cross-section of the Denver community. The program for a 1973 charreada, for example, featured numerous advertisements by the Spanish-surnamed owners of restaurants, bakeries, and food wholesalers, as well as auto dealers, mechanics, and parts shops in Denver. The Denver Charro Association also reached out to professional Mexican Americans and the new cohort of Chicano and Latino politicians, as well as elite Anglo Americans, through their practice of naming “honorary members.” In 1973, the association’s honorary members included Governor John Love, state senator Roger Cisneros, Spanish-language radio station owners Andrés Neidig, George Sandoval, and Jesus Pineda, and Forrest F. Hammes, owner of a local advertising firm and past secretary of the

Arapahoe County Fair.²¹ In pursuing this form of outreach, the Denver charros – like their counterparts in San Antonio a generation before – nurtured networks with a broad range of influential leaders in the name of creating more open and responsive urban public institutions. Unlike their predecessors in the post-World War Two period, however, most of their relationships were now with people who identified as Hispanos or Latinos.

Reflecting their personal backgrounds in the military and unionized industry, Colorado’s charros expressed full faith in the power of American public institutions to facilitate opportunity for ethnic Mexicans in the United States. As the Denver charros explained, their primary motivation was to “represent the Mexican-American people of Colorado with pride and dignity.”²² At the same time, they believed that charrería could be a powerful way to improve racial and ethnic relations in Colorado. They were committed to “promoting goodwill among all Americans at every opportunity” and creating “a bridge for better understanding in the greater cosmopolitan Denver area.”²³ For them, it was clear that these bridges should be built in the public sphere. Thus, almost immediately after their inception, the Colorado charro associations focused on creating more equitable racial relations within the public education, history, and art institutions of Denver and Pueblo.

Educational Justice and the Charro

Much of the Colorado charros’ energy focused on the empowerment of Hispano and ethnic Mexican youth, both inside and outside formal educational settings. As Ron Codina later recalled, the founders of the Pueblo association “got it going as a way to promote pride in the heritage; they were trying to teach the kids about something that’s been going on in Mexico for 400 years, to teach the kids a little discipline.”²⁴ Their goal was “to instill in youth a true spirit of horsemanship with respect for their country [presumably the United States] and pride in their ancestry [presumably Mexican],” so that ethnic Mexican and Hispano youth could become better citizens and professionals.²⁵ But even while they focused on equipping individual children with the behavioral qualities and modest financial resources they deemed necessary for success, Colorado’s charros were not naïve to the conditions of profound

inequality that plagued ethnic Mexican youth. Indeed, discrimination and de facto segregation in public schools had been driving forces in the racialization of ethnic Mexican children in Colorado (and elsewhere) for decades.

Educational inequality had been a major concern for Hispanos and Mexicans in Colorado since at least the 1920s, when sugar and mining companies systematically recruited migrant laborers from southern Colorado and northern New Mexico as well as the interior of Mexico. Agricultural employers paid extremely low wages and provided substandard housing; migrants faced conditions of desperate poverty. To make ends meet, whole families including young children worked in the fields up to 14 hours per day in intense heat. It was virtually impossible for Hispano and Mexican children in agricultural areas to get a decent education.²⁶ Conditions in urban public schools were scarcely better. As Hispanos and Mexican immigrants urbanized in large numbers during and after World War Two, urban school districts across Colorado implemented segregated classrooms and, eventually, segregated schools that were not mandated by law, but rather enshrined in social practice. Dropout rates among Spanish-speaking students in some urban school districts were extraordinarily high; in Denver, fewer than 10 percent of Spanish-speaking students graduated from high school throughout the 1940s.²⁷ For these reasons, education was a persistent focus for Hispanos and Mexican Americans in Colorado, especially in the years after World War Two.²⁸

By the late 1960s, educational inequality still had not improved to any meaningful degree. In 1968-69, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission conducted an extensive study of public education in the U.S. Southwest. The Commission reported severe segregation, underrepresentation of Mexican American teachers and administrators and their concentration in majority-Mexican American schools, underfinancing of schools with predominantly Mexican American students, teachers shunning or ignoring Mexican American children, and the suppression of Mexican American culture and the Spanish language. While these conditions prevailed across the U.S. Southwest, they were especially acute in Denver.²⁹ Thus, educational justice remained a key priority for both Hispano leaders and the Chicano Movement in Denver. The Crusade for Justice, led by former boxer Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzáles, organized walkouts

from DPS high schools and established an autonomous community school, La Escuela Tlatelolco. Meanwhile, Hispanos and Mexican Americans continued to pursue educational justice through their dogged determination to integrate and transform the city's public schools.³⁰

In response to pressure from activist groups and the embarrassing findings of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, state and federal legislators in the late 1960s and early '70s passed a series of laws meant to dismantle conditions of educational inequality. While national in reach, these decisions disproportionately targeted conditions in the American Southwest. In 1968, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (known as the "Bilingual Education Act") recognized the special educational needs of children who spoke limited English, and stipulated that the federal government would provide financial assistance for bilingual programs. By 1978, thirty-four states had repealed their English-only laws and enacted bilingual education.³¹ Also in 1968, Congress authorized the creation of National Hispanic Heritage Week, which called upon educators to observe one week in September with appropriate ceremonies and activities.³² In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court decided the landmark case *Keyes v School District No. 1*, which ordered the Denver school district to implement a mandatory desegregation plan – the first "northern" city so ordered, and the first where Hispanics were explicitly considered as a separate class for purposes of desegregation.³³ And in 1974, the Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols* affirmed the importance of bilingual education even in desegregated schools, stating that "there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." These decisions did not create wholesale educational equality. But they did create important openings for ethnic Mexican educators, parents, and allied activists in Colorado and across the nation to create public schools that better served their children.³⁴

In numerous cases, they turned to the charro as an instrument of educational justice. Throughout the 1970s, the Denver and Pueblo charro associations partnered with the Latin American Education Foundation to host public charreadas, with proceeds dedicated to college scholarships for "Latin American" students – the identity they often embraced as a unifying label, rather than "Mexican" or

“Hispanic.”³⁵ On another occasion, the Denver Charro Association gifted 12-year-old John Pineda, a Walsenburg boy detained at the Colorado Boys Ranch, with a Black Angus calf named “Charro” that he was to raise. When the animal reached maturity, John would be allowed to sell it, and he could use the proceeds towards a college education.³⁶ Innovators in multicultural and bilingual education likewise viewed the charro as a source of cultural pride and racial uplift for ethnic Mexican students, as well as a way for Anglo American students to learn about the nation’s diverse histories. Throughout the 1970s and ‘80s, multicultural education companies produced books, musical albums, and videos that used the charro to represent a colorful and honorable Spanish and Mexican past.³⁷

Lena Archuleta, member of the Denver charro association and Hispana educator, wrote one such text. The daughter of a World War One veteran and shoe repairman, Archuleta had grown up in rural New Mexico. The valedictorian of her high school class, she attended the University of Denver, where she majored in Spanish with a minor in education. Thus, Archuleta was one of the very few Hispanos who graduated high school and obtained a college degree in the years before World War Two. Afterwards, she taught at schools in New Mexico until 1951, when she and her husband Juan Archuleta returned to Denver. There, she worked as a teacher and librarian at schools with substantial numbers of Spanish-speaking students before becoming the principal of Fairview Elementary School in 1974, making her the very first Hispano/Latino principal in Denver Public Schools (DPS). Through this work, Archuleta nurtured relationships with diverse ethnic Mexican leaders from across the political spectrum, nurturing a shared racial and cultural identity in the name of creating more inclusive and just urban public schools.³⁸

To guide this work, Archuleta embraced the Mexican ranching past and its diverse cast of characters, especially the charro, which she saw as a unifying symbol for Hispano, Chicano, and Mexican immigrant children in southwestern schools. In 1973, she authored a curriculum guide, titled “The Rodeo and Cattle Industry: Its Rich Spanish-Mexican Heritage,” which explores the history of charros and vaqueros to empower Hispano and ethnic Mexican students in Denver Public Schools. In its distinction between charros and vaqueros, and inclusion of them both, her guide uniquely recuperates the agency of workers and indigenous people in the making of ranch cultures and economies. Archuleta composed the

guide using social studies and foreign language materials, as well as contributions from people she knew in the Denver and Pueblo charro associations. In writing the guide, she wanted to help teachers create a culturally responsive curriculum as Denver rolled out desegregated classrooms and bilingual education during the 1970s.³⁹

Archuleta's curriculum guide makes a strong claim for the Mexican origins of rodeo – that charros and vaqueros, whether in New Mexico or “Old” Mexico, were the “original cowboys.” This claim is anchored in the title of the guide itself, which explicitly argues for the “rich Spanish-Mexican heritage” of the rodeo and cattle industry. She elaborates this central idea throughout the guide, challenging the racialization of cowboys and rodeo as white in American popular culture. Her guide claims: “The ‘vaquero’ was the earliest American horseman to work with cattle, the *first American cowboy* [emphasis added].” She elaborates: “The vaquero plied his trade in Mexico during the sixteenth century, and his methods and equipment were adopted and adapted by both the California vaquero and later by the Texas cowboy.” Notably, too, in this sentence she redefines the word “American” in a transnational sense, to include Mexicans as inhabitants of the Americas, in a way remarkably similar to certain wings of the Chicano Movement.⁴⁰ Later, the guide shows that virtually all of the elements that would come to make up American-style rodeo had their origins in Mexican practice. “The [western] saddle as we know it today is a Mexican invention,” she insists.⁴¹ Thus, though personally identified as Hispana, Archuleta demonstrated a commitment to cultivating a shared Spanish-Mexican identity, via the figures of the charro and the vaquero, among the diverse children and parents with whom she worked in Denver's public schools.

Reflecting Archuleta's commitments to bilingual education, the curriculum guide also devotes a great deal of space to etymology. It highlights the many Spanish-language words related to ranching that were incorporated into the English language during U.S. colonization. For example, in her discussion of the animals that Spanish colonists brought to the “New World,” Archuleta notes that the tough, hardy horses “were called *mesteños*, which means wild horses. Later, of course, the *Americanos* called these horses mustangs.”⁴² Her use of the Spanish-language “*Americanos*” subtly situates Anglo American

settlers as foreigners within the region, while asserting Hispanos' and Mexicanos' longer historical presence. In a gentle appeal to Denver students who might be struggling to learn English, the guide also highlights Americans' historic difficulties in learning Spanish as they moved west. For example, Archuleta writes, "[American] cowboys had difficulty in saying 'chaparreras', so they called these leg coverings 'chaps.'" ⁴³ She also lists many other words that "became the basis for American-English words" with only minor variation, such as *la reata* (lariat), *cincho* (cinch), *jáquima* (hackamore), *bandana* (bandanna), *botas* (boots), *lazo* (lasso), *guitarra* (guitar), and *rancho* (ranch). ⁴⁴ Finally, she inscribes a persistent Spanish-Mexican linguistic influence on the physical landscape by showing how Spanish-language words were incorporated into the region's topography. She writes: "the Spanish *vaquero* (cowboy) used many words that are now in the English language such as: *mesa*, *canyon* (cañon), *sierra*, *arroyo*." ⁴⁵ Archuleta's guide thus marked the region's Spanish speakers as not only long-established in the region, but also having inscribed meaningful place-names upon its landscape and contributed in valuable ways to its culture.

Drawing from the era's growing emphasis on experiential education, Archuleta's guide suggests many hands-on activities. These activities centered histories of Mexican ranch life, creatively adapted to urban life in Denver, as a source of pride and mobility for Hispano, Chicano, and Mexican students. For students in primary grades, the guide suggests that the teacher plan excursions to the annual stock show, city zoo, or historical museum; lead students in singing songs about ranch life in English and Spanish; stage make-believe rodeos or charreadas; and teach the students about farm animals, their products, and the Spanish names of both. For students in intermediate grades, the guide encourages students to conduct original research, build dioramas, dance "La Vaquerita," or use tape recorders to prepare a broadcast of a make-believe charreada. For upper grades, the guide suggests that students make a giant mural with labels in Spanish, or that the teacher invite members of the Denver Charro Association to do demonstrations and talk about the various events of the charreada. ⁴⁶

Archuleta's guide also incorporated popular education techniques that valued learners' existing culture and knowledge. These same convictions were embedded in the Chicano Movement's educational

campaigns, including the pedagogical practices used at the Crusade for Justice's autonomous school, La Escuela Tlatelolco. In a similar spirit, Archuleta's guide emphasized the value of students' familiarity with and knowledge of the Spanish language, as well as charrería and sheep ranching. Thus, despite tactical and ideological differences among Chicano and Hispano activists, both turned to popular education techniques to counteract the dehumanization of Hispano, Chicano, and Mexican immigrant children in Colorado's public schools. In the guide's introduction, Archuleta advises teachers to conduct additional research as they are able, and she provides lists of potential resources, including contact information for the Denver Charro Association (which was her own phone number and address). But she also writes that "pupils will have much to add to the information as they participate in the various learning activities," and encourages teachers to see their students as active producers, not just consumers, of knowledge. In these ways, Archuleta built upon the very recent advances of federal legislation relating to bilingual education, while responding to the principal findings of the Civil Rights Commission's 1968-69 study: namely, that Mexican American children were rarely being drawn into classroom discussions, that their knowledge and potential contributions were consistently overlooked, and that they were punished for speaking Spanish.

In all these ways, Archuleta's curriculum guide centered Hispanos' and Mexicans' historical contributions to the making of southwestern ranch culture as the basis for a shared racial and cultural identity through which children could experience an empowering education. Centering principally on the distinct issues of language, culture, and heritage through which ethnic Mexicans had long been racially subjugated in the United States, the guide inverted the power dynamics bound up in Colorado's struggles for desegregation and bilingual education. These choices positioned the guide, and Archuleta herself, as an important bridge between the radical activism of the Chicano movement and efforts to integrate and hold accountable powerful public institutions like Denver Public Schools from within. Her efforts, not only through the curriculum guide but also throughout her career, complemented the exhaustive labor performed by Hispano and Latino educational activists in this period – and ever since.

It is difficult to know how teachers, students, and parents actually engaged Archuleta's curriculum guide, or the kind of impact it made upon their individual and collective understandings of the U.S. Southwest's history and culture. What *is* clear is that the demands and strategies for desegregation, bilingual education, and multiculturalism that Hispano and Latino activists pursued during the 1960s and '70s largely failed to significantly change patterns of educational inequality – not because of shortcomings or ideological fractures within the movement, though these were real, but because of demographic, spatial, and legislative shifts underway across Colorado. Already by 1973, when the *Keyes* decision was handed down, white families and some Hispano and Latino families were moving to the suburbs – including places in Adams County, location of the Denver charros' lienzo – where they found more affordable homes and hoped to avoid mandated school busing. Then, in 1974 voters passed the Poundstone Amendment to the state constitution, which prohibited the incorporation of surrounding suburban communities into the Denver school district, severely limiting the reach of the desegregation order wrought by *Keyes*.⁴⁷

Isolated and segregated in Denver's older schools, Latino students continued to exhibit staggeringly high dropout rates. They remained subject to the same forces that had long been at play: the undervaluing of the Spanish language and Mexican culture; too few Latino teachers and administrators; the tracking of ethnic Mexican students into vocational, remedial, and English-language learner classes; and districts' refusal to apply for federal funding to create support services for Hispanic students.⁴⁸ Even so, in 1995 the court allowed Denver Public Schools to terminate its mandatory desegregation plan, arguing that the district had achieved all practicable results. As the court acknowledged, the widespread effects of suburbanization, coupled with the Poundstone Amendment, made higher rates of integration between Latinos, Blacks, and whites not only unlikely, but virtually impossible to achieve. Thus, public education remained a primary site for the continued racial subjugation of Hispanos, Mexicans, and other Latinos in Colorado, despite the concerted efforts of Archuleta and the charro associations, as well as their contemporaries.⁴⁹

Sister Cities and Fiesta Days

One hundred miles south in Pueblo, a smaller city with deeper ties to the Hispano homeland, Hispanos and Chicanos were also battling for a more just city through boycotts, direct action, and lawsuits.⁵⁰ The members of the Pueblo Charro Association were central to this collective effort, focusing on the transformation of public institutions devoted to heritage and culture. Throughout the 1970s, they worked to center figures associated with Hispano and Mexican ranching histories in the city's public art landscape and its public history institutions. Through these efforts, they built bridges between Hispanos and members of the city's robust Chicano Movement, but they also developed meaningful ties with people and places in central and western Mexico, where relatively little connection had existed before. These enhanced local and transnational connections generated a more coherent racial identity as Mexican Americans, rooted in a newfound sense of shared roots in the rural ranching societies of what historian Alan Gómez has called "Greater Mexico."⁵¹

In this last respect, the Pueblo charros had a key ally in Henry Reyes, a Spanish-language radio broadcaster and local politician. The U.S.-born son of migrants from Puebla, Mexico, Reyes sought to promote Mexican culture, especially Mexican histories of ranching and rural life, in southern Colorado. He knew a great deal about charros and charrería, and he enjoyed collegial relationships with members of the Pueblo Charro Association, whose events he sometimes attended. As a local Chicano activist later recalled, "I was impressed with Henry's thorough knowledge of the events of the charreada. He was like a living history book and shared his knowledge with the audience at each performance of the charros."⁵² For a decade spanning the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, Reyes launched numerous initiatives that centered the charro in Pueblo's urban public culture. His efforts buttressed the charro associations' own activities, and pushed them towards an increasingly transnational orientation that united Hispanos more firmly with Mexican migrants.

In the mid-1960s, Reyes was the driving force behind the creation of Fiesta Days as part of the Colorado State Fair. The Southern Colorado Agricultural and Industrial Association – a private organization of wealthy white businessmen – had established the State Fair in 1872 as a way to draw

tourists, investors, and settlers to southern Colorado. For nearly a century, the Colorado State Fair celebrated Anglo settler histories of ranching, riding, and mining in southern Colorado exclusively. Attendance by Hispanos and ethnic Mexicans had always been low.⁵³ All of this troubled Reyes deeply. In promoting the idea of Fiesta Days, Reyes wanted to celebrate southern Colorado's Hispanic heritage and draw more Hispanos and Mexican Americans to the State Fair. He knew that such an effort would rely on creating a more inclusive vision of the state's ranching history – one that included charros, vaqueros, and shepherds. Yet Reyes remembers how difficult it was trying to persuade the Colorado State Fair Commission to include even one Fiesta Day in the fair's schedule:

“There was an attitude from some officials that we didn't need to be attracting more Mexicans to the Fair ... they couldn't even pronounce charros or mariachi. They wanted more Roy Rogers-type cowboys. But I told them that thousands of Hispanics will come to the Fair if you give us a day to celebrate our culture. And that turned out to be right.”⁵⁴

In 1966, Reyes capitalized on the appointment of Don Svedman, the new State Fair Manager, to make Fiesta Days a reality. Svedman was looking for ways to make the State Fair more profitable, and Reyes had plenty of ideas. Reyes learned that Svedman had recently seen a Thanksgiving Day performance by Mexican entertainer Antonio Águilar and his wife, Flor Silvestre.⁵⁵ Popularly known as “El Charro de México,” Águilar had become instrumental in popularizing charrería among U.S. audiences. His show, a four-day “Mexican Festival and Rodeo,” had been touring the U.S. for ten years by the time Svedman saw it.⁵⁶ When Reyes learned how much Svedman had enjoyed Águilar's performance, he convinced Svedman to create something similar for the Colorado State Fair.

Owing largely to Reyes' influence and Svedman's support, the Colorado State Fair governing board created a Fiesta Committee in 1966. Henry Gurule, Francisco Gallegos, and Florinda Gallegos – all Hispano members of Pueblo's charro association – served on the Fiesta Committee from its inception. The first Fiesta Days were held in 1967 and featured another performance by Águilar, who brought “his trained horses to acquaint people with the Mexican Cowboy – El Charro Mexicano.”⁵⁷ Fiesta Days also

included a “Noche de Fiesta” as well as a Catholic mass, a parade, and musical performances. Reflecting the charros’ enduring interest in education, proceeds were directed towards Hispanic student scholarships.⁵⁸ A full charreada, performed by the Pueblo charros in competition with another team, was added to Fiesta Days in the early 1970s. Subsequently, the Pueblo charros lobbied state senator Paul Sandoval, the first Hispanic senator on the Colorado State Legislature’s Joint Budget Committee, to create permanent funding for the event. Senator Sandoval promised his support and said he would try to line-item the money in the fair’s budget. A complete charreada has been a fully funded and very popular feature of Fiesta Days and the Colorado State Fair ever since.⁵⁹

Building on his success with Fiesta Days, as well as his popularity in regional Spanish-language radio, Reyes campaigned and won a position on the Pueblo City Council in 1969. He then served two four-year terms, including a stint as City Council President in 1976-77. Reyes’ election and long service was significant because Pueblo’s Hispano and Mexican community, though numerically large, had long struggled to elect a co-ethnic representative, owing to the city’s system of at-large elections and low voter turnout, as well as disidentification among Hispanos and Mexicans.⁶⁰ During his tenure on the City Council, Reyes became a key advocate for the celebration of Mexican ranching cultures, including the charro, in Pueblo’s public institutions. He also served as architect of the transnational social networks that would allow charrería to flourish in southern Colorado in the 1970s, crafting a shared racial identity with roots in rural ranching practices.

One of Reyes’s first actions as city councilman was to build a sister-city partnership between Pueblo, Colorado and Puebla, Mexico (his father’s hometown). President Dwight Eisenhower had developed the sister-city program, which was intended to reduce global conflict through the development of personal relationships across national borders, in 1956. Southern Colorado State College already had a longstanding partnership with the Universidad Popular Autónoma de Puebla. The president of SCSC, Victor Hopper, reached out to government officials in Puebla to initiate a sister-city partnership. Those officials in turn invited Hopper and a delegation, which included Reyes, to visit Puebla. Afterwards, Reyes took the lead in developing the program.⁶¹

Reyes acknowledged that the main goal of the sister-cities partnership was to bolster international relations, but an equally important goal for him was improving relationships among Anglos and ethnic Mexicans in Pueblo. He explained, “We were having problems with the Anglo community. The Anglo community was having trouble accepting things we stood for.”⁶² Reyes believed that exposure to elite forms of Mexican culture like *charrería* could help alleviate Anglo discrimination against Hispanos and Mexican Americans at home in Colorado, while also cultivating relationships with Mexican nationals that might prove beneficial to the struggle for more responsive and inclusive public institutions.

Toward that end, the trips that Reyes coordinated were lavish by design. The first delegation of 150 persons was greeted with decorated buses, banners, and balloons, and enjoyed numerous banquets and receptions. The 1973 delegation, which included 163 Puebloans, traveled on a Boeing 707 airplane chartered by Reyes and his co-owner of the Spanish-language radio station KAPI, George Sandoval.⁶³ Similar trips that ultimately involved over 3,000 people occurred annually until 1997, when Reyes stepped down as organizer of the collaboration. Reflecting on the importance of the exchanges, Reyes said: “Everything we've been told about Mexico many times is embarrassing, just negatively critical. But when [*sic*] we went there and found wonderful friendships and they treated us well. They took us into their homes which were beautiful and treated us like we were family; people (Puebloans) just couldn't believe it.”⁶⁴

The expanded transnational relationships that Reyes and others helped to craft soon imprinted on Pueblo's physical landscapes through the creation of new public art. In 1973, Puebla officials donated a sculpture crafted by renowned Mexican artist Jesús Corro Ferrer, which sits prominently in front of Pueblo's city hall in the Sister Cities Plaza. The sculpture depicts an eagle made of steel plate mounted on a white concrete pedestal, with the seal of Pueblo and the coat of arms of Puebla on tile just below the eagle's talons. Notably, the city seal of Pueblo highlights the area's rural, agricultural features: it features a cow standing in a grassy field next to the Arkansas River, with the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and Old Fort Pueblo, the area's first permanent structure, in the background; an ear of corn and bushel of wheat are prominently depicted in the foreground. In this way, ranching was situated alongside agriculture and

military exploration as emblems of the area's rural heritage, in ways that were both urban and transnational – thus providing a shared sense of origins for Hispanos, Chicanos, and Mexican immigrants in Pueblo.

The local, regional, and transnational networks cultivated through Fiesta Days and the sister-cities program laid the foundation for the Pueblo charros' most ambitious vision yet: hosting the first-ever International Charro Congress and Competition as part of celebrations of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976. In doing so, they centered *Mexico's* national sport within celebrations of the American birthday party, while cohering and galvanizing Hispanos, Chicanos, and Mexicans to participate fully in the U.S.'s premiere public history event of the decade.

The Bicentennial Charro

The evolution of Bicentennial celebrations illustrates powerfully the multicultural opening of U.S. public institutions in the 1960s and '70s. Bicentennial preparations were initially carried out by the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission (ARBC), which Congress created in 1966. The ARBC had advocated holding the national birthday party, which was expected to cost more than \$1.5 billion, in just one historic city—either Philadelphia or Boston. However, after significant public pressure, in 1973 the ARBC was dissolved and replaced by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA), now headed by John Warner, former Secretary of the Navy during the Vietnam War and future U.S. senator from Virginia.⁶⁵

Under Warner, the new organization infused the Bicentennial with a multicultural and populist spirit. Although the agency was still headquartered in Washington, D.C., Warner created new regional and statewide commissions to coordinate day-to-day planning. Instead of one central theme, ARBA identified three: (1) *Heritage*, which honored not only the “founding fathers” and the “three great documents” but also forgotten people and places; (2) *Festival*, which embraced the richness of U.S. diversity and promoted positive international relations through dance, drama, music, and the arts; and (3) *Horizons*, which encouraged civic and social improvement, including initiatives that might benefit

indigenous communities, immigrants, and communities of color.⁶⁶ Warner created a national advisory council of representatives from multiple ethnic, religious, geographic, and occupational groups, whom he charged with promoting a broader diversity of perspectives and strengthening public investment in the Bicentennial. Many state and regional commissions, including Colorado, likewise created ethnic advisory committees or review boards to ensure diverse participation.⁶⁷

Reconstituted in this way, the ARBA, like many other public agencies, provided significant institutional support for the “ethnic revival” that proliferated in this period. As historian Matthew Jacobson has shown, the ethnic revival was especially popular among white Americans, for whom identification as Italian, Polish, Greek, or some other European ethnicity was one way to negotiate critiques of white supremacy emanating from the era’s Civil Rights and Black Power movements.⁶⁸ In Colorado and other states of the U.S. West, these impulses translated into Bicentennial projects that celebrated the white settler experience via histories of European and immigrant westward migration as “pioneers.” White (or white-dominated) communities and organizations used the ARBA’s institutional structure and financing to preserve pioneer villages, commission public artworks, and create local history museums that memorialized the white settler experience in the landscape. Yet people from historically marginalized communities, especially Chicanos, African Americans, and indigenous groups, also benefitted substantially from the ARBA’s newly inclusive vision. With federal and state support, they succeeded in adding to the archive, creating history and art museums, and preserving and celebrating aspects of their cultural heritage. In many cases, they secured access to public institutions, organizations, and physical spaces previously denied them.⁶⁹

Colorado’s charros were among them. The Pueblo Charro Association earned bicentennial sponsorship and financing to host the first-ever International Charro Congress and Competition in Pueblo in 1976. The Pueblo charros’ bicentennial vision was grand and ambitious. They hoped “to reintroduce a rediscovered cultural heritage of the Southwest; promote the ‘Charrería’; to enhance the relationship between the U.S. and Mexico; to provide an opportunity for future participants in the sport and to expose contributions of the Mexican-American in the development of the Southwest.” These goals clearly

illustrate the Pueblo charros' multiple interests in empowering local people of diverse origins, rewriting regional history, and cultivating transnational relationships. To achieve these goals, they planned to invite twenty charro teams, from both the United States and Mexico, for a full week of competitions, meetings, parades, dinners, and dances in Pueblo. They also intended to establish a permanent lienzo, riding school, and cultural center with research facilities that would support the practice of charrería in Colorado well after the Bicentennial's conclusion.⁷⁰

Preparations began as early as 1971, when members of the Pueblo Charro Association joined the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce's newly formed Centennial-Bicentennial Task Force. The Chamber – an organization dominated by real-estate developers, small business owners, and media companies – appears to have been enthusiastic, because coverage of the charro association and its bicentennial vision appeared frequently in the chamber's newsletter. The Pueblo Charro Association, in turn, formed a centennial-bicentennial subcommittee charged with coordinating the planning. Members included a diverse set of Hispanics from the charro association, as well as Mexican Americans who held positions within related public institutions in Pueblo. Thus, in addition to Henry Gurule, Ted Calantino, Phil Martínez, and Frank Guerra from the charro association, Douglas Patino, vice president for student affairs at Southern Colorado State College, also joined the committee.⁷¹ Over the next few years, diverse representatives from the FMCH, Pueblo City Council, and the Colorado Centennial-Bicentennial Committee (CCBC) also joined in the planning.⁷²

In early June 1974, the charro association formally submitted its application to the Colorado Centennial-Bicentennial Committee (CCBC). The application's first stop was Colorado's Multi-Ethnic Committee, a statewide body akin to the national advisory council created by John Warner as part of the multicultural reorganization of the ARBA; its members included many of Colorado's most notable Black, Hispano, and indigenous leaders.⁷³ The Multiethnic Committee's primary role was to review and endorse applications for ARBA recognition and funding. At its very first meeting in August 1974, the Multi-Ethnic Committee endorsed the International Charro Competition as an official bicentennial event and sent the proposal up to the CCBC for state approval.⁷⁴

The Pueblo Charro Association's proposal was embraced, in part, because it offered a clear opportunity to nurture positive international relations – a crucial goal for the nation's top brass, given widespread discontent with the United States' aggressive military and diplomatic interventions in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere in the early 1970s. Cognizant of that fact, the Pueblo Charro Association framed their bicentennial project as an exercise in international friendship and goodwill. In the fall of 1974, while their application to the CCBC was still under review, the Pueblo Charro Association sponsored a trip to Guadalajara, Jalisco to participate in that year's National Charro Congress and Competition.⁷⁵ While competitive trips like this would normally be attended only by charros and their family members, in this case the Pueblo charros invited a broad cross-section of delegates from the City of Pueblo to attend. In preparation for the trip, the Pueblo Charro Association distributed an information packet that declared to the delegates: "Your visit to Guadalajara, Jalisco is an important contribution in international relations. We hope that each one of us will return to Pueblo having established a friendship with a person from Mexico."⁷⁶ On the eve of the trip, Takaki, acting in his capacity as president of the Pueblo City Council, formally proclaimed the first week of November 1974 to be "International Charro Week" in Pueblo because "the Charro has contributed greatly to the socio-economic and cultural development of the Southwest" and because "the friendship of the United States of America and the United States of Mexico is of great significance to the Western hemisphere." Takaki also noted the states of Jalisco and Colorado were taking steps to become "sister states," a higher-scale partnership akin to the sister-city program between Pueblo and Puebla.⁷⁷ In this way, Takaki and the Pueblo charros situated the charro at the center of a budding transnational friendship with diplomatic as well as cultural significance. Equally important for race relations back home in Pueblo, the trip served to educate Hispanos and others about a Mexican ranching tradition to which many had little exposure. Leopoldo Trujillo and Henry Gurule, two members of the Pueblo Charro Association who joined the delegation to Guadalajara, explained, "The trip was not only a rewarding experience in international relations, but also a significant learning experience in preparing for the 1976 event in Pueblo, Colorado."⁷⁸

One of the lessons they surely learned was that charrería in Mexico was an extravagant affair associated with the Mexican political and economic elite. On their first day in Guadalajara, the Pueblo delegates listened to a speech by Jalisco governor Alberto Orozco Romero. There were multiple luxurious banquets, dances, and award ceremonies. Douglas Patino, for example, was honored for his work promoting charrería in the U.S. and given the “silver spur” award, one of the FMCH’s highest honors. In accordance with the congress’s theme, “La Mujer/The Woman,” an entire day honored the queens of Mexican and U.S. charro associations, including Ruby Tafoya, queen of the Pueblo Charro Association. Women also attended a special reception hosted by the governor’s wife, where the world’s leading female bullfighter, Conchita Cintrón, was honored as a special guest. Upon their return to the U.S., the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce reported, “the lavish dinners, colorful entertainment, ceremonial presentations and exciting charreada (Mexican rodeo) were a royal treat to Charro members who had worked diligently to snare the top honor.” The Chamber’s newsletter then issued a friendly challenge to its readers: “How are you going to top all that, Pueblo?”⁷⁹

“Topping all that” required, first and foremost, official ARBA endorsement, which came through in March 1975, a few months after the delegation’s return from Guadalajara. Acting upon the endorsement of Colorado’s Multiethnic Committee, the CCBC approved the International Charro Competition as an official centennial-bicentennial activity. The CCBC also awarded the Pueblo Charro Association \$10,000 in public funding, with the requirement that they locate matching funds in hard money.⁸⁰

With official endorsement and partial funding in hand, the hard work of planning and fundraising accelerated. That spring, U.S. and Mexican charros engaged in near-constant transnational activity to coordinate and promote the bicentennial events. José Islas Salazar, president of the FMCH, visited Denver on May 1, 1975 for a meeting. Four days later, a delegation from Pueblo visited Puebla for another sister-city exchange, this one timed to coordinate with Cinco de Mayo, where they presented a fringed ARBA flag and five ARBA pins to Mexican President Luis Echevarría Álvarez.⁸¹ Extensive cross-border visits like these persisted throughout the duration of bicentennial planning and beyond.

These visits, much like their counterparts in San Antonio a generation before, built upon and solidified the networks that Reyes and others had established through the sister-city and sister-state partnerships. They also linked southern Colorado's Hispanos, who previously had only weak relationships with Mexicans and Mexican nationalism, more firmly into the world of transnational cultural production associated with charros and charrería. Notably, too, these transnational relationships were increasingly structured by U.S. public institutions, like the ARBA, rather than solely through interpersonal or business networks, as in years past.

Next was the issue of preparing the physical space. Under the direction of secretary Ted Calantino, the charro association began working on architectural plans for the lienzo and related facilities. The vision was to include an arena, park, baseball field, parking lot, and horse stables, all of which would be open to the general public; the cultural center with research facilities seems to have been scrapped.⁸² The association also ordered a bicentennial flag, featuring the ARBA logo, to fly at the lienzo alongside the other flags they regularly displayed (presumably an American flag and a Mexican flag, and perhaps a Colorado state flag as well).⁸³ Still, while qualifying competitions would be held at the lienzo, the Pueblo charros always hoped to hold the final competition as part of Fiesta Days. The county fairgrounds, where Fiesta Days was held, would not only accommodate far more spectators but would also signal the full rights of Hispanos and Mexican Americans to occupy and use that symbolically important location in the city's cultural life. Thus, in late December 1975, the Pueblo Charro Association made a formal presentation to the Colorado State Fair Commission requesting that the final two days of the international charro competition be included as part of Fiesta Days 1976. Their request was granted.⁸⁴

As noted above, paying for the charros' expansive bicentennial program would require \$10,000 in matching funds. Association members attended a CCBC seminar meant to help applicants find appropriate financing for their events.⁸⁵ In addition, they planned a slew of fundraisers that targeted local Hispanos and Mexicans for support, often through the celebration of both Hispano and Mexican cultural forms, such as Hispano music, ballet folklórico, and tamale sales.⁸⁶ But the greatest part of the Pueblo charros' fundraising strategy rested on applying for special federal funds for groups who were planning

inclusive bicentennial programs, especially those likely to appeal to underrepresented communities or to cultivate international relations. The bicentennial charreada promised to do both.

In April 1975, shortly after learning that their event had been approved as an official Bicentennial event, the Pueblo Charro Association made a new grant application to the ARBA in which they showed how their event met the four criteria required of organizations seeking supplementary funds. Their application demonstrates their sophisticated understanding of the newly multicultural political landscape created by the ARBA and other institutions, as well as how they might position charrería to create new opportunities for ethnic Mexicans in Colorado. First, the applicants argued that the International Charro Competition was a project of *special international significance* because it

“fosters international friendship by matching youthful competitors from both Mexico and the United States in sports of skill and talent. The friendship of the United States and Mexico has great significance to the Western Hemisphere and the magic and excitement of the charrería can only cement these bonds.”

This claim built upon and cemented the work that Reyes, the Pueblo charros, and others had been doing to develop transnational ties between southern Colorado and Mexico; it also signaled a stronger sense of shared cultural heritage among Hispanos and Mexicans.

Second, the applicants noted that the International Charro Competition would encourage an *overall balanced bicentennial program* that would not be centered solely on the Atlantic seaboard, but across the continent. They asked Warner and his staff to honor “the many Hispanic people who contributed to this nation’s birth and development.” They observed that charrería was an integral part of the lives of Hispanic people in the Southwest and argued that ARBA’s financial support would broaden the reach of the Bicentennial commemoration to their region.

Third, the applicants claimed to meet the requirement of *emphasizing ideas associated with the Revolution* by framing U.S. independence as only one event within a global struggle for freedom during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in which Mexico had also participated. They wrote:

“The struggle for freedom did not begin or end with the American Revolution, but it was merely an episode in an epic, universal struggle to eradicate tyranny and autocracy. The concept of government by consent of the governed was a dream that our neighbors to the south shared with America’s founding fathers. Mexico and the United States share a heritage filled with the ideals and dreams which spawned a revolution, and it was the charros, cowboy/cavaliers, who helped free the Mexican people to self-government.”

By situating the charro as a freedom fighter akin to Boston’s Tea Party patriots, the Pueblo Charro Association drastically simplified the charro’s historical roles in both the war for independence from Spain: charros had actually fought on both sides, and after the Mexican Revolution, they were responsible for elevating a tradition associated with the conservative landed elite to the status of national sport.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the Pueblo charros’ claim about the importance of charros to the Mexican Revolution resisted the nationalist impulse of American bicentennial celebrations. Instead, and quite remarkably, they used the charro to show that struggles for freedom and democracy were not, and had never been, exclusive to the United States.

Fourth, the applicants noted that charrería was popular among a wide cross-section of ethnic Mexicans in the United States and would therefore satisfy the requirement that funded projects *encourage maximum participation and interest by citizens*. In particular, they claimed that charrería was “especially relevant to youth, women, minority, ethnic groups, and Native Americans.” While they did not elaborate this claim for women or indigenous people, they did note that charrería had become increasingly popular among Hispanos, “who have started to discover this rich heritage and with pride.”⁸⁸ The ARBA found these statements compelling, and the Pueblo charros’ request for supplemental funding was approved, allowing the International Charro Congress and Competition to proceed with almost all of its funding coming from public agencies.

For a time, the association’s officers shouldered the planning and fundraising work. However, in late 1975, the Pueblo Charro Association hired two staff members: Toby Madrid, former secretary-coordinator for the city’s Chicano Planning Council, and Elisa Cortinas, a former outreach worker for

Headstart.⁸⁹ These appointments suggest, first, that the Pueblo Charro Association had at least some financial resources at its disposal to hire staff. Second, they show that ethnic Mexican people with a range of racial identities as well as political and ideological affiliations – from the Chicano Movement to War on Poverty organizations like Headstart – were invested in using *charrería* to create more responsive public institutions in urban Colorado.

As the International Charro Competition loomed nearer, the Pueblo and Denver charro associations committed to extensive public appearances at both “western” and “Mexican” events across Colorado. In January 1976, both associations participated in the National Western Stock Show at the Denver Coliseum, itself an official Bicentennial event.⁹⁰ The Pueblo and Denver charros also worked to extend *charrería* to surrounding towns, suburbs and cities, including those places where ethnic Mexicans were small populations or poorly represented in local politics.⁹¹ These appearances promoted *charrería* amongst both Anglo American and Mexican audiences, while inserting the charro into whitewashed histories of cowboys, ranching, and rural life in Colorado. In addition, the associations continued their weekly competitive *charreadas*. Rotating between the *lienazos* in Pueblo and Denver, these Sunday afternoon competitions helped the charro teams practice for the international competition later that year. But they also built a fan base among the region’s Hispanos and Mexicans, many of whom – like the charros themselves a decade earlier – knew little or nothing about *charrería* and the Mexican nationalist tradition from which it sprung.⁹²

Finally, in late August 1976 – well after the official Bicentennial weekend in early July had ended, but while the region was still fully aglow with the “spirit of ‘76” – the much-anticipated International Charro Competition and Congress took place. In an article in the *Pueblo Chieftain* announcing the week’s events, journalist Ron Martínez trumpeted, with no small amount of hyperbole, “Not since the arrival of the horse to the Americas via the Spanish conquistadors has there been an event as spectacular and historic as the upcoming International Charro Competitions here this week.” Martínez justified his over-the-top enthusiasm: “Why so? Because it was the introduction of the horse as a work animal by the Spaniards and perfection given to the art of horsemanship by the Mexican-Indian and

mestizo that gave birth to the Mexican jaripeo. It was also this beginning that provided the foundation for American rodeo and cowboy lore.”⁹³ Thus, like other ethnic Mexicans and Hispanos in Colorado, Martínez claimed that charros were, in fact, the “original cowboys,” but he did so through subtle references to both the Spanish origins of the sport – thus appealing to Hispanos – as well as its “perfection” by Mexican-Indians and mestizos – racial identifications that would resonate with Chicanos.

As planned, the activities coincided with Fiesta Days at the 1976 Colorado State Fair, which had come to attract more than 40,000 people since its creation by Reyes a decade prior, making it the most popular day of the State Fair. The charros’ opening event was a parade that wound through the streets of downtown Pueblo, and that included a diverse set of Hispano, Chicano, Mexican American, and Mexican representatives. The parade’s grand marshal was Paul Sandoval, state senator from Denver and part of the much-celebrated cohort of Chicano politicians who took office in Colorado during the 1970s, who was escorted by members of the Pueblo Charro Association riding as his “guard of honor.” A delegation of sister-city participants from Puebla also participated in the parade. So did numerous queens representing local Mexican American organizations, including the Pueblo chapters of LULAC and the GI Forum, and visiting female royalty from cities and towns across the region that were racially marked as both Anglo and Hispano.⁹⁴ Subsequent activities, spread across six days, included a meeting of the U.S. Congress of Charro Associations, multiple Catholic masses, barbeques and cocktail parties, a Queens Ball and, of course, daily competitions between charro associations from the U.S. and Mexico. Most of these activities were held at either the Pueblo Charro Association’s lienzo on 33rd Lane, the Sangre de Cristo Arts Center in downtown Pueblo, or the state fairgrounds.⁹⁵

Eight teams (down from the original vision of twenty) were scheduled to compete: four from the U.S. Southwest, and four from Mexico. The U.S. teams hailed from Pueblo and Denver, whose members rode as a combined Colorado team, as well as from Sonol, California; Del Rio, Texas (the reigning US champions); and Phoenix, Arizona. The Mexican teams were to come from León, Guanajuato (the reigning Mexican champions); the sister city of Puebla, Puebla; and two from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. As the events neared, however, the Juárez teams telegraphed to announce they were unable to cross the

border due to quarantines on their horses imposed by Mexico.⁹⁶ Thus, competitors were reduced still further to six teams, including just two from Mexico. Audiences were relatively small at the daily events, never numbering more than 150 persons. Yet Mexican and U.S. dignitaries and businessmen were consistently among them. Finally, after several days of competition, the Phoenix team, apparently to everyone's surprise, emerged as the victors. The Phoenix team defeated not only the Colorado and California teams, but also the reigning Mexican champs from Guanajuato and those from Texas, who were characterized as being "over-confident."⁹⁷

The Pueblo and Denver joint team scored low in the competitions, which they attributed to the youth of their organizations as well as the unavailability of year-round instructors from Mexico. Yet they believed they had made a "respectable showing" and earned the respect of their Mexican peers. They chalked up the experience as a crucial opportunity to learn about charrería from teams across the U.S. Southwest, including places like California and Texas where charrería was more established, and of course from the Mexican charros. Pueblo association member Gabby Granillo reported: "We learned more about charreada tonight from Puebla and León that we couldn't have learned in 50 years by ourselves." He remained optimistic that the Pueblo charros would continue to improve: "Pueblo will close the gap with the Mexican teams. We will be able to compete on the same level next year."⁹⁸

The International Charro Congress and Competition of the bicentennial year was a landmark achievement in other ways, too. It succeeded in shifting southern Colorado's prevailing public history narratives to include the charro and the vaquero, and it united Hispanos with Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and Mexican immigrants in ways that would have been unlikely a decade before. The Pueblo charros thus successfully cultivated a stronger sense of shared cultural heritage and shared racial identity to guide ethnic Mexicans' pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable American public sphere.

A Failed Bronze

In Denver, a city with longer and more deeply entrenched histories of white supremacy, the charro was less successful as a unifying figure for accessing public institutions, at least with regards to the

transformation of public art. This became apparent in the failed effort, led by Hispano and Mexican American politicians, to install a bronze charro statue on the state capitol grounds at Denver's civic center. The project struggled not only with funding and the lack of material support from public agencies, but also because of the fraught nature of political relationships between Hispanos and Chicanos, who disagreed on tactics for transforming urban public life.

In 1981, state senator Polly Baca Barragán, a Democrat representing the Adams County suburb of Thornton (near the Denver charros' lienzo), and state representative Richard Castro, a Democrat representing Denver's Westside, co-sponsored a senate resolution allowing for the installation of a charro statue on Capitol Grounds as a tribute to the state's Hispanic people. Both Baca Barragán and Castro traced their roots to the Hispano Homeland and were well connected with members of the charro associations. Baca Barragán, for example, grew up in Weld County, Colorado and was a descendant of Spanish colonists; she had served on the board of directors for LARASA alongside Lena Archuleta. Castro grew up in Walsenburg, Colorado and worked as a migrant laborer until moving to Denver for college and community service work. Both Baca Barragán and Castro had also been affiliated with and influenced by Chicano Movement politics, though both eschewed militant tactics of direct action and instead valued working within institutions in order to transform them. Over the years, these positions had put them, especially Castro, at odds with more radical factions of the movement.⁹⁹ In this context, they saw the charro statue as a unifying symbol around which Hispanos, Chicanos, and Anglos in Colorado might cohere. The twenty-foot bronze was to be installed on State Capitol Grounds, on the block between Colfax and 14th avenues bounded by Lincoln and Broadway streets. Their resolution passed both houses unanimously, though no public funding was provided.¹⁰⁰

A committee headed by Denver businessman and Hispano Gary Archuleta selected local artist Emmanuel Martínez to create the sculpture. By the time of the commission, Martínez had become well known for his artistic contributions to the Chicano movement and the vernacular landscapes of Denver's Chicano and Black neighborhoods. He, too, had deep roots in the Chicano Movement: he had produced pamphlets, flyers, and logos for the Crusade for Justice and had filled the walls of the CfJ's Denver

headquarters and other city buildings with murals. Martínez had also organized with Cesar Chavez in California and traveled to Mexico to study with renowned muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros. By the time of the commission for the charro sculpture, however, Martínez's relationship to the movement had become strained. Despite his artistic and organizing contributions, Martínez remained persistently poor, a fact he could not reconcile with the movement's stated goals of economic justice and the exalted nature of many of his male colleagues. After a lawyer stole the commission for one of his paintings, Martínez stepped back from the movement and entered an "entrepreneurial period," investing in real estate as well as several businesses. He worked on the charro statue during this period of reassessment and reinvention.¹⁰¹

Martínez's approach to the charro statue reflected his changing understanding of Chicano identity politics and his growing reluctance to produce art on behalf of the movement. Martínez deliberately chose to cast an anonymous charro, noting: "Emiliano Zapata was one of the best charros around. But I didn't do Pancho Villa or Zapata because it would become a political thing."¹⁰² Surely part of Martínez's design choice derived from his alienation from the Chicano Movement. But Martínez may also have been referring to the controversy that had erupted earlier that year in Tucson, when a professional association of Mexican journalists gave a 14-foot statue of Pancho Villa, mounted on a horse, to the city. Many in Tucson's Mexican American community, especially immigrants and working-class people, welcomed the Villa statue. But civic elites and business people – both Anglo and Mexican American – were loathe to center a revolutionary working-class Mexican hero in downtown Tucson's public art landscape. Tucson's business elite quickly commissioned a second – and much larger – statue of the Spanish Franciscan missionary Eusebio Kino, which they installed just a few miles away from the Villa statue in 1989. The affair exposed the economic and ideological fault lines amongst ethnic Mexicans in Tucson, especially in relationship to histories of Spanish colonialism and Mexican migration, which were in some ways remarkably similar to those in Denver. Surely Martínez was aware of this fraught political climate when he chose to cast an anonymous charro for the Colorado state capitol.¹⁰³

Despite Martínez's artistic renown and his attempts at political neutrality, however, the Colorado charro statue was never built. Certainly, there were initial steps forward. Martínez worked on the statue throughout the summer and fall of 1981, and in September, as part of the kick-off for that year's Hispanic Heritage Week, he unveiled a two-foot model during a short ceremony at the Capitol Building.¹⁰⁴ However, Martínez never had a chance to complete the full-scale statue. The primary issue seems to have been funding. The statue was estimated to cost \$125,000, which was to be funded entirely through private contributions; the state made no investment of public funds, and private donors did not support the project. Perhaps the effort was not well organized or publicized, or perhaps Colorado's economic decline in the mid-1980s made money tight for working families. Or maybe the figure of the charro simply did not resonate with enough of Denver's ethnic Mexican community, who remained fractured in their ethnic identifications despite the hard work of the charro associations and other civic leaders to unify them. Regardless, when the money failed to materialize, the charro statue was abandoned.

Just a few years later, another statue honoring Colorado's Hispanic peoples was successfully installed in the very same location once reserved for the failed charro statue. This statue, which was also crafted by Emmanuel Martínez, honored Joe Martínez, a Mexican American World War Two hero from Denver. Unlike the charro statue, the Joe Martínez benefited from ample public investment. It was coordinated and partially funded by the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs, a public agency, and another public agency, the Denver Parks and Recreation Department, allocated another \$10,000. Private corporations and organizations known for their conservative, pro-military policies also donated generously: the Coors Brewing Company gave \$14,000, and the Latin American Law Enforcement Association and the Hensel Phelps Construction Company both gave large donations. The rest came from small private donors.¹⁰⁵ Erected in July 1988, the finished statue depicts Joe Martínez in uniform, running with a Browning automatic rifle in his hands. Thus, the Mexican American military hero – not the charro – became the more effective means for unifying Denver's diverse ethnic Mexicans and appealing to the state's white business interests in order to create a more inclusive urban public art landscape.

The failure of Denver's charro statue reflected a broader issue: the decline of charrería in Colorado. Throughout the 1970s and early '80s, members of the Pueblo and Denver charro associations continued to travel across the US Southwest and Mexico for competitions and performances, and in 1983, the Pueblo Charro Association again secured a major achievement when it hosted the U.S. National Charro Championships.¹⁰⁶ But by the mid-1980s, Colorado's charro associations were struggling to exist. As many of the founders became elderly and died, few young people stepped in to take their place. The demise of the most visible aspects of the Chicano Movement, which had centered land struggles and Mexican culture, was partly to blame, as was the fragile attachment to Mexican history and cultural nationalism in a region still dominated by U.S.-born Hispanos.

Economic changes in Colorado also played a role. Ron Codina, who had served as president of the Pueblo Charro Association from 1979 to 1985, attributed the decline of his organization to economic restructuring in Pueblo. The city's largest employer, Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I), made many layoffs and closed numerous plants during the 1980s. Although these processes impacted the entire region, they were especially hard-hitting in southern Colorado and among the firm's ethnic Mexican unionized workforce. In Pueblo, two-thirds of the CF&I workforce, or roughly 3,500 people, lost their jobs; many of those workers were members of the charro association. "It ended about the time the mill went down," Codina recalled. "Some of the guys had to go out of town to work. It's an expensive sport."¹⁰⁷ Although the City and County of Pueblo attracted some new industry, including light manufacturing and tourism, the Hispano and Mexican American men and women who had worked at the plant, sometimes for decades, had to reinvent their livelihoods, families, and communities wholesale, including through regional migration.¹⁰⁸ For Codina, the loss of the area's charro association was palpable. "I do miss those days," he told a reporter from the *Pueblo Chieftain*. "There was a camaraderie. Birthdays, anniversaries – we'd celebrate them at the arena on 33rd Lane; we'd have a barbecue. There's not much left there now."¹⁰⁹ Not until the early 2000s, when Mexican migration to Colorado expanded, would charrería experience resurgence in the state.¹¹⁰

Even so, the charro associations in Denver and Pueblo made important inroads as they worked to create a more equitable public sphere in Colorado during the 1970s and '80s. They did so in ways that honored the homegrown cultural geography of the region – its status as a dynamic, constantly evolving Hispano homeland – while also nurturing workable relationships with members of Colorado's Chicano Movement and new forms of transnational connectivity with Mexico. Though structural inequality and segregation remained pervasive, especially in Denver, the cumulative effect was the creation of a moderately more inclusive public sphere in the realms of education, history, and art. Their counterparts in Los Angeles were working toward similar ends, with a focus on the claiming of suburban public space and the transformation of racial geographies.

Notes

¹ Máximo Virgil, “Mexican American Women Excel: La Charreada,” *La Luz*, November 1978, 13-15.

² Nancy MacLean, “The Civil Rights Act and the Transformation of Mexican American Identity and Politics,” *Berkeley La Raza Law Journal* 18 (2007), 124. See also Carlos K. Blanton, “George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement, 1930-1960,” *Journal of Southern History* 72, no. 3 (2006): 569-604; Neil Foley, “Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian Pact with Whiteness,” in *Reflexiones: New Directions in Mexican American Studies*, ed. Neil Foley (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Ariela J. Gross, “‘The Caucasian Cloak’: Mexican Americans and the Politics of Whiteness in the Twentieth-Century Southwest,” *Georgetown Law Journal* 95, no. 2 (2007): 337–92; Danielle Olden, “Becoming Minority: Mexican Americans, Race, and the Legal Struggle for Educational Equity in Denver, Colorado,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 48 (2017): 43-66.

³ As historian Charles Montgomery has argued, in New Mexico, “even in the heyday of the Chicano movement, the belief that Spanish-speaking people were culturally Spanish, not Mexican or Indian, was never in question. The spirit of *chicanismo*, so strong in Texas and California, could not dislodge a Spanish colonial legacy in New Mexico that seemed to reach back to 1598.” Charles Montgomery, *The Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico’s Upper Rio Grande* (University of California Press, 2002), xii. See also Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Richard Nostrand, *The Hispano Homeland* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

⁴ Fawn-Amber Montoya, “From Mexicans to Citizens: Colorado Fuel and Iron’s Representation of Nuevo Mexicans, 1901-1919,” *Journal of the West* 45, no. 4 (2006): 29-35; Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, 107-126.

⁵ Although Denver and Pueblo attracted substantial numbers of Mexican migrants during and after the Mexican revolution, they were far fewer than those received by cities in Texas and California and always

outnumbered by Hispano migrants from rural villages in New Mexico and southern Colorado. Nostrand, *Hispano Homeland*, 164.

⁶ In Denver, as manufacturing work increased in the build-up to World War Two, Hispano and Mexican immigrant sugar beet workers who had long wintered in the city began to settle there permanently, while in Pueblo, the opening of the Army Depot in 1942 and the ramping up of production at Colorado Fuel and Iron, the city's largest employer, propelled both Hispano and Mexican urbanization. Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*; Donald W. Meinig, *Southwest: Three Peoples in Geographic Change, 1600-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 55-56; David Sandoval, *Spanish/Mexican Legacy of Latinos in Pueblo County* (Pueblo City-County Library District, 2012), 61.

⁷ Nostrand, *Hispano Homeland*, 208-209.

⁸ One study found that "Chicano" was a very weak identity among Denver's Hispanic voters in the 1970s, and that they expressed significantly more moderate, even conservative viewpoints than the city's African American population, particularly with regards to direct action tactics and violence. Nicholas P. Lovrich, Jr. and Otwin Marenin, "A Comparison of Black and Mexican American Voters in Denver: Assertive versus Acquiescent Political Orientations and Voting Behavior in an Urban Electorate," *The Western Political Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1976): 284-294; see also Rodney Hero, "Hispanics in Urban Government and Politics: Some Findings, Comparisons and Implications," *The Western Political Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1990), 403-414.

⁹ Carl Abbott, "Suburb and City: Changing Patterns of Socioeconomic Status in Metropolitan Denver since 1940," *Social Science History* 2, no. 1 (1977): 53-71; Carl Abbott, "Plural Society in Colorado: Ethnic Relations in the Twentieth Century," *Phylon* 39, no. 3 (1978): 250-260; Vincent de Baca, ed., *La Gente: Hispano History and Life in Colorado* (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 1998); Denver Area Welfare Council, *The Spanish-American Population of Denver: An Exploratory Survey* (July, 1950); Denver Unity Council, *The Spanish-Speaking Population of Denver: Housing, Employment, Health, Recreation, Employment* (Denver, CO, 1946).

¹⁰ In their new urban environments, Hispanos created public art celebrating rural life, produced folk music remembering the *acequias* of their home villages, and used birth and burial practices to remain connected with their villages of origin. Interest in charros and charrería developed within this larger pattern of what geographer Jeffrey Smith has called “rural place attachment.” Jeffrey Smith, “Rural Place Attachment in Hispano Urban Centers,” *Geographical Review* 92, no. 3 (2002): 432-451. But rural place attachment was more than just sentimental nostalgia; it also expressed an active political problem. Unlike other parts of what became the U.S. Southwest, most of the Spanish and Mexican land-grants in New Mexico and Colorado rested on complex arrangements of communal property and usufructuary rights. After US conquest, as much as 80 percent of those land grants were lost through taxation, litigation, and fraud. By the 1960s, Hispanos were struggling to reclaim and assert their rights to what was left. In 1965, a Colorado district court dealt a crushing blow by extinguishing communal land rights on the massive Beaubien and Miranda land grant in southern Colorado. Hispano villagers fought this decision through lawsuits, direct actions, grassroots organizing, and violence that lasted well into the twenty-first century (and eventually resulted in the Colorado Supreme Court’s 2002 restoration of communal rights on the grant). At the same time, activist Reies López Tijerina was leading a grassroots effort to restore land-grants in New Mexico to the descendants of their Spanish and Mexican owners. Urban Hispanos in places like Denver and Pueblo were intimately aware of these land-based struggles, which impacted the livelihoods and futures of their own families. In this context, many Hispanos rightly saw the charro as a figure that represented histories of land ownership and economic self-sufficiency, even if he had only a vague relation to the agrarian practices of their historic homeland. On the making of Spanish and Mexican land-grants, see Harold Dunham, “Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in the Southwest,” (pp. 43-63) and Charles Vigil, “Mexican Land Grants in Colorado,” (pp. 65-77), both in *The Hispanic Contribution to the State of Colorado*, ed. José de Onís (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1976). On the struggles by Hispanos to retain and reclaim their land, see David Correia, *Properties of Violence: Law and Land Grant Struggle in Northern New Mexico* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013); Nicki M. Gonzales, “‘Sin Tierra, No Hay Libertad’: The Land Rights Council and the Battle for La Sierra, San Luis, Colorado,

1863-2002” (PhD diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2007); Maria Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West, 1840-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Tom I. Romero II and Nicki M. Gonzales, “Colorado,” in *Latino America: A State-by-State Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, ed. Stephen Pitti (Westport, CT: Greenview Press, 2008), 111; Reies López Tijerina, *They Called Me “King Tiger”: My Struggle for the Land and Our Rights*, ed. José Ángel Gutiérrez (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2000).

¹¹ Nancy Burkhart, “Mexican Culture in the Ring,” *The Sunday Denver Post* April 30, 1978, 16, 18.

¹² Juan Espinosa, “Spanish Empire Coming Back in Region,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, March 21, 1993; Mary Jean Porter, “Lassoing Memories: Former Charro Celebrates Mexican Heritage,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, May 5, 2011.

¹³ Espinosa, “Spanish Empire”; Porter, “Lassoing Memories”; and “John Delgado Guerrero,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, February 18, 2009; as well as the following obituaries, none of which are dated: Miguel “Torro” Torrez, at: http://www.chiefads.com/obituaries/miguel-torro-torrez/article_ce49f281-c317-5b28-9714-6d722f24daff.html; Leonel ‘Leo’ Arthur Romero,” www.romerofamilyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Leonel-Leo-Romero (last accessed July 28, 2017); Francisco Manuel García, www.montgomerysteward.com/_mgxroot/obits; José Gabino Granillo, <http://www.chieftain.com/news/obituaries/2896434-119/granillo-family-gabby-santos#sthash.qMpCoaXS.dpuf>

¹⁴ Mary Jean Porter, “Charro Art Exhibit,” *The Pueblo Chieftain*, September 19, 1993.

¹⁵ Espinosa, “Spanish Empire.”

¹⁶ Ryan Severance, “Calantino’s Irish Pub was Pueblo’s Gathering Place,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, October 4, 2015.

¹⁷ Antonio Duane López, interviewed by Henry Vélez, Denver, Colorado, August 9, 2010, University of Texas Voces Oral History Project; see also Mike McPhee, “War Vet in a battle against time to make reunion,” *Denver Post*, February 10, 2010.

¹⁸ Frank Carrillo, LinkedIn profile, at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/frank-carrillo-3550b126> (accessed April 18, 2016); see also his letter to the editor of the *Denver Post* printed online on September 25, 2007 at http://www.denverpost.com/letters/ci_6986579 (last accessed July 28, 2017).

¹⁹ Frank Moya, "Mexican Charreada a Delightful Event," *Rocky Mountain News*, November 27, 1972, 8.

²⁰ Abbott, "Suburb and City."

²¹ "Asociación Charros de Denver Colorado Presents Charreada 1973" and "Asociación Charros de Denver Colorado Presents Charreada 1975," both in the Denver Charro Association Collection (MSS #1189), Stephen H. Hart Library and Research Center, History Colorado Center, Denver, Colorado.

²² Lena Archuleta, "The Rodeo and Cattle Industry: Its Rich Spanish-Mexican Heritage" (Denver Public Schools, CO, 1973), 17.

²³ Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry," 17.

²⁴ Porter, "Lassoing Memories."

²⁵ "Asociación de Charros (Pueblo Charro Association)," American Revolution Bicentennial Administration [hereafter ARBA] collection, folder: "Colorado Correspondence, Oct-Dec 1974", Box 1, National Archives and Records Administration (Broomfield, Colorado regional office).

²⁶ Rubén Donato, *Mexicans and Hispanos in Colorado Schools and Communities* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).

²⁷ Denver Area Welfare Council, *Spanish-American Population*, 65; Denver Unity Council, *Spanish-Speaking Population*, 51-52; Donato, *Mexicans and Hispanos*, 70-88

²⁸ In the years just after World War Two, a small but influential cohort of Hispano leaders graduated in spite of the odds and went on to earn bachelor's degrees, achieve middle-class status, and assume leadership positions in education, social services, and elected office. This upwardly mobile cohort formed local chapters of national organizations, such as the GI Forum and LULAC, as well as the Colorado Latin American Conference and the Latin American Education Foundation (LAEF). All of these groups made education a top priority, often working with white liberals on the implementation of cultural pluralism in schools. Tom I. Romero II, "Our Selma is Here: The Political and Legal Struggle for Educational

Equality in Denver, Colorado, and Multiracial Conundrums in American Jurisprudence,” *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 3, no. 1 (2004): 72-142.

²⁹ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Mexican American Education Study, Report I* (Washington, DC, 1970); U.S. Civil Rights Commission, *Mexican American Education Study, Report VI: Toward Quality Education for Mexican Americans* (Washington, DC, 1974).

³⁰ Christine Marín, *A Spokesman of the Mexican American Movement: Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales and the Fight for Chicano Liberation, 1966-1972* (San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, Inc., 1977), 9-10; “History of Escuela Tlatelolco,” at: http://escuelatlatelolco.org/Escuela_2013/History.html (last accessed July 28, 2017). Other organizations of the period, such as the Westside Coalition, also prioritized working with youth and pressuring schools for change. Richard Gould, *The Life and Times of Richard Castro: Bridging a Cultural Divide* (Denver: Colorado Historical Society, 2007).

³¹ Guadalupe San Miguel, *Chicana/o struggles for education: Activism in the community* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 2013), 11.

³² San Miguel, *Chicana/o struggles for education*, 84.

³³ Olden, “Becoming Minority”; Romero, “Our Selma is Here.”

³⁴ U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, “Developing Programs for English Language Learners: Lau v. Nichols,” at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ell/lau.html> (last accessed July 28, 2017).

³⁵ “Mexican Charro Rodeo Coming to Colorado Springs Over 4th Holiday,” *Cragmor Newsletter* vol. II, ed. 2 (June 29, 1970), 2; “LAEF to Hold Mexican Rodeo,” *Denver Post*, June 25, 1972, 26.

³⁶ “Asociación Charros de Denver Colorado Presents Charreada 1973,” 18.

³⁷ E.g., Amalia Millán and Beatrice Krone, “El charro” [audio-recording], in *Cantos de México (Folk songs of Mexico): a supplementary book of songs in Spanish for beginning classes* (Park Ridge, Ill.: Neil A. Kjos Music Co., c1968); James Norman, *Charro: Mexican Horseman* (New York: Putnam, 1969); “Charro team” [video-recording], episode 102 of television program *KidsWorld* (Miami, Fla.: Behrens Company, [197-])

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- ³⁸ Colorado Women's Hall of Fame, "Interview with Lena Archuleta," (videorecording) at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N25B0kvLcCI> (last accessed July 28, 2017); Latin American Research and Service Agency, "Our Story," at: <http://www.larasa.org/> (last accessed July 28, 2017); Jeanne Varnell, *Women of Consequence: The Colorado Women's Hall of Fame* (Johnson Books, 1999).
- ³⁹ Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry."
- ⁴⁰ Alan Eladio Gómez, *The Revolutionary Imaginations of Greater Mexico: Chicana/o Radicalism, Solidarity Politics, and Latin American Social Movements* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016).
- ⁴¹ Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry," 2.
- ⁴² Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry," 4.
- ⁴³ Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry," 1.
- ⁴⁴ Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry," 6-9.
- ⁴⁵ Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry," 6, underline and italics in original.
- ⁴⁶ Archuleta, "Rodeo and Cattle Industry," 27-32.
- ⁴⁷ Chungmei Lee, "Denver Public Schools: Resegregation, Latino Style," The Civil Rights Project (2006), 3, at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7mk9j9pf> (last accessed July 28, 2017).
- ⁴⁸ Colorado Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Hispanic Student Dropout Problem in Colorado* (Denver, 1987).
- ⁴⁹ Lee, "Denver Public Schools."
- ⁵⁰ David Márquez, "'The Chicano Wars': The Advent of the Chicano Movement in Pueblo, Colorado," (unpublished manuscript, 1983), David Márquez Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Colorado State University-Pueblo. See also Mary Therese Anstey, Chery Yost, and Adam Thomas, *In Pursuit of the American Dream: Pueblo in the Modern Age, 1940-1982* (Pueblo, CO: Historitecture, LLC, 2012), 108-114; Sandoval, *Spanish/Mexican Legacy*, 70-76.
- ⁵¹ Gómez, *Revolutionary Imaginations*.
- ⁵² Juan Espinosa, "A time to reflect," *Pueblo Chieftain*, September 21, 2003.

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- ⁵³ “Slamming the door – no Mexicans or dogs allowed,” *The Pueblo Chieftain*, December 23, 2003.
- ⁵⁴ “Slamming the door.”
- ⁵⁵ Colorado State Fair Fiesta Committee, “General Information,” at: <https://sites.google.com/a/fiestacommittee.org/csf-fiesta-committee/> (accessed July 11, 2017).
- ⁵⁶ James Mills, “Águilar Brings Mexican Pride to Festival, Rodeo,” *Denver Post*, August 27, 1976, 27; see also “Mariachi Icon Antonio Águilar Dies at 88,” *Billboard*, June 20, 2007.
- ⁵⁷ Colorado State Fair Fiesta Committee, “General Information.”
- ⁵⁸ Espinosa, “A time to reflect.”
- ⁵⁹ Photo Caption, “State Sen. Paul Sandoval, D-Denver, Hears about Mexican-Style Rodeo,” *Denver Post*, January 13, 1979, via Getty Images; Obituary for Florinda Romero Gallegos, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=49382547> (last accessed July 28, 2017).
- ⁶⁰ Hero, “Hispanics in Urban Government.”
- ⁶¹ Pueblo Sister Cities Commission, “Puebla, Mexico,” at: <http://www.pueblosistercities.org/puebla-mexico> (last accessed July 28, 2017).
- ⁶² Karen Vígil, “Bridging Borders,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, December 9, 2003.
- ⁶³ Juan Espinosa, “El Cinco de Mayo — Pueblo's holiday,” *The Pueblo Chieftain*, May 2, 2010; Sandoval, *Spanish/Mexican Legacy*, 74.
- ⁶⁴ Vígil, “Bridging Borders.”
- ⁶⁵ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton University Press, 1992): 234–237; David Ryan, “Re-Enacting Independence Through Nostalgia—The 1976 US Bicentennial After the Vietnam War,” *Journal of the International Association of Inter-American Studies* 5, no. 3 (2012): n.p.; Malgorzata J. Rymsza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive: Between Past and Present in the Making of Postwar Historical Consciousness* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Tammy Stone-Gordon, *The Spirit of 1976: Commerce, Community, and the Politics of Commemoration* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

⁶⁶ American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, "Questions and Answers about the Bicentennial," (Washington, DC: GPO, 1975).

⁶⁷ "Multi-Ethnic Coalition Forms Plans to Aid in Bicentennial," *Afro-American*, July 13, 1974; Carol Bell, "U.S. Asked to 'Correct' History," *Denver Post*, September 12, 1975.

⁶⁸ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁶⁹ Laura Barraclough, "The Western Spirit of '76: The Bicentennial of the American Revolution and the Making of Conservative Multiculturalism in the Mountain West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (2016): 161-181; Rymysza-Pawlowska, *History Comes Alive*.

⁷⁰ Greater Pueblo Chamber of Commerce Centennial/Bicentennial Task Force, "1976 Charro Meet Set," *Centennial/Bicentennial Newsletter* 1, no. 1 (1976), 1, Julian Nava Papers, Box 19, Folder 12, California State University-Northridge, Urban Archives Center.

⁷¹ "Delegaciones de Agencias de Gobierno, Asociaciones Cívicas, y de la Ciudad de Pueblo," folder: "Colorado Correspondence, Oct-Dec 1974," Box 1, ARBA.

⁷² E.g., early in the summer of 1974, a group of Mexican and U.S. officials convened in Pueblo to discuss organizational details. The meeting was attended by José Islas Salazar, president of the FMCH; Ignacio Arriola, the federation's special executive assistant to the United States; George Barrante, head of the Colorado Centennial-Bicentennial Committee (CCBC); Melvin Takaki, President of the Pueblo City Council and Vice-Chairman of the CCBC; Mel Harmon, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce's Centennial-Bicentennial Committee; and Hispano members of the Pueblo Charro Association. Similarly diverse collectives would reconvene periodically throughout the planning stages. "Pueblo Bidding for Charreada Competition," *Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*, June 20, 1974, 18-D.

⁷³ Members of the CCBC's Multi-ethnic Committee included singer and activist John Denver; firefighter and veteran Lincoln Baca; Leonard Burch, tribal chairman of the Southern Utes; historian Vine Deloria, Jr.; African American librarian Juanita Gray; and Carlos Lucero, the first Hispanic president of the

Colorado Bar Association, among others. "Hoffman at Bar Helm; Lucero President-Elect," *Denver Post*, October 3, 1976.

⁷⁴ Multi-Ethnic Committee to Leopoldo Trujillo, August 27, 1974, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, Jan-March 1976," Box 1, ARBA.

⁷⁵ "Delegaciones de Agencias."

⁷⁶ "Distinguished Guests Traveling to the XXIV Congress and National Charro Competition," October 22, 1974, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, Oct-Dec 1974," Box 1, ARBA.

⁷⁷ Pueblo City Council, "Proclamation: International Charro Week," October 13, 1974, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, Oct-Dec 1974," Box 1, ARBA.

⁷⁸ "Information Packet: Colorado's Centennial-Bicentennial International Charro Competition," enclosed with Ted Calantino to Joe Cerquone, February 9, 1976, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, Oct-Dec 1974," Box 1, ARBA.

⁷⁹ Pueblo Chamber of Commerce Centennial-Bicentennial Task Force, "1976 Charro meet set," *Focus '76* 1, no. 1 (January 1975), 1-2; Marcella F. Guerra, "La Charrería," *La Luz*, May 2, 1975, 11.

⁸⁰ "Minutes of the Colorado Centennial-Bicentennial Commission for March 22, 1975," in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, Jan-March 1975," Box 1, ARBA.

⁸¹ G. D. Barrante to Joe Albi, "Memorandum: Monthly Status Report," May 30, 1975, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, April-June 1975," Box 1, ARBA; Joséph Albi to Joseph Dobal, "Request for Reimbursement, Two Fringed 3x5 Indoor Flags," April 30, 1975, in folder: "Flags," Box 7, ARBA.

⁸² "Lienzo Working Plans Near Completion," Pueblo Charro Association Newsletter I, no. I (December 1975), 2.

⁸³ Toby Madrid to Rae Hellen, December 22, 1975, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, October-December 1975," Box 1, ARBA.

⁸⁴ "Charros to Meet with Fair Commission," Pueblo Charro Association Newsletter I, no. I (December 1975), 1.

⁸⁵ "Charro Members Attend Seminar," Pueblo Charro Association Newsletter I, no. I (December 1975), 2.

⁸⁶ In the spring of 1975, the Pueblo charros held a dinner dance in observation of Mexican Independence Day at Pueblo's new Sangre de Cristo Arts Center. The event featured performances by Robert Griego, a popular Mexican American recording artist known for his corridos and other music honoring rural Hispano village life, as well as a ballet folklórico performance. Later that year, the charro association sponsored a New Year's Eve Dance, again at the Sangre de Cristo Arts Center, where Francisco Lara gave a roping demonstration and local recording artist Juan Carlos performed his songs. They also hosted a children's party and sold tamales. The Pueblo Charro Ladies Auxiliary seems to have done most of the work in planning and hosting these events. "Griego will perform at Charro show here," *Pueblo Chieftain*, n.d., clipping in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, April-June 1976," Box 1, ARBA; "Charro New Years Eve Dance Draws Full House," Pueblo Charro Association Newsletter, vol. II, no. I (January 1976), 2.

⁸⁷ Kathleen Sands, *Charrería Mexicana: An Equestrian Folk Tradition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), 66-69.

⁸⁸ Pueblo Charro Association to John Warner, April 10, 1975, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, April-June 1975," Box 1, ARBA.

⁸⁹ "Pueblo Charro Association Hires Staff," Pueblo Charro Association Newsletter, I, no. I (December 1975), 1.

⁹⁰ "Charros to Perform in Western Stock Show," Pueblo Charro Association Newsletter, II, no. I (January 1976), 1.

⁹¹ For example, in May 1976 as part of ARBA-funded Cinco de Mayo celebrations, the Pueblo and Denver charro associations competed in the first-ever charreada to be held in the small town of Fountain, just south of Colorado Springs, which billed itself "the oldest town in the Pikes Peak region." Fountain Centennial-Bicentennial Committee, Press Release, April 15, 1976, in folder: "Colorado Correspondence, April-June 1976," Box 1, ARBA.

⁹² "Charreada Schedule Set by Pueblo Charros," Pueblo Charro Association Newsletter, II, no. I (January 1976), 1.

⁹³ Ron Martínez, “International charro contests begin this week,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 22, 1976, 16B.

⁹⁴ The queens who participated in the parade included Miss Rodeo Colorado, Bobbi Jo Etter of Grand Junction, Agnes Padilla of Colorado Springs, and Dawn Gonzáles and Rose May Sánchez representing the Fiesta de Colores in Las Animas. Grand Junction and Colorado Springs are both cities associated with white settlement and resource exploitation, especially through mining and corporate ranching, while Las Animas was a small city in the heart of the Hispano homeland. Jim Harmon, “Fiesta Parade: Rich Mexican culture celebrated,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 30, 1976, 5B.

⁹⁵ Pueblo Charro Association, “First International Charro Competitions Tentative Schedule of Events,” Folder: “Colorado Correspondence, Jan-March 1976,” Box 1, ARBA.

⁹⁶ Ron Martínez, “Phoenix Blanks Denver,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 26, 1976, 6B.

⁹⁷ Ron Martínez, “Phoenix charros unseat Del Rio champs,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 28, 1976, 8A.

⁹⁸ Mike Spence, “‘Respectable showing’: International charro contests termed learning experience for Pueblo team,” *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 30, 1976, 1B.

⁹⁹ Linda C. Delgado, “Baca Barragán, Polly,” in *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*, eds. Vicki Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol (Indiana University Press, 2006), 75-76; Gould, *Life and Times of Richard Castro*; Emma Lynch, “Richard Castro: And Justice for All,” *La Voz Bilingue*, October 13, 2010; Sandoval, *Spanish/Mexican Legacy*, 76.

¹⁰⁰ “Charro Statue to Be Placed West of Capitol,” *Rocky Mountain News*, September 29, 1981, 11.

¹⁰¹ Nancy Clegg, “Manuel Martínez,” *Muse*, June/July 1985, 3; Carol Dickinson, “Power Period: Social Issues Find Expression through Artist’s Creations,” *Rocky Mountain News Sunday Magazine*, May 3, 1992, 12-14.

¹⁰² Irene Clubman, “Charro Statue for Capitol?” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 24, 1981, 6-C.

¹⁰³ Geraldo Cadava, “Two Horsemen,” in *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013): 212-244.

¹⁰⁴ “Charro Statue Unveiled,” *Rocky Mountain News*, September 15, 1981, 16.

¹⁰⁵ Guy Kelly, “Artist crafts enduring park tribute to war hero,” *Rocky Mountain News*, March 14, 1987, 7, 13.

¹⁰⁶ Porter, “Lassoing Memories.”

¹⁰⁷ Porter, “Lassoing Memories.”

¹⁰⁸ H. Lee Scamehorn, *Mill and Mine: The CF&I in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 181-196.

¹⁰⁹ Porter, “Lassoing Memories.”

¹¹⁰ The contemporary webpage for the Unión de Asociaciones de Charros de Colorado lists six associations, none of which are the same as the first charro associations established in Denver, Pueblo, and elsewhere in Colorado during the 1970s and ‘80s. <http://charroscolorado.com/teams/> (last accessed July 28, 2017).