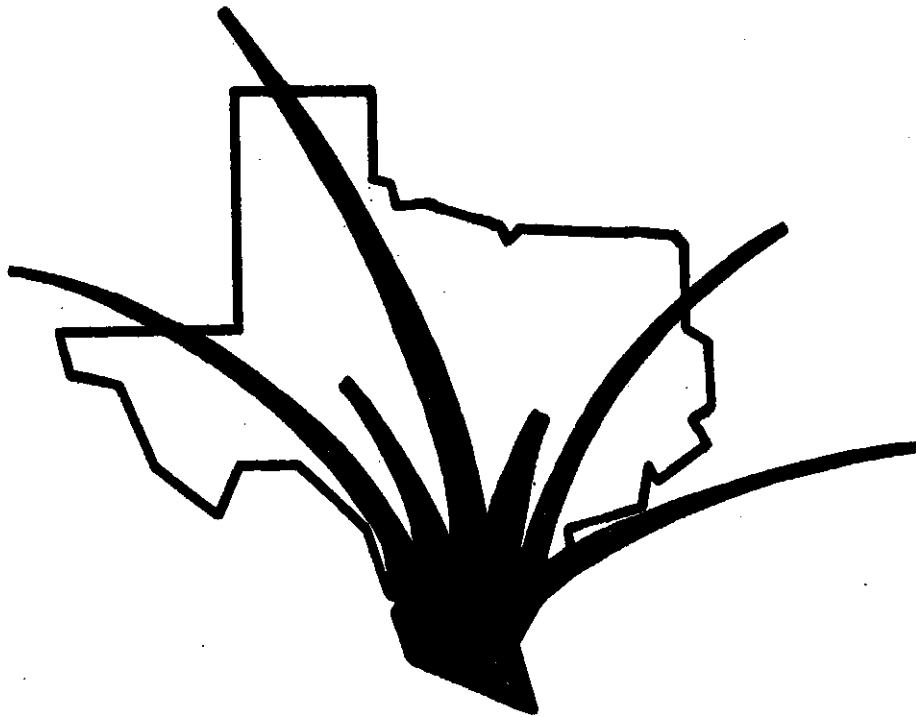


Evaluation of Migrant Education In Texas
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT NO. 1

MIGRANT TRAVEL AND WORK PATTERNS

Resource ID#: 3339

Evaluation of Migrant Education In Texas,
Supplementary Report No.1, Migrant Travel and
Work Patterns



TEXAS MIGRANT EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER
SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

AUSTIN



TEXAS

ABSTRACT

As part of the larger Evaluation of Migrant Education in Texas (June, 1968, SEDL), 255 migrant parents and students were interviewed. Included among the interview questions were items concerning work and travel patterns. This report on Migratory Work and Travel Patterns is the first of several special supplements to the Final Report.

Twenty-nine states and Mexico were identified as areas of migration. Of the 420 mentions of states to which migrants traveled, eight states received about three-fourths of all mentions. These states were Michigan, Texas, Ohio, Colorado, Indiana, California, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

The average round-trip mileage to the seven states (excluding Texas) is almost 3000 miles. This finding is interesting when contrasted to other estimates which indicate that agricultural migrants travel substantially fewer miles. The Texas migrant farm worker may travel a greater distance than is commonly thought.

The geographic areas receiving no mention were the New England states, Eastern Seaboard states, and some of the states in the deep South. Other evidence and literature indicates that the agricultural needs of these areas are being met by migrants from Florida or "homestate" laborers.

When the ages for the adult migrants were compared to the number of years that they had been migrating, it was found that the typical respondent had migrated for relatively few years. (Age: 42; Number of years migrating: 12 to 13).

Harvesting and cultivating a variety of citrus and vegetable crops, as well as several other agriculturally related activities, were mentioned. Several mentions were made of migratory treks which included both agricultural and non-agricultural labor. The diversity of work patterns, travel routes and destinations, and times of migration mentioned by the respondents make it clear that no single work-travel pattern is characteristic of the migrant agricultural worker in Texas.

Introduction

In June, 1968, a report of the Evaluation of Migrant Education in Texas was submitted to the Texas Education Agency by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. That report presented an overview of the educational facilities and programs available to migrant students in Texas. It was based primarily on narrative reports from 15 Laboratory staff members and about 55 professional consultant-observers who made on-site visits to 90 schools throughout Texas. In addition to the comprehensive narrative reports, each observer interviewed administrators, teachers, and migrant children and parents and recorded these interviews on pre-structured observation guides. Drawing upon information from the observation guides, this report is the first of several special supplements to the larger report. Each supplementary report will deal with a specific topic not covered in detail by the larger report.

Supplement number one is a summary of the responses to questions asked of migrant children and their parents concerning their migratory work and travel patterns. The following items guided observers in their interviewing:

INSTRUCTIONS TO OBSERVERS: INDICATE MOVES, STATES, ROUTES,
TYPE OF WORK/CROP. BE AS SPECIFIC AND COMPLETE AS POSSIBLE.

- . Number of years following the crops.
- . Number of moves per year during migration.
- . Migrant activities or moves last year.

Respondent Backgrounds

A breakdown of information from the 255 migrants interviewed is presented in Table 1 below.

In interpreting Table 1 or any of the data in this supplement, the reader should be cautioned against generalizing to all migrants in Texas.

The reasons for this caution are:

- . The parents and children were selected for interviewing on the basis of availability, willingness to cooperate, or bilingualism (some observers spoke only English).
- . Most (about 70%) of the migrant parents and children who were interviewed lived in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.
- . Interviews were conducted in March and April of 1968, a time at which some migrants had already left the Rio Grande Valley for early summer work elsewhere.

It should be clear from the above points that the migrants who were interviewed are not necessarily representative of all Texas migrants in terms of their work and travel patterns. The point is that the findings, while useful and interesting, should not be construed as definitive, unqualified statements about migrant labor in Texas.

Referring to Table 1, it is noted that the average ages for both project and non-project respondents are about 41 or 42 for parents and 12 for the migrant children. Project children have been migrating for about

seven of their twelve years. This implies that, barring discontinuities in their years of migration, the average age of first migration was about five years old. If the years following the crops were interrupted by non-migrating years, the age at first migration would be even younger.

The parents have been migrating for an average of about 12 or 13 years. Few of these parents have been migrating "all their lives," as is sometimes thought. Several of them mentioned that they would migrate for a few years, remain in the Valley for a couple of years, migrate again and so forth.

TABLE 1

Number of Years Migrant Parents and Children
In Texas' Project and Non-project Schools have
"Followed the Crops"

Type of School	Number of Respondents		Avg. Number of Years Following Crops		Avg. Age of Respondent	
	Parents	Children	Parents	Children	Parent	Child
Project	47	111	13.4	6.9	42.1	12.1
Non-Project	22	75	11.5	5.5	40.9	11.6
Totals	69	186				

Travel Patterns

The migrant parents and children were also asked where they went last year or during a typical year following the crops. Table 2 lists these states in the rank order of mention.

Of the 420 mentions of states to which migrants travel, eight states received about three-fourths of all mentions. (Michigan, Texas, Ohio, Colorado, Indiana, California, Wisconsin, Illinois.) None of these states are contiguous to Texas. This represents substantial migrant treks in terms of miles traveled. For example, the average round-trip distance from McAllen, Texas, to these states (capital cities) is 2,898 miles. This is an interesting pattern when compared to a USDA report* which stated that over 50 percent of all U. S. Migratory Farm Workers traveled less than 75 miles to do farm wage work. The same article stated that only 20% travel 1,000 miles or more. Although the USDA report included all U.S. migrants, it may be that the Texas migrant is traveling a greater distance than is commonly thought.

Although many individual differences were evident in the number of states mentioned (ranging from as many as eight states to only Texas), it appears that the "average" migrant travels to two states outside of Texas. (255 migrants and 420 mentions of states.)

*USDA, Economic Research Service, 1967 Agricultural Economic Farm Reports 120 and 121, pg. 10.

TABLE 2

STATES MENTIONED BY MIGRANT PARENTS AND CHILDREN

AS AREAS OF MIGRATION

STATE	% OF TOTAL MENTIONS	STATE	% OF TOTAL MENTIONS
Michigan	17.1	Oklahoma	1.4
Texas	16.0	Utah	1.4
Ohio	10.7	Wyoming	1.4
Colorado	7.4	Oregon	1.2
Indiana	6.2	Arizona	.7
California	6.0	Kansas	.7
Wisconsin	5.0	Arkansas	.5
Illinois	4.5	Iowa	.5
Idaho	4.3	New Mexico	.5
Florida	3.1	Tennessee	.5
Alabama	2.1	Virginia	.5
Minnesota	1.9	*Mexico	.5
Montana	1.9	Missouri	.2
Nebraska	1.9	Washington	.2
North Dakota	1.7	TOTAL	100.0%

* Total of 28 states plus Mexico

Table 3 presents in alphabetical order a listing of all 50 states allowing the reader to locate any particular state or to note the states not mentioned.

The states not mentioned fall into three general geographic areas:

- 1) New England and surrounding states, 2) Eastern Seaboard states, and
- 3) some of the states in the deep South. It is possible that the Florida based migrant goes to states in areas 1 and 2 above, while area 3's agricultural needs are met by "homestate" laborers.

TABLE 3

RECEIVING STATES	NUMBER OF MENTIONS	PERCENT OF TOTAL	RECEIVING STATES	NUMBER OF MENTIONS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Alabama	9	2.1	Nebraska	8	1.9
Alaska	--	-	Nevada	--	-
Arizona	3	.7	New Hampshire	--	-
Arkansas	2	.5	New Jersey	--	-
California	25	6.0	New Mexico	2	.5
Colorado	31	7.4	New York	--	-
Connecticut	--	-	North Carolina	--	-
Delaware	--	-	North Dakota	7	1.7
Florida	13	3.1	Ohio	45	10.7
Georgia	--	-	Oklahoma	6	1.4
Hawaii	--	-	Oregon	5	1.2
Idaho	18	4.3	Pennsylvania	--	-
Illinois	19	4.5	Rhode Island	--	-
Indiana	26	6.2	South Carolina	--	-
Iowa	2	.5	South Dakota	--	-
Kansas	3	.7	Tennessee	2	.5
Kentucky	--	-	Texas	67	16.0
Louisiana	--	-	Utah	6	1.4
Maine	--	-	Vermont	--	-
Maryland	--	-	Virginia	2	.5
Massachusetts	--	-	Washington	1	.2
Michigan	72	17.1	West Virginia	--	-
Minnesota	8	1.9	Wisconsin	21	5.0
Mississippi	--	-	Wyoming	6	1.4
Missouri	1	.2	Mexico	2	.5
Montana	8	1.9	TOTALS	420	100.0

Work Patterns

A variety of crops was mentioned by the migrant parents and children. The mention of a crop, however, should not be interpreted as the harvesting (picking) of that crop since much of the harvesting is mechanized. Much of the migrant's labor is in pre-harvest preparation or post-harvest processing. A list of the principal crops mentioned appears in table four. Table five presents all "non-crop" activities mentioned while table six presents all crops mentioned at least once.

TABLE 4

PRINCIPAL CROPS FOLLOWED BY TEXAS MIGRANTS

		Migrant Respondents from:			
<u>PROJECT SCHOOLS</u>		<u>NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS</u>		<u>PROJECT & NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS</u>	
<u>CROP</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL MENTION</u>	<u>CROP</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL MENTION</u>	<u>CROP</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL MENTION</u>
Tomatoes	21.5	Beets	23.3	Beets	18.7
Beets	16.7	Cotton	12.5	Tomatoes	18.0
Cucumbers	12.6	Tomatoes	9.1	Cucumbers	11.2
Potatoes	10.9	Cucumbers	7.5	Potatoes	9.3
Cherries	6.1	Pecans	7.5	Cherries	6.3
Cotton	3.7	Cherries	6.6	Cotton	6.3
Apples	3.0	Beans	5.0	Strawberries	3.1
Pecans	3.0	Potatoes	5.0	Beans	3.0
Asparagus	2.0	Carrots	3.3	Grapes	3.0
Beans	2.0	Strawberries	3.3	Apples	2.4
Others	<u>18.5</u>	Others	<u>16.9</u>	Others	<u>18.7</u>
TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0	TOTAL	100.0

TABLE 5

"NON-CROP" MIGRANT ACTIVITIES

TYPE OF WORK	* TIMES MENTIONED	% OF TOTAL MENTIONS
FACTORY		
Agricultural	14	28.0
Non-Agricultural	1	2.0
MISCELLANEOUS		
Drive Tractor	1	2.0
Construction	3	6.0
General Labor	3	6.0
Ranch Work	3	6.0
Attending School	2	4.0
Trucking	4	8.0
General Farm	17	34.0
Packing Shed	2	4.0
TOTALS	50	100.0

* Includes parents and children, project and non-project schools.

TABLE 6

ALL CROPS MENTIONED BY MIGRANT PARENTS AND
CHILDREN (PROJECT AND NON-PROJECT SCHOOLS)

CROP	TIMES MENTIONED	% OF TOT. MENTIONS	CROP	TIMES MENTIONED	% OF TOT. MENTIONS
Almonds	1	.2	Maize	1	.2
Apples	10	2.4	Mint	2	.5
Asparagus	7	1.7	Nuts	1	.2
Beans	12	3.0	Onions	5	1.2
Beets	77	18.7	Oranges	2	.5
Berries	2	.5	Peaches	2	.5
Blueberries	2	.5	Peanuts	1	.2
Broomcorn	3	.7	Peas	1	.2
Cabbage	3	.7	Pecans	9	2.1
Caladiums	1	.2	Plums	3	.7
Cantaloupes	1	.2	Potatoes	38	9.3
Carrots	6	1.5	Radishes	1	.2
Celery	2	.5	Raspberries	1	.2
Cherries	26	6.3	Soy Beans	2	.5
Corn	5	1.2	Strawberries	13	3.1
Cotton	26	6.3	Tomatoes	74	18.0
Cucumbers	46	11.1	Vegetables	5	1.2
Figs	1	.2	Watermelons	2	.5
Fruit	2	.5	Yams	1	.2
Grapes	12	3.0			
Green Beans	2	.5	TOTAL	413	100.0
Lettuce	2	.5			

Unfortunately, the crops and activities were not listed by state so it is not possible to determine exactly which activity was performed in each location. It is interesting to note, however, that the list of crops is quite lengthy and diverse. The diversity of crops and range of locations lend further evidence to the increasingly valid generalization that few, if any, unqualified statements can be made about the work or travel conditions and patterns of the migrant agricultural worker in Texas.

In summary, it can be said (within the limits of the aforementioned qualifications) that Texas migrant agricultural workers and their children travel widely throughout the United States and may travel greater distances than is commonly thought. Their work involved a multiplicity of activities including nearly all citrus and vegetable crops as well as non-agricultural jobs. They travel to an average of two states each migratory year, but do not travel every year. The migrant's life style, like that of any other American, cannot be simply and summarily categorized.