



Exploring Diversity in Pennsylvania History

The Colonia Mexicana of Bethlehem Steel

Primary Source

“Corrido Pensilvanio”

A *corrido* is a Mexican narrative song or ballad based on oral tradition. Spanning more than two centuries, the *corrido* highlights important social, political and cultural issues that impacted and continue to impact Mexican and Mexican American communities. Themes include war, romance, social justice, heroism, labor, and migration. The “*Corrido Pensilvanio*” is an example of a border *corrido*, a ballad generated in the southwestern region that was particularly popular between 1880 and 1930. This ballad is significant in that it highlights the changing roles and experiences of the Mexican laborer. The following transcription is from Paul S. Taylor’s *Mexican Labor in the United States*, Vol II. (Berkeley: University of California, 1931).

Part I. Read through the song lyrics in Spanish and analyze the patterns that emerge. What are some characteristics of the *corrido*?

Part II. In the third column, write what you think the stanza means or important pieces of information that provide clues as to what the song is about.

<p>El 28 de Abril A las seis de la manana Salimos en un enganche Para el estado de Pensilvania.</p>	<p>On the 28th of April At six o'clock in the morning We set out under contract For the state of Pennsylvania.</p>	
<p>Mi chinita me decia Yo me voy en esa agencia- Para lavarle su ropa Para darle su asistencia.</p>	<p>My little sweetheart said to me, "I'm going into that office- And say I'll wash your clothes And take care of you."</p>	

<p>El enganchista me dijo, No lleves a tu familia Para no pasar trabajo Es en el estado de West Virginia.</p>	<p>The contractor said to me, "Don't take your family Or you'll pass up this job It's in the state of West Virginia."</p>	
<p>Para que sepas que te quiero Me dejas en Fort Worth Y cuando ya estes trabajando Me escribes de donde estes.</p>	<p>"So you'll know that I love you, When you leave me in Fort Worth, And you have started working, Write me from where you are.</p>	
<p>Cuando ya estes ppor alla Me escribes, no seas ingrante, En contestacion te mando De recuerdo mi retrato.</p>	<p>"When you are there Write me, don't be forgetful; In reply I will send you My picture as a 'forget- me-not'."</p>	
<p>Adios estado de Texas, Con tu vas to plantacion; Yo me voy para Pensilvania Por no pisicar algodón.</p>	<p>Goodbye, state of Texas, With you goes your plantation I'm going to Pennsylvania But not for picking cotton.</p>	
<p>Adios Fort Worth y Dallas, Por no de mucha importancia Yo me voy para Pensilvania Por no andar en la vagancia.</p>	<p>Goodbye, Fort Worth and Dallas, You're not much to me now, I'm going to Pennsylvania To be a vagrant no more.</p>	
<p>Al llegar al steel mill worque, Que vemos la locomotora Y salimos corriendo Ochenta millas por hora!</p>	<p>When we got to the steel works We saw the locomotive And we came running At eighty miles an hour!</p>	

<p>Cuando llegamos alla Y del tren nos bajamos, Preguntan las italianas, De donde vienen, Mexicanos?</p>	<p>When we arrived there And got off the train The Italian girls asked us, "Where do you come from, Mexicans?"</p>	
<p>Responden los Mexicanos Los que ya saben "inglear" Venimos en un engache Del pueblo de Fort Worth</p>	<p>The Mexicans reply, Those who know how "to English," "We come out under contract From the town of Forth Worth."</p>	
<p>Estos versos son compuestos Cuando yo venia en camino Soy un muchacho Mexicano Nombre das por contestino.</p>	<p>These verses were composed When I was on the way; I'm a Mexican boy, Call me "Contestino."</p>	
<p>Y con esta me despido Con mi sombrero en las manos Y mis fieles companeros Son tres cientos Mexicanos</p>	<p>And with this I take my leave With sombrero in my hands, And my faithful companions, Three hundred Mexicans.</p>	

What event is depicted in this song?
