

**Clues for an Archive:
The University of Chicago, Mexico, the Social Sciences and Language**

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Throughout the twentieth century and beyond, the University of Chicago and Mexico have woven a diverse and durable tapestry of intellectual crossings. Traces of these sometimes odd interactions are collected in the holdings of the Joseph Regenstein Library and its Special Collections. “Researching Mexico: University of Chicago Field Explorations in Mexico, 1896-2014,” offers multiple perspectives of this tapestry. Here are some clues to decipher the stories hidden in this archive.

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The University of Chicago played a major role in the emergence of a science for the social, a kind of knowledge that sought to measure, understand, predict, and even solve the problems of society. Needless to say, this became a long-term commitment, full of complications. Yet by the 1930s, the University of Chicago confidently echoed the sentiment of that old Pedro Infante song: how large could the world be, after all, if it could be contained in a five letter word? “El mundo,” “Si cabe en cinco letras / muy grande no ha de ser”. The Social Science department was born with the University, in 1892. The founding faculty—Frederick Starr, Albion Small, Charles Henderson, and Marion Talbot—planted the seeds of specialized research centers and academic departments. Regions, societies, and cultures were studied with the aid of a growing array of methods and theories. Academic specializations and professional disciplines were born: sociology, economics, anthropology, social work, history.

To be sure, none of this happened in incremental progressions, from falsehood to truth, from wrong to right. More than once it backslid, and more than once it found its

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footing. In fact, Chicago social science came to be at the nexus of two larger histories. On the one hand, the emergence of the modern U.S. research university; on the other, the blend of the university with larger global trends and the very City of Chicago. That is, Chicago social science meant scholars facing rapid industrial development, social unrest, economic depressions, and world wars in the modern industrial metropolis.

In time, the University of Chicago became a sort of “style” in U.S. social science—a style that significantly impacted the course of the century. Commenting on the emergence of sociology, Albion Small wrote: “[A generation of American scholars] advertised that they were going to furnish the world with a science that would correct the errors of the older and futile social sciences... They adopted the name ‘sociology,’ and I am frank to admit that they accepted it as compliments when, after a few years, European scholars began to refer to “sociology” as the ‘American science.’” (Albion W. Small, *Origins of Sociology*, UCP, 1924). Certainly, this “American science” was not necessarily at odds with the great burdens of American history: racism, segregation, social exclusion. . . However...

The University of Chicago’s newfangled social science remained also inseparable from the problem-solving ethos and the moral standards of its time: from the progressive era with its works on immigrants, to the struggle against racism, to the search for a “useful,” “democratic,” yet rigorous and independent social science during the Cold War. So much so that in a 1954 report for the Ford Foundation, (“Notes on the Early History of the Social Sciences at Chicago, Ford Foundation Self-Study Program,” Burgess Papers), historian and educator Richard J. Storr explained how in the 1930s Chicago sociologists still felt the need to “prevent misconception”: sociology was not “the sum of modern experiments in beneficence nor the formulation of benevolent sentiments”; it was “an application of social philosophy to concrete problems.” Already in the 1920s, Small proudly quipped, “we are under indictment for resting content with satisfying smug, pedantic curiosities instead of

contributing to the world's knowledge of the way of salvation.... I report (...) this, not in sorrow, but with rejoicing." By 1952, Chicago anthropologist Sol Tax attempted a definition of a rigorous, yet progressive, social science in the midst of the ideological pressures of the Cold War: "we are willing to accept for pedagogical purposes what are commonly conceived to be the values of the democratic way of life—and indeed without such acceptance we could not educate for the enlightenment of the democratic citizenry but we believe it improper to permit any value—even democracy, God, or country, or any conception of the good or true—to lead us from the path of deterring what is the order in nature and imparting to the Student the understanding achieved by knowledge of that order obtained by the methods of science." ("The Credo of the Social Scientist," Burgess Papers).

All this is well known. The history of American social science has become an established field—to which various Chicago scholars have significantly contributed: Andrew Abbott, Peter Novick, and George Stocking. By necessity, such a history reserves a prominent role for Chicago. However, what these histories have often bypassed has been the impact of Mexico in this history. Indeed, Mexico was an ingredient in the emergence and growth of social science at the University. Why?

The science of the social sought its "laboratory," and it came up with two main varieties: the community –*Gemeinschaft*-- with its well-defined geographic, temporal, and cultural domains; and the modern industrial city –*Gesellschaft*. Such concepts as modernity, tradition, the state, society, representation, individual rights, and race were scientifically articulated and tested in the study and contrast of these two spaces. Thus, Mexican "traditional" "communities" or American Native-Americans or "complex" American industrial cities, became laboratories --research site, testing ground, control sample (Robert Owen, "'Laboratory Talk' in U.S. Sociology," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 2014).

In this context, social science at Chicago became consubstantial with the City of Chicago. A social, human, economic, and cultural challenge, the city was both a laboratory and an overwhelming reality. Chicago had doubled its population in the two decades between 1880 and 1900, from half a million to a million. As the century opened, it was already the nation's second largest city. By 1930, it had reached a population of nearly three million and a half. Chicago was one of the most impressive examples of the accelerated commercial, technological, and industrial development characteristic of the time. It was also an object lesson in the kind of social disruption such breakneck growth could bring about. A destination for African-Americans migrating from the South, the city had become an epicenter for racial tensions.

At Chicago, city and social science were inseparable. Soon, Mexicans began to play a role in the equation, albeit always within the context of an African-American capital, of a city of world immigrants, of rapid industrialization and social unrest—a city where a new kind of research university had been born.

Chicago is today a Mexican city, and the origins of this Mexicanness were one of the original concerns of social science at the University. Chicago scholars estimated that in 1900 there were one hundred Mexican men in the city. By 1930, census data counted 19,362. Today there are more than one million Mexicans in the metropolitan area. Early Chicago scholars found that Mexicans in the city were used as strike breakers in 1916 and 1919. They also examined how they had been able to grow and prosper despite the 1920s migration quotas—from which Mexicans were excluded—and despite a wave of repatriations during the Depression. Small wonder, thus, that social science, the University of Chicago, the City of Chicago, and Mexicans have for long been elements in the same equation.

Mexico and the University of Chicago were also linked by the import of the institution and the city for Mexicans themselves. They were points of reference, both

negative and positive, for Mexican scholars and travelers. “Chicago no solamente es lugar donde la especulación es más fuerte, más extensa, más atrayida, sino también es el punto de reunión de los desgraciados,” wrote Francisco Bulnes during his stay in Chicago in 1874, adding: “Parece suficiente a algunos tocar esta ciudad de magnificencias para elevarse instantaneamente sobre la pobreza y dejar para siempre sus harapos.” (*El porvenir de las naciones hispanoamericanas*, 1899). By 1927, José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), then visiting professor at the University, wrote from a hotel in Hyde Park: “la hora del mestizo se acerca.” Contrasting his “Cosmic Race” concept with his impressions of the city, civilization “es alma de taller; constante, inextinguible producción y oleadas de humanidad prestos a producir.” As these waves of Mexicans crashed upon the city, they suffered “destrozo humano de la máquina.” (“Temas de Chicago,” in *Mexico* [Spanish language newspaper published in Chicago] April 6, 1927.) Chicago and its University have thus been a concern for Mexicans; from the musicians and bureaucrats who came to represent their country at the 1893 World’s fair and decided to stay, to the well-documented trips by Bulnes, Carlos Gonzalez Peña, and Justo Sierra; from the lectures and courses taught at the University of Chicago by Moisés Saenz, José Vasconcelos, Manuel Gamio, and Luis Leal, to the score of distinguished scholars and intellectuals who have taught there since 1980, such as Adolfo Gilly, Enrique Semo, Arturo Warman, Alicia Hernandez, José Luis Reyna, Brigida von Mentz, Guillermo de la Peña, Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, Ilán Semo, Larissa Lomnitz, Eugenia Meyer, Federico Reyes Heróles, Sergio Aguayo, Javier Garcíadiego, Cuahutemoc Cárdenas, Jorge Durand, Fernando Escalante, Anthony Stanton, Fausto Hernandez, Alma Guillermoprieto, Gerardo Esquivel, César Martinelli, Antonio Azuela, and Christopher Dominguez. The countless Mexican scientists, economists, historians, sociologists, and anthropologists who have pursued their graduate studies at Chicago also attest to the import of the University for Mexico.

In the 1920s, Mexico became going concern for University of Chicago scholars thanks to U.S. ideological and, as it were, imperial concerns, be they Pan Americanism during World War I or the search for a more harmonious relationship between the two countries during the Cold War. Certainly, the lore of an exotic Mexico and its revolution, as well as Chicago's twentieth-century transformation into a a large and important Mexican city, were reason enough for the University to maintain a Mexican agenda in different fields and disciplines. But there were also national security concerns: racial fears, immigration quotas, the Mexican Revolution, World War I, and spies—as distinguished Chicago professor, Friedrich Katz, has masterfully shown in *The Secret War in Mexico* (UCP, 1981). There was also the question of Mexico as a refuge for pacifists, Mexico's participation in the allied war effort in World War II, the Cold War, anti-communism... Such stimuli for research might seem, from a Mexican perspective, spurious and vile. But the fact is that a progressive agenda prevailed at the University, from the Norman Wait Harris Lecture for a better American understanding of Mexico and other countries, to the 1970 appointment of two progressive historians of Mexico, John Coatsworth and Friedrich Katz, who in turn trained a cohort of historians who transformed U.S. Mexicanism.

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Mexico played a key role in the transition of U.S. social science from the racialist perspectives of the nineteenth century to the twentieth century's cluster of specialized disciplines, each with their own methods, languages, and goals: anthropology, sociology, history, political science, economics, social work. The original single Department of Social Science included flamboyant scholar Frederick Starr (1858-1933). Trained as a biologist, Starr became one of the founding fathers of anthropology at Chicago. Together with Daniel Brinton, Starr was one of the first U.S. "amateur" anthropologists devoted to Mexico. By all accounts, he was a true character; a strong speaker, a difficult colleague and a believer in the

innate superiority of the white race. Still, he was a traveler, a merchant, connoisseur and ambivalent admirer of Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, Native-American, and Korean cultures. His approach to Mexico blended the “civilizing” mission of the white man with an odd fascination with the Indian body and its anatomy. He measured skulls and collected images of deformed Mexican bodies --very likely inspired by his biology training and by his travels to Mexico; the image of the deformed bagger was a constant quotation for U.S. and European travelers. His numerous, carefully indexed notebooks were less “fieldwork notes” than dense narratives—travelogues and accounts of personal experience. His archive also includes a long, intriguing correspondence on the subject of a boy he “adopted” and brought back to Chicago in absolute disregard of the boy’s family, and their constant demands for news and explanation.

Starr profiled himself as an intellectual broker for various cultures. Equipped to lecture before a large audience on the Mexican revolution or Japanese art; capable of translating Porfirian literature or procuring Mexican or Japanese natives for display at World’s Fair exhibits. His papers include correspondence and pictures of Mexican writers he contacted, translated, and published in English (F. Starr, editor, *Readings from Modern Mexican Authors*, Chicago, The Open Court Publishing Company, 1904). Among these authors were geographers (García Cubas), novelists (Federico Gamboa), and historians (García Izcabalceta, Emilio Rabasa, Rafael Delgado). His correspondence with Federico Gamboa is particularly interesting. In 1904 Gamboa asked Starr to translate his popular novel, *Santa*, for he was determined to “make money with my books in the U.S.” As the Mexican saying goes: “ven burro y se les ofrece viaje.”

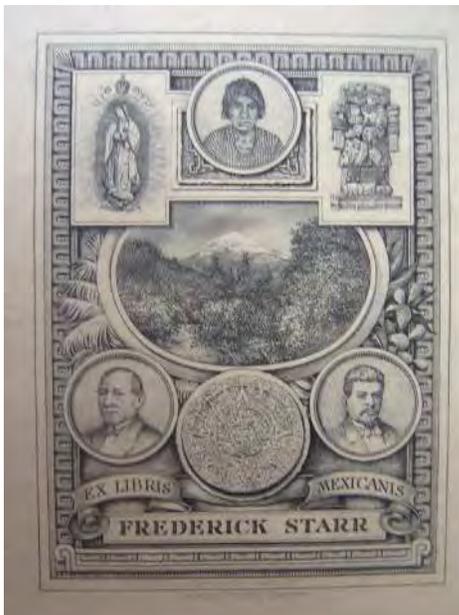
A portion of Starr’s library can now be found at the Regenstein library. It contains more clues to help us summarize Starr’s early anthropological approach to Mexico, a paradigm that would eventually be overcome by the new anthropology that flourished at

Chicago and Columbia universities over the 1920s. In 1914, Frederick Starr recalled how in 1899 he was “invited” to write one of the many propaganda books on the achievements of the Porfirio Díaz administration. Although Starr never wrote the book, his papers are filled with evidence of the help he received from cabinet members, governors, and archbishops. They aided him in collecting pre-Hispanic antiquities, measurements of indigenous people’s skulls, and the facial features of Indians. These would later show up in the various Mexican exhibits and book he organized and published in the U.S. (see especially F. Starr, *Mexico and the United States: A Story of Revolution, Intervention, and War*, Chicago, The Bible House, 1914). Thus the image: Starr and his native collaborators measuring the heads of Mexicans aided by Porfirian governors and local bosses—an encompassing allegory of such collaborations and alluring exchanges: Mexicans observing Mexicans, a U.S. anthropologist taking measures of a Mexican, a snapshot meant for U.S. audiences, used by generations of observers of Mexico as a mirror upon which to view themselves.



F. Starr, *Mexico and the United States. A Story of Revolution, Intervention, and War*, Chicago, 1914.

A more modern clue about these convoluted views of Mexico can be found in Starr's ex-libris (1903), found on his vast collection of Mexican books at the Regenstein Library. In this image he included a stereotypical view of an "indigenous type" at the top; on its left side, the Virgin of Guadalupe, on the right, the Aztec god of war, Huitzilopochtli. At the center of the stamp: a landscape dominated by a volcano. Mexico was persistently related to volcanoes, reflecting both a fascination with those surrounding the Valley of Mexico and an enduring allegory (up to the 1940s) of an apparently calm, yet potentially explosive and violent society. Unique in Starr's ex-libris is the inclusion of two distinguished historical figures: the former Mexican president Benito Juárez and the late nineteenth century capo of Mexican letters, Ignacio Manuel Altamirano. Foreigners did not understand the import of these characters, but Starr, being an "expert" on Mexico, knew better. In any case, the racial obsession remains. Both characters are included because they were considered "pure" Indians. Cacti, maguey, palms, and Mitla-like motifs complemented the image of this alien "civilization."



F. Starr's Ex-Libris Mexicanis.

Owing to the role of universities like Chicago, by the turn of the century, anthropologists were leaving behind this idea of Mexico. As the distinguished Chicago historian of anthropology, George Stocking, explained, the discipline of anthropology was founded twice at Chicago, once by Starr, then once again after his retirement. Starr never went beyond the racialist, evolutionary, nineteenth-century paradigm inspired by Edward Taylor. He thus maintained an uneasy relationship with Franz Boas (1852-1942), the father of the new paradigm that would gain dominance during the first half of the twentieth century. Boas, a German Jew, participated in the organization of ethnographic collections for U.S. museums and World's Fairs. Seeking an academic job in the U.S., he kept a very respectful correspondence with Starr (mostly found in Boas' papers at the American Philosophical Society). Mexico was a central concern for both Starr and Boas, the latter, however, was advancing a radically different approach to anthropology.

As is well known, in 1910 Boas founded the International School of Ethnology and Anthropology in Mexico City. Starr opposed the project. He knew Mexico "pretty well," he said, and tried to convince Boas that the country was too unstable and anti-American for any such endeavor. Commenting on Manuel Gamio's 1916 nationalist manifesto, *Forjando Patria*, in a 1918 letter to Gamboa, Starr claimed that it was characteristic of Mexicans "to discuss things wonderfully well, to lay out splendid programs, Constitutions, and platforms, but to fail utterly in practice." Mexicans, it seemed, excelled in rhetoric but were wholly incompetent when it came to practice. Like Starr, Boas indeed made mention of alleged cultural atavistic tendencies in Mexican students and scholars. He argued that their need to "think high and broad" conflicted with careful, modest, time-consuming scientific work. So did the political ambitions and engagements so common among Mexican intellectuals. And

as historians M. Rutsch, B. Urias Horcasitas, and C. Ruiz, among others, have explained, it was the latter factor that produced insurmountable differences between Gamio and Boas.

The moral role of social science, especially anthropology, became a source of apprehension in the 1920s and 30s, particularly for Chicago social science. Starr's approach was becoming, not only passé, but a moral liability. By the 1910s and 20s, when Chicago sociologists were at the vanguard of anti-racism and social-scientific rigour, Starr unapologetically expounded on the atavistic criminality of African Americans. He was also rumored to organize marijuana parties with his students. Meanwhile he maintained a high profile in national media. At this juncture then, in 1928, the University of Chicago decided to re-found its anthropology department,

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Starr was originally a biologist. His approach was closer to that of nineteenth-century Darwinism than to 1920s anthropology. Before turning to clues about Mexico in the new Chicago anthropology of the 1930s and 40s, there is one more nineteenth-century-like scientific clue to pursue in Chicago archives: another biologist and doctor, Howard T. Ricketts. Ricketts was already a prominent pathologist when he commenced work at Chicago. Along with French scientist Charles Nicolle and Harvard professor Hans Zinsser (all of whom worked in Mexico City at some point), he became a pioneer hunter of typhus contagion agents. Special Collections at the Regenstein Library holds the Ricketts papers, where one can find a commemorative medal, produced in 1945 for the Fourth Inter-American Typhus Meeting in Mexico City. Engraved upon it are the profiles of Ricketts, Nicolle, and Zinsser.



H.T. Ricketts Papers, commemorative medal, 1945, fourth Inter-American Typhus Meeting, Mexico City.

Rickett's research into typhus offers more clues about the Chicago-Mexico connection. In 1909, in the midst of another serious typhus epidemic, Porfirio Díaz offered a prize of 50,000 pesos for the discovery of the typhus agent and cure. Together with his student Russell Wilder, Ricketts went to Mexico City to research typhus, along with a group of Mexico City bacteriologists in fierce competition with one another. Among the many protagonists of this scientific moment were Ángel Gaviño, Miguel Otero, Joseph Girard, and Herman Mooser. Mexico City became the scene of a frenzied hunt for lice, rats, flies, and *tifosos* in prisons, hospitals, and *casas de vecindad*. On December 14, 1909, Ricketts wrote to his wife, Myria, "there is only one way to go in this job, and that is a careful... business like way." Then, in December 15, "if I find the microbe there will be 10,000 in it" (for he would have had to share the prize with Wilder). Months later, in April 1910, Ricketts wrote to Joseph Goldberger of the U.S. Public Health Service (also in Mexico City studying typhus): "I am a lucky fellow... we are both lucky, mighty lucky... when you think of the fate of the man from Ohio, we two differ having been down here for 3 or 4 months without being infected." The Man from Ohio was Dr. James Conneffe, from Ohio State University. He was infected in Mexico City and died in Columbus in January 1910. But Goldberger was lucky, not because

he did not get infected, but because he survived; Ricketts died of typhus in Mexico City in May 3, 1910.

This archival clue is about the unique cultural nuances in the collaborations between U.S. and Mexican scientists. From January to April 1910, Ricketts wrote to Myra about his fears and his eagerness to publish his findings as soon as possible. He feared the competition and “spying” of his Mexican collaborators; “An impertinent bunch,” as he described them. Still, Ricketts and Wilder received all the official and unofficial credentials and honors that the city could give. Mexico City’s institutions, colleagues, and servants housed and assisted them. In 1910, Ricketts managed to publish four essays in four months, most of them in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. These were the results of Ricketts’ efforts in Mexico and the basis of his solid reputation. The disease’s agent, rickettsiae, was named after him. Ricketts’ final transmission of typhus through lice, which cost him his life, made him a scientific hero. The Mexican government organized a pompous celebration in his honor. The Minister of Education, Justo Sierra, the U.S. ambassador, as well as Gaviño and Wilder were in charge of the honors. A commemorative plate was placed at the laboratory where Ricketts, Wilder, Gaviño and Gilbert worked in the 1910 battle against typhus. In his speech, Gaviño was as generous as Wilder. He asserted that he collaborated with Ricketts in good faith, and that he was the first to applaud his success and lament his death. He did, however, reveal his ambivalence: “Queriendo llegar antes que otros investigadores a las fronteras de la verdad en el estudio del tifo exantemático, no vio que iba a una muerte segura... despreciando los peligros que le rodeaban y sin excusar los prudentes consejos de quienes lo veíamos tan confiado.” Like any good war, the war against typhus produced its own epic, which included a heroic sacrifice and a tense but necessary alliance. Along with Mexican scientists and institutions, the University of Chicago played one of the lead roles. (See exhibit, Howard

Taylor Ricketts to Myra Tubbs Ricketts, letter December 13 1909; and Howard Taylor Ricketts working in laboratory in Mexico City, photograph ca. 1910).

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Returning to anthropological clues, the small Department of Social Science gave rise to independent departments and schools. New scholars were hired, among them German-trained Americans William Thomas (1862-1947) and Robert Park (1864-1944) in the 1910s, and later Edith Abbott at the School of Civics and Philanthropy (later School of Social Service Administration). This became, in Andrew Abbott's words, "the first Chicago School of social science," (*Department and Discipline: Chicago Sociology at 100*, UCP, 1999). And it was at this point that Chicago began to truly leave its mark on the social sciences. In a few words, Chicago led the way to the professionalization of sociology, social work, and anthropology beyond the nineteenth-century biologism and eclecticism of someone like Starr. The new emphasis was on the city, on methodology, and on finding reliable knowledge for practical use. The key words were "mapping" and "laboratory." Not crime, but "criminality." Other key words were "assimilation," "race relations," and most prominently, "community," a word that U.S. scholars began to use to translate the "Gemeinschaft" of their German professors. In translation, the word gained a new moral and normative content.

It was not only Starr's influence that put Mexico in the new social scientific agenda at Chicago. It was also that Mexicans were becoming an essential part of the "laboratory" that was the City of Chicago. They became an ideal object for studying assimilation, or lack thereof. Above all, they offered the possibility of studying "community." The Mexican population of the city could be mapped, measured, and studied. Meanwhile an array of innovative studies of "Indian communities" in Mexico had begun to appear. To be sure, in the emergence of this influential new social science Mexico was originally, above all, the

Mexican immigrant in Chicago. Departing from that Mexico, the University of Chicago developed different kinds of Mexicos through odd intellectual connections and developments.

After the publication of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918-1920) by W. Thomas in collaboration with the Polish immigrant Florian Znaniecki and, later, *The Ghetto* (1928) by sociologist Louis Wirth (1897-1952), the University of Chicago became known for the study of cities, immigration, and the process of assimilation. Based on the study of the city's large Polish and Jewish populations, Chicago-style social science had ceased to conceive of assimilation in racial terms, and had redefined it in relation to social, economic, and educational factors. Race was seen not as an insurmountable biological problem, but as a problem of American prejudices, lack of opportunities, and poor education. The methods they advanced were innovative, including massive collections of life stories and interviews, mapping, studies of ethnic networks, criminality, family life, religious, and civic associations. This agenda was pursued in different ways by Park, Thomas, Wirth, Abbott, and one of the founders of the renewed independent Anthropology Department at Chicago, Fay Cooper-Cole (1881-1961). Mexico was there.

In the 1920s, Park suggested to his student and son in law, Robert Redfield (1897-1958), that he should study Mexicans in Chicago. For their part, Edith Abbott and Cooper-Cole encouraged two other Chicago connections, the Berkeley trained economist Paul Taylor (1895-1984) and the Columbia trained anthropologist Manuel Gamio, to study Mexicans in California and Mexican immigration as a whole, respectively. Thus the study of Mexican immigration and Mexican "communities" in the U.S. became a science.

The Mexican angle in the study of the city was maintained at the University from the 1920s to the 1940s by the influential Chicago sociologist Ernest Burgess (1886-1966). Along with Park, he had published a landmark book in American sociology, *The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment*, (1925). From the 1920s to

the 1940s, Burgess and his colleagues sought to divide the city into communities—a long term project based on “social surveys.” Their work was part of the Local Community Research Committee, which produced the celebrated Chicago “community area”: 75 incompatible, largely ethnically defined, geographic areas. Burgess’ students researched the Mexicans. They mapped them, examined their criminality, their cycle of assimilation or failure to assimilate, and their community networks. Burgess’s papers indeed constitute a repository for many reports, term papers, and research proposals on African Americans, Jews, Homosexuals, Irish, Polish, and Mexican immigrants in the city.

Thus in 1928, following the new methodology, Anita Jones of the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration studied 1319 cases of Mexican immigrants in the Immigrants Protective League. Thanks to this *in situ* research, today we have some images of the life of Mexicans in Chicago. Burgess’s papers contain the remains of such an endless attempt at mapping the city—of fixing well-demarkated “communities” temporally, spatially, and culturally. He carefully filed his students’ assignments and term papers. The archive is thus full of maps of Chicago, including many related to Mexican immigrants and cross-referenced to other variables, such as crime, marriage, or religion. Paul Taylor’s 1930s map of Mexican Chicago, inspired by Burgess and created with the support of the Social Science Research Council through Abbott and Cooper-Cole, became one of the most influential (*Mexican Labor in the United States: Chicago and the Calumet Region*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1932).

A Group Near Hull House



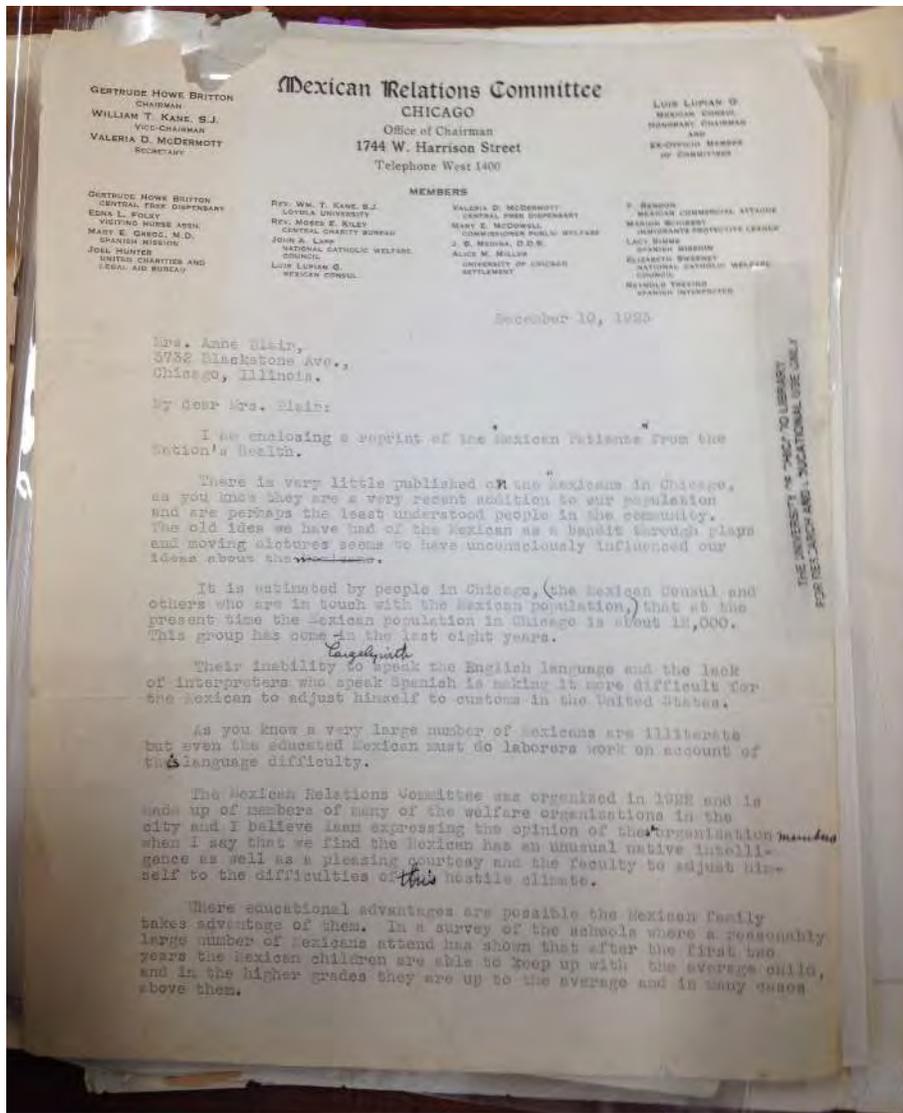
Anita E. Jones, *Conditions surrounding Mexicans in Chicago*, (MA Thesis, Chicago, 1928).



Paul Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States: Chicago and the Calumet Region*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1932).

In her term paper, "Adjustment of Mexicans in Chicago" (1933), one of Burgess's students, Madeline Kreberg, echoed the progressive position (for the 1920s and 1930) of the Chicago style of sociology. It supported the then unthinkable idea of an inevitable and enduring coexistence between Mexicans and Americans (this, while a large repatriation of Mexican immigrants was taking place throughout the Southwest). The paper began by positively quoting Jay S. Stowell (1833-1966), a well-known Methodist publicist and advocate of the rights of African and Mexican-Americans: [between Mexico and the U.S.]

“... We are man and wife in common law marriage, and no intentional divorce court can ever issue a decree which will separate our interests.” (*The Near Side of the Mexican Question*, 1921). Burgess’s archive also includes traces of the contacts with local committees of progressive Americans, some of them linked to Jane Addams’ famous Hull House. These groups included, for instance, the Mexican Relations Committee (chaired by Gertrude Howe Britton, William T. Kane, and the Mexican consul Luis Lupián). They believed, not only that Chicago’s Mexicans were intelligent and educable, but that their education was indeed a social duty.



Burgess Papers, letter from Mexican Relations Committee

Another interesting finding in Burgess's paper is Manuel Bueno's study of Mexicans in Chicago. Likely a student of social work, Bueno was a bilingual Chicagoan of possible Hispanic origin who often assisted University scholars in the study of the city's Mexican population. He seems to have known the barrios and Mexican organizations. His paper – published in Spanish by Patricia Arias and Jorge Durán in *Mexicanos en Chicago. Diario de campo de Robert Redfield, 1924-1925* (2008)-- has never been published in English. It has, however, been used by all scholars of Chicago's Mexican immigrants.

In Burgess's course, "Adventures in Religion" (1934), a term paper dealt with Chicago's new Mexican Church and the role of protestant churches in civilizing Catholics; we can also find a research proposal by Robert C. Jones on the religious life of Mexicans in Chicago. But all of Burgess's courses involved life stories and *in situ* ethnographic research. Students collected and translated life stories, such as that "written and typed by a young Mexican... who dares leave home somewhere in Mexico where Life is really sweet and fragrant, to enter a strange world full of mysterious mood and ways." Or there is the intriguing life story of a young Mexican boy who, defying the surveyor's intentions, rather than telling his life wanted to sketch the images of an Indian and a soldier.

ADJUSTMENT OF MEXICANS IN CHICAGO

Term Project - Autumn Quarter

Sociology 270

ADJUSTMENT OF MEXICANS IN CHICAGO

Term Project - Autumn Quarter

Sociology 270

*Adventures in Religion
November, 1934.*

WITH CHICAGO'S NEW MEXICAN CHURCH
The Story of a
Difficult Task
in South Chicago

Nearly four thousand Mexicans have been brought to South Chicago during the past fifteen years by employment superintendents of the industries and steel mills in this district. Most of them were peons on the ranches and farms of Mexico, uneducated, and not the upper class of Mexico. All of them are Catholic in their religious background, and it is a highly superstitious, fanatical religious belief.

The First Mexican Congregational Church, newest Congregational church of the city, is working against this background in South Chicago. For several years this Mexican group was a division of the Bird Memorial work in South Chicago. In 1932 a formal church was organized, and in June, 1933, this church was recognized by the Chicago Association. While still holding its meetings and activities in the Bird Memorial building, the new enterprise is now an independent organization, under the leadership of its Mexican pastor, Rev. Jose O. Velasco.

Mr. Velasco reports that 75 Mexican children and young people are enrolled in the Sunday School, which meets from 3 to 4 every Sunday afternoon. The worship service is held from 4 to 5, with an average attendance of 40. At the same time, a Junior worship service is held for young people each Sunday.

Interesting week-day religious activities have been developed by the church's leader. (Social and recreational work for the Mexicans in South Chicago is part of the responsibility of the Bird Memorial Church and South Chicago Community Center.) On Monday the Mexican Women's Auxiliary meets; Tuesday night cottage prayer meetings are held in the homes of these people, - a valuable, informal service for 20 or 25 men

A Life Story Written and
Typed by a Young Mexican

Guaymas, Sonora,

A few days after I had left Guaymas, Sonora, I reached Nogales, Arizona, where I stayed a day and a half. Leaving Nogales, in company of other two Mexican fellows I came within the reach of Sierra Madre, this Mountain one of the most dangerous of the all.

The Railroad track being a bit too far, perhaps a hundred miles further than the mountain trail, I decided to take a chance and ~~take~~ ^{make} a shorter route across the Mountain.

Five days later I came into a little shabby town in the State of Arizona, which is called Fairbanks, here in this Country ^{town} I worked as a water ^{boy} for the Southwestern Railroad.

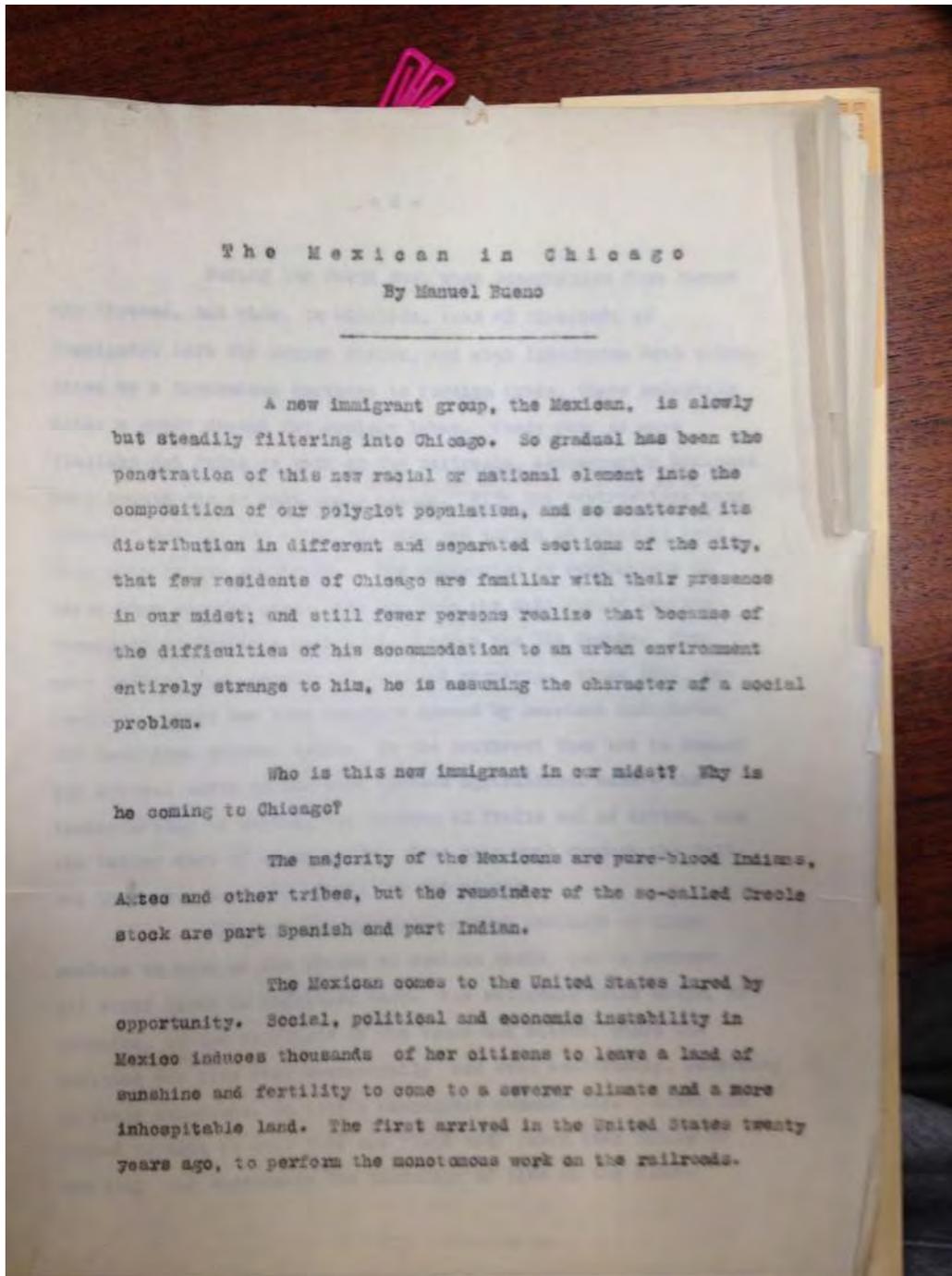
A few months of hard labor, in Fairbanks, and with the aid of a little money I saved, I drifted into Benson, of the same state. I did not like Benson ^{it was} a prosperous town, ^{so} I decided to struggle out again. Hence I went to Douglas, also, Arizona, where I worked ^{very} hard in a metal foundry. Being alone and with rules that might stop me from roaming from town to town, I left Douglas, and within a few days found myself a little more than fifty miles distant ^{at} Mescal, Arizona, ~~a distance of~~ about three hundred miles from ~~either~~ Benson ^{or} Tucson.

Within a few days after starting to work in this isolated camp, I began to get very sick with pains which

where you learn languages and all that. My mother wants me to go to nearly all the schools there are. She wants me to learn a lot of things.

My mother and father both want me to be an artist who paints good pictures and nice big pictures. I can draw an Indian and a sailor. I like to draw and I want to be an artist. Here are an Indian and a sailor.





Burgess's Papers, thus, constitute a survey of many surveys of Chicago. An output of this was Edward Baur's 1938 M.A. thesis on "Delinquency among Mexican Boys in South Chicago." He claimed that: "The Mexican boy adults in South Chicago have come from lower and middle class backgrounds. Few of them are peons with a rural background and

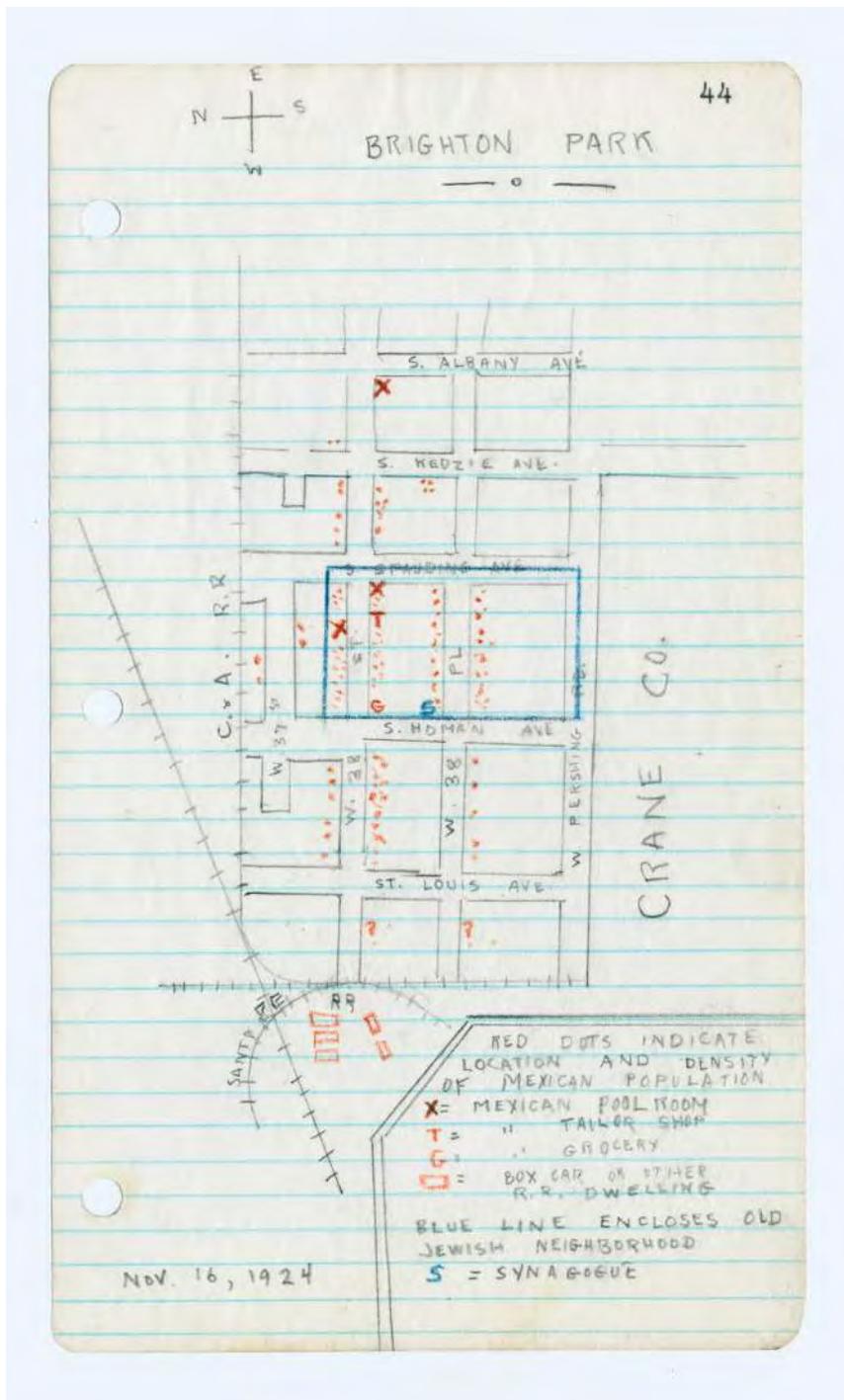
none are Indians from a tribal type of society.” He found evidence of conflict between Mexicans and Polish immigrants, Mexicans and Blacks. Yet by and large, Mexicans were not part of the larger problem of criminality observed by the Chicago style of social science. Most Mexicans with criminal records had earned them by public drunkenness or street brawling. Sex and miscegenation, of course, were part of these sociological preoccupations. And in Burgess’s archive one can find evidence of Mexicans’ miscegenation in the U.S. -- “Mexican intermarriage with a more desirable race, for assimilation into American life and opportunity.” Judiciously for the time, though, this paper claimed: “Intermarriage will not be the usual thing. The Mexican is the last ‘greenhorn,’ and has a low status in the eyes of other nationalities.” For scholars in Chicago and elsewhere, miscegenation would remain taboo well into the twentieth century.

*

Out of this original urban, sociological, preoccupation emerged another one, rural and anthropological. Redfield never completed his 1924 study of Mexican immigrants and convinced his father in law, Park, that the thing to do was to study Mexicans *in situ*—in their communities of origin. Thus his landmark study on Tepoztlán. This work represented the beginning of another Mexico for the University of Chicago: the anthropological Mexico of Redfield and his students, Sol Tax and Alfonso Villa Rojas. The first—urban—Mexico prospered as a sociological topic, leading to a scientific conceptualization of “The Mexican Problem” in the U.S. Meanwhile, the second, rural, anthropological Mexico became the setting for an important chapter in the history of anthropology in both the U.S. and Mexico. In addition to Chicago protagonists --Redfield, Tax, and Villa Rojas-- there were two other central characters in this story, both trained at Columbia University: Manuel Gamio, and a later addition to the cast, Oscar Lewis (whose papers are at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign).

As we have seen, in 1924, Robert Redfield did some “field research” in Chicago’s South Side. He examined Mexican immigrants according to the methods advanced by his professors, especially Park, Thomas, and F. Cooper-Cole. In this way, he found that most Mexicans in Chicago came from Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacán; also that they did not come directly from Mexico, but from an earlier migration to Texas. He found this out through the innovative life stories methodology he pursued. Unlike Starr’s notebooks, Redfield’s notes were carefully crafted to match the scientific criteria of the new Chicago sociology. (Thanks to Patricia Arias and Jorge Durán, Redfield’s notes on Mexican migration are now published in Spanish, together with other Chicago-related papers --*Mexicanos en Chicago*).

Redfield’s data collection proved something unexpected: Mexican immigrants were not illiterate rural people. They came from small cities. They knew how to write and were even familiar with other U.S. cities. Redfield seems to have used University of Chicago connections, social workers, and bilingual immigrants—such as Manuel Bueno. As is clear from the notebooks, Redfield did not have then a full command of Spanish. He drew his first blueprint of the a Mexican community in Chicago with the help of a Jewish friend, whose family had a business in Brighton Park, and who had earlier drafted a map of the displacing of Jews by incoming Mexicans.



R. Redfield's Map, Redfield papers.

Redfield never completed his research on Mexicans in Chicago. He did, however, make one great contribution to the issue: He assisted Gamio in procuring grants for his research on Mexican immigrants and helped get it published as a pair of University of Chicago Press

books: *Mexican Immigration to the United States: A Study of Human Migration and Adjustment* (1930), and *The Immigrant, his Life-Story; Autobiographic Documents Collected by Manuel Gamio* (1931). The English publication of these works was crucial, since Spanish-language scholarship was then—and still is—largely invisible for mainstream social scientists. In a sense, Redfield was playing Starr’s old role of cultural broker, still necessary after so many years.

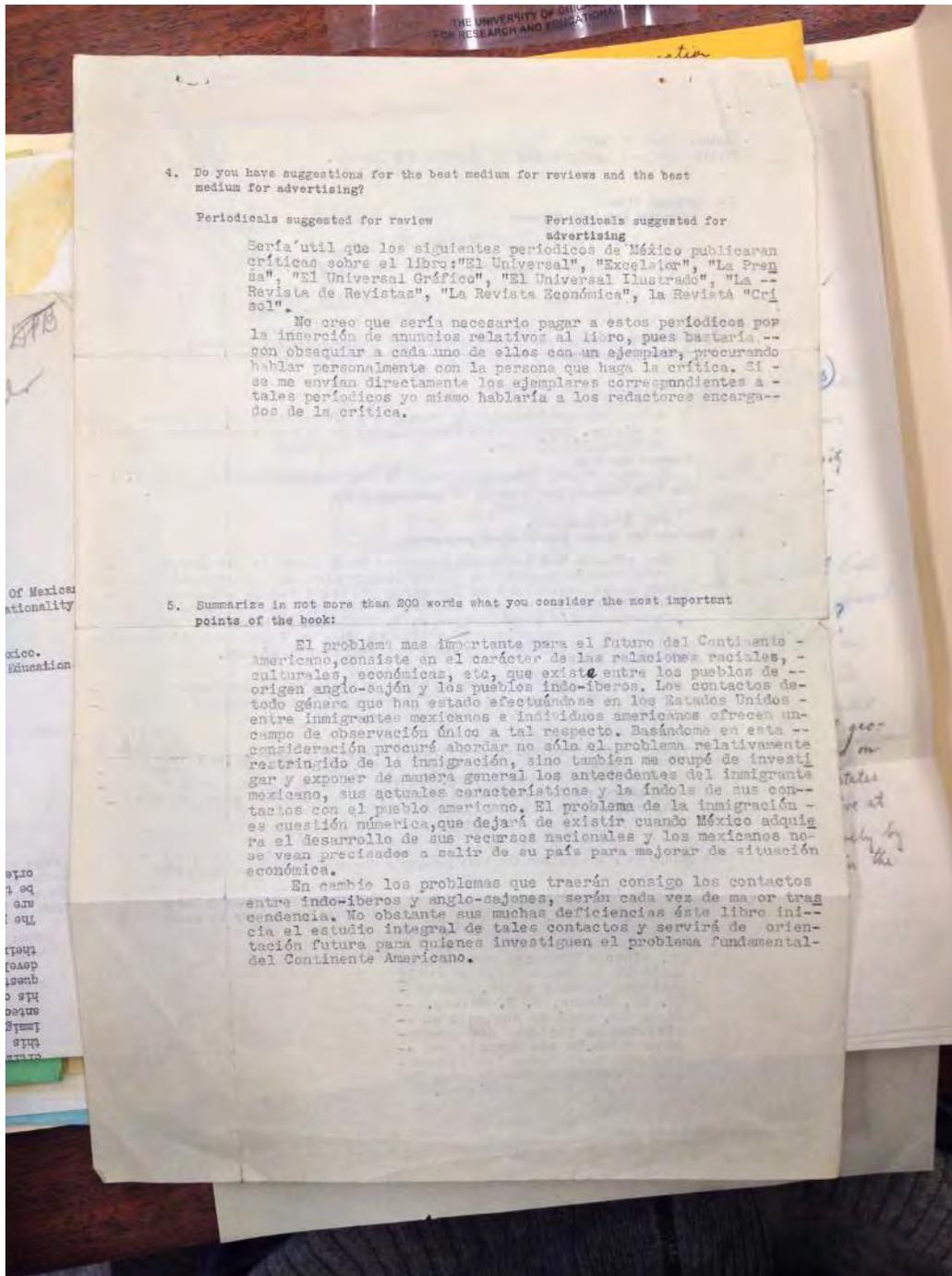
Thanks to Redfield and F. Cooper Cole, Gamio gained access to U.S. funding and institutions. As Franz Boas’ student, Gamio commanded the new language of U.S. social science, and seemed to always be in need of more resources and more prestige. The questions of immigration and assimilation continued to grow in importance at Chicago. Thanks to generous sources of funding, Gamio was able to pursue these questions—even if they had not been, until then, his own intellectual concerns. In fact, he never personally engaged in the new hand-on methods such as participant observation, collecting life stories, or administering interviews. He rapidly trained several surveyors to take on these tasks. Regardless, Gamio delivered the work Redfield never completed.

Redfield sponsored Gamio, arguing that he indeed offered the Mexican perspective on the matter. “Rather than on the effect of the Mexican immigrant upon the economic and social organization of the United States,” Redfield wrote, “Dr. Gamio looks at the matter from the south of the Rio Grande, although his experience with North America makes it also possible for him to consider some problems raised by the Mexican in our environment” (Redfield, “The Antecedents of Mexican Immigration to the United States,” *Journal of Sociology*, 1929). What Gamio offered to Mexican social science was different: it was another chapter in the formation of a national culture based on *mestizaje* and education: good mestizos, exposed to industry and modern mentalities, yet still mestizos after all—since they sidestepped any further miscegenation once they arrived in the U.S.

Gamio's responses to the UCP questionnaire are very telling of his original goals. He wrote: "El problema más importante para el futuro del continente americano consiste en el carácter de las relaciones raciales, culturales, económicas, etc. que existen entre los pueblos de origen anglo-sajón y los pueblos indo-europeos." Using money orders, interviews, and mapping, Gamio produced a "scientific" study filled with charts, statistics, and a second volume of life narratives. Along with the UCP, Redfield carefully monitored the book's production. He had to explain to the Press why Gamio's first volume did not cover the whole project, but also why, due to funding onuses, Gamio had the obligation to publish a second volume containing the translated life stories.

The clippings of reviews kept by the UCP records show that the book had a great critical reception in the U.S., albeit mixed reviews in Mexico. Rogerio de la Selva—a Nicaraguan intellectual who, together with his brother Salomón, was close to the Mexican government and well acquainted with American radical circles—used the occasion to state what Redfield and other Chicago scholars must have wanted to state: that the University was committed to progressive causes as well as serious scientific analysis and the improvement of U.S.-Mexico relations. De la Selva argued that UCP was already established as a Press that truly cared about these issues, demonstrating, he thought, that the U.S. was not only a place for reactionary capitalists, but was also the home of publications like *The Nation*, *The Masses*, and the UCP. In turn, Pablo González Casanova, writing in Mexican daily *Excélsior*, opposed Gamio's optimism about the Mexican immigrant as an agent of modernization. Quoting Vicente Lombardo Toledano's judgment of "repatriados" in the state of Michoacán, González Casanova argued that the returning immigrants represented either unfair competition in the labor market or a potential criminal element. What Gamio showed, thought González Casanova, was that the immigrants idealized Mexico upon arriving in the U.S., but would turn around and worship the U.S. as soon as they got back to Mexico. "Eso

es anhelo insatisfecho,” he wrote, “a fermento de revuelta” that “el futuro añadirá al capítulo de Gamio sobre inmigración y revolución.” Undeterred, UCP marketed the book enthusiastically, aiming it at such concerns of progressive Americans as protection of immigrants and yet fears of miscegenation and lack of assimilation. Thus UCP used the phrase of an informant —“Rather cut my throat than change my Mexican nationality”—to highlight the peculiarities of a growing Mexican immigration that, it was implied, was threatening but controllable. So the book marketing read: “because of inherent racial conflicts permanent migration from Mexico should be discouraged, but transient migration encouraged for the industrial benefit of both countries.”



4. Do you have suggestions for the best medium for reviews and the best medium for advertising?

Periodicals suggested for review

Periodicals suggested for advertising

Sería útil que los siguientes periódicos de México publicaran críticas sobre el libro: "El Universal", "Excelesior", "La Prensa", "El Universal Gráfico", "El Universal Ilustrado", "La Revista de Revistas", "La Revista Económica", la Revista "Crisol".

No creo que sería necesario pagar a estos periódicos por la inserción de anuncios relativos al libro, pues bastaría, -- con obsequiar a cada uno de ellos con un ejemplar, procurando hablar personalmente con la persona que haga la crítica. Si se me envían directamente los ejemplares correspondientes a tales periódicos yo mismo hablaría a los redactores encargados de la crítica.

5. Summarize in not more than 200 words what you consider the most important points of the book:

El problema más importante para el futuro del Continente americano, consiste en el carácter de las relaciones raciales, culturales, económicas, etc, que existe entre los pueblos de origen anglo-sajón y los pueblos indo-iberos. Los contactos de todo género que han estado efectuándose en los Estados Unidos entre inmigrantes mexicanos e individuos americanos ofrecen un campo de observación único a tal respecto. Basándome en esta consideración procuré abordar no sólo el problema relativamente restringido de la inmigración, sino también me ocupé de investigar y exponer de manera general los antecedentes del inmigrante mexicano, sus actuales características y la índole de sus contactos con el pueblo americano. El problema de la inmigración es cuestión numérica, que dejará de existir cuando México adquiere el desarrollo de sus recursos nacionales y los mexicanos no se vean precisados a salir de su país para mejorar de situación económica.

En cambio los problemas que traerán consigo los contactos entre indo-iberos y anglo-sajones, serán cada vez de mayor trascendencia. No obstante sus muchas deficiencias éste libro inicia el estudio integral de tales contactos y servirá de orientación futura para quienes investiguen el problema fundamental del Continente Americano.

Manuel Gamio's University of Chicago Press questionnaire, UCP record.

OKANS IN LOS ANGELES

live a life of their own, influenced by the religious convictions that led them to dissent from the Greek Orthodox Church of Russia. Dr. Pauline V. Young knows these people well. She has lived among them, studied them for years. She has been their emissary to Russia, carrying food, money and clothing to the people the Molokans left "back home." Dr. Robert E. Park, who recommended this book for inclusion in the University of Chicago Sociological Series, believes it of "extraordinary value." It especially concerns the struggle of a religious group to maintain itself in a foreign urban environment.

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RATHER CUT MY THROAT

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UCP marketing of Gamio's book. UCP records.

