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### War Ally

Following the Spanish-American War in 1898, the U.S. annexed the island of Puerto Rico, where members of the 2nd Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment spent time after a battle in Cuba. The image above shows a flag used by a Puerto Rican regiment, the Third Provisional Battalion, deployed by Spain to defend Cuba during the Spanish-American War. After the war, the unit became the Porto Rico Voluntary Infantry under U.S. command. By 1920, it was the 65th Regiment, U.S. Infantry.

# The Puerto Rican Community of Western Massachusetts, 1898–1960

JOSEPH CARVALHO III



**Abstract:** *This article attempts to chronicle the earliest connections between Western Massachusetts and Puerto Rico, and the experiences of earliest Puerto Rican residents of the region. Regional newspapers with special emphasis on the largest three newspapers in Western Massachusetts—the Springfield Republican, the Springfield Daily News, and the Springfield Union; the U.S. and Massachusetts State Census records for 1910–1940; city directories for the major cities of Western Massachusetts; School Department reports; and related secondary sources were consulted in the compilation of this narrative.*

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Although dry goods stores and tobacconists in the four western counties of Massachusetts often advertised the availability of Puerto Rican cigars, or on special occasions, “Fine Porto Rican Molasses,” the island and its people

were largely a mystery to the people of Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, and Berkshire Counties. The Spanish-American War in 1898 changed all that. Leading up to the U.S. declaration of war with Spain, lurid stories of Spanish atrocities and mistreatment of their colonial charges in Cuba and Puerto Rico were commonplace in the region's newspapers. Once the war broke out, hundreds of men from the region served in the 2nd Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment.<sup>1</sup> The Regiment experienced combat notably at the Battle of El Caney in 1898 in Cuba. Several companies of the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment briefly spent time in Puerto Rico after that battle.<sup>2</sup> The region grieved as casualty reports from the front were reported in their local newspapers and when the train inevitably brought the bodies back to their respective towns or cities to be interred, citizens lined the rail stations to honor their dead.

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, ending the Spanish-American War, the United States annexed the island of Puerto Rico. Although full citizenship for the Puerto Rican population was not granted until the Jones Act of 1917, the process of bringing the island into the American economy and political process began as early as 1899. There was early resistance from the New England Tobacco Growers Association to post-war trade with the island. A Connecticut Valley tobacco grower, Alfred Francis Austin of Suffield, Connecticut, worried that tariff-free trade with Puerto Rico would cause "the ultimate ruin to the tobacco interests not only of New England but all other tobacco sections of the mainland United States." He warned that competition from Puerto Rico would "insure the swift and utter ruin to all those engaged [in the Connecticut Valley] in the production of tobacco products."<sup>3</sup> Ironically, it was Puerto Rican farm labor that helped revive and sustain Connecticut Valley tobacco farms into the mid-20th century, as will be highlighted in the second half of this article.

But aside from the initial negative reaction from certain tobacco farmers, the earliest regional reaction to the acquisition of Puerto Rico appeared to be highly positive, at least as conveyed in the pages of the area's leading newspaper, the *Springfield Republican*. Soon after the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, Western Massachusetts communities appear to have become fascinated with the newly-acquired territory of Puerto Rico (or "Porto Rico" as it was referred to in those years). The pages of the *Springfield Republican* reveal a genuine interest in the island's people, culture, and products.

With the congressional passage of the Organic Act of 1900, known as the "Foraker Act" for the bill's sponsor, Senator Joseph B. Foraker of Ohio, free trade was established between the island and the continental United States in

July of 1901. Soon after, a Puerto Rican government and business delegation was sent to the United States to explore the linkages to the mainland market. Springfield leaders were thrilled that this delegation of prominent business and civic leaders from Puerto Rico selected Springfield as one of their first destinations in their tour of major American cities in 1901. The front page headline of the *Springfield Republican* announced: “Banquet to Porto Ricans — Mayor welcomes city’s guests — visitors will be shown the Industries and Sights of the City Today.”<sup>4</sup> The extensive article went on to describe the event in minute detail with a reception and dinner held by the Springfield Board of Trade at one of the region’s premier hotels, the Cooley Hotel. There were speeches by Springfield Mayor W. P. Hayes and by U.S. Congressman Frederick H. Gillett of Westfield, welcoming the delegation. Dr. J. C. Barbosa of San Juan “made the principal response for the delegates.” That day, the delegates were given a tour through the city’s industries and “sights of interest.”<sup>5</sup>

In an after-dinner speech, John E. Stevens of the Ludlow Manufacturing Company noted:

A few years ago we thought of Porto Rico as one of the sleepy islands of the West Indies in which we had little interest. Today how great is the change. We welcome these delegates as fellow patriots. Springfield should be especially interested in them. Mutual interest demands a closer knowledge of each by the other....

Stevens also referred to the chief products of Puerto Rico “tobacco, sugar, and coffee and their importance to us.”<sup>6</sup>

Mayor Hayes gave his speech to the delegates, thanking them for “honoring this city” by their visit. He then offered these thoughts, which envisioned statehood for Puerto Rico:

The Treaty of Peace at Paris in November of 1898, transformed you from Spanish subjection into the development of American citizenship. And it is the hope and wish of every true American that that development shall continue until your government shall be admitted into full rights of statehood, and you shall be given the fullest measure of self-government. You will never again be subjects, and the greatest freedom that you can attain, other than your own complete control and government of your island, will be its admission into the Union of American states....it is my

pleasure and my honor to extend to you the welcome of the city of Springfield and its people....<sup>7</sup>

To place these sentiments in the context of the times, it is important to note that Mayor Hayes' comments reflected the more enthusiastic elements of Massachusetts' Republican Party regarding the issue of eventual statehood for Puerto Rico. The previous year, Republican Senator George F. Hoar from Massachusetts broke with the imperialist policy of his own party. In a speech to the Senate in January 1899, he said:

Under the Declaration of Independence, you cannot govern a foreign territory, a foreign people, another people than your own, that you cannot subjugate them and govern them against their will, because you think it is for their good, when they do not ... You have no right at the cannon's mouth to impose on an unwilling people your Declaration of Independence and your Constitution and your notions of freedom and notions of what is good," ending his speech with his injunction, "imperialism and republicanism were mutually incompatible."<sup>8</sup>

But Senator Hoar's passionate opinion was not in evidence in Springfield among the business and political leaders assembled to welcome their guests from Puerto Rico.

Federico Degautau y González, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Washington, was one of the delegation speakers to respond to these welcoming remarks. He declared that:

The People of Porto Rico came to the United States by popular will. The soldiers of your army were received there as living emblems of freedom....American ideas have permeated the consciences of Porto Ricans....It gives me much pleasure that I can bring to you the expression of good feeling of the people whom I represent....<sup>9</sup>

Another delegate, José Gómez Brioso, one of the leading Puerto Rican advocates for Puerto Rican rights and independence from Spain prior to the Spanish American War, extolled the island's virtues and expressed pride in the quality of Puerto Rico's produce. He presaged the future linkage with the Western Massachusetts region regarding Puerto Rican labor when he stated that "Our men are industrious and will work for you from six in the morning

until seven at night for 50 cents.” Adding that “we are good citizens...”<sup>10</sup> This wage rate was more than Puerto Rican farm laborers were receiving in Puerto Rico, and about half of what contemporary American farmworkers were receiving in Massachusetts at the turn of the century.<sup>11</sup>

The most important business leaders of the region made it a priority to participate in welcoming these Puerto Rican dignitaries. The Puerto Rican delegation was escorted through the city in Springfield’s celebrated “Rockrimmon” parlor car usually reserved for only the most important guests to the city such as presidents and governors and foreign dignitaries. The tour began with a visit to Everett H. Barney’s mansion overlooking the Connecticut River “to get a glimpse of Forest Park.” Internationally known inventor and wealthy businessman Everett Barney personally lined up ten locally made automobiles including a number of expensive Knox autos made in Springfield, the birthplace of the American auto industry, for the delegates to use on their tour through the park. The Puerto Rican delegation then visited the world famous Smith & Wesson small arms factory where they were given a tour by owners Joseph and Walter H. Wesson. They were escorted over the river to West Springfield to visit the Mitteneague Paper Company where they toured through the facility by owner Horace A. Moses, the respected Massachusetts business leader and philanthropist who in later years established the Junior Achievement organization. Before continuing on to Albany, the delegation toured the extensive J. Stevens Arms and Tool Company in Chicopee where the company’s band performed during their luncheon at the factory.<sup>12</sup>

## PUERTO RICAN PRODUCTS

At the time of the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rican molasses had been occasionally advertised as a special item in regional newspapers even in the remote town of North Adams where Sherman’s dry goods store boasted having a limited quantity of “the best Porto Rico molasses” in their North Adams Transcript advertisements.<sup>13</sup> As early as August 1899, on special occasions, Westfield’s Owen & Root Cash Grocery advertised “Choice Porto Rican Coffee” encouraging their customers with this tag line, “Our Porto Rican Coffee is What You Ought to Try.”<sup>14</sup> However, the Puerto Rican delegation’s visit to the region set off an expanded consumer interest in Puerto Rican products in the Valley. As early as October 1901, fruit and vegetable wholesalers on Lyman Street in Springfield were selling “Porto Rican Oranges” by the crate, and “the Best Porto Rican Molasses” by the gallon.<sup>15</sup> Westfield’s premier restaurant located in the Hotel Bismarck featured

its Christmas Special dinner menu in their December 1901 advertisement boasting Puerto Rican “Pineapple Pie” as a special dessert treat.<sup>16</sup> Retailers regularly ran advertisements in the Springfield area newspapers for a growing range of “Porto Rican” products: beginning with “Genuine Imported Porto Rican Cigars” boasted by the two United Cigar Stores on Main Street in Springfield, followed by stores touting “Porto Rican hats”, and prized hand-embroidered “Porto Rican towels and pillow cases.”<sup>17</sup> In 1906, King Brothers dry goods in Westfield began offering the “Best Ponce [Puerto Rico] Molasses” at 50 cents a gallon.<sup>18</sup>

In 1910, the social pages of the *Springfield Republican* announced that “a large attendance of young people” were at Mrs. R. S. Brown’s “Barn Party” in Granville with one of its main food attractions being the newly arrived and exotic “Porto Rican Coffee.”<sup>19</sup> By 1913, fruits such as “Porto Rican Grapefruit,” “Porto Rican Oranges,” and “Fancy Porto Rican Pineapples” from the island began showing up as exotic features in local grocery store advertisements. Even the Forbes & Wallace Department Store used an ad promoting the availability of “a fresh shipment of sweet, juicy Porto Rican oranges” to lure shoppers to their store.<sup>20</sup>

By the 1920s, Puerto Rican embroidered clothing was highly prized and began to be featured in area clothing stores especially those catering to women’s fashions with embroidered lingerie gowns commanding high prices. The major Springfield department stores, such as Forbes & Wallace and the Albert Steiger Company which were the region’s premier upscale department stores, ran large ads to promote their availability at their stores assuring their clientele that they no longer needed to travel to New York City to buy such finery.<sup>21</sup> Department stores in Pittsfield, Northampton, Greenfield, and North Adams soon followed suit by advertising these products as well in their advertisements in the *Berkshire Eagle*, *Hampshire Gazette*, *Greenfield Recorder*, and *North Adams Transcript*. Puerto Rican products had become regularly featured items.<sup>22</sup> Westfield’s Valley Echo newspaper carried a large Forbes & Wallace Christmas advertisement that featured luxury “Porto Rican Hand Drawn” women’s handkerchiefs for sale with prices ranging from \$1.50 to \$3.25, with regular monogrammed American handkerchiefs being sold for 29 to 79 cents.<sup>23</sup>

## TRAVEL

In 1900, Springfield’s French Protestant College (today the American International College) began admitting a few students from Puerto Rico.<sup>24</sup> By 1901, local private schools like Williston Academy of Easthampton began

attracting “well-to do” students from the island.<sup>25</sup> To help slake the growing public interest in Puerto Rico, Reverend J. W. Minchin gave a free public lecture on the island and its people at the Second Congregational Church in Chicopee on December 5, 1902, which was well attended. He also brought “Porto Rican laces” and embroidered items for sale, which sold out.<sup>26</sup>

In 1906, A.C. Wentworth in Springfield was advertising “railroad tours to Florida with tickets [to steamships] to Cuba and Puerto Rico.”<sup>27</sup> By January of 1910, the Passenger Office and Tour Bureau on Main Street in Springfield was offering regular cruises by the Atlantic, Gulf, and West Indies Steamship Lines including the “Porto Rican Line” with trips to San Juan, Ponce, Mayaguez “and cruises around the island of Porto Rico.”<sup>28</sup> A few years later, the “unrestricted” German submarine warfare of World War I curtailed these cruises until the 1920s.

Very early on, individuals from Western Massachusetts volunteered to work with these new Americans in Puerto Rico especially in an effort to teach English, an effort encouraged by the Puerto Rican territorial government. Arthur G. Mayo of Springfield may have been the first English language teacher from Western Massachusetts to go to the island to teach. A featured *Springfield Sunday Republican* newspaper article entitled “Reaching Porto Ricans: Experiences Among Our New Wards of the Tropic Isle” described Mayo’s experiences in Puerto Rico. In September 1903, he took a steamship to Puerto Rico and over the following three years taught English in the towns of Albonita and Manatí at which time he was the only English speaking person living in either of those towns. He was soon joined in Puerto Rico by Elizabeth “Lizzie” Moore and her sister Bessie Moore, two teachers who had just graduated from Brimfield Academy. The two young women taught English in various Puerto Rican schools from 1904 to 1906.<sup>29</sup> The expansion of English teaching in Puerto Rico gained real momentum under the supervision of Commissioner Roland Falkner (1904-07). During his tenure in office, Falkner expanded the number of American teachers in the system and implemented the teaching of English in all grades in Puerto Rico.<sup>30</sup>

In 1907, the Northampton Commercial College boasted in their *Springfield Republican* advertisement that “the success of our students is notable.” In the advertisement, it went on to tell the success story of Louis Frederic Davis, “a farmer’s boy” of Sunderland, who began his studies in 1906:

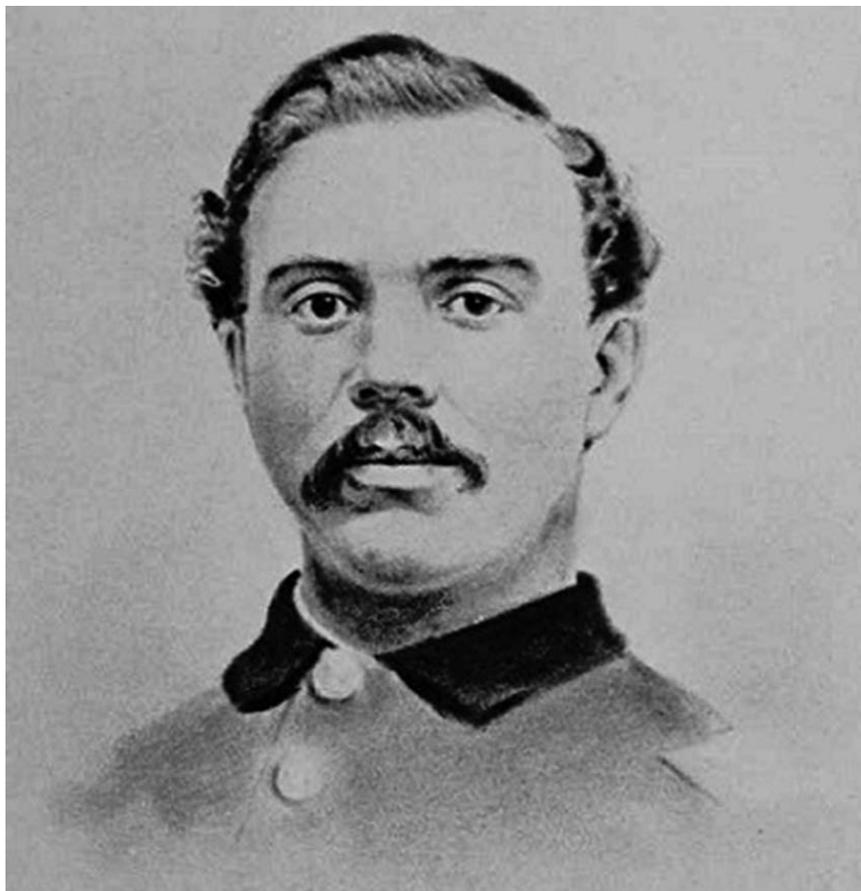
He didn’t come here as a makeshift, or to take a rush course.  
He TOOK TIME to MASTER shorthand and typewriting.

He wanted to be ready for the best place in sight and HE GOT IT. \$1,200 [annual salary] with the Attorney General of Porto Rico. AND HE WILL RISE” [emphasis with capital font in advertisement].<sup>31</sup>

Davis moved from that post in Puerto Rico to the post of “examiner” in the Naturalization Division of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor in 1912. Later in life, he moved back to Western Massachusetts and started his family in Northfield.<sup>32</sup>

A number of Protestant ministries in Western Massachusetts demonstrated an interest in Puerto Rico during this period. Elizabeth Prewitt, wife of Pittsfield Methodist minister Reverend Charles Russell Prewitt, taught at the Blanche Kellogg Institute in Santurce in the 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>33</sup> Established in Puerto Rico by the American Missionary Institute in 1906, the Blanche Kellogg Institute was a Congregational institution becoming interdenominational in 1916.<sup>34</sup> Over the years, a number of individuals from Western Massachusetts taught there. Berkshire County Congregational minister Reverend Archie G. Axtell spent ten years in the 1920s and early 1930s as a “missionary worker” in Puerto Rico. He would occasionally present lectures accompanied by stereopticon slides detailing his experience to his North Adams parishioners and local residents.<sup>35</sup> Another area cleric and former Williams College football captain, Reverend Charles Francis Boynton of Williamstown, began his ministry as an Episcopal priest at St. Andrew’s Church in Mayaguez in 1941 and in 1950 was elected as the Episcopal Bishop of San Juan with his rectory at the Episcopal cathedral located in Santurce.<sup>36</sup>

In October of 1907, four young men, William M. Brown, Stuart Schouler, Verne Parsons, and John Williams from North Adams, spent nine months in Puerto Rico teaching in island schools.<sup>37</sup> The experience left a lifelong impact on them. That nine-month sojourn was mentioned as one of the highlights of William Brown’s life in his obituary 46 years later.<sup>38</sup> Positively-influenced by John Williams’ experience, the Williams family began a long connection with the island. After World War II, some of the family even moved to Puerto Rico. In the 1950s, Donald Williams served as the Chief Electrical Engineer for the South Puerto Rican Sugar Company having worked for the company since 1946. His family lived in Ensenada and was visited by their North Adams relatives on a regular basis.<sup>39</sup> Another North Adams native, entomologist Dr. Harry D. Pratt, conducted a major survey for the U.S. government studying “mosquito control and tropical diseases” in Puerto Rico in 1942.<sup>40</sup>



### **Lieutenant Augusto Rodríguez**

Lieutenant Rodríguez (1841–1880) served with the 15th Connecticut Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War, enlisting in the city of Hartford, which had 10 Puerto Rican residents around the time of Rodríguez's tour of duty, 1862–1865.

The future treasurer [1920–29] of the Federal Land Bank in Springfield, John J. Merriman, purchased a "fruit plantation" in Puerto Rico in 1905. From 1918 to 1920 Merriman served as auditor of the American Colonial Bank in San Juan, as the Director of the "Porto Rican Fruit Exchange," and as the treasurer of the "Porto Rican Fruit Products Corporation." He also personally managed his "fruit plantation" during his time on the island.<sup>41</sup> Former North Adams City Councilman, Valmore H. Monette left his North Adams car dealership and took a position as an agent for a variety of Puerto Rican food products shortly before the U.S. entry into World War II. His

brother Clarence Monette was the manager of a food distribution company based in Puerto Rico at the time.<sup>42</sup> These individuals and many more not chronicled here began lifelong relationships with the island of Puerto Rico and its people. At that same time, Puerto Ricans were in turn discovering Western Massachusetts as a place to work, and to ultimately become residents.

## PUERTO RICANS IN WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Prior to World War I, there were few evidences of individuals from Puerto Rico living in Springfield or Western Massachusetts. However, it must be pointed out that census takers almost always listed “Spain” or “Spanish” as designations of an individual’s place of origin. The term Puerto Rico or “Porto Rico” was not generally seen in the records for this region until the 1920s. Historians have identified Lieutenant Augusto “Gustave” Rodríguez (b. 1841 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, d. Mar. 22, 1880 in New Haven, Connecticut) of the 15th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, who enlisted in the city of Hartford for service during the U.S. Civil War from 1862 to 1865, as having been born in Puerto Rico.<sup>43</sup> There were ten other individuals from Puerto Rico living in Hartford at that time.

Other than a few students who came to regional educational institutions for a semester or two, there were few permanent Valley residents born in Puerto Rico prior to the First World War. Two of the first documented Puerto Rican workers were “Charlie” (Carlos) Fernández and Frank (Francisco) Hidalgo who were listed in the U.S. Census for Westfield as working at the local iron works.<sup>44</sup> A Springfield church group put on a play, “Leave It to Polly,” in 1915 to raise money to “support a Porto Rican girl” in the community “whose expenses through school are being paid by the Queen Esther Circle.”<sup>45</sup> In December of 1919, the *North Adams Transcript* reported in their social pages that “Miss Irene Sullivan and her friend Miss Anna Avalenet of Puerto Rico were “enjoying the holidays at Miss Sullivan’s home here.” They were classmates at Russell Sage College at the time.<sup>46</sup>

During World War I, the United States government made a concerted effort to bring Puerto Rican laborers to the mainland. The U.S. Labor Department through the U.S. Employment Service eventually brought over 10,000 workers from the island from 1917-1918. The challenge of transporting these numbers was solved by using Army transport ships returning from Europe after unloading troops heading to the front lines in France. Almost all of these laborers were employed in “war work” in Baltimore, Maryland; Newport News and Norfolk, Virginia; Brunswick and Savannah, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; Charleston, South Carolina; and Wilmington,

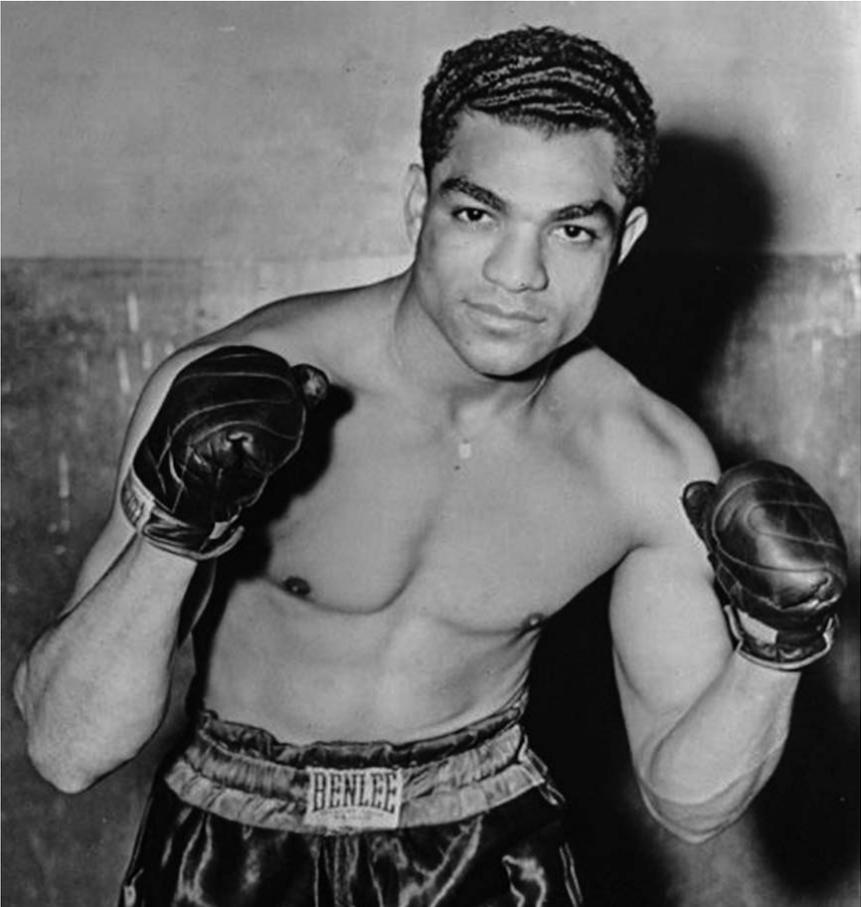
North Carolina. After the war, most returned to the island but some stayed in the continental U.S. in cities like Baltimore, New Orleans, and New York. However, it is not evident that any of these individuals ever made it north to the Connecticut Valley at that time. The Labor Department report detailed the wartime arrangements for these workers:

The Puerto Rican laborers will receive 35 cents an hour, with time and a half for overtime work. They will be fed by the Government commissary, each man paying 25 cents a meal. Housing will be furnished to these men without cost, and a representative of the Department of Labor now is in the cities in which they will be employed arranging housing accommodations in advance of their arrival.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1920s, a few individuals from the island began to make their home and livelihood in Valley communities. One of the most remarkable individuals was Manuel Lloveras, the region's only Puerto Rican Spanish-American War veteran. Born in Isabella, Puerto Rico in 1881, Manuel O. Lloveras joined the U.S. Army on April 19, 1899, serving four years in the infantry and three years in the cavalry stationed in Puerto Rico eventually achieving the rank of Sergeant. After his honorable discharge from the service in 1909, Lloveras moved to Plattsburg, New York, where, in 1911, he met and married Bertha Cross who was originally from Michigan. They began their family in Plattsburg, but by 1920 had moved their family to Westfield where Lloveras established his own barber shop on Elm Street.<sup>48</sup> As a war veteran, he joined "Camp 11" of the Spanish-American War Veterans of Springfield and remained a member for life, serving as Post Commander twice.<sup>49</sup> He was to live out his life in Westfield. When he died on June 16, 1970, Manuel Lloveras had lived in Western Massachusetts longer than any other person of Puerto Rican descent.<sup>50</sup>

In 1927, the Springfield School Department reported that of the 700 adult immigrant students completing their winter session of evening classes, two individuals were from Puerto Rico. In 1927, "Daisy" Mattai who was born in Puerto Rico and was a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico was hired by the Burnham School for Girls in Greenfield. Mattai was a frequent speaker at local churches and organizations talking about her younger years on the island.<sup>51</sup>

All of these connections over the years served to heighten the awareness of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans among Valley residents. When a particularly strong hurricane in September 1928 left almost 700,000 people homeless in



### Popular Pugilist

Puerto Rican boxer Jose M. Basora, South American Middleweight champ, was a crowd favorite in Holyoke, where he fought three of his most important bouts.

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Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, the Springfield area chapter (with offices in Springfield, West Springfield, and Longmeadow) of the Red Cross raised substantial funds and collected clothing to send to the disaster victims.<sup>52</sup> In at least one incident, the value of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans was highlighted when members of the Lloveras family visiting Spain found themselves caught up in the middle of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The two sisters and a cousin of Manuel Lloveras of Westfield were released by the Spanish authorities in Barcelona due to their proof of U.S. citizenship. The newspaper reported “one sad note” that the cousin’s father-in-law was

not released because of his Spanish citizenship. Apparently “although he had lived in Puerto Rico for many years [he] had not availed himself of becoming a U.S. citizen.”<sup>53</sup>

Still, the actual person-to-person interaction between the general population and Puerto Ricans was rare in those early years. In the 1930s, local boxing fans at various venues in the Connecticut Valley and most prominently at the Valley Arena in Holyoke, one of the Northeast’s most storied venues, would frequently see Puerto Rican boxers compete, including fighters of national renown. In fact, newspaper accounts often described the positive responses in support of these Puerto Rican pugilists. A few became quite popular with local audiences in the 1930s and 1940s. Most of these pugilists were based in Puerto Rico, while some also called New York their second home.

Puerto Rican Bantamweight boxer Felippo Yambo (a.k.a. Yambo Andrade, a.k.a. Felippo Yambo Andrade, born Juan Yambot) fought several matches in Western Massachusetts including Holyoke and at the American Legion Arena in West Springfield where he was “a decided hit in his several appearances.”<sup>54</sup> A large crowd turned out for his much anticipated August, 1934 bout with Worcester’s Vernon Cormier. Based out of San Juan, Yambo’s lifetime boxing record was 51 wins and 17 losses. Other Puerto Rican Boxers appearing at Valley Arena in Holyoke during the 1930s and 1940s were featherweight boxers Koli Kolo, “Joe” (Domingo) Rozo, Apontes Tórres, and Victor Corchado; and lightweight boxers Saverlo Turello, Ruby García, and Victor Vallee, who was undefeated in his first 50 fights.<sup>55</sup>

Early in his storied career, Jose M. Basora, South American Middleweight champion from Puerto Rico, was one of the favorites at Valley Arena in Holyoke where he fought three of his most important matches. On Jan. 11, 1943, Basora beat the highly regarded Philadelphia middleweight boxer, Gene Buffalo, at the Valley Arena to qualify for a chance to one day fight against Sugar Ray Robinson, the reigning champion. On May 14, 1945, Basora shocked the boxing world when he fought Robinson to a ten-round draw at the Convention Hall that night in Philadelphia.<sup>56</sup>

In 1957, with a local Puerto Rican fan base finally established in Holyoke, the Valley Arena hosted fan-favorite Puerto Rican Middleweight champion Rodolfo Bent in a bout against Springfield’s Sammy Walker. Local fans also spawned serious interest from young Puerto Rican men who desired to follow in the footsteps of these local boxing heroes. By the early 1960s, weekly boxing matches often featuring Puerto Ricans either from Puerto Rico or from the local communities in Springfield, Westfield, or Holyoke, were held at the Eastern States Coliseum in West Springfield. Florial “Flut” García of



### **Music Sensation**

World-famous Puerto Rican pianist Jesús María Sanromá wowed Springfield Symphony audiences in two performances in 1931.

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Westfield was one of the primary promoters of the events and served as the interpreter for the many boxers who were not proficient in English. Some of the local boxers who participated in 1961 were George Cruz, Lee Torres, Manuel Dávila, Juan Avedo, and Jesús Jusiono.<sup>57</sup>

### **OTHER CONTACTS**

The gentler side of Puerto Rican culture was also celebrated locally. The world famous Puerto Rican pianist Jesús María Sanromá (1902–1984) wowed the Springfield Symphony audiences at two concerts on November 18 and 22, 1931, to help kick off its tenth season with an impressive start. Sanromá's family had been exiled from Barcelona by Spanish authorities making their new home in the town of Carolina and later in the town of Fajardo, Puerto Rico. It was in Fajardo that he learned to play piano and where he debuted

his talents on stage at the age of thirteen. Sanromá has been considered by some music critics to have been one of the most accomplished pianists of the 20th century.

Sanromá frequently returned to Western Massachusetts to perform. He played at the Tanglewood Music Festival several times in the 1950s. He was so popular with Berkshire audiences that he was brought back to headline the opening concert of the Pittsfield Community Concert Series in 1958. The previous year he opened the Chicopee Community Concert Series with a well-attended concert at the Veritas Auditorium of Our Lady of the Elms College on November 18, 1957.<sup>58</sup>

## TOBACCO

Local industry has always been interested in expanding their markets for their products and the opportunities for sales in Puerto Rico. After World War II, the availability of low-wage labor also drew interest from a number of major manufacturers in Western Massachusetts. The Springfield (and later West Springfield) based John H. Breck Company, with its market dominant brand of hair care products, discovered a lucrative market in Puerto Rico and Latin America in general. In 1953, Virginia Maldonado, a representative of the government of Puerto Rico, held an employee cocktail party at the offices of the John H. Breck Company in Springfield. The *Springfield Union* reported that “Breck does a substantial volume of business in Puerto Rico and the party was a goodwill gesture towards the company from the government of Puerto Rico.” Ana Rita Fernández, Breck Company Sales representative for Latin America, was among the company officials welcoming Maldonado to the facility.<sup>59</sup>

During the late 1950s, a number of Western Massachusetts companies opened factories in Puerto Rico including Savage Arms Corporation of Westfield, Sprague Electric Company of North Adams, and A. G. Spaulding Company of Chicopee.<sup>60</sup> In fact, this trend began to concern some legislators in Massachusetts. Secretary of the Treasury of the government of Puerto Rico, Rafael Pico, travelled to the state to reassure concerned citizens and legislators. In a speech held at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Secretary Pico declared that although Puerto Rico offered tax exemptions for U.S. investors, “the Commonwealth [of Puerto Rico] wants no part of ‘Run-away’ industries.” He firmly stated that, “the tax exemption, which is basic to our development effort, will not be granted to any concern which gives the slightest basis for suspecting that it will shut off or reduce its operations in the United States in order to establish itself in the Commonwealth [of Puerto Rico].”<sup>61</sup>

Of all the mainland American business with the longest commercial interests and business and labor ties with Puerto Rico was Connecticut Valley-based tobacco agribusiness. As historian Ruth Glasser points out, “years before Puerto Rican workers came to work on Connecticut [Valley] tobacco, Connecticut tobacco concerns had come to Puerto Rico.”<sup>62</sup> The largest were the General Cigar Company, the Consolidated Cigar Corporation, and Meyer & Mendolsohn, Inc., the “dominant” partners in the Connecticut Shade Tobacco Growers Association. During the 1950s and 1960s, General Cigar was one of the largest employers of Puerto Rican workers on the island. These companies found that they could pay much less than the U.S. minimum wage while also avoiding income tax by “using island labor to sort Connecticut-grown leaves and roll cigars.”<sup>63</sup> A significant number of migrants who came to work on Connecticut Valley tobacco farms came from the Caguas, Cayey, and Comerio areas of Puerto Rico and had been previously employed by one of the mainland tobacco companies. As Glasser notes, “ironically, they came to the mainland to try to get a living wage from the very same employers.”<sup>64</sup> From the 1940s, the upper Connecticut Valley region began to attract increasing numbers of migrant farm laborers from Puerto Rico. Many workers eventually brought their families and soon the nucleus of several Puerto Rican communities began to emerge in the cities of Westfield, Springfield, and Holyoke.

### **MIGRATION, FARM LABOR, AND THE EMERGENCE OF A PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY: 1940–1965**

Since officially becoming United States citizens in 1917, many Puerto Ricans came to the mainland in search of jobs. Most of these immigrants settled in New York City. However, by the late 1940s, New York newspapers began to express concern over the tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans migrating into the city. Editorialists claimed that there would not be enough jobs and social services to accommodate them into housing, jobs, education, and social services. In the meantime, large-scale United States farmers were looking for workers. Since the 19th century, agribusiness had benefited from an almost unrestricted flow of overseas labor to work their low wage, undesirable jobs. However, in the 1920s, Congress passed a series of federal laws severely limiting the number of immigrants into the United States. By the post–World War II era, there were few United States residents willing to labor in agriculture.<sup>65</sup>

It was not surprising, therefore, that both island and mainland government officials would see Puerto Ricans as a major solution to the labor needs of growers in the continental United States. The Puerto Rican Department of

Labor established its Migration Division in 1947 in order to arrange contracts between unemployed Puerto Ricans and mainland farmers. According to accounts, Migration Division recruiters would travel all over the rural island roads in cars with bullhorns and distributing leaflets. They also placed frequent advertisements in island newspapers announcing good jobs on the mainland. By 1955, the Migration Division had also established offices in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. The initiative helped make the 1950s the period of greatest Puerto Rican migration in the twentieth century, with over 470,000 individuals leaving Puerto Rico to come to the mainland during that decade.<sup>66</sup>

In this way more than 4,900 Puerto Ricans came to the continental United States in 1948 to work under contracts with the Puerto Rican Department of Labor. By 1968, almost 23,000 farmworkers came to work in 14 states, primarily along the East Coast. By the mid-1960s, 25% of these workers went to Connecticut. During this period, tens of thousands of other Puerto Rican workers came through illegal private contracts or with no contract at all. Most of the Connecticut Valley-bound were hired by local growers to work from spring to fall. One labor historian noted that, “this extended season coincided with the *tiempo muerto*, or “dead time,” of the [island’s] sugar industry, enabling migrants to work half a year on U.S. mainland farms and then return to the island to labor in cane fields or sugar mills.”<sup>67</sup>

Puerto Rican farmworkers labored in many parts of the Connecticut Valley, working in nurseries and on tomato, mushroom, and cucumber farms from Meriden, Connecticut to Sunderland, Massachusetts. However, most came to work tobacco in the Connecticut River Valley. The region, known as “Tobacco Valley,” once extended from Hartford, Connecticut, to Springfield, Massachusetts, covering an area 30 miles wide and 90 miles long. Changes in tobacco growing at the end of the 19th century had created a great demand for workers. In 1899, one year after United States troops landed on Puerto Rican soil, Hurricane San Ciriaco devastated the island’s coffee crop. At that time, Connecticut Valley farmers were experimenting with new ways of cultivating tobacco. Since colonial times, the rich soil of the Connecticut Valley had produced a good tobacco crop. At the turn of the 20th century, Valley tobacco farmers replicated tropical conditions by growing their plants under white netting, thus shielding plants from direct sunlight while creating a humid atmosphere to produce high quality leaves. These “shade tobacco” leaves were then used to wrap the most expensive cigars.<sup>68</sup>

Historically, labor shortages plagued the Connecticut Valley's tobacco industry. Up to the 1920s growers employed many Polish, Lithuanian, and Italian immigrants until the severe immigration restrictions of the 1920s and the lure of factory jobs depleted those labor supplies. By World War II, tobacco growers began to recruit African-Americans from the South to work tobacco. Farmers also took advantage of inexpensive child labor from local areas. Farmers brought children in on trucks in the morning and then returned them to their homes at night, avoiding costly housing expenses. Understandably, the war years brought further labor shortages, as it did for most non-defense-related industries. Desperate tobacco farmers looked to the West Indies for new sources of labor and began hiring Jamaican farmworkers into the postwar years. At that same time, the various child labor laws in southern New England were tightened, including the passage of Connecticut's 1947 Child Labor Bill, which set age and hourly restrictions on agricultural labor.

An administrator for the Farm Placement Division of the Massachusetts Department of Employment Services recalled that the first tobacco laborers from Puerto Rico were brought into the Hartford area to work the farms during World War II and the use of Puerto Rican labor quickly spread north into the Connecticut Valley farms of Massachusetts by 1950. The severe shortage of available farm labor in the early 1950s caused the State's Division of Employment Security to help recruit Puerto Rican farmworkers from New York City, and from the island through a formal agreement with the Puerto Rican Department of Labor.<sup>69</sup>

Beginning in 1947, Puerto Rican laborers started coming to the Connecticut Valley in significant numbers to work in the tobacco fields. Hired as seasonal workers, many of these workers eventually settled in Connecticut Valley cities. In the earliest years of migration, farm laborers to the Connecticut Valley received scant attention by the general public. It was much later in 1959 that a *Springfield Union* newspaper reporter was able to coax an owner of a local tobacco farm to respond to the community criticism of agricultural labor practices in the Valley. The farm owner gave a revealing response:

Connecticut and lower Massachusetts tobacco farmers do a slow burn when people charge them with importing Puerto Ricans for three months work and then dumping them onto city welfare rolls. Everyone seems to forget [that] we used to recruit workers from Jamaica. They were British subjects and when farm season was over, they had to go back home. Then the U.S. Department of Labor told us, 'What are you doing, hiring Jamaicans? There are thousands of people in Puerto Rico who need work desperately.

They are American Citizens. Hire Puerto Ricans.' So, we hired Puerto Ricans. We knew they'd stay. We knew they'd be out of work when the season was over. We knew they would have to go on welfare. And I hate to say it — but we told you so.<sup>70</sup>

But at the time, no such open discussion was heard. No provisions were made for farmworkers after the planting, growing and harvest season. The primary concern of growers was simply, “how do we get these laborers to our farms?” In January of 1952, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation decided to adopt the example of Hampden County agriculturalists who had joined together to bring Puerto Rican laborers to the Greater Springfield area in 1951 to work on their farms. The president of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau had experienced this first hand on his farm in Southwick and easily persuaded the Federation to follow this model of bringing in labor from the island. He described the laborers as being of “two types”: “boys from the hill towns [in Puerto Rico] who take a job as a stepping stone to something better,” and “those who have strong family attachments at home and are ready to scoot back to Puerto Rico as soon as cold weather comes.” The Federation anticipated bringing in 500 workers that year to help with the harvests. As early as 1951, Granville orchard owners reported that they had “imported Jamaicans and Puerto Ricans to help during the harvest season.”<sup>71</sup>

On an interesting note, the City of Westfield was so pleased with the new arrivals to the area's farms that they held an International Festival on September 22 and 23 of 1952, “a program never before staged in this city,” to present programs “highlighting the many ethnic groups of the City including Polish, Italian, Irish, Greek, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Puerto Rican.” This was the very first Western Massachusetts Puerto Rican cultural event in which local Puerto Ricans were both performers, exhibitors and audience.<sup>72</sup> Later in 1956, Reverend Ladeslaw Pykosz of Holy Trinity Church in Westfield helped convene the first organized Puerto Rican-Latino organization in that city. Father Pykosz was on leave of absence from his pastoral duties in Spain. Over 150 Puerto Ricans attended the first planned social gathering in Westfield held at Holy Trinity Hall. The first president of the club was Dietrina Christiana; Antonio Mirando was elected vice-president, and José Ocasio served as the group's Secretary. Father Pykosz was assisted in organizing the event by Mariano, Jose, and Domingo Cruz.<sup>73</sup> “At their own suggestion,” the Catholic Puerto Ricans in Westfield soon organized their own parish society, “Borinquen,” with Victor Franco serving as its first president.<sup>74</sup>

Years later, in a 1978 Spanish-American Union demographic study of the Puerto Rican community, the compilers offered further insight into the

earliest migrants to the area. They reported that: “The first Puerto Ricans to arrive in the Springfield area did so as seasonal farmworkers over 20 years ago. Many of these persons stayed in the area after obtaining permanent employment and thus provided a network for friends and relatives from Puerto Rico.” That report also stated that later migration came “from within the continental United States, with many Puerto Ricans coming from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.”<sup>75</sup>

In his 1986 study, *Puerto Rican Poverty and Migration: We Just Had to Try Elsewhere*, author Julio Morales states: “The more sophisticated New York Puerto Ricans rejected as demeaning and ‘dead-end’ the migrant farm labor the more recent migrants readily accepted [and that] New York’s Puerto Ricans were more likely to leave a Massachusetts farm for a better paying job in the burgeoning factories.”<sup>76</sup>

Despite all the early recruitment efforts, the Hampshire County tobacco growers announced in 1953 that there was still a shortage of farm labor to harvest their crop. Farmers estimated that they would need about 500 more farm laborers that season. The Division of Employment Security in Northampton attempted to fill that need by bringing in Puerto Rican laborers living in New York City and New Jersey but could not bring in enough from those regions. The spokesman for the Division claimed that it was due to “many Puerto Ricans [from that region] preferring to accept work in the canning factories of the Midwest.”<sup>77</sup> As early as 1954, some tobacco farms in Westfield, Southwick, and other Connecticut Valley towns in Connecticut lured workers with “dormitory-styled” buildings where up to thirty workers lived during the growing and harvesting seasons. According to Westfield historians Edward Janes and Roscoe Scott,

Starting early in the 1950s, plane loads of Puerto Ricans were imported each year as tobacco field workers. The rigorous northern climate usually sent them shivering back home in the Fall when the farm season was over, but a few were induced to brave the cold by promises of winter work in the factories. By 1952, there were several families who had settled in Westfield. The large tobacco farms in the city had erected crude barracks-style housing for the men, but as they brought in their wives and children, more substantial homes were needed. Breaking the pattern of earlier immigrant groups, they did not congregate in a single area but bought houses throughout the city.<sup>78</sup>

The use of Puerto Rican farm labor soon spread north into the upper Valley. The 1955 growing season witnessed “imported farmworkers from Puerto Rico” on farms in Hadley, South Hadley, Southampton, Easthampton, and Northampton, harvesting tobacco and onion crops on Valley farms. South Hadley and Hadley workers mostly lived in Holyoke while working the farms, where low-rent tenement apartments were plentiful.<sup>79</sup>

Other than the opportunity for hard, grueling farm work, little was provided for the great majority of these workers or their families. Housing, education, and health care were rare and substandard. And the work was often dangerous. Nineteen fifty-five was a particularly bad year for farm injuries. On August 19, when the Westfield River and Little River overflowed their banks and flooded the Adams Nursery in Westfield, two Puerto Rican farmworkers, García Colón Hipólito and Alejandro Carabello Cortís, both from Barriado Bordaleza, Puerto Rico, drowned. They were working at the nursery when, after two days of heavy rainfall, 17.83 inches of rain in less than thirty hours, Colón and Cortís with two other workers, became trapped on the second floor of a barn. They drowned while trying to escape from the building in a canoe which tragically overturned. The two other Puerto Rican workers miraculously managed to swim to safety. The flood caused \$10 million in damage with half of the City’s 47,000 square feet covered by water. “Hundreds of residents had to be rescued by amphibious ‘Duck’ boats.”<sup>80</sup>

But it didn’t take a natural disaster to cause severe injuries. Everyday farm work could be tragically hazardous as in the case of Puerto Rican farm worker, Luís González. He was working on the Bagdon Farm in Sunderland when he fell from atop a moving truckload of corn and died soon after from his injuries on September 19, 1955. Sadly, the newspaper reported that “No family was available to make funeral arrangements.” By 1956, there were over 350 Puerto Ricans living in Westfield, most being farm laborers.<sup>81</sup>

When tobacco farming started to “slack off” on Sunderland farms in 1957, cucumber farming in that town employed the Puerto Ricans laborers formerly “working tobacco.” Although new machinery was slowly being introduced in the Valley for harvesting this crop, the *Springfield Union* reported that, “the bulk of the pickles, however, are still being harvested in the old, back-breaking method, and observers said that the increase in cuke acreage has taken up the slack in work for Puerto Rican workers caused by the reduction in tobacco acreage.”<sup>82</sup>

In Sunderland during the late 1950s, the largest number of Puerto Rican farm laborers, nevertheless, were employed by the Hubbard and Warner tobacco farms of that town. Hampshire County Tobacco growers continued to be challenged with getting enough farm labor for their harvest. In the

1959 season, they had to bring in “150 boys and girls brought in from other states, and over 200 Puerto Ricans and West Indians will be imported.”<sup>83</sup> In March 1959, Antonio Del Río, Field Representative of the Migration Division of the Puerto Rican Department of Labor reported that about 900 Puerto Rican farm laborers worked in Western Massachusetts tobacco and vegetable farms, and nurseries. Approximately half [were] brought in from Puerto Rico under contract and were supervised by the Massachusetts Division of Employment Security. Minimum wages per hour were \$1 for nurseries, 90 cents for Tobacco farms, and 70 to 75 cents for vegetable farms. The other half of the labor force “are brought in without contracts” and were paid less.<sup>84</sup>

Del Río cautioned that workers who came to the area without a contract “had no protection against exploitation except his own common sense.” That year complaints had been lodged with the New Haven (CT) Human Relations Council charging that Puerto Rican farm labor was being exploited in the Connecticut River Valley with some laborers being paid as little as 51 cents per hour.<sup>85</sup> The Cuban Revolution in 1959 and Fidel Castro’s seizure of vast farmlands owned by U.S. investors under the Cuban Agrarian Reform Act soon provided Del Río important leverage to change that situation when it came to providing Puerto Rican tobacco workers to mainland farms. Within a year of the communist revolution, the U.S. government imposed an embargo on Cuban goods including “Castro’s Cuban Leaf.”<sup>86</sup> This meant that U.S. cigar producers now would have to rely almost totally on the broadleaf tobacco produced in the Connecticut Valley. Southwick and Westfield tobacco farms increased their production of broadleaf tobacco, while other Valley farms shifted their crop acreage proportions to take full advantage of this windfall in the U.S. tobacco market.<sup>87</sup>

In May of 1960, Valley farm employers brought in Puerto Rican laborers by Eastern Airlines chartered planes to Bradley Field Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Antonio Del Río reported that there were approximately 3,400 Puerto Rican migrants in Western Massachusetts, “mostly in the Greater Springfield Area.” Five hundred of these individuals were farm laborers brought into the area that year. Del Río estimated that “between 5 to 7 percent of these individuals will remain as permanent residents based upon past experience.”<sup>88</sup>

Ultimately promoted to a management position in the local tobacco industry, Nestor Morales remembered his earliest years as a Valley agricultural worker in the 1960s. A trained cook, and a veteran of the U.S. Army, this hard working native of Catano, Puerto Rico, couldn’t find a job when he finished his service in the military. With unemployment high in Puerto Rico

at the time, Morales went to his regional unemployment office in Bayamón and filled out an application to be a farm worker on the mainland. He didn't know where he was going until he was on the plane, "It could be Florida, it could be Chicago, it could be New Jersey [but] I wound up in Connecticut." Morales recalled that he and his friends were so desperate for work that, "We didn't care where they sent us. We just wanted to work."<sup>89</sup>

In late April of 1964, he and his fellow "recruits" arrived at Bradley Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. They were transported by busses "to a camp surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by armed guards." From there, the workers were transported in small groups to various tobacco farms in northern Connecticut and southern Massachusetts. Nestor Morales was to work in the tobacco industry for the rest of his adult life and, as he later observed, "If there's a harvest, you've got Puerto Ricans working there." The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1964 (the "Bracero Act") restricting the use of foreign nationals for temporary farm work temporarily increased the flow of Puerto Ricans to farms in the Connecticut Valley. That year, the Massachusetts Department of Labor reported that there were over 800 Puerto Rican migrant farmworkers working on 31 farms in Hampden and Hampshire Counties.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, over this time period many Puerto Rican farmworkers had decided to improve their conditions by "voting with their feet." They began to leave the fields and found other jobs in the nearest cities. As one historian put it, "these former agricultural workers helped form the nuclei of entirely new communities."<sup>91</sup>

Clayton Cigal Jr. managed the R. E. Arnold Tobacco Company's 47-acre tobacco farm in Southwick for the Arnold family from the early 1960s to the 1970s. He managed the farm and interacted with Puerto Rican workers for 12 seasons. "We would buy them their plane tickets, and they would come in the spring and leave in the fall," Cigal said. "There were about 12 of them, and we prepared a little house for them to stay in."<sup>92</sup> Cigal said he had a steady group of workers who came up every spring. A few came with their wives who would work in the barns.

"There were always a few who knew how to drive the tractor pretty good and they were good workers," Cigal said. He learned to communicate with the workers, "They knew some English, and they taught me to speak Puerto Rican [sic]." The usual work day was from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays were spent visiting other Puerto Rican workers on neighboring farms, Cigal said. Occasionally, they took excursions to Springfield or the Eastern States Exposition.

Cigal worked with the farmers for many years before there was a shift in labor in the early to mid-1970s. "They started demanding higher wages and

there were other complaints,” Cigal said, referring to organizations like the Spanish-American Union and New England Farmworkers Council, which began to protest conditions, particularly at the larger farms. “At that point we started to get more Jamaican workers,” he said.<sup>93</sup> As foreign migrant workers, Jamaicans did not have the leverage of political and labor organizations that could forcefully advocate for them and so they generally accepted low wages without “work actions.”

Although Puerto Rican farm labor is still significant in the Valley. The numbers actually working tobacco is relatively small. Since its “hayday,” the Valley shade-tobacco industry has decreased dramatically. Like other forms of tobacco use, cigar smoking has seen significant decline in recent years, in part due to the health concerns associated with tobacco consumption. Even with the slight resurgence of expensive “boutique” brands, the development of cheap, mass-produced cigar wrappers by commercial enterprises has taken a significant toll on the local shade-tobacco industry. In the 1930s, Connecticut alone had 30,000 acres of farmland dedicated to tobacco production; by 2006 this acreage had dwindled to less than 2,000 acres. Former tobacco farmland is now used to grow nursery stock or has been developed for residential or retail commercial uses.<sup>94</sup> By 2007, there were only 46 farms in Massachusetts still cultivating tobacco.<sup>95</sup> A further downturn in the market, and a succession of poor weather seasons from 2008 to 2010 caused more and more Pioneer Valley farmers to drastically reduce or cease production completely. One Hadley farmer explained that, beginning in 2008, regional farms began to have problems selling their tobacco. “Nobody wanted it,” he lamented, “premium cigars went down when the economy went down.”<sup>96</sup> Tobacco farmer, Bernie Smiarowski of Hatfield spoke to a *Hampshire Gazette* reporter in 2010 about the economic malaise in the regional tobacco industry. “The flavor of the tobacco grown here in the Connecticut River Valley is much better than in Honduras, Venezuela or the Dominican Republic because of the growing conditions, the soil and humidity,” he said, “but the cost is high [and] It costs more to grow it here than in countries where labor is cheap.”<sup>97</sup> He subsequently reduced the number of acres dedicated to tobacco growing from 60 to 35. His story has been repeated throughout the Valley’s tobacco industry with its consequent reduction in production and farm labor required for that once major Connecticut Valley crop.<sup>98</sup>

By 1960, the region’s Puerto Rican population was no longer a “temporary” labor force. It also ceased to be primarily employed in agriculture. Branching out into manufacturing jobs, employment in the service industry, and in small businesses, Puerto Ricans set down long-term roots in Western

Massachusetts. Over the succeeding generation, Springfield, Westfield, and Holyoke developed sizeable and self-sustaining Latino communities with Puerto Ricans taking leading roles in Latino social, religious, and political organizations. Overcoming language, racial, and cultural barriers, second- and third-generation Western Massachusetts-born Puerto Ricans began to find leadership roles outside of Latino-specific institutions. By the early 21st century, Puerto Ricans began to be elected on a regular basis in most of the major cities of Connecticut River Valley.<sup>99</sup>

HJM

## Notes

1. During the War, the 2nd Massachusetts Volunteers Regiment was comprised primarily of men from Western and Central Massachusetts. It fought as part of the U.S. Fifth Army Corps, First Brigade, 2nd Division at the battle of El Caney in Cuba on July 1, 1898.
2. *North Adams Transcript*, February 20, 1899, 8.
3. *Springfield Republican*, December 22, 1899, 10–11.
4. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1.
5. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1.
6. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1.
7. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1.
8. J. R. Chapin, R. J. McHugh and R. E. Gross, *Quest for Liberty* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1973), 507.
9. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1. Degautau was an early proponent of U.S. citizenship for Puerto Ricans, see Federico Degautau y González, *The Political Status of Porto Rico* (Washington, DC: Globe Printing Co., 1902), 16.
10. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1. In 1902, José Gómez Brioso participated in the Republican Party Convention in Chicago representing the territory of Puerto Rico, see Carmen Muñiz de Barbosa and Rene Tórrres Delgado, *José Gómez Brioso (1844–1930) Nada Menos Que Todo un Hombre* (San Juan: Authors, 1982).
11. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics: Bulletin 29 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1900), 694–5; 766–812.
12. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1.
13. *North Adams Transcript*, October 4, 1898, 5.
14. *Westfield Times and Newsletter*, August 9, 1899, 5; and May 23, 1900, 6.
15. *Springfield Republican*, October 25, 1901, 1.
16. *Westfield Times and Newsletter*, December 18, 1901, p. 8.
17. *Springfield Republican*, *Springfield Union*, and *Springfield Daily News*, wholesale and retail produce advertisements, October–December 1901.

18. *Valley Echo* (Westfield), January 20, 1906, 3.
19. *Springfield Republican*, January 13, 1910, 7.
20. *Springfield Sunday Republican*, department store advertisements, September–December 1913.
21. *Springfield Sunday Republican*, department store advertisements, October–December 1920.
22. Notably, England Brothers in Pittsfield; Wilson’s in Greenfield; McCallum’s in Northampton.
23. *Valley Echo* (Westfield), 17 December 1920, 6.
24. *Boston Herald*, 23 June 1903, 4.
25. *Springfield Republican*, 6 September 1901, 4.
26. *Springfield Republican*, 5 December 1902, 8; and *Springfield Union*, 6, December 1902, 6
27. *Springfield Republican*, 13 February 1906, 11.
28. *Springfield Republican*, January 13, 1910, 7.
29. *Springfield Sunday Republican*, August 24, 1902, 13; *Springfield Republican*, August 16, 1904, 8; and *Springfield Sunday Republican*, September 10, 1905, 11. In 1932, Bessie Moore returned to Puerto Rico and performed with an all “girl’s orchestra” in San Juan for four weeks.
30. Gustavo J. Bobonis and Harold J. Toro, *Modern Colonization and its Consequences: The Effects of U.S. Educational Policy on Puerto Rico’s Educational Stratification, 1899–1910* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2007), 9–10.
31. *Springfield Republican*, August 30, 1907, 11; *Hampshire Gazette*, August 29, 1907, 6.
32. *Springfield Republican*, February 16, 1912, 5; 6 August 1974, 6.
33. *North Adams Transcript*, May 7, 1934, 11; *Berkshire Eagle* (Pittsfield), August 2, 1947, 9.
34. *Seventy-first Annual Report of the American Missionary Association 1917*, 17.
35. *North Adams Transcript*, December 20, 1935, 13.
36. *North Adams Transcript*, July 12, 1949, 9; May 10, 1950, 8.
37. *Springfield Republican*, June 23, 1908, 12.
38. *North Adams Transcript*, March 21, 1956, 2.
39. *North Adams Transcript*, May 29, 1951, 5; July 14, 1959, 3.
40. *North Adams Transcript*, February 6, 1942, 5.
41. *Springfield Republican*, October 4, 1929, 4. It is not known how many other local businessmen owned plantations in Puerto Rico. A complete survey of the *Springfield Republican*, *Springfield Daily News*, and *Springfield Union* digital indexes did not locate any other examples.
42. *North Adams Transcript*, February 5, 1942, 18.
43. Carmen T. Whalen and Victor Vázquez-Hernández, *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspective*, 176; Sheldon B. Thorpe. *The History of the Fifteenth Connecticut Volunteers in the War for the Defense of the Union, 1861-1865*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010), 154.

44. U.S. Census 1910, Westfield, Enumeration District 664, Montgomery Street, April 18, 1910.
45. *Springfield Daily News*, April 27, 1915; and *Springfield Republican*, April 28, 1915, 4.
46. *North Adams Transcript*, December 22, 1919, 5.
47. “To Increase Common Labor Supply with Porto Ricans,” U.S. Employment Service Bulletin, Department of Labor, Washington, D.C., May 21, 1918.
48. U.S. Census 1920, Westfield, Enumeration District 184, Summer Street, Jan. 5, 1920.
49. “Lloveras to Hold Family Dinner on 50th Anniversary,” *Springfield Union*, June 9, 1961, 4.
50. Social Security Death Index, 1970 Westfield, Massachusetts, Manuel Lloveras, June 16, 1970; *Springfield Union*, June 18, 1970, 55 [obit.].
51. Springfield School Department, Annual Report, 1927; and *Springfield Republican*, November 26, 1928, 8.
52. *Springfield Republican*, September 20, 1928, 5.
53. “Puerto Ricans Visit After Fleeing Spain: Manuel Lloveras Entertains Sisters and Cousin Who Cite Case of Escape,” *Springfield Republican*, August 15, 1936, 16. [sisters names were Mercedes and Julia E. Lloveras, their cousin was Miguel Luís Soler of Santurce, P.R.]
54. *Springfield Republican*, September 20, 1928, 5.
55. *Springfield Republican*, September 20, 1928, 5.
56. *Boston Herald*, May 15, 1945, 10.
57. *Springfield Union*, June 25, 1961, 27; “Flut” Garcia was a patrolman in Southwick for many years. He also worked for the Enfield Shade and Tobacco Co., see obituary in the Hartford Courant, August 11, 1998.
58. *Springfield Republican*, November 17, 1957, 17; and *Springfield Union*, November 2, 1958, 2; Biography of Jesús María Sanromá, in Fundación para la Cultura popular, [www.prpop.org](http://www.prpop.org).
59. *Springfield Union*, December 17, 1953, 30.
60. *Springfield Union*, December 17, 1953, 30.
61. “Runaway Industry Not for Puerto Rico,” *North Adams Transcript*, July 12, 1957, 7.
62. Ruth Glasser, *Aquí Me Quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut/ Los Puertorriqueños en Connecticut* (Hartford, CT: Connecticut Humanities Council, 1997), 55.
63. Patricia Cooper, *Once a Cigar Maker* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 315.
64. Glasser, *Aquí Me Quedo*, 55–56.
65. Michael Lapp, “Managing Migration: The Migration Division of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1948–1968,” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1991), 185–190.
66. José L. Vázquez Calzada, *La Población de Puerto Rico y Su Trayectoria Histórica* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico: Escuela Graduada de Salud Pública, Recinto de Ciencias Médicas, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1988), 286; and Felix V.

Matos Rodríguez, "Saving the Parcela: A Short History of Boston's Puerto Rican Community," in Carmen Teresa Whalen and Vásquez-Hernández, eds. *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 205–209.

67. Ruth Glasser, "Tobacco Valley: Puerto Rican Farmworkers in Connecticut," *Hog River Journal* (2003), passim.

68. Glasser, *Aquí Me Quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut/Los Puertorriqueños en Connecticut* (Hartford: Connecticut Humanities Council, 1997), 41–47.

69. Luís Nieves Falcón, *El Emigrante Puertorriqueño* (Ríos Piedras, Puerto Rico: Editorial Edil., 1975), 15–18.

70. *Springfield Union*, May 6, 1959, 5.

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