

THE HISTORY OF LABOR AT STANFORD, 1969–2003

* * *

I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear;
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should be, blithe and strong;
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work;
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—the deckhand singing on the
steamboat deck;
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench—the hatter singing as he stands;
The wood-cutter's song—the ploughboy's, on his way in the morning, or at the noon
intermission, or at sundown;
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing
or washing—Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else;
The day what belongs to the day—At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs.

—*Walt Whitman*

I, TOO

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

—*Langston Hughes*

CANTO AL TRABAJADOR

a Juan Gómez Duarte

I

Doy la mano
al que lucha
canto
a los arrieros y vaqueros
a los rieleros y mineros
moledores de nueces y
lechugeros y betabeleros

Canto
a los piscadores
a los steelworkers y los del auto
a los mecánicos y plomeros
también
a los electricistas, carpinteros
a los lavadores y alas operadoras
a todos los trabajadores.

Canto a los trabajadores
Todos los meses son crueles
y la semilla queda aunque arranquen la mata
todos los meses son crueles
para ellos de]las manos esculpidas.

Siento los pies de Cuauhtémoc
último soberano y primer rebelde
mártir de la conquista
primer sabor de lo amargo y la rosa.

Cantaremos a los trabajadores
y con la ayuda de los compañeros
echando un pie con el pueblo será
Canto a los trabajadores.

II

My father's holy hand is etched
in holy grime.

I remember my father's hand
 etched in cries and sweat.
Huddled on the corner

I have seen
 the men who work.

What I know I learned
 from my father's worker's hand
who is we and who are they
 of right and wrong
 who has built the cities
and wherefrom came the riches.

I have seen the workers scattered
 like rosary beads across fields.

Rain flooded streets
sweat the work, dry the wire, change the tire
wounds from clashing steel
a care away from injury and death

the put down stare
exaggerated patience
ridicule the English

You learn
eating at trocaderos
filled with Mexicanos and drunken foremen

On cold windy days
your hands bleed and your hands can hardly hold a wrench
no books or street demagogues teach
we learn from bitterness and broken bodies.

My father's hand is etched in time
Canto a los trabajadores.

—*Juan Gómez-Quiñones*

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Abbreviations

C.A.A.	Community Action Agency of San Mateo County
D.S.C.U.A.	Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
MEChA	Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán
N.L.R.B.	National Labor Relations Board
OSOC	Office Staff Organizing Committee
S.E.I.U.	Service Employees International Union
SLAC	Stanford Linear Accelerator Center [<i>Chs. 1–3</i>]
SLAC	Stanford Labor Action Coalition [<i>Ch. 4</i>]
U.S.E.	United Stanford Employees
U.S.W.	United Stanford Workers

Preface and Acknowledgments

This is a study of labor at Stanford University from 1969 to 2003. It is organized into an introductory chapter, with a treatment of secondary material and a review of Stanford history; four thematic chapters, with context and topic introductions included; and a conclusion. In the appendix there is a discussion of health and safety code violations at Webb Ranch; this discussion at first seemed to belong to Chapter 4 but is now more sensibly placed in the back, where it may still be reviewed but will not distract from the retelling of the events of 1989–1991 at the ranch.

One topic I have not explored in this study is the strike of the hospital and campus workers on December 12, 2005. As a member of the Stanford Labor Action Coalition, I played a role in organizing student solidarity for campus workers in the events leading up to and on the day of the strike. (My involvement with this organization dates back to 2004 and therefore does not overlap with any of the events of this study.) The 2005 strike was the first work stoppage at Stanford since the fall of 1982, and a future researcher with interest in the topic may benefit from reviewing the following sources related to this most recent episode in Stanford labor relations:

Labor Update (Office of University Communications, posted February 1, 2006):
<http://laborupdate.stanford.edu/>.

Service Employees International Union Local 715:
<http://www.seiu715.org/onthejob/worksiteProfiles.cfm?worksiteProfileID=2663>.

Stanford Labor Action Coalition:
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/slac/>.

There are other themes and periods I have been unable to explore. One source that I am aware of but have not studied is *Employees Organize!/Empleados Organizan*, which was published by United Stanford Employees in the 1960s and 1970s. It is available in Green Library in both the stacks (call number HD8085.P33 E5) and at the Department of Special Collections (Box 1283/9).

* * *

This study has been enabled and bettered at every turn by a great number of individuals and institutions. My original interest in the lives of workers at Stanford University grew out of my involvement with the Stanford Labor Action Coalition (SLAC), and I am especially indebted to fellow activists Mollie Goldberg and Kate Raven for the genesis of this project; they taught the winter 2004–2005 student-initiated course, “Jobs with Justice,” in which I was first introduced to American labor history and first made to wonder if such a history had been written of this university. Having sponsored that course, Dr. Michael Kahan eagerly agreed to help me develop my project and continued to be a kind and spirited source of advice as my second reader. Professor Mark Mancall helped me turn the seed of an idea into a viable research proposal, put me in contact with potential interview subjects, and generously shepherded me through a primer on labor history in the spring of 2005.

During the initial stages of the project I was urged to visit Professor Albert M. Camarillo, and I quickly came to appreciate why he has earned his reputation for mentorship. This study would have been significantly diminished if not for his presence. He pointed me to useful resources, was the first to suggest that I explore the important topic of Webb Ranch, and read and commented upon each of my drafts with a sedulousness that I had never before seen. My experience at Stanford generally has been enriched by the opportunities and hospitality provided by my major, the Program in Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (C.S.R.E.). Especially helpful to the pursuit of this thesis have been Professors Paula Moya and C. Matthew Snipp, the past and present Undergraduate Program Directors; Dr. Lisa Arellano and Victor Thompson, the past and present Senior Seminar Coordinators; Student and Academic Services Coordinator Margarita Ibarra, and Administrative Manager Gina Wein. Professor Sylvia Yanagisako has entertained and helped deepen each of my academic initiatives, including this study, in the three years she has been my major advisor. At the same time, she has helped counsel me in my extracurricular political activities and been a wise interlocutor to my constant questions about Stanford culture and history. I will greatly miss, but hope to continue learning from, her good sense and ethical example. Professors Clayborne Carson, Luis Fraga, and Gordon Chang at Stanford; and Professor Nelson Lichtenstein at the University of California, Santa Barbara, have also provided helpful suggestions along the way.

The research for this study was conducted largely during the summer of 2005 and was funded by a generous grant from the Undergraduate Research Programs (U.R.P.). My long summer stints in the Department of Special Collections were rendered rather more efficient by the assistance of University Archivist Margaret Kimball, who was an invaluable guide to the collections and people of this university. Professor Carson, Tenisha Jackson, and the rest of my employers and colleagues at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project provided me a second home in their series of enjoyable and stimulating summer programs. During the school year, Dr. Jacqueline Schmidt-Posner, Julia Ka‘iulani Nelson, and the Public Service Scholars Program cohort gave an immense measure of moral and editorial support. I am likewise privileged to have worked with my fellow thesis-writers in C.S.R.E., who girded me to complete my literature review on time, supported my activist work, and provided a warm and caring companionship

throughout the year. My fellow activists in SLAC continued to express interest in my project, and our collective political efforts were both a refreshing complement to the solitary pursuit of historical research and a daily reminder of the real-life significance of labor studies. Hilton Obenzinger in the office of U.R.P. offered extremely helpful editorial consultation at numerous stages of the project. Also at numerous stages I enjoyed the vast amount of advice and contacts provided by Jack Truher, a former Stanford employee and labor activist who was presented to me by the campus union at the thankfully early time of April 2005. Sam Bhagwat, Anthony Ha, Eva Jellison, Therin Jones, Susan Lou, Jackie Schmidt-Posner, Erica Simmons, Will Trueheart, and Randy Yang proofread the final drafts of the thesis. Though I did not end up conducting any interviews in Spanish, Elia Herrera helped me edit the translated consent forms I would have used. And the cooperation and patience of those whom I did interview allowed their oral testimonies to assume a rightful place in this study. The involvement of all these individuals has improved this study, but none of them, of course, may be blamed for the errors and misjudgments that surely remain.

Finally, my work on this project and my life as a whole have been kindly nourished by my friends and family. It is difficult to put into words the meaning of the many individuals who, during my years in and out of Stanford, have guided me through moments of great duress and shared in moments of great fun, moved me with their generosity, and constantly filled me with joy and hope. They are, at Stanford and in the Bay Area, Reed Adam, Phil Aguilar, Vanessa Baker, Lacy Caruthers, Kelsey Hills-Evans, Anthony Chun-Hui Ha, Miri Hutcherson, Nundu JanakiRam, Bonnie Johnson, Katie Justus, Julia Nelson, Brian Salomaki, Erica Simmons, Caleb Stokes, Renée Trochet, Greg and Susan Watkins, Matthew Woodbury, Christina Zempel, and my freshman residents in Alondra House; in the Northeast, P.J. Bonavitacola, Christie Gibson, Jerad King, Charles Mattina, Michael McCarthy, and Chelsea Pollen; in Chile, the Carvajal-Illanes family, Alex, Daniel Buguño Díaz, Consuelo Cortés Abad, Michel Perret da Fonseca, Mauricio Pulgar Sandoval, and Nicole Rubilar del Valle; in Massachusetts, my loving parents, Robert Vaughan and Katie McNulty-Vaughan; and in New York, New Jersey, and St. Louis, my lovely sisters, Kelly, Julie, and Mary. They are more valuable to me than even my sincerest measure of gratitude could express.

—C.R.V.
Stanford, Calif., May 2006