

# Michoacan to Michigan

## An Immigrant's Journey

### FOREWORD

I began this project in 1990 as nothing more than an effort to help my godson (and nephew) Lenny Radjewski develop a script for his wonderful endeavor to produce a video of dad and mother's journey from Mexico. My main effort was to transcribe an audio tape, which was in Spanish, that I had made with mother and dad sometime in the early 1970's. As I began the transcription, however, it soon became evident that I needed to do more than that. I realized that I needed additional information to put some of their comments, feelings, and decisions into historical context. Luckily, I found a book in the library that helped me immeasurably in understanding some of the Mexican history of that era. This book was *The Great Rebellion/Mexico 1905-1924* by Ramon Ruiz. The quotes in this report of that era are from this book.

In addition, I also found that as I transcribed my tape, there were many times that I needed further clarification or more detail. I figuratively kicked myself for not having done something like this while dad and mother were still alive and they could have easily provided this information. I was lucky enough, however, to find that in about 1972 Martin had also taped dad and mother discussing their journey, and that his son Eddie had also taped them a few years later. These tapes were invaluable in filling in some of the details and in providing a check on the consistency of their story. Although these three versions varied in the events covered and in the level of detail for the different events, the basic facts were always the same.

Another valuable source of information was my sister, Frances. She was the only child old enough to have memories of the journey from Mexico and of the very early years in Michigan. She also was able to provide amplification and clarification of some of the issues covered in the tapes.

I would like also to clarify at this time why most of what you will read here is from dad's perspective. It is not meant to diminish mother's role in any way, but is simply because he was the one who provided most of the information on the tapes and he was also the one who used to tell us the stories you will find recounted here.

I hope that you will excuse my personal observations and philosophizing, but as I wrote this, I felt the need to express these thoughts. One final thing that I need to add is that although I tried to be as accurate as I could in translating and recording the events they described from the sources previously mentioned, there are nuances in the Spanish language that I know I did not fully understand or appreciate but I made every effort to remain true to the facts as dad and mother recalled them. In addition, many of the characterizations of these events are my own interpretation. I hope that I have been true to their spirit.

Daniel E. Fraga / December, 1995

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DEDICATION

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF:**

**Valeriano Fraga; born April 19, 1891 died Sep 7, 1982**

**and**

**Martina (Herrejon) Fraga; born Nov 6, 1895 died May 1, 1978  
(We celebrated her birthday on Jan 30)**

*"We don't care for us, we suffered, but we suffered for  
our family"*