Building a City and a Nation: Immigration Stories from El Paso, Texas

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/anne_giangiulio/43/
Building a City and a Nation: Immigration Stories from El Paso, Texas.
Logo I designed for the exhibit at the Main Branch of the El Paso Public Library
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Bilingual trifold designed for the exhibition

¿Qué haría si tuvieras que dejar todo y huir de tu patria?
¿Qué se siente dividir su vida entre dos países?
¿Qué se siente ser rociado(a) con pesticidas para poder así ir a trabajar?
¿Qué haría si le dijeran que no se le quiere en su país adoptivo?
¿Qué haría para demostrar tu cariño a tu nuevo país?
¿De qué manera iniciarían una nueva vida usted y sus seres queridos?
¿Cómo se construiría una ciudad con el esfuerzo de cada persona?
¿Qué harías si te dijeran que no te quieren en tu país adoptivo?

What would you do if you had to leave everything behind and flee your native land?
What is it like to divide your life between two countries?
What does it feel like to be sprayed with pesticides just so you can get to work?
What would you do if you were told you were not wanted in your adopted country?
What would you do to show you love your new nation?
How would you create a new life for yourself and your loved ones?
How do you build a city, one person at a time?

These are just some of the questions explored in the exhibit Building a City and a Nation: Immigration Stories from El Paso, Texas. It features historic portraits taken at the Casasola Photographic Studio in El Paso, Texas, and documents the experiences, struggles and triumphs of people crossing into the United States from Mexico. With images of immigrants hailing from Mexico, Lebanon, China and beyond, the photos will tell you their story. Then, through the “Sobremesa Program,” a series of dialogues over lunch, you can discuss the immigrants’ stories and tell your own.

Entrada gratuita

Librería Pública de El Paso • Atrio de la Biblioteca Central, Casa Casasola
501 North Oregon, El Paso, Texas 79901

Información
Teléfono: (915) 543-5401
Página electrónica: www.elpasolibrary.org

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Building A City and A Nation

El Paso Public Library • Main Downtown Library
501 North Oregon, El Paso, Texas

Library hours
Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Contact
(915) 543-5401 • www.elpasolibrary.org
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Five different publicity postcards I designed for the exhibit
Chinese EXCLUSION ACT

The Chinese Exclusion Act, signed in 1882, was among the first U.S. immigration laws that barred people from immigrating based on race. While it made provisions for the admission of some scholars and members of the Chinese mercantile class, only certain ports of entry were designated for the passage of the Chinese, most of whom crossed through the California coastline. While the Act was in effect, Chinese could not cross through the Ciudad Juárez–El Paso border city of El Paso, Texas during the first half of the twentieth century. It consists of pictures taken by Alfonso Casasola, a member of a family of Mexican photographers. He set up his studio in El Paso in the 1920s after working in the Mexican consular service in Sonora. The studio was located in the heart of the city at 511 S. El Paso St., just a short walk from the international bridge between Ciudad Juárez, Mexico and El Paso. The clientele captured in his portraits reflect the racial, cultural, national and socioeconomic diversity of the people who called El Paso home during these years and beyond. Casasola’s career in El Paso spanned the three decades following the Mexican Revolution. He was an active member of the community and participated in numerous civic organizations.

The pictures that appear here were digitally scanned after workers remodeling the studio discovered 50,000 negatives in a closet around 1996. The Special Collections department of The University of Texas at El Paso Library entered into partnerships with the El Paso Times and El Diario de Juárez to publish the portraits and recover the histories of those photographed. The subjects, as well as their families and friends, identified over half of the people in the pictures that were published as a result of this outreach, uncovering part of the region’s history and engaging the community in the project. Alfonso Casasola worked in both Mexico and the United States and his photographs present El Paso as a significant hub of immigration with a dynamic border culture formed by the individuals in the photographs and others like them.

This photographic exhibit highlights the cultural richness and diversity that characterized the U.S.–Mexico border city of El Paso, Texas during the first half of the twentieth century. It consists of pictures taken by Alfonso Casasola, a member of a family of Mexican photographers. He set up his studio in El Paso in the 1920s after working in the Mexican consular service in Sonora. The studio was located in the heart of the city at 511 S. El Paso St., just a short walk from the international bridge between Ciudad Juárez, Mexico and El Paso. The clientele captured in his portraits reflect the racial, cultural, national and socioeconomic diversity of the people who called El Paso home during these years and beyond. Casasola’s career in El Paso spanned the three decades following the Mexican Revolution. He was an active member of the community and participated in numerous civic organizations.

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