

NIU Latino Oral History Project

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Aim

The purpose of this project is to document the migration of Latinos to Illinois, as well as to collect the oral histories of individuals or their descendants in DeKalb, Aurora, and the Chicago land area. In doing so, we have created an archival collection of bibliographies consisting of scholarly articles, images, journals, etc. encompassing issues that affect the Latino community (i.e. housing discrimination, undocumented communities, ethnic relations, education, and politics.) Additionally, this project facilitates the research of students in an Oral History 494 course, whose research in turn will be stored in its database. During the upcoming summer, four students will be researching in México. Ultimately, these bibliographies and oral histories will be stored in the NIU Founders Memorial Library.



Mexican Chapel and its Parishioners, Eola Boxcar Camp, West Eola, Aurora, Illinois, ca. 1929. Photo courtesy of Ben Pérez.



Mexican Family, Eola Boxcar Camp, West Eola, Aurora, Illinois, ca. 1929. Photo courtesy of Aurora Historical Society.

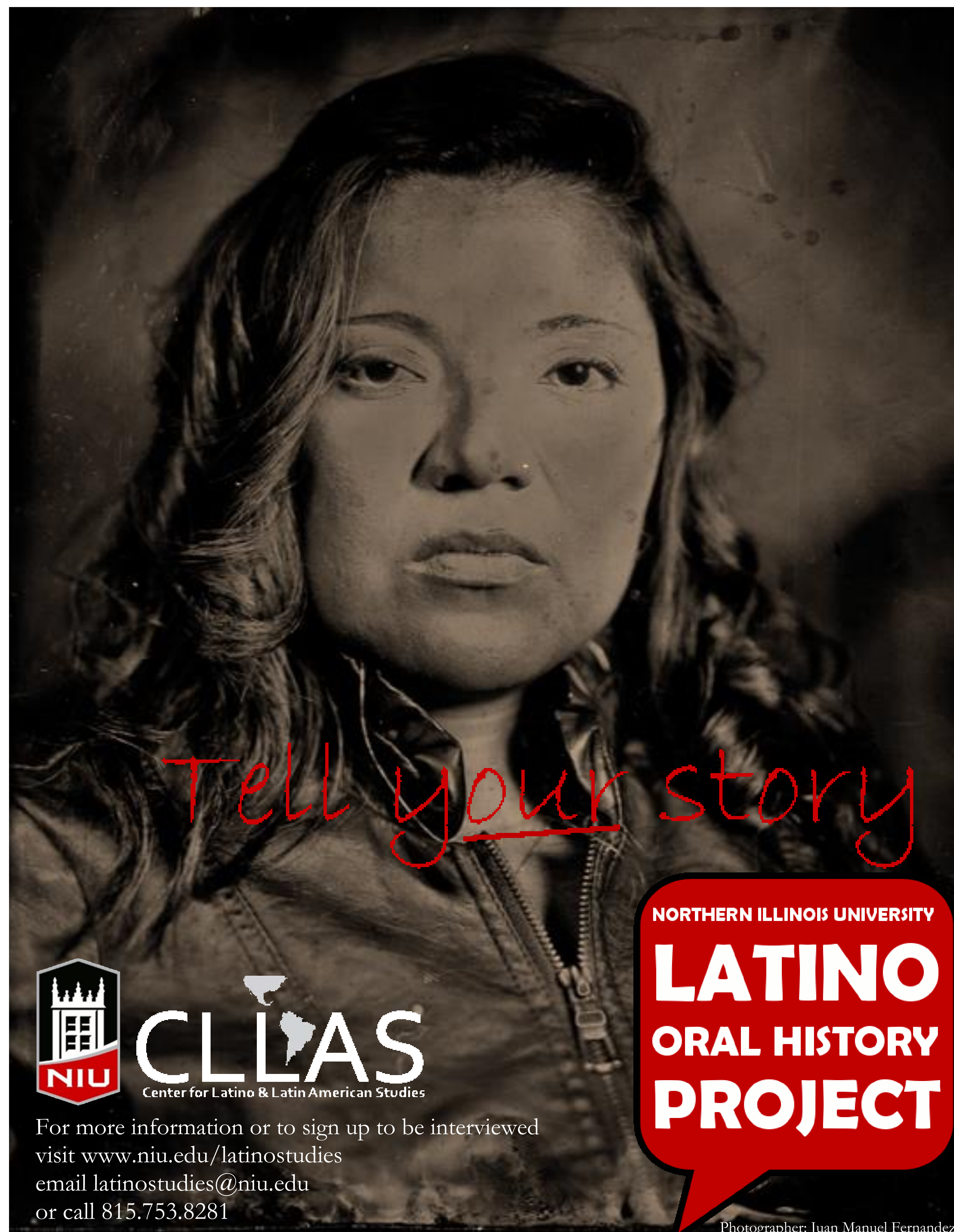


C.B. & Q, Eola Boxcar Camp, West Eola, Aurora, Illinois, ca. 1929. Photo courtesy of Aurora Historical Society.

Method

Due to the changing nature of the Latino oral history project, my individual research began with the background knowledge needed to understand the boxcar community focus, thus observing the Mexican revolution and the Cristero War. In addition, factors that contribute to Mexican migration were analyzed for the purpose of determining how individuals and/or families decided on a destination point. Lastly, observations included a focus on the development of the Mexican community in Aurora and how those factors paved the way for expansion into the Chicago land area. Methods included:

1. Reviewing migration documents provided by the Regional History Centre
2. Visiting UIC, the Aurora Historical Society, the Tanner House, and contacting various Latino oriented organizations to request historical artifacts
3. Reviewing the IRB process for interviewer/ interviewee confidentiality and documentation
4. Calling local religious organizations to target the intended population to collect oral histories



For more information or to sign up to be interviewed visit www.niu.edu/latinostudies email latinostudies@niu.edu or call 815.753.8281



Photographer: Juan Manuel Fernandez

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