

Mexican Enclaves in the U.S. Northeast: Immigrant and Migrant Mushroom Workers in Southern Chester County, Pennsylvania

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ABSTRACT

Mexican farm workers are not limiting themselves to farm areas in the U.S. Southwest. In fact, as Gamboa (1990), Garcia (1996), and Nodin Valdes (1991) have found in their research, this has never been the case. Today, as before, Mexican laborers continue to venture into communities and work in agricultural industries found throughout the country, including the U.S. Northeast. In New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, for example, vegetable, fruit, and horticultural producers are hiring Mexican laborers in unprecedented numbers. In some of these industries, like the mushroom industry of Pennsylvania, which produces nearly half of the country's crop, Mexicans make up the majority of the work force. The relatively new Mexican enclaves in Southern Chester County, Pennsylvania, a major mushroom region of the country, is examined in this research paper. A Mexican enclave is defined as a growing concentration of Mexican-origin residents, both foreign and U.S.-born, who reside permanently in the boroughs and townships of the region. The focus of this paper will be on two expanding enclaves, one in Kennett Square and the other in nearby Toughkenamon.