

Latino Auto Workers Exhibit

“From the Margins to the Core”



Photo: Lansing Auto Town Gallery

**MSU Museum
409 W. Circle Drive
East Lansing, MI 48824**

Daily Hours: 9 am – 5 pm • Saturday 10 am – 5 pm

Mexicans and Mexican Americans have been working in the nation’s auto manufacturing plants since the 1920s. They were followed later by Puerto Ricans and Cuban Americans. After the 1936-37 Flint Sit-Down Strike, in which some Latinos participated, Latino autoworkers became members of one of the highest paid blue-collar workforces in the nation, receiving excellent wages and benefits. Some early Latino autoworkers had been migrant farm workers who sought and found better work at Ford and General Motors and other auto plants. Others came to Michigan with the hopes of finding employment in the auto industry. Despite ethnic and racial discrimination, Latino autoworkers went from the margins of the labor force to the very core of the nation’s industrial work force. For many, it was the first time they received a living wage. Through the unions and the impact of the Civil Rights Movement, some went on to become leaders in the UAW and in the corporations.

Sponsored by the Julian Samora Research Institute, the MSU Museum, Our Daily Work, Our Daily Lives, and the MotorCities Automobile National Heritage Area