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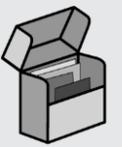


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# Today's Program



## *Migrant Farm Workers and the Evolution of Farm Labor Programs in the United States*

Textual Processing Archivist **Gabrielle Hutchins** discusses federal records documenting migrant farm workers' participation in farm labor programs in the United States. We can identify their stories by examining records from 1942 to the present in the Bracero, H-2A guest worker programs, and other related record groups.

# Gabrielle Hutchins



Gabrielle Hutchins is an archivist in the Accessioning and Basic Processing division at the National Archives in College Park, MD.

Dr. Hutchins is a native of Chicago, IL, by way of Palm Bay, FL. She is a scholar of African American, Caribbean, and Latin American history with over 10 years of professional experience in the field of archival science, museum, and public history. She earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Caribbean and Latin American history from Howard University (2015). Her research focused on West Indian migrant farm workers in the United States. Dr. Hutchins also pursued her studies at Florida A&M University, where she earned a B.S. in political science (2009) and a M.A. in history (2010).

She is a member of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), the International Council on Archives, and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). She is also a member of the Say it Loud! African American Employee Affinity Group, where she served as Chair. She presented research related to farm workers at many conferences such as the Southern Labor Studies Association, Caribbean Studies Association, and the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Her philosophies are based on the premise of making a connection between the historian, the archivist, and the community.



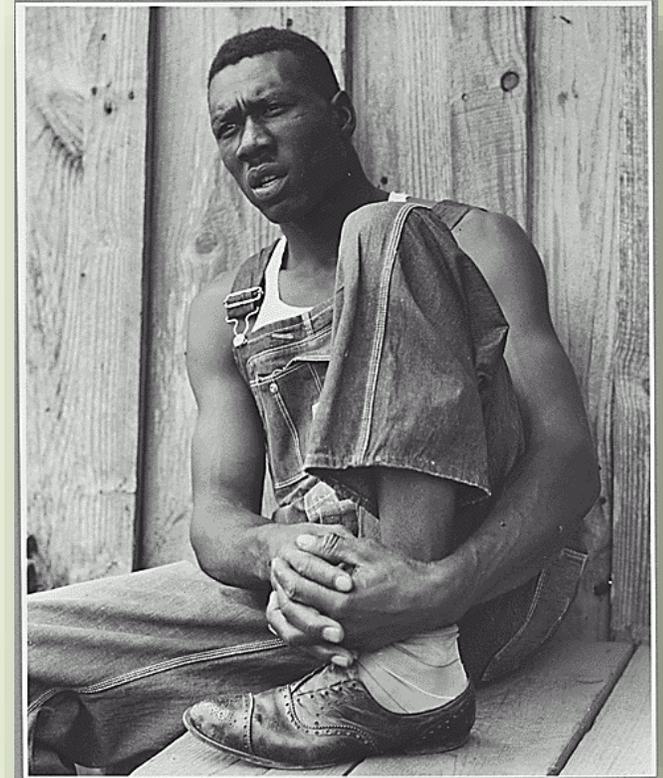
# Migrant Farm Workers and the Evolution of Farm Labor Programs in the United States

By Gabrielle Hutchins, Ph.D.

# Presentation Outline

Brief historical background of migrant farm labor in the United States

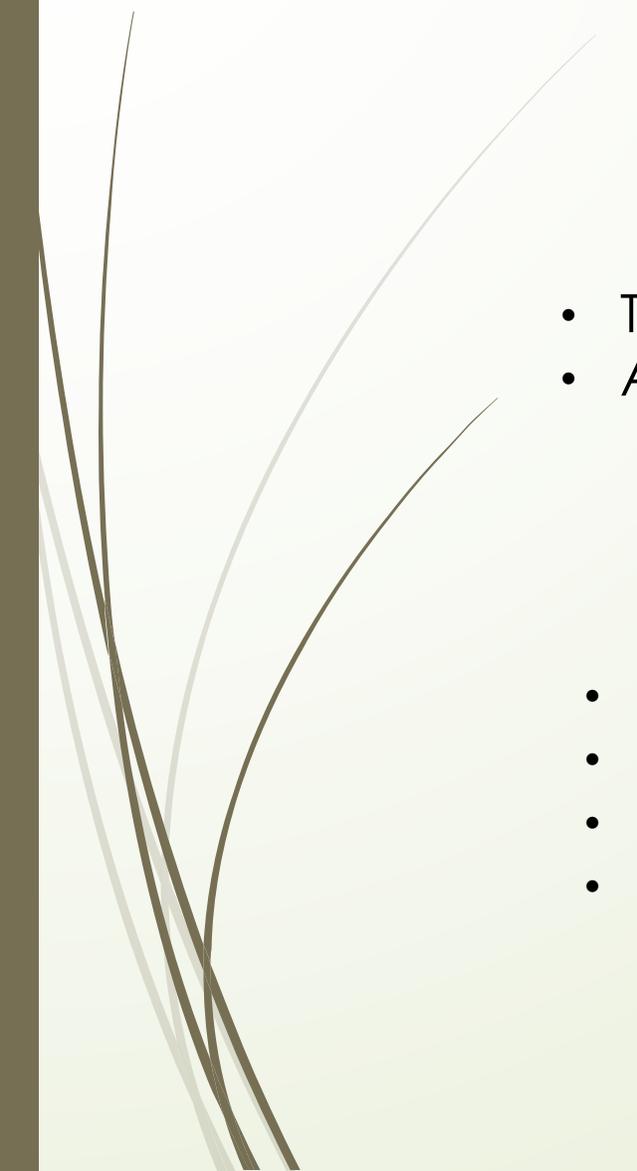
- The Bracero Program
- The Migrant Experience
- H-2A Guest Worker Program
- The McCarren Act
- Modern Day



Harmony Community, Putnam County, Georgia. Negroes in the Harmony Community. **National Archives Identifier (NAID): 521375**



# Historical Overview



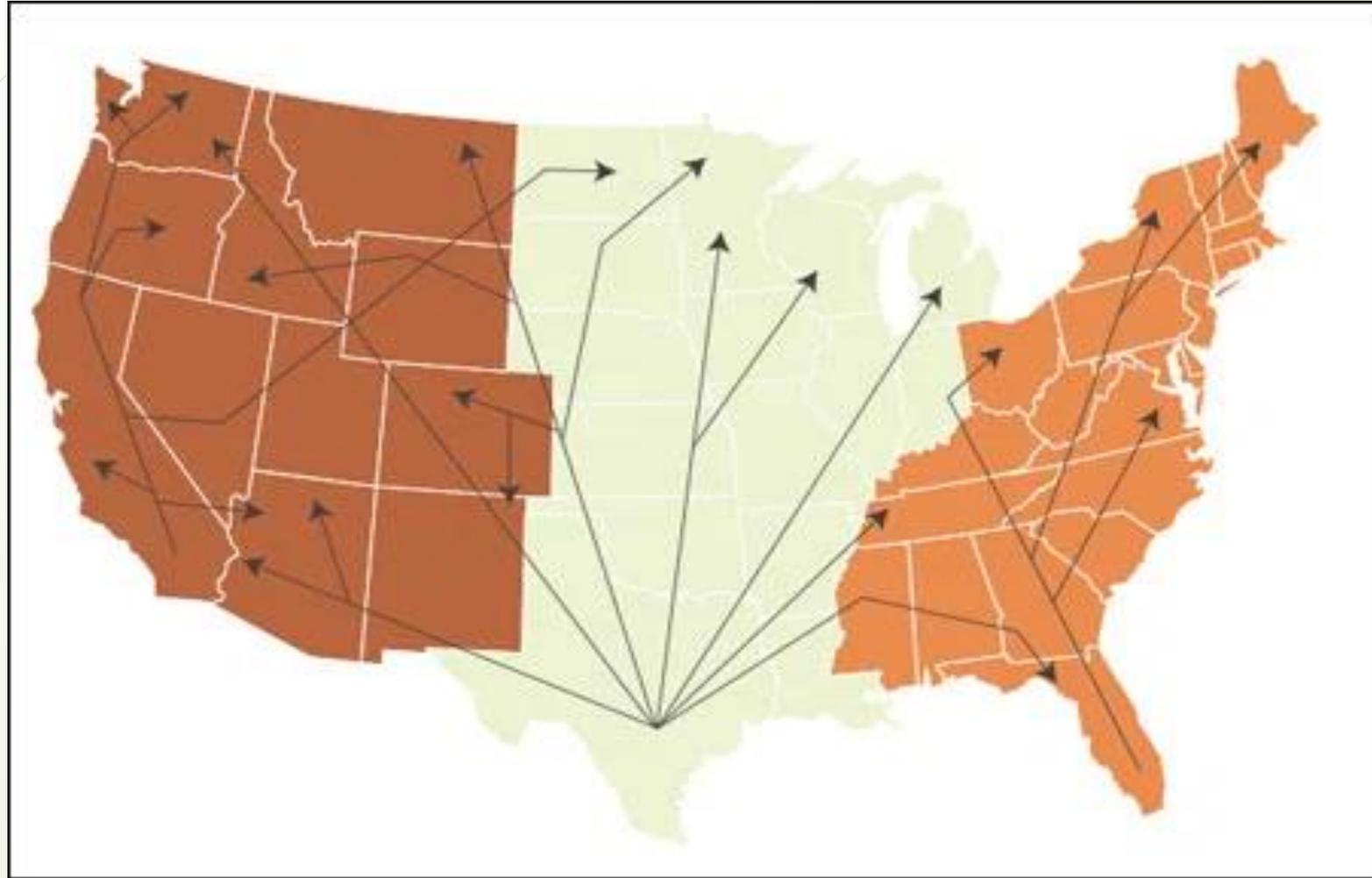
- The Second World War-Labor Shortage
- Agricultural Workers
  1. African American
  2. Women
  3. Mexican
  4. Caribbean
- Bracero Program
- British West Indies Temporary Alien Labor Program
- H-2A Temporary Guest Worker Program
- Immigration and Labor Laws



# Historical Timeline of Farm Labor

- 1935: The Wagner Act of 1935 made employment available to Mexican and West Indian migrant workers.
  - 1942: World War II caused major labor shortages. In result, the Bracero Program was created to assist the farming industry as a wartime emergency program.
  - 1943: In Florida, sugar cane companies recruited West Indian workers to cut sugar.
  - 1952: Temporary Guest worker visa program—The Walter McCarren Act.
  - 1962: United Farm Workers established.
  - 1964: Bracero Program came to an end.
  - 1964: Civil Rights Act bans institutional forms of racial discrimination.
  - 1965: The Hart-Celler Act.
  - 1970s–Present: African Americans, Latino, West Indian workers in the H-2A to program and other industries.
  - 1986: Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.
  - Present: The H-2A seasonal guest workers-Immigration and Labor.
- 

# Migration Patterns Map



Guntzel, J.S. (2011, October 5). Vital and invisible: Minnesota's migrant workers and their children. *MINNPOST*. Retrieved from <https://www.minnpost.com/rural-minnesota/2011/10/vital-and-invisible-minnesotas-migrant-workers-and-their-children/>



# Examples of Federal Records Documenting Migrant Farm Workers

- A. RG 224-The War and Food Administration
- B. RG 33-Records of the Extension Service-The Farm Labor Supply Program
- C. RG 145-Farm Service Agency
- D. RG 174-Department of Labor
- E. RG 85-Immigration and Naturalization Service
- F. RG 211-War and Manpower Commission
- G. RG 59-Department of State
- H. RG 16-Records of the office of the Secretary of Agriculture
- I. RG 83-Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics



# Bracero Program

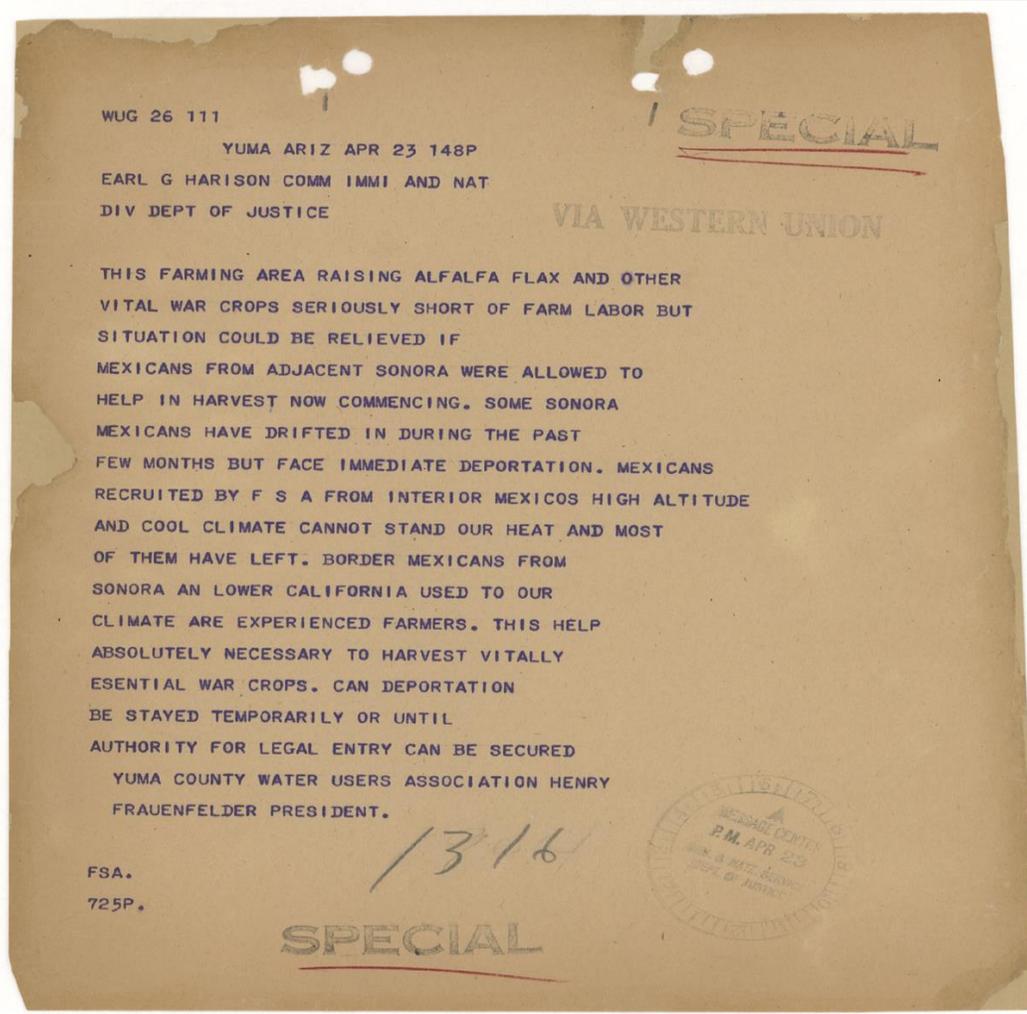
- A Mexican laborer allowed into the U.S. for a limited time as a seasonal agricultural worker.
- August 4, 1942, the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement was signed between the United States and Mexico.
- Since 1942, the Bracero Program presented opportunities for many migrant laborers; over 5 million contracts were signed.
- The Program guaranteed housing, minimum wage, transportation, healthcare services, education, and food.
- The Program was mainly operated by the Department of Labor, Department of State, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).



# Bracero Program (continued)

- ❑ Migrant Labor Agreement of 1951-Public Law 78
- ❑ American farm companies valued the Bracero Program because it assured them financial security with their crops. American farm employers were penalized if they had undocumented migrant workers.
- ❑ Labor union/programs such as the United Farm Worker, AFL-CIO, National Agricultural Workers Union, and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and others assisted in fighting for equal treatment, fair wages and other issues presented by the migrant workers.
- ❑ The Bracero Program ended in 1964.

# Bracero Program (continued)



- "one who works using his arms"
- From 1942 to 1964 the Bracero Program imported temporary laborers from Mexico to work in farming
- World War II relief

Telegram from Yuma County Water Users Association to Earl G. Harrison regarding the shortage of agricultural labor  
NAID: 7459462

# The Migrant Experience

- Contract Labor
- Transportation
- Crops
- Wages
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Work Conditions
- Living Conditions



Pinal County, AZ. Mexican boy age 13, coming in from cotton field at noon. He picked 27 pounds of Pima cotton (earnings about \$.45) during the morning. Note stamped work ticket in his hand. **Local Identifier: 83-G-41839**



Corcoran, San Joaquin Valley, CA. Company housing for Mexican cotton pickers on large ranch.

**Record Group 83:** Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1876–1959

**Series:** Photographic Prints Documenting Programs and Activities of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Predecessor Agencies, ca. 1922–ca. 1947

Local Identifier: 83-G-41476



Mexican Farm workers who have been accepted for farm labor in the U.S. Through the Braceros Program. **Local Identifier:** 16-G-159-2-N6173

**Record Group 16:** Records of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1794–ca. 2003

**Series:** Historical File of the Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, 1900–1959



Eloy District, Pinal County, AZ. Mexican irrigator siphoning from ditch to field. **Local Identifier:** 83-G-44022

**Record Group 83:** Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1876–1959

**Series:** Photographic Prints Documenting Programs and Activities of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and Predecessor Agencies, ca. 1922–ca. 1947



Maricopa County, AZ. Mexican girls bunching broccoli; they earn about \$2.50 a day. John Jacob's farm. **Local Identifier:** 16-G-159(2)AAA8172W

**Record Group 16:**Records of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1794–ca. 2003

**Series:** Historical File of the Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, 1900–1959



## Federal Records Documenting Mexican Migrant Workers

- **Record Group 16: Records of the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture**  
**Series:** Historical File of the Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, 1900–1959
- **Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State**  
**Series:** Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs Labor Adviser Subject Files, 1944-54
- **Record Group 83: Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, 1876–1959**
- **Record Group 84: Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State**  
**Series:** General Records (Braceros)



# Federal Records Documenting Mexican Migrant Workers

- **Record Group 174: Department of Labor**
  - Series:** Records Relating to the Mexican Labor ("Bracero") Program, 1950–1964
  - Series:** Investigative Case Files Relating to Mexican Labor, 1953–1967
  - Series:** Subject Files, 1944–54 Series: Lewis B. Schwellenbach, 1945–1948, Migratory Labor
  - Series:** Secretary Francis Perkins , 1941–1945, Migratory Labor
- **Record Group 211: Records of the War Manpower Commission 1936–1951**
  - Series:** Central Files, 1942–1945
  - Series:** General Records of Collis Stocking, 1942–1944
  - Series:** General Records, 1943–1945
- **Record Group 220: Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards**
- **Record Group 224: Records of the War Food Administration**
  - Series:** General Correspondence, 3/1943–7/1943
  - Series:** General Correspondence, 8/1943–12/1944



## Collections— Mexican Migrant Records

**Collection**—Official Files (Truman Administration 1945–1953)

**Collection JC-DPS:** Records of the Domestic Policy Staff (Carter Administration), 1976–1981

**Series:** Annie Gutierrez's Subject File, 1977–1980

File Unit: Bracero Program

**Collection DDE-1029:** James P. Mitchell Papers, 1953–1964

**Series:** Labor Affairs Files, 1953–1961

**Collection HST-RLG:** Robert C. Goodwin Papers, 1929–1985

**Series:** Department of Labor Files, 1929–1976



# Federal Records Holdings of Caribbean Migrant workers

- **Record Group 33: Extension Service** (Farm Labor Mobilization Program and Emergency Farm Labor Program)
- **Record Group 43: Records of International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions, 1825–1979**
  - Series:** Subject Files, 1966–1969
  - File Unit:** Migrants
  - Series:** Subject Files Relating to the Anglo American Caribbean Commission, ca. 1940–1948
  - File Unit:** E12-7 Labor- Sociological Survey of Jamaican Laborers
- **Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State, 1763–2002**
  - Series:** Subject Files, ca. 1950–1955
  - File Unit:** (58D197) Importation of Foreign Labor, British West Indies, 1949-1952
  - Series:** Caribbean Commission Subject Files and Publications, 1945–1961
  - File Unit:** General-- Immigration (Caribbean)
- **Record Group 145: Records of the Farm Service Agency, 1904–1983**
  - Series:** Administrative Files, ca. 1943–ca. 1948
- **Record Group 211: Records of the War Manpower Commission, 1936–1951**
  - Series:** Regional Central Files, 1941–1946
  - File Unit:** 533.191 - Immigrant and Alien Labor
- **Record Group 220: Records of Temporary Committees, Commissions, and Boards, 1893–2008**
  - Series:** Commission Studies, 1991–1992 Series: Records Relating to Consultations and Seminars, 1979–1981
  - Series:** Subject Files, 1950–1951
  - File Unit:** Culture of Migrant Labor and Problems of Legal Definitions, C. Whitten & R. Suggs
  - Series:** Records Relating to Consultations and Seminars, 1979–1981
- **Record Group 224: Records of the Office of Labor (War Food Administration), 1941–1947**
  - Series:** General Correspondence, 3/1943–7/1943
  - Series:** General Correspondence, 8/1943–12/1944



# Collections—Caribbean Migrant Workers

## **Collection WJC-NEC-Cecilia Rouse's Subject Files, ca. 1998–ca. 1998**

This series consists of records created by Cecilia Rouse when she was a Special Assistant to the President in the National Economic Council. Rouse's subject files contain reports, correspondence, legislation, memos, notes, press clippings, publications and briefing materials concerning a number of economic topics, particularly H-1B and H-2A Visa legislation.

## **Collection WJC-DPC: Records of the Domestic Policy Council (Clinton Administration), ca. 1992–1/20/2001**

**Series:** Barbara Chow's Files, 2000–2001

**File Unit:** Labor – H-2A

**Series:** Irene Bueno's Files, 1999–2001

**File Unit:** H-2A Background: H-2A Briefing

## **Collection HST-RLG: Robert C. Goodwin Papers, 1929–1985**

**Series:** Department of Labor Files, 1929–1976

## **Collection WJC-TFNHC: Records of the Task Force on National Health Care (Clinton Administration), 1993–1994**

**Series:** Ira Magaziner's Files, 1993–1994

**File Unit:** Redacted Health Care Reform Considerations [2]

**Letter from Walter Simcich, Field Representative, Local 78, United Packinghouse Workers of America, to Glenn E. Brockway, Regional Director, Bureau of Employment Security, Department of Labor. NAID: 296746**

Dear Mr. Brockway:

This letter is written to you in accordance with the procedure we agreed upon after the February 7th and 8th El Centro informal hearing held by you in the matter of this Union's complaints, in behalf of its membership in Imperial County, that the present administration of Public Law 78 and the procedures of the California and Arizona Departments of Employment were proving extremely inadequate to protect the rights of both domestic and imported agricultural workers.

Present at this hearing were representatives of your office, of the California Department of Employment, of the Arizona Department of Employment (in an observer capacity), of United Packinghouse Workers of America, C.I.O., and of the public.

The Union presented a lengthy criticism of the over-all situation and cited specific incidents as illustrations of the many forms of discrimination against resident workers which not only worked great hardships on these workers but had a profound and negative effect on both the "available supply of resident workers" and the "prevailing wage".

### **Migrant worker experience**

- U.S. Department of Labor
- United Packinghouse Workers of America, C.I.O.-1955
- Prevailing Wage
- Domestic and imported agricultural workers

## News from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Federal Stop-Order on Indio Farmer" (USDL-IX-59S56), San Francisco, August 3, 1959. NAID: 296747

**NEWS** from the **U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
James P. Mitchell, Secretary

CONTACT: Tor Torland, Info Officer  
630 Sansome Street, San Francisco  
YUkon 6-3111, Ext. 647

RECEIVED  
AUG 4 1959  
REGIONAL ATTORNEY  
SAN FRANCISCO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*Mr. B. Robertson*  
*File*  
*Mexican Program*

FEDERAL STOP-ORDER ON INDIO FARMER

SAN FRANCISCO, August 3: Joseph Munoz, a member of the Coachella Valley Farmers Association in Indio, has been refused further authorization to employ Mexican farm workers in a decision made public today by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Under the terms of public law 78 and the international agreement between the governments of the U.S. and Mexico, Mexican nationals may be imported to work on our farms only if it has been determined by authorities that there are not enough American workers in a specific area to fill farm-labor needs there.

Munoz was found to be using Mexican nationals to sort tomatoes in his packing shed despite repeated warnings by the U. S. Labor Department and the California Department of Employment that American workers were available for the jobs.

Glenn E. Brockway, regional director of the Labor Department's employment security bureau, issued his decision in a letter to the Coachella Valley Farmers Association. Brockway said, in part:

"All authorizations issued to the Coachella Valley Farmers Association to contract Mexican national workers are hereby revoked with respect to the employment of Mexican national workers by the said Joseph Munoz."

The federal stop-order also specified that because of Munoz's "repeated failure to give preference in employment to United States domestic workers", no authorizations would be granted him in future to use Mexican nationals.

The move came as part of the U.S. Labor Department's continuing policy of strictly policing the foreign-labor importation program so as to ensure first preference for farm jobs to American citizens.

#####  
USDL-IX-59S56

### Migrant worker experience

- Coachella Valley Farmers Association
- Public Law 78-International agreement between the U.S. and Mexico
- Tomato Pickers
- Repeated warnings for domestic workers
- Employment Security Bureau

## Minutes of Meeting of Somis Farm Labor Association Officials and the Regional Director, Bureau of Employment Security, Region X, San Francisco, May 25, 1959 NAID: 296748

By questioning association officials, Mr. Brockway brought out the following facts:

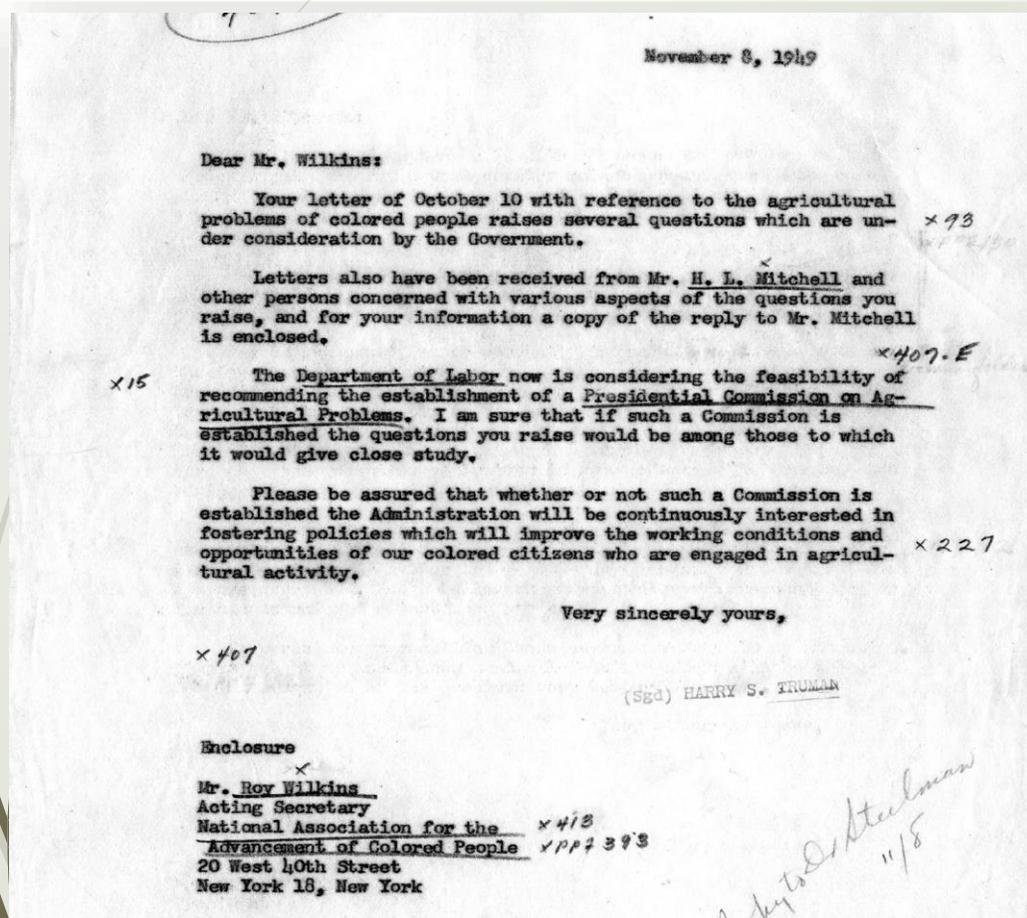
The Somis Farm Labor Association in 1959 is comprised of 73 user-members. This represents a slight increase over 1958 when their membership was 65. The low point in association employment of Mexican Nationals is in March when approximately 100 Nationals are employed. The high point in employment of Mexican Nationals is in September when 1100 to 1200 are employed. Employment begins to taper off in September and reaches a mid-point between high and low about November 15. The association staff consists of the manager, one fieldman who was recently hired, and two ladies who work in the office. The fieldman's duty is the morning assignment of workers. Because of his inexperience, the fieldman does not work with and advise user-members. This duty is performed by the manager.

The California Department of Employment refers domestic workers to the association and directly to users. Workers are paid at piece rates and hourly rates. The association, as of March 31, 1959, had \$17,000 in accounts receivable and total assets of \$32,000. Workers are paid at the camp and at other central units. Workers living on the farms of user-members are paid by those users. Ninety-five per cent of the workers are paid by the association. There is a lapse of 5 days between the end of the pay period and the time the men are paid. The association has tried to cut this lapse to 4 days but has been unable to do so.

### Migrant worker experience

- Article 7 of Migrant Labor Agreement
- Somis Farm Labor Association
- Number of employed farmers
- Piece rates and Hourly Rates

# The Migrant Worker Experience — Mexican Agricultural Workers



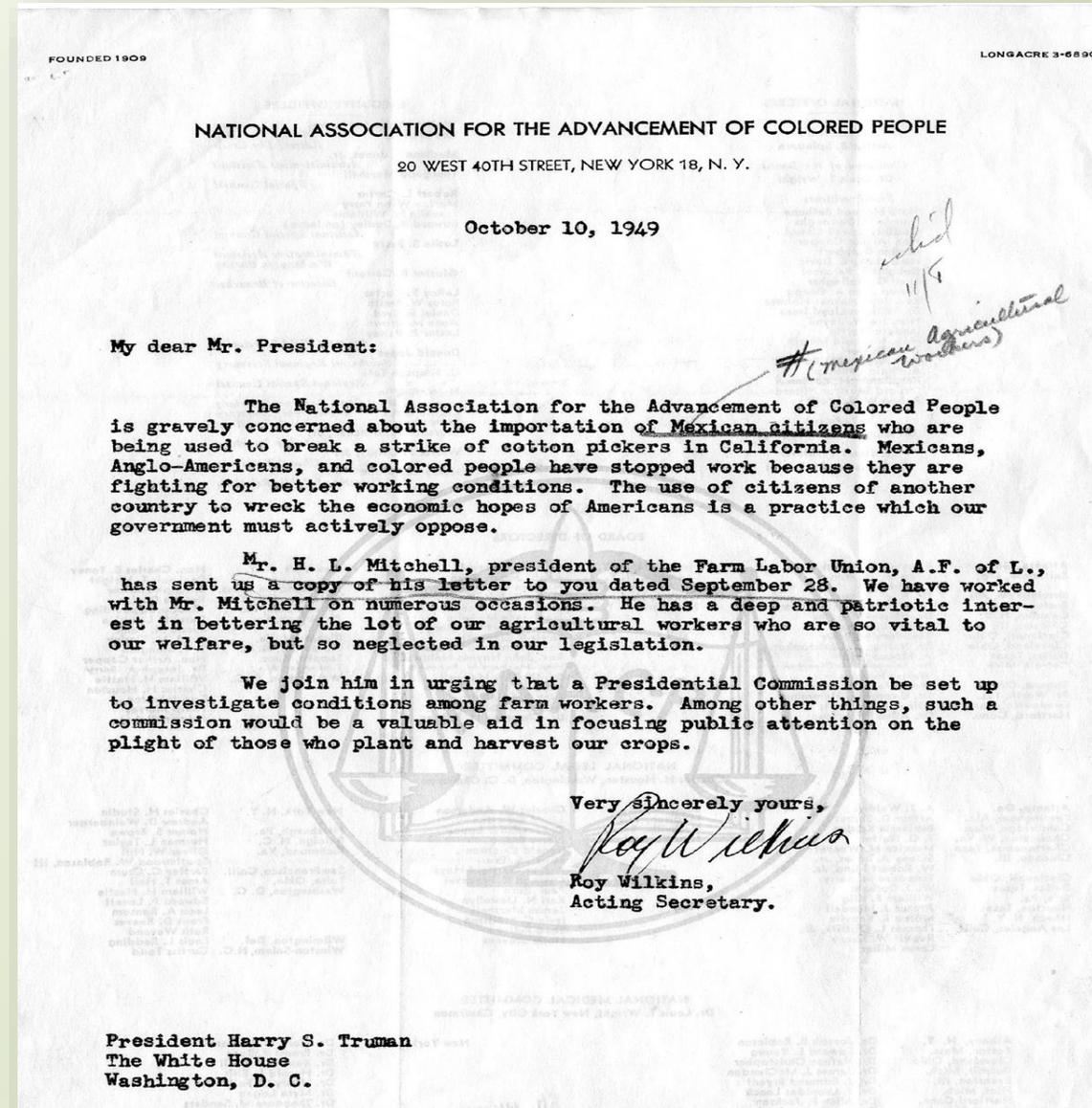
## Correspondence between Roy Wilkins and President Harry S. Truman, with related material ("Mexican Agricultural Workers, OF 407d" — Truman administration) NAID: 68866090

- President Harry S. Truman November, 1949
- Roy Wilkins
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Agricultural Problems of people of color
- Presidential Commission on Agricultural Problems
- Work conditions
- Work opportunities

# The Migrant Worker Experience— Mexican Agricultural Workers (continued)

**Correspondence between Roy Wilkins and President Harry S. Truman, with related material** ("Mexican Agricultural Workers, OF 407d"— Truman administration)  
NAID: 68866090

- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Strike of cotton pickers in California
- Fighting for better work conditions
- Mr. H.L. Mitchell Farm Labor Union, A.F. of L.
- Investigate conditions among farm workers



## The Migrant Worker Experience—Agricultural Labor Disputes

PAGE 2

ITEM 10, DOMESTICS 32, NATIONALS 46. ITEM 11, DUA. ITEM 12 - 18  
ITEM 13, YES 6. ITEM 14, YES PENDING DETERMINATION. ITEM 15, JANUARY 16, 1961 -  
11:00 A.M. ITEM 18, WAGES, WORKING CONDITIONS, UNION CONTRACT, JOB SECURITY.  
PAYING 90¢ PER HOUR - DEMAND \$1.25. ITEM 19, NO. ITEM 20, NO. ITEM 21,  
NATIONALS ENGAGED IN LETTUCE HARVEST AND FIELD WORK - EFFECT ON WORK OF NATIONALS  
NOT DETERMINED. REGIONAL OFFICE REPRESENTATIVES AT SITE. ITEM 22, AMOC AND UPWA.  
ITEM 23, NO. ITEM 24, INVESTIGATION JANUARY 1, 1961. ITEM 25, 18 DOMESTICS AND  
53 NATIONALS WORKING JANUARY 17. 11 DOMESTICS A DAY HAULED FROM CALEXICO. REFUSED  
TO CROSS PICKET LINE.  
NO. 92, CHARLES FREEDMAN. ITEM 5, THREE MILES SO. OF CITY HOSPITAL ON 8TH STREET,  
EL CENTRO, IMPERIAL COUNTY. ITEM 6, LETTUCE HARVEST. ITEM 7, START JANUARY 28 -  
END APRIL 1. ITEM 8 - 80 ACRES. ITEM 9, DUA. ITEM 10, DOMESTIC 75 - NATIONALS  
WORKING NUMBER UNKNOWN. ITEM 11, DUA. ITEM 12, 13. ITEM 13, YES, PENDING

**Teletype report of agricultural labor disputes from Huxley, Bureau of Employment Security, San Francisco, to Director, Bureau of Employment Security, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC. NAID:296725**

- In view of current activity in agricultural labor disputes believe it advisable to resume daily reports in accordance with practices last year. This report is as of cob January 18, 1961.
- Item 18 wages, working conditions, union recognition, job security. Paying 90¢ per hour - demand \$1.25 per hour.
- Item 25, 18 domestics and 53 nationals working January 17. 11 domestics a day hauled from Calexico. Refused to cross picket line.

# The Migrant Worker Experience— Agricultural Labor Disputes

The Commission's study will center upon three important and related questions:

1. The social, economic, health, and educational conditions among migratory workers in the United States, and responsibilities now being assumed by Federal, State, county, and municipal authorities to alleviate conditions among these workers.
2. The problems created by the migration into the United States of alien workers for temporary employment, and the extent to which alien workers are now required to supplement the domestic labor supply.
3. The extent of illegal migration of foreign workers into the United States, and whether and how law enforcement measures may be improved to eliminate illegal migration.

Members of the Commission are:

Maurice T. Van Hecke, Professor of Law, North Carolina University, Chairman

Robert E. Lucey, Catholic Archbishop of San Antonio, Texas

William Leiserson, Former Chairman of the Mediation Board

Peter H. Odegard, University of California, Professor, Political Science

- - - - -

Headquarters: - Temp. "V" - 14th &  
Pennsylvania Ave; N.W.; beginning June  
26-1950. S.B.

## Press release, President's Commission on Migratory Labor, June 23, 1950

NAID: 68866111

- Dept. of Agriculture-Concerning industries that use migrant workers
- Dept. of State
- Federal Security Agency
  
- Social, economic, health conditions
- Domestic workers
- Illegal Migration



## The Migrant Experience—Wages

Inquiry Widens on Job Records of Braceros/Books of More Growers in Imperial Valley Scrutinized on Falsification Allegations" from *Los Angeles Times* (text and photograph). 1/25/1963 NAID: 296742

## The Migrant Experience—Wages (continued)

A five-month investigation of reported abuses in the bracero program has produced information that at least one Imperial Valley grower allegedly has falsified records, the U. S. Department of Labor charged Thursday.

Glenn E. Brockway, regional director of the Labor Department's Bureau of Employment Security, told The Times the E. T. Inglund Corp. reported Mexican nationals to have worked longer hours than they actually did.

This, if true, Brockway said, "drives piece rates down."

Brockway said a report, a joint field determination by representatives of the United States and Mexico, has been submitted to Robert C. Goeldin, national director of the Labor Department's Bureau of Employment Security, acting for Labor Secretary Firtz.

He said a final determination will be made by both governments.

How adding to the work hours of a bracero could drive piece rates down might be explained this way:

A bracero working piece rates at 22 cents a carton of lettuce might pick 60 cartons in six hours. This would be \$13.20 for the six hours or \$2.20 an hour. If the grower falsifies his records and says the bracero earned the \$13.20 in 10 hours this shows the hourly rate at \$1.32.

Some growers who are against paying piece rates could then represent that the bracero could make more money by working at say \$1.35 an hour although in fact he could make more doing piece work, if it is charged.

Transcribed news story "U.S. Charges  
Falsifying of Bracero Pay Books" from *Los Angeles Times*. December 7, 1962  
NAID: 296731

- Imperial Valley Grower
- False Bracero Pay Books
- Piece rates

# The Migrant Experience— Work Conditions

Although the commission is concerned with all of the aspects of migrant and alien labor, it appears that the chief issue before the body is whether or not Mexican alien farm labor should be allowed free access into the United States to work in the agricultural industry. Our position is firmly against such practices at this time, and we submit the following reasons for our opposition to this and other practices.

1. THERE ARE SUFFICIENT AMERICAN WORKERS AVAILABLE.

Figures of the State Employment Commission and the U. S. Employment Service indicate a large number of persons qualified to do common labor who are unemployed and willing to work. It is unwise to jeopardize the opportunity for employment of the citizens presently unemployed by flooding the labor market with alien labor. Many of the workers out of work were placed in that position because of the existing practice of importing and contracting alien and other outside labor. State relief agencies are spending money to maintain the unemployed citizens, while aliens are given jobs. The sole reason for this practice is the wage rate which the agricultural industry pays and which the aliens are willing to accept. In many cases, the State is forced to pay the difference between what a worker needs for mere existence and what he is paid.

2. ALIEN LABOR HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN PITTED AGAINST AMERICAN LABOR.

Since the records show that there are enough workers for the jobs in the industries in question, one of the main reasons for wanting alien labor to come into the Southwest agricultural industry is to gain an advantage and control over the labor market that would deny the individual his rights as a citizen of the United States. Since the citizen worker will not allow himself to be subordinated without voice as to his conditions of work and his

**Report from the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the Arizona State Federation of Labor, a report to President Truman's Commission on Migrant and Alien Labor, 8/7/1950  
NAID:68866013**

- CIO-AFL Observations
- American worker availability
- Tension between domestic and migrant workers
- Control of labor market
- Wages and work conditions

# The Migrant Experience — Living Conditions

## Report from the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the Arizona State Federation of Labor, a report to President Truman's Commission on Migrant and Alien Labor National Archives Identifier: 68866013

- ❑ Cotton fields
- ❑ Substandard wages and work conditions
- ❑ Church, school, and housing conditions
- ❑ Homeless
- ❑ Healthcare

pay, it is to the advantage of certain groups like the Cotton Growers Association to get federal permission to get alien labor that is not guaranteed the rights of our Constitution into their employ and, thereby, setting up a paternalism that borders on involuntary servitude and slavery.

### 3. STANDARDS OF LIFE WOULD BE IMPAIRED.

In the Arizona cotton fields, the prevalent wage for cotton choppers is about 40-50 cents per hour for a 10-hour day and a 6-day week. In face of the present living costs, it can hardly be said that it is possible for these workers to maintain a standard anywhere near to one that's in keeping with what a worker in our great country is entitled. The constant battle that the citizen worker undergoes to meet this standard set by workers in ~~the~~ organized labor in America would be lost by him were he further pressured by the presence of aliens who invariably tend to lower our way of life by accepting sub-standard wages and conditions. Our country, and the states that comprise it, can only progress by constantly improving the modes and standards that put us so far ahead of the other countries. We point to the inhuman living conditions at M. O. Best Ranch at Deer Valley in Maricopa County. A trip by the commission to this place would aid it in its report.

### 4. HOUSING PROBLEM WOULD BE AGGRAVATED.

In the Southwest, as elsewhere in the country, the low income families - which include predominately the agricultural workers' families - there is a great need for adequate housing. Too often family life is burdened by poor housing. This, then, becomes a burden not only on the worker but also on the community at large, as juvenile delinquency and crime are directly attributed to poor housing according to church, school, and other authorities. If additional workers from Mexico were admitted, they would only find themselves homeless or bidding for the deplorable quarters already occupied by the present agricultural workers. The prospects of additional housing is ~~dimming~~ in the face of the all-out defense program that will strain the supply of building materials available to the limit. Why rob a citizen of shelter in order to make room for an alien?

### 5. HEALTH OF THE WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES WOULD BE AFFECTED.

Agricultural workers must use the health facilities that are available to them in areas where they are employed. These are presently deplorable and the state finds itself daily expending its medical installations to cope with the problem. An additional influx of alien workers would only minimize the chance that a citizen has for medical attention when needed. In many cases, the native and citizen worker would be placed in contact with the alien who in the past has not been afforded the advantages of even meager health and sanitary facilities. Due to lack of sanitary facilities, the communities are in danger of epidemics and diseases. All these perils would be increased by an alien influx. Experience of persons engaged in public health drives home the grim fact that poorly paid, poorly housed, and poorly fed people are most susceptible to disease and thus, eventually, lower the health of the nation as a whole. This was most strikingly presented in President Truman's plea for a Federal Health Program which, incidentally, is opposed by the same group seeking alien labor.

**Enjoy Florida Sunshine  
During the Winter Months  
Colored Farm Workers**

**Men and Women between ages 18 and 60 years of age.**

Can procure steady employment until spring, harvesting Sugar Cane on the Plantations of the UNITED STATES SUGAR CORPORATION, At Azucar and Clewiston Florida.

**GOOD WAGES**

**GOOD LIVING CONDITIONS**

**FREE TRANSPORTATION and MEALS To  
FLORIDA**

**Cash Issued Every Day**

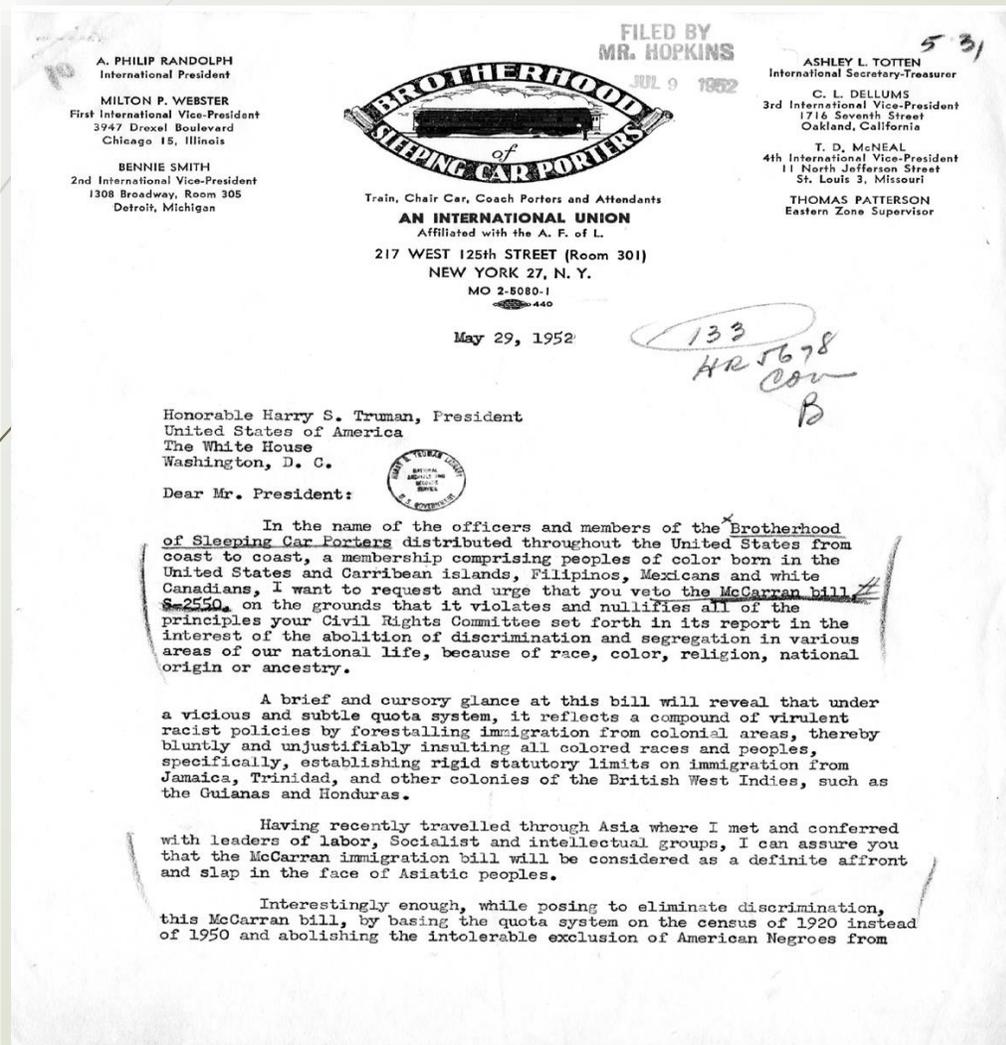
**Free House Rent, Recreation, and  
Medical Attention.**



Poster created by U.S. Employment Service

Collection WJC-DPC: Records of the Domestic Policy Council (Clinton Administration), ca. 1992–1/20/2001 Series: Irene Bueno's Files, 1999–2001 File Unit: H-2A Background: [loose] [4] **National Archives Identifier:**158701046

# Walter McCarren Act of 1952



## Letter from A. Philip Randolph to President Harry S. Truman

NAID: 68866049

- Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters
- Caribbean, Mexican, Philippino
- McCarren Bill-S-2550
- Abolition of discrimination and segregation
- Limited immigration from Jamaica, Trinidad, British West Indies, Honduras and many others
- Quota System

# Walter McCarren Act of 1952 (continued)

**Letter from A. Philip Randolph to  
President Harry S. Truman**  
NAID: 68866049

- African American population
- West Indian Migrant workers
- Point Four Program

Honorable Harry S. Truman  
May 29, 1952  
page 2.

the census for quota determination purposes, maintains rank discrimination against the American Negro population.

The affront to persons of color from the West Indies through this sinister quota device affixes a stigma of inferiority based upon race and color to Negro peoples of African descent everywhere. I need not tell you that this action will arouse and provoke resentment among Negroes throughout the United States, the West Indies and Africa since it smacks of the same species of totalitarian racist policies for which the notorious Milan-South African government has become universally condemned by decent, liberty-loving people.

Because you are making a notable and praiseworthy effort, through the Point Four program, not only to win the goodwill and approbation of the peoples throughout Asia and Africa but also to provide basic programs for the technical advancement and human welfare of these peoples, which in the last analysis, will help give security and strength to the United States of America, I wish to point out to you that this McCarran immigration bill is destined to destroy and emasculate the beneficent effects of your Point Four program and implant the seeds of bitter hatred, distrust and suspicion of the foreign policy of the United States in the hearts and minds of the peoples of Asia, Africa and the West Indies.

This McCarran bill, by striking a sinister blow at civil rights and the doctrine of racial democracy and racial equality, thereby constitutes a grave threat to the vitality and strength of our American democratic system and aids and abets the world-wide drive for universal power of Stalinist Russia.

Very truly yours,



*A. Philip Randolph*  
A. Philip Randolph  
International President

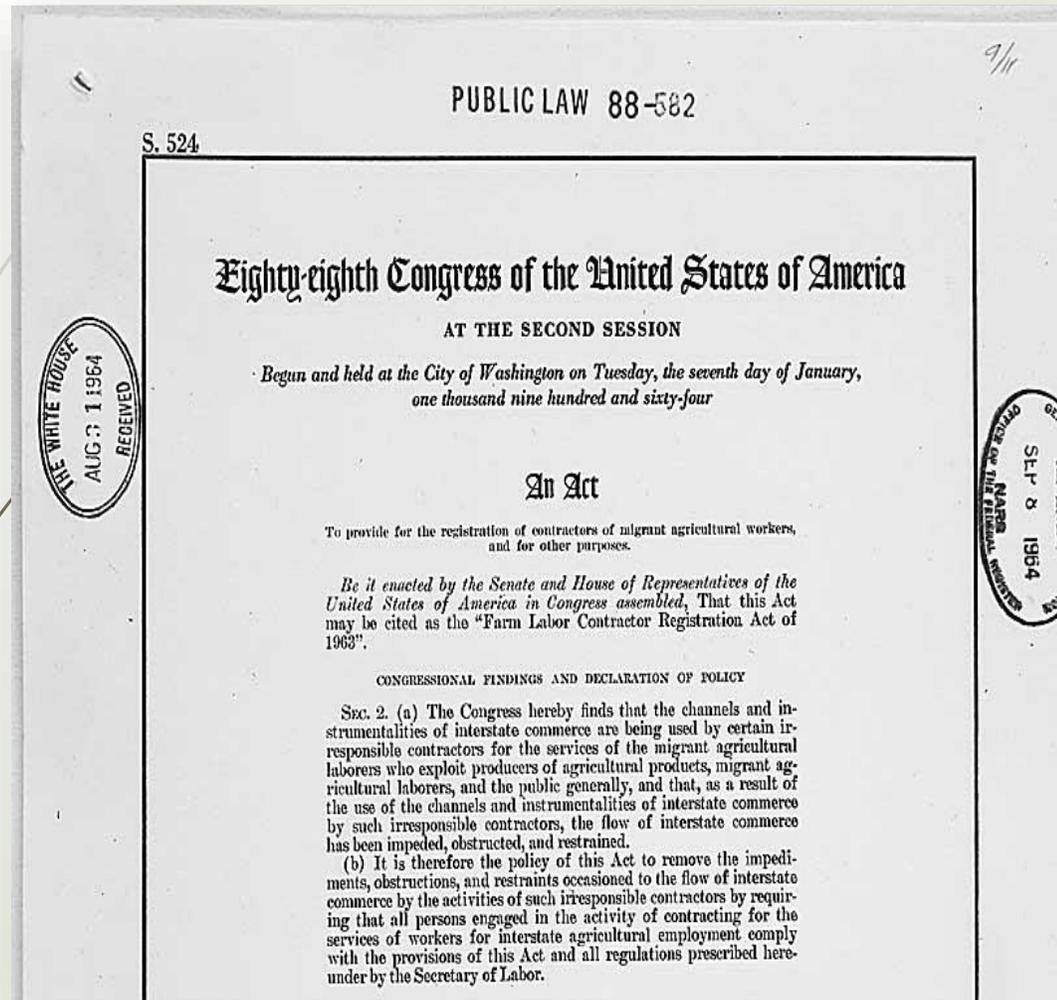
APR:bw



# H-2A Temporary Guest Worker Program

- ❑ Section 218 of the Immigration and Nationality Act authorizes the lawful admission into the United States of temporary, nonimmigrant workers (**H-2A** workers) to perform **agricultural labor** or services of a temporary or seasonal nature. ([www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov))
- ❑ The **H-2B** nonimmigrant program permits employers to temporarily hire nonimmigrants to perform **nonagricultural labor** or services in the United States. ([www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)) — manufacturing, tourism industry, domestic service.
- ❑ Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies.
- ❑ Targeted males for low-wage, low-skilled labor in agriculture.
- ❑ Benefits of the program include: savings plan, healthcare, hourly wages, dormitory style housing, and transportation.

# The Guest Worker Program (continued)



Act of September 7, 1964 (Farm Labor Contractor Registration Act of 1964), Public Law 88-582, 78 STAT 920, which provided for the registration of contractors of migrant agricultural workers.

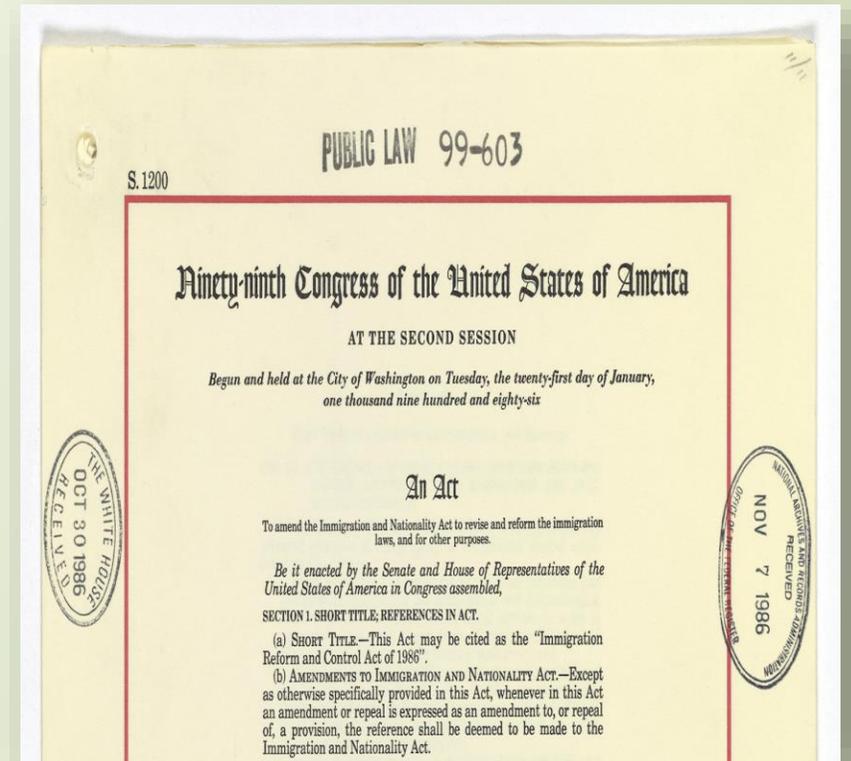
**NAID: 299900**

- Recruitment
- Transportation
- Employment
- Housing

# The Guest Worker Program (continued)

An Act of November 6, 1986, Public Law 99-603, (100 STAT 3359), to Amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to Revise and Reform the Immigration Laws, and for Other Purposes  
**NAID: 31490816**

- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986



# Caribbean Migrant Experience

Dear Jack:

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) opposes S. 1814, a bill "To establish a system of registries of temporary agricultural workers to provide for a sufficient supply of such workers and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to streamline procedures for the admission and extension of stay of non-immigrant agricultural workers, and for other purposes."

USDA believes the minimum wage provision for H-2A workers under S. 1814 is unacceptable because it would sometimes be less than provided under present regulations.

Although S. 1814 is unacceptable because of its reduced wage standard, there are several provisions of the bill that have merit. The current H-2A temporary agricultural worker program is deemed unsatisfactory by both employers and farm workers, and the agricultural workforce is increasingly dominated by unauthorized workers whose presence undercuts the wages and working conditions of U.S. workers. USDA recommends a dialogue be established between the concerned parties to effect revisions that would benefit both agricultural workers and employers and begin to regularize the agricultural workforce.

Collection WJC-DPC: Records of the Domestic Policy Council (Clinton Administration), ca. 1992 – 1/20/2001  
Series: Barbara Chow's Files, 2000–2001  
File Unit: Labor - H-2A  
**NAID:** 34427389

May 29, 2000

# DukeDIALOGUE

VOL. 5, NO. 23

DUKE UNIVERSITY DURHAM, N.C.

NOVEMBER 16, 1990

## Exposing the hidden abuses in the H2A farm program

by Geoffrey Mock

When filmmaker Stephanie Black first visited a Florida camp for migrant workers in the H2A program — designed to bring in foreign farmworkers — she found that the men were crowded into the barracks with roofs that leaked, sanitary facilities that didn't work and working conditions in sugar cane fields that scarcely differed from slavery.

Then she found out that this camp was one of the better ones.

Black turned her outrage into an award-winning documentary film, "H2 Worker," which was shown at Duke this week. The film was brought to campus by Duke's Center for Documentary Studies, with co-sponsorship by the Triangle Friends of the United Farmworkers and other groups. The film was also shown three times in Raleigh this week.

At a news conference held Monday at the Center for Documentary Studies, Black said the conditions for H2A workers have gotten worse since she made the film. "At the camp that I just visited, I saw men vomiting because the water hadn't been used in six months, so the water was filled with rust from the pipes," she said. "In the past they were afraid to talk because they could easily be fired from their jobs, but now the conditions were so desperate that they were willing to talk."

Designed to allow agricultural employees to bring in foreign farmworkers — mostly Jamaicans or

It is a very ominous trend. (The H2A) program is supposed to be used only if domestic workers are not available, but in North Carolina there is no need for the program.

Joan Priess

Mexicans — when there are shortages of U.S. farmworkers, the H2A program is most prominent in the fruit, vegetable and sugar-growing industries of Florida, Black said. However, provisions protecting the workers are not enforced against the powerful sugar industry, and the program gives the employer immense power over the workers.

"The H2A workers are allowed to work only for the employer who has hired them," Black said. "They are not allowed to try to find other jobs (at higher wages or better conditions), and if the employer fires the worker, he has to be immediately sent back to his country."

She said workers can be fired for the most minor of offenses, including talking to outsiders or getting sick. The provision effectively prevents the workers from organizing, she said. "The H2 worker is tied to the company," Black added.

According to the Farmworkers Legal Services of North Carolina, H2A workers have been denied basic legal rights given even to migrant workers — rights such as receiving an accurate written wage receipt or to have adequate drinking water and sanitation facilities. Wages for the hard-working cane cutters have been known to sink as low, after deductions, as \$17 a day.

Although predominantly used in Florida, the program is now being increasingly used in North Carolina, said Joan Priess of the Triangle Friends of the United Farmworkers at the news conference. The program was non-existent in North Carolina before 1989, but this year approximately 1,100 workers have been brought in, primarily from Mexico, to pick tobacco, cucumbers and other vegetables and peaches.

"It is a very ominous trend," Priess said. "It is supposed to be used only if domestic workers are not available, but in North Carolina there is no need for the program. There are plenty of unemployed and underemployed farmworkers."

The Center for Documentary Studies brought Black and her film to Duke to publicize the situation and to make people aware of it in North Carolina, said center officials. The center is active in bringing students to work with migrant workers in a variety of capacities including a migrant workers children's education program.

## The Guest Worker Program (Continued)

Collection WJC-DPC: Records of the Domestic Policy Council (Clinton Administration), ca. 1992–1/20/2001 Series: Irene Bueno's Files, 1999–2001 File Unit: H-2A Background: [loose] [4] **National Archives Identifier:** 158701046

# The Palm Beach Post

ATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1992

FINAL EDITION

94 PAGES

35 CENTS

## THE AGREEMENT:

■ **U.S. SUGAR CORP.** will abandon its "task rate" payment system and instead pay workers a guaranteed rate of \$5.10 per net ton of cane cut during the five-month harvest season beginning in October. Under this new system, the average worker, based on past productivity, should earn \$7.28 an hour — a 75-cent-per-hour increase over last year's average wage and 28 percent more than is required by federal law.

■ **A FORMAL DISPUTE** resolution process will be established so that litigation can be avoided whenever possible. A grievance procedure will be instituted and a mediator will be named to rule on grievances that cannot be worked out between the parties.

## U.S. Sugar revamps cutters' pay system

By LISA SHUCHMAN  
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

U.S. Sugar Corp. and farmworker advocates put aside a decade of differences Friday and announced an unprecedented agreement that will improve wages and working conditions for the men who hand-harvest sugar cane for the South Florida company.

Calling it a "labor peace," advocates and executives from the Clewiston-based company held a joint news conference in Washington to announce the details of the pact, which evolved over two years and follows years of criticism

of Florida's sugar industry.

"This agreement has been a long time in the making, but with it U.S. Sugar will set the standard for farm labor practices in American agriculture," said J. Nelson Fairbanks, president and chief executive officer.

The agreement applies only to U.S. Sugar — not to the other South Florida companies that employ cane cutters. Those companies, Okeelanta Corp., Osceola Farms Co. and the Atlantic Sugar Association, all are owned or controlled by the Fanjul family of Palm Beach.

Under the agreement, U.S. Sugar will abandon the confusing and somewhat arbitrary "task rate" payment system and instead pay workers a guaranteed rate of \$5.10 per net ton of cane cut during the five-month harvest season beginning in October.

This new system should allow the average worker, based on past productivity, to earn \$7.28 an hour — a 75-cent-per-hour increase over last year's average and 28 percent more than is required by law.

In return, advocates from Florida Rural Legal Services, Farmworker Jus-

tice Fund and the Migrant Legal Action Program have agreed to establish a formal dispute resolution process.

A grievance procedure will be instituted, and a mediator — most likely a prominent labor specialist — will be named to rule on grievances that cannot be worked out.

Pending litigation will continue is not affected by the pact.

The agreement is especially significant for the thousands of cane cutters

Please see FANJULS/10A

## The Guest Worker Program (Continued)

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**National Archives Identifier:** 158701046

# Caribbean Migrant Experience

**Making a Difference**

## 'Labor Peace' In Florida's Sugar Fields

**M**OST employers of foreign migrant farmworkers figure they have about as much chance of winning kudos from representatives of the impoverished laborers as they do of seeing the crops harvest themselves, but J. Nelson Fairbanks, president of the United States Sugar Company, did not take poor relations with the workers' advocates for granted.

The result was an extraordinary joint announcement Sept. 11 of "labor peace" by the privately held company, which is based in Clewiston, Fla., and three persistent critics — the Farmworkers Justice Fund Inc., the Migrant Legal Action Program and Florida Rural Legal Services.

"Each side had misconceptions about the other," said the 56-year-old Mr. Fairbanks, recalling the beginnings of the dialogue that led to the agreement. Among the peace provisions are a wage increase expected to average more than 11 percent, better disclosure to the foreign workers of their rights and a grievance procedure for settling disputes without litigation. Thanks to improved relations, some problems that led to major disputes in the past are now being solved with telephone calls, Mr. Fairbanks said.

Mr. Fairbanks hopes the reforms will make it possible to continue to use the foreign migrant workers, most of whom come north from Jamaica for the five-month harvest.



Barnaby J. Feder/The New York Times

### At work for U.S. Sugar.

rather than switching completely to mechanized harvesters. Experienced cane cutters do a better job of harvesting only the valuable parts of the cane and do less damage to the soil. U.S. Sugar employs just over 2,000 seasonal workers, about 40 percent of the industry total.

The peacemaking effort has been part of a larger campaign to establish U.S. Sugar as a progressive voice on a variety of legal and environmental issues affecting Florida growers. Many longtime critics are impressed.

"There are still people in U.S. Sugar that don't like the change but that's not who Fairbanks sided with," said Robert Williams, an attorney with Florida Rural Legal Services in Tallahassee. "It's obvious that none of this would have happened without his support and leadership."

BARNABY J. FEDER

- Collection WJC-DPC: Records of the Domestic Policy Council (Clinton Administration), ca. 1992–1/20/2001 Series: Irene Bueno's Files, 1999–2001 File Unit: H-2A Background: [loose] [4]
- National Archives Identifier:** 158701046
- New York Times September 20, 1992
- Sugar cane cultivation
- Housing
- Wages
- Labor Disputes
- Transportation

# Caribbean Migrant Experience (continued)

**Collection:** WJC-DPC: Records of the Domestic Policy Council (Clinton Administration), ca. 1992-1/20/2001

**Series:** Barbara Chow's Files, 2000-2001

**File Unit:** Labor - H-2A

**National Archives Identifier:** 34427389

## Increase Illegal Immigration

It is estimated that there are approximately 900,000 undocumented workers employed in U.S. agriculture, out of a crop workforce of about 1.8 million. This unauthorized population has steadily increased over the last decade, displacing U.S. workers in the agricultural workforce, and those legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 have gradually left farm work for other, more predictable, reliable and steady kinds of jobs.<sup>1</sup>

S.1814/HR15 would "legalize" - as temporary guestworkers and, later, as permanent residents - some portion of those who worked illegally in U.S. agriculture during the period from October 1998 to October 1999. These bills would effectively create two categories of legal agricultural guestworkers in the U.S. - those legalized guestworkers potentially on a track towards permanent

<sup>1</sup> During the decade of the 1990s, the population of "special agricultural workers" - or "SAWs" - legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 in the U.S. agricultural-crop labor force has declined by nearly one-half from 29 percent (1990-91) to 14 percent (1997-98); the estimated population of undocumented workers in the agricultural-crop labor force has increased from 10 to 28 percent.



“

The essence of trade is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, the poor.

”

A. Philip Randolph



# After the live broadcast ...



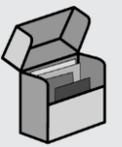
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Email questions to  
[Gabrielle.Downer@nara.gov](mailto:Gabrielle.Downer@nara.gov)

Video recording of the lecture  
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# Feedback



## We value your opinion.

Please take a minute to complete a short evaluation. Your comments help us maintain the quality of our services and plan future programs. Thank you!

Event Evaluation:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval)