

A CONCISE HISTORY OF LATINO RACIAL CONFLICT IN THE UNITED STATES 1740-1980

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1740-1830- Protracted Micro-violence---U.S. southwest, including the border area:

This Ninety-year period witnessed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of small-scale encounters between Anglos and Mexicans, with the latter, because of their subordinated status, predominantly the victims. Incidents include discrimination, harassment, miscarriages of justice, land invasions, swindles, thefts, rapes, murders, and lynching.

1830-40's- Violence on a larger scale (Texas)

Instability stemming from Texas rebellion from Mexico leads to widespread persecution of Tejanos.

1848-Bordertowns

"Forty-niners" harass Mexican settlements and steal from local residents; American slave chasers cross into Mexican territory.

Early 1850's-New Mexico

About two thousand native New Mexicans leave their homes and cross the border into Mexico when Anglos encroach upon their lands.

1857-South Texas

"**The Cart War**"; Anglo cartmen attack Mexican competitors, killing seventy-five.

1859-60-Brownsville, TX

"**Cheno Cortina Raids**"; Juan Nepomuceno Cortino and sixty followers engage Anglo lawmen in a series of skirmishes motivated by racial tensions. Fifteen Americans and eight Mexicans die in the raids.

1870-Arizona-Sonora border

"Mission Camp Affair"; A theft allegedly committed by a Mexican leads to reprisals and shootouts, resulting in the death of four Anglos and two Mexicans.

1870s-All along the border

The old problem of transborder Indians raids and bandit depredations flares up into a crisis in U.S.-Mexico relations. Countless clashes in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s result in hundreds of deaths, widespread destruction of property, and repeated violations of national sovereignty. :

1871-Mesilla, New Mexico

"Mesilla Riots"; Nine men, most of them Spanish-speaking supporters of politician Colonel J. Francisco Chavez, are killed in a political dispute. Additionally, forty to fifty are wounded.

1873- Lincoln County, New Mexico

"Lincoln County War"; Range war between rival Anglo cattlemen traps Mexican vaqueros in the middle. Thirteen Mexicans die along with many Anglos.

1877- El Paso, TX

"The Salt War" Mexicans from San Elizario rebel against Anglo entrepreneurs who take over community salt deposits. Texas rangers are brought in to reestablish peace but are repelled. Several Anglos and several Mexicans die in a series of violent clashes and summary executions.

1880s-Panhandle, TX

Retaliating for the murder of an Anglo sheepman, Texas cowboys rampage in Tascosa, killing several innocent Mexicans and lynching others suspected of complicity in the murder. Gunman and folk hero Sostenes l' Archeveque of French-Mexican descent, is identified as the killer and is executed in a trap.

1898-U.S. Invasion of Puerto Rico

US troops invade Puerto Rico just 5 months after Puerto Rico had fought for and acquired her independence from Spain. Washington D.C. politicians regarded the

Puerto Rican people as an inferior race. In 1900 Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado frankly admitted, "I don't like the Puerto Rican....Such a race is unworthy of citizenship." Senator Bate of Tennessee described the people of the Philippines and Puerto Rico as "savages addicted to head-hunting and cannibalism".

1900-El Carmen, TX

While **Gregorio Cortez** was in his home shaving near his family when a sheriff entered asking him about a missing mare. A misunderstanding arose and the sheriff shot Cortez's brother killing him. Cortez shot the sheriff, thus becoming an outlaw. Eventually, he was caught, put on trial and found not guilty. He was put on trial again for having stolen a mare, was found guilty and sentenced to 99 years and a day. A year later Abraham Lincoln's daughter asked the Texas Governor for clemency. Cortez was set free but soon after was poisoned and killed by his enemies.

1915-16- Texas- Tamaulipas border

"Plan of San Diego Raids"; Raids associated with the Plan of San Diego keep the Texas Lower Rio Grande Valley in continuous turmoil. Raiders include Mexican revolutionaries, Mexican American guerrillas, and bandits of various backgrounds. U.S. troops, Texas Rangers, local lawmen, and vigilantes retaliate against the attackers, sometimes crossing into Mexico to avenge losses. Hundreds die in the raids.

1930 - Puerto Rico

U.S. laboratories and chemical companies used Puerto Rican women as "guinea pig" to test a birth control pill. When "the pill" was judged "safe" for use in the U.S. it was no longer available on the Island, and sterilization became the chief method to prevent births. The U.S. Government developed a sterilization campaign to limit the number of births of the Puerto Rican people. By 1976, 35% of Puerto Rican women and 20% of Puerto Rican men had been sterilized. The incidence of sterilization in Puerto Rico had become the highest in the world

1937- The Ponce Massacre, March 21

As Puerto Ricans marched in protest to the arrest and imprisonment of **Pedro Albizo Campos**, Leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, 150 policemen armed with machine guns, tear gas bombs and hand grenades and rifles opened fire on

the unarmed crowd. When the shooting stopped 20 people were dead including women and small children and 150 were wounded.

1943-The Zoot Suit Riots

A brawl began with a group of U.S. Marines and Sailors from Oakland. As they beat up blacks and Mexican-Americans, the police watched and did not respond. They proceeded to arrest the Chicanos after the fight, accusing them of disturbing the peace. The clashes worsened until rioting broke out on June 7. Chicanos, as well as other racial and ethnic groups were targets in restaurants and other public areas. About 600 Chicanos were arrested. Newspapers spoke highly of the police, who claimed the arrests were necessary to prevent further violence.

1953-56 Operation Wetback

After World War II ended and soldiers returned home seeking employment, two million Mexicans who had provided cheap labor in the United States were sent back to Mexico in what became known as Operation Wetback.

1965 Cesar Chavez

To fight numerous injustices in the treatment and working conditions of Chicano and Phillippino farm workers, **Cesar Chavez** organized workers into The United Farm Workers Union to boycott Grape Growers that ended with the union signing a contract with the California Grape Growers.

1980 The Cuban Marielitas

Tens of thousands Cubans were permitted by Castro to leave Cuba. When they arrived at Mariel Harbor in Florida, the Cubans who were poor, uneducated and racially mixed were housed in tent cities and football stadiums. They became frustrated over the delays in being able to leave the camps. Many were forced to remain in the camps for years before being released.