

Dutchirican: The Growing Puerto Rican Presence in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country

ABSTRACT: Although Pennsylvania is the state with the fourth-largest population of Puerto Ricans, their history, particularly outside of Philadelphia, has received little attention. Puerto Ricans began to settle in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country due in part to farmers' demands for labor in the 1940s and 1950s. Puerto Ricans moved to the area for reasons of their own, seeing the region as a place to pursue their economic progress and religious expression. Since the 1980s, the growth of the community has been rapid, chiefly as Puerto Ricans have moved away from expensive housing in the New York metropolitan area.

The Anglos here, they don't feel good being very close. Picture a Latino and an Anglo talking: the Latino is moving forward, and the Dutchman is moving backward.

—Beatrice Ramirez, *Allentown, 1994*

I'm a Dutchirican.

—Pedro Cruz, *Lebanon, 2014*

THIS ARTICLE ANALYZES THE recent history of Puerto Ricans in eastern and central Pennsylvania. Beginning in the 1940s, small communities developed in such industrial cities as Bethlehem and such agricultural centers as Lancaster County, but the vast majority of Puerto Ricans in Pennsylvania lived in the Philadelphia area until the 1970s. At that point, Puerto Ricans began to move out of the New

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York City area to small cities up and down the East Coast, with central Pennsylvania representing the western edge of that outmigration.¹ Puerto Ricans became increasingly concentrated in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, a region that stretches from Allentown in the eastern part of the state to York in south central Pennsylvania.² Pennsylvania Dutch is an emic term for those of German descent; it also is a language that is now largely limited to the Amish and Old-Order Mennonites.³ As the first epigraph suggests, Puerto Ricans often perceive “Dutchmen” as conservative, reserved, and suspicious toward newcomers. Yet, as I argue, the movement of Puerto Ricans to small-town Pennsylvania reflects cultural values shared in common with the Pennsylvania Dutch, such as a preference for rural life. Some “Nuyoricans” who live in the area long enough find they no longer fit into New York; they have become instead “Dutchiricans.”⁴ This term was used by New York-born Pedro Cruz, an educator in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, to describe himself. The experiences of groups such as Puerto Rican Mennonites, moreover, allow us to understand important cultural changes in the region.

Several factors contributed to the emergence of what I call Dutchiricans. Demographic and economic forces obviously played a role. Small groups of *boricuas* began to move to the Pennsylvania Dutch region in the 1940s, working in agriculture and then food processing.⁵ These communities emerged largely out of a process of labor migration, which was complicated by a colonial relationship between the mainland United States and Puerto Rico and a racialized ones between white Americans and *boricuas*.⁶

¹ Gilbert Marzan, “Still Looking for that Elsewhere: Puerto Rican Poverty and Migration in the Northeast,” *Centro Journal* 21 (2009): 100–117.

² Another center was in the anthracite coal region around Scranton and Wilkes-Barre.

³ Mark L. Loudon, *Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language* (Baltimore, 2016).

⁴ “Nuyorican” refers to someone who is Puerto Rican but born in New York. There are many variations on the spelling of this term, which has an interesting and contested history. Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos E. Santiago observe that “unlike the popular term ‘Chicano,’ adopted in the 1960s by a large portion of the population of Mexican descent in the United States to differentiate itself from Mexico’s population and from more recent immigrants from that country, there is no adequate single term that has yet captured the imagination of most US Puerto Ricans in a similar way. Thus they continue to identify themselves as Puerto Ricans, whether they are living on the island or in the metropolis.” See Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos E. Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait* (Boulder, CO, 2006), 6–7, 189–92. See also Jorge Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2002), 23–24, 28–35.

⁵ *Boricua* is the name the pre-Columbian Taino people gave to the island. It has been adopted by Puerto Ricans as a term for themselves.

⁶ Carmen Teresa Whalen, *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Workers and Postwar Economies* (Philadelphia, 2001).

However, the size of Puerto Rican communities became far larger even as blue-collar job markets declined, suggesting Puerto Ricans were not pulled to the region by employers seeking workers. Instead, the catalyst was the affordability of housing and attractiveness of the communities relative to the New York City area.

My analysis is not entirely novel. As noted scholars Edna Acosta-Belén and Carlos E. Santiago observe, “It is ironic that despite difficult economic times in these cities,” notably “declining employment,” nonetheless “Puerto Ricans continue to gravitate to these places.”⁷ Acosta-Belén and Santiago suggest that housing costs encourage this gravitation, a point upon which sociologist Gilbert Marzan expands. He finds that small cities in the Northeast, such as Allentown, provide lower-cost locales for poorer Puerto Ricans who have pursued jobs that do not require substantial education. Marzan acknowledges that these cities require more research to understand “the social forces that create and sustain these communities.”⁸

What I have found, through interviews and other evidence, is that housing and livability are central to why Puerto Ricans have moved to the region, a perspective that is consistent with studies of the Northeast and the Midwest.⁹ This article makes two additional arguments: first, Puerto Ricans and “Dutchmen” are comparing the same cities against their own distinctive experiences and histories. Dutchmen tend to compare Pennsylvania’s small cities against their past, mythic or actual, while Puerto Ricans compare them to where they lived before, chiefly New York or Puerto Rico. Second, Puerto Ricans’ movement into Dutch Country is deliberate, at least for some, part of a relocation to “the country,” which

⁷ Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*, 143.

⁸ Marzan, “Still Looking for that Elsewhere,” 115. To paraphrase Juan Flores, Latino communities are not simply a product of demographics or labor markets. That evidence is useful, but hardly the whole story about community, which involves identities and relationships that are experienced and (to invoke Benedict Anderson) invented. Juan Flores, *From Bomba to Hip Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity* (New York, 2000), 193–97.

⁹ Ann V. Millard and Jorge Chapa, *Apple Pie and Enchiladas: Latino Newcomers in the Rural Midwest* (Austin, TX, 2004); Sujey Vega, *Latino Heartland: Of Borders and Belonging in the Midwest* (New York, 2015); André Torres, ed., *Latinos in New England* (Philadelphia, 2006). Over the last several years, I have collected over sixty-six interviews with a variety of Latinos in the region. Some were conducted by me, in English; some were done by my students. Some were conducted in Spanish and were conducted by Dr. Ivette Guzmán-Zavala, from Lebanon Valley College, or by students in her classes. The interviewees were a cross-section of Latinos in the region: about half were Puerto Rican, about 10 percent were Dominican; 15 percent were Mexican; another 15 percent were born in the US, and the remainder were born elsewhere.

allows or facilitates the creation or reestablishment of identities, including religious ones. While “Dutchiricans” have their roots in the 1940s, most of the migration, and thus the evidence, has emerged over the last quarter century.

*Literature Review and the Origins of Puerto Rican
Communities in Pennsylvania*

The rise of Puerto Rican communities in the Pennsylvania Dutch countryside has been central to the increasingly large Latino population in the commonwealth.¹⁰ From 1970 to 2010, two-thirds of the state’s population growth, or half a million people, has been composed of Latinos (tables 1 and 2). Pennsylvania’s Latinos are a large and diverse group, including Mexicans, Peruvians, Dominicans, and many other nationalities, as well as individuals born in the United States with Spanish surnames. Sixty percent of Latinos in the commonwealth are Puerto Ricans.¹¹ De-Gothamization, or outmigration from the New York area, does not in itself explain why all these groups have moved to rural Pennsylvania. For instance, many Mexicans and Peruvians are better thought of as immigrants who come directly to the region from their country of origin for jobs, rather than relocating to escape housing costs. But the major cause for the largest group of Latinos in the state has to do with the attractiveness of the region, in terms of housing and livability, compared to New York and the Caribbean. Pennsylvania Dutch Country and the adjacent anthracite coal region account for a plurality of the Latino population growth in the state over the last quarter century (tables 1 and 2). These demographic trends have been hidden in plain sight, largely unremarked upon by scholars. Understanding the rise of Dutchiricans will require changing how scholars frame both immigration and Latino history in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Puerto Ricans do not neatly fit within the narrative assumptions that have characterized Pennsylvania’s immigration history. Historians have

¹⁰ Because this article relies extensively on census materials, when referring to demographic or economic trends I use the panethnic term Latino unless the evidence is specific to Puerto Ricans.

¹¹ The vast majority of Latinos leaving the New York region are citizens, having been born in the mainland United States or Puerto Rico. Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends Project, “Demographics of Hispanics in Pennsylvania, 2011,” Dec. 11, 2014, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/states/state/pa/>. The 1917 Jones Act made Puerto Ricans citizens of the United States. See also Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*, 48.

Table 1: Regional Distribution of Latinos

	Greater <u>Philadelphia*</u>	Central <u>Pennsylvania**</u>	<u>Anthracite ***</u>
1970#	70.9%	16.5%	NA
1980	55.3%	21.2%	2.2%
1990	52.1%	34.1%	1.9%
2000	42.9%	37.8%	4.8%
2010	41.1%	34.2%	8.8%

*Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties

**Berks, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Northampton, and York counties

***Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, and Schuylkill counties

#1970: Puerto Ricans only

Source: “General Characteristics of Person of Puerto Rican Birth or Parentage for Counties, 1970,” *Social and Economic Characteristics, Pennsylvania*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1973), 40–696; “Selected Social Characteristics by Race and Spanish Origin for Counties, 1980,” *Social and Economic Characteristics, Pennsylvania*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1983), 40–998–1005; “Race and Hispanic Origin, 1990,” *Social and Economic Characteristics, Pennsylvania*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1992), 40–57–63; “Pennsylvania: Total Population” and “Pennsylvania: Hispanic or Latino of Any Race,” *2000 Population Summary File*, Bureau of the Census; “Pennsylvania: Total Population” and “Pennsylvania: Latino or Latino of Any Race,” *American Community Survey, 2006–10*, Bureau of the Census. The data from 2000 and 2010 that the author gathered online is now only available in print.

tended to see migration as interacting with the intertwined processes of industrialization and urbanization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is true that most migrants during that time frame arrived to work in various industries, from coal and steel to textiles and railroads. They built communities in urban neighborhoods or coal patches that allowed them to survive harsh conditions and an often hostile reception.¹² However, the Puerto Ricans who came to Pennsylvania because of heavy industry

¹² John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington, IN, 1985); Nora Faires, “Immigrants and Industry: Peopling the Iron City,” in *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh*, ed. Samuel P. Hays (Pittsburgh, 1991), 3–33; Ayumi Takenaka and Mary Johnson Osirim, eds., *Global Philadelphia: Immigrant Communities Old and New* (Philadelphia, 2010). Most of the literature on African American migration to Pennsylvania is situated within the assumptions of urbanization and industrialization.

Table 2: Latinos in Pennsylvania

	<u>Total Amount</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1940	7,350	0.07%
1950	NA	NA
1960	NA	NA
1970	106,634	0.90%
1980	153,961	1.30%
1990	232,262	1.95%
2000	394,088	3.20%
2010	719,660	5.70%

Source: Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Latino Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States," Population Division Working Papers, Bureau of the Census, Sept. 2002; "Pennsylvania: 2000," Bureau of the Census, <https://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00-pa.pdf>; "Population of Pennsylvania: Census 2010 and 2000 Interactive Map, Demographics, Statistics, Quick Facts," Bureau of the Census, <http://censusviewer.com/state/PA>.

were the exceptions, not the rule. More came to the state to pick tomatoes than ever handled hot metal. Most Puerto Ricans moved to small cities well after the largest factories had closed or moved overseas. Even studies of postindustrial rustbelt regions, such as those by venerable historians Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht, emphasize the ways that the legacy of European immigration, combined with a long history of poverty, blended to create a regional identity in the anthracite coal region.¹³ Dublin and Licht's analysis ends in 1990, however, before the arrival of large-scale Latino settlement in places around Scranton or Wilkes-Barre. In some locales, such as Philadelphia, scholars have begun to connect the more recent patterns of immigration to those of the industrial era and earlier.¹⁴ That perspective, however, is atypical, and Latinos have yet to be fully incorporated in the historiography of the state's cities or its working

¹³Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht, *The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 2005). In other parts of the state, such as western Pennsylvania, many small cities have not recovered from the decline of heavy industry, and cities like Monessen or Altoona are so far from other big cities that cheap housing cannot attract newcomers. See also Carolyn Adams et al., *Philadelphia: Neighborhood, Division, and Conflict in a Postindustrial City* (Philadelphia, 1991).

¹⁴See, for example, Takenaka and Osirim, *Global Philadelphia*.

class.¹⁵ Situating Puerto Ricans into Pennsylvania history is not as simple as adding a new chapter into preexisting narratives.

The history of Puerto Ricans in Bethlehem indicates the problems of viewing migration as interwoven with industrialization. Peter J. Antonsen begins his analysis in 1944, during the labor shortages of World War II. Most Puerto Ricans obtained work in heavy industry, chiefly at Bethlehem Steel, just as unions began to dramatically improve wages and benefits. The few hundred boricua families gradually found their place in the multiethnic steelworkers' union and city, developing a set of community institutions that gradually improved their political status. These Puerto Ricans were able to send their children to college or help establish them in skilled trades. Antonsen argues that later arrivals, many from the slums of New York or Puerto Rico, arrived after factory closings and found few jobs and fewer routes out of poverty. The latter group was larger in numbers and had limited resources to deal with the demands of the postindustrial economy. Writing in the mid-1990s, Antonsen saw that most Puerto Ricans in the Bethlehem-Allentown area had no connections to the region's industrial history. He worried that the newcomers had worse prospects than those who came earlier, as the labor market for unskilled workers had dramatically worsened with the decline of industry and unions.¹⁶ Antonsen's worries were born out by sociologist Gilbert Marzan, who analyzed the census to find out more about those who had moved to Allentown from New York City. Compared to Puerto Ricans in other regions of the country, the new arrivals were poorer and less educated; consequently, they were concentrated in low-wage jobs, often in such declining sectors as manufacturing.¹⁷

A demand for agricultural labor, blended with religious evangelical enthusiasm, contributed to the foundations of the Dutchirican identity in Lancaster County. In the 1940s, Puerto Rican men were recruited on a seasonal basis to pick canning tomatoes and other vegetables, typically living in rural dormitories or converted barns. Field organizers for the Mennonite church were concerned that few farmers, as "men of the world," were "willing to provide housing for Puerto Rican families, or even to have those families near them." Indeed, many landlords refused to

¹⁵ James R. Barrett, "Whiteness Studies: Anyone Here for Historians of the Working Class?" *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (2001): 33–42.

¹⁶ Peter J. Antonsen, *A History of the Puerto Rican Community in Bethlehem, Pa., 1944–1993* (Bethlehem, PA, 1997).

¹⁷ Marzan, "Still Looking for that Elsewhere."

rent to Puerto Ricans. Mennonite ministers wanted Puerto Rican families to live together, however, as they thought it would encourage the small number of converts to remain in the church rather than be “overcome by sin.”¹⁸ Anabaptist businessman Victor F. Weaver was one of the first to hire Puerto Ricans on a permanent basis, doing so on the recommendation of Ross Espenshade, a Mennonite farmer who lived near his factory. Weaver insulated chicken barns and converted them into housing. Puerto Ricans began to bring their families to New Holland, a small town outside of Lancaster. Weaver also supported the effort of Mennonite churches to evangelize among Puerto Ricans. The relationship between the church and employment was so strong that over the years Weaver had to remind people that he also hired Puerto Ricans who weren’t Mennonites.¹⁹

Puerto Ricans were an important source of agricultural labor in the 1950s. At this point, much of the Puerto Rican presence in Dutch Country was temporary. State officials estimated that Puerto Ricans made up roughly half of the estimated twelve thousand temporary farm laborers in the state. Most Puerto Ricans came directly from the island; the remainder had traveled to farms from Philadelphia or New York City.²⁰ The practice of hiring Puerto Ricans was controversial, but some local employers voiced enthusiasm for the practice. As one farmer explained, “the Lord makes peaches ripe on a Saturday, and we have to pick ’em on a Sunday while the [American] boys are in church. But these Puerto Ricans get half-mad if they can’t work 11 or 12 hours in a day.”²¹ Leon Miller, a Lebanon County reporter, expanded: “the only continuously dependable labor to pick the crops in these parts comes flying up here every year from Puerto Rico,” concluding, “I’d like to see any workers who are more dependable than Puerto Ricans and more eager to please when they’re on the job and properly supervised . . . which is more than you can say for the ordinary native farm worker.” Farmers paid workers eleven cents (around one dollar in 2016 dollars) to fill a bushel and then load it on a truck. At least one boricua regularly picked and loaded two hundred bushels a day, or more than ten thousand pounds of tomatoes.²² The wider community, however,

¹⁸ William G. Lauver, “Lancaster County Spanish Ministry,” *Annual Report*, Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, 1955, Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society.

¹⁹ Larry and Janet Weaver, comp., “Early Days of Puerto Rican Employees at Victor F. Weaver Inc., New Holland, PA,” July 2014, New Holland Historical Society papers.

²⁰ “About 12,000 Farm Workers,” *Lebanon Daily News*, Mar. 20, 1952, 7.

²¹ Unsigned article, *Pottsville Mercury*, Aug. 5, 1952, 1.

²² Leon Miller, “Rural Ramblings,” *Lebanon Daily News*, Mar. 20, 1954.

Table 3: Production and Transportation Workers

	<u>Bucks</u>		<u>Montgomery</u>		<u>Lancaster</u>		<u>Lehigh</u>	
	White	Latino	White	Latino	White	Latino	White	Latino
1980	33%	48%	26%	24%	40%	64%	37%	62%
1990	25%	35%	20%	25%	35%	51%	27%	45%
2000	12%	19%	9%	16%	21%	40%	16%	35%
2010	10%	13%	7%	13%	18%	31%	13%	29%

Source: "Race and Spanish Origin, 1980," *Social And Economic Characteristics, Pennsylvania*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1983), 40–1024–1035; table 156, "Occupation of Employed Person by Race and Spanish Origin, 1990," *Social And Economic Characteristics, Pennsylvania*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1992), 40–518–531; "PCT064 Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics," 2000 Population Census Summary File 3, Bureau of the Census (for total only, see http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_00_SF3_DP3&prodType=table; for Puerto Rican only, see http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_00_SF4_QTP28&prodType=table); *American Community Survey, 2006–2010*, Bureau of the Census, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_C24010I&prodType=table.

did not share farmers' enthusiasm for Puerto Ricans. The location of a government-funded dormitory for agricultural workers had to be kept secret until it was built due to "repeated public protests to locating the camp in the Lancaster area."²³

The story of the arrival of Puerto Ricans in rural Pennsylvania in the 1940s does not fit neatly into the common historical narrative of industrialization and urbanization. In the following decades, however, many Puerto Ricans did shift into higher-paying factory jobs. In adjacent Berks and Lebanon Counties, Puerto Ricans in the 1960s and 1970s were overwhelmingly working-class. More than 85 percent of adult Puerto Rican men worked for wages, two-thirds in manufacturing (table 3).²⁴ Puerto Ricans earned half the median income of white households.²⁵ Because they were consistently poorer than other ethnic groups, Puerto Ricans relied more heavily—up to five times higher than the statewide average—on

²³ "Morgantown Area Picked for Puerto Rican Camp," *Lebanon Daily News*, Mar. 3, 1953, 7.

²⁴ Table 131, *1970 Population Census*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1973), 40–696–97.

²⁵ Tables 124 and 131–33, *ibid.*, 40–678–83, 40–698–700.

public assistance.²⁶ Some families tried to avoid applying for financial support until desperate circumstances arose. One woman recalled, “when my parents came [in the late 1950s], it was looking for work. They didn’t even want to go on welfare. . . . [T]hat was a stigma for my parents.” However, when her father’s union went on strike, he was left with no money: “I remember my father crying because he had to go to the welfare office. . . . [T]hat was very hard for him. He couldn’t provide for his family.”²⁷ Puerto Ricans made up about 1 percent of the population of Berks and Lebanon Counties in 1970, with about half having lived in the county for five years or more.²⁸ By 1970, Puerto Ricans were a small piece in the state’s mosaic of nationalities and ethnicities; they labored in the worst jobs, lived in the oldest neighborhoods, and endured nativism. Most Pennsylvania Dutch counties had a few hundred Puerto Ricans. These early migrants were soon eclipsed by later arrivals, who came chiefly from New York.²⁹

The growth of the Puerto Rican population in the Pennsylvania Dutch region has followed the patterns of the better-documented cases of small cities in the Northeast. During the first major wave of Puerto Rican migration in the 1940s, communities developed in places as diverse as Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Dover, New Jersey. Early *pioneros* left the rural countryside and found what jobs they could—first in farming and later in agricultural processing, light industries, restaurants, and hotels. Over the years, family and friends swelled their ranks, and in time people from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, and other countries also moved to such cities as Bridgeport and Dover. Eventually, their children decamped to the suburbs.³⁰ Puerto Ricans dealt with low-paying jobs, discrimination, and housing segregation, but they also found advantages in the smaller, more intimate settings, especially compared to the vastly larger neighborhoods of New York. Maria Ruiz Agront left Aguada, Puerto Rico,

²⁶ Table 57, *1970 Population Census*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, 1973), 40–327–28; “Selected Economic Characteristics: Pennsylvania,” *American Community Survey, 2006–2010*, Bureau of the Census.

²⁷ JS, interview by Kelsey Shoupe, Oct. 22, 2009.

²⁸ Tables 124 and 133, *1970 Population Census*, 4–678–683 and 40–700.

²⁹ There were almost 70,000 Latinos in Berks County in 2011 and 13,000 in Lebanon County. Pew Research Center, “Demographic Profile of Hispanics in Pennsylvania, 2011,” <http://www.pewhispanic.org/states/state/pa/>.

³⁰ Ruth Glasser, “Mofongo Meets Mangú: Dominicans Reconfigure Latino Waterbury,” in *Latinos in New England*, ed. André Torres (Philadelphia, 2006), 103–25; José E. Velásquez, “Pushing Left to Get to the Center: Puerto Rican Radicalism in Hartford, Connecticut,” *The Puerto Rican Movement: Voices From the Diaspora*, ed. Andrés Torres and Velásquez (Philadelphia, 1998), 70–72; Jose Cruz, *Identity and Power: Puerto Rican Politics and the Challenge of Ethnicity* (Philadelphia, 1998), 32–66.

and moved to New Jersey in the 1950s. She recalled, “[w]hen I arrived in Dover it was as if I were still living in Aguada. I don’t know why, but I liked the environment very much; it was a small town, tranquil, but with all the conveniences. . . . I adjusted quickly.”³¹

Pennsylvania’s Latino history has emphasized the role of labor migration in the process of community development. Puerto Ricans formed part of the working class, including cigar rollers, in late nineteenth-century Philadelphia.³² Several hundred Mexicans were recruited to work in heavy industry in the 1910s and 1920s in the Pittsburgh area and on the Pennsylvania railroad.³³ Many returned or were forced to leave, while others stayed. By the 1970s, one of their descendants had become the vice president of a major steelworkers’ local union, but by then his family had recast their ancestry as Spanish.³⁴ The best-studied community is that of Philadelphia, where as late as 1970 more than two-thirds of the state’s Latinos lived. Prior to World War II, Pan-Latino community organizations emerged, matching the city’s diversity.³⁵ Carmen Teresa Whalen has carefully analyzed the factors that from World War II onward created a large and mostly impoverished Puerto Rican community. Boricua workers in Philadelphia endured low wages and sporadic employment, mirroring their previous history of migration for work in the impoverished Puerto Rican countryside. Whalen also points out the major contradiction that Puerto Ricans continue to confront: legally they are citizens, but culturally they are viewed as aliens. Employers welcomed them as workers; but in the community, Puerto Ricans faced segregation and discrimination.³⁶ So while a foundation for Latino history in the state has been laid, much work remains to be done, particularly in studying its numerous small cities and towns.³⁷

³¹ Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim, “From Aguada to Dover: Puerto Ricans Rebuild Their World in Morris County, New Jersey, 1948–2000,” in *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Carmen Teresa Whalen and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández (Philadelphia, 2005), 112. See also Julio Morales, *Puerto Rican Poverty and Migration: We Just Had to Try Elsewhere* (New York, 1986).

³² Víctor Vázquez-Hernández, “From Pan-Latino Enclaves to a Community: Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia, 1910–2000,” in *The Puerto Rican Diaspora*, 89–91.

³³ Zaragosa Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Mexican Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Midwest, 1917–1933* (Berkeley, CA, 1993), 38–45.

³⁴ “United Steelworkers’ Chief at Homestead Works’ Local,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Sept. 8, 1999, B7.

³⁵ Vázquez-Hernández, “Pan-Latino Enclaves,” 89–91.

³⁶ Whalen, *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia*. See also Whalen, *El Viaje: Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia* (Charleston, SC, 2006); Elijah Anderson, *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City* (New York, 1999), 216–23.

³⁷ An important addition to that history is Edgar Sandoval, *The New Face of Small-Town Life: Snapshots of Latino Life in Allentown, Pennsylvania* (University Park, PA, 2013). See also Anna Adams, *Hidden from History: The Latino Population of Allentown, PA* (Allentown, PA, 2000); Lillian Escobar-

The understudied history of Pennsylvania's rural areas presents a sizeable stumbling block to the expansion of Latino history in the commonwealth. As is the case elsewhere in the United States, Latinos are increasingly moving to the countryside.³⁸ Typically, Puerto Ricans and other newcomers are not users of—nor subjects of—local historical societies. Few archives are collecting source material on Latino history.³⁹ Indeed, a disproportionate amount of Pennsylvania's written history, no matter the topic, focuses on the commonwealth's cities, with studies of the coal region marking the one major exception. Consequently, vast parts of the state receive only sporadic scholarly attention. In 2016, historian Tim Blessing observed that “only an occasional article has appeared on what processes, what events, defined the lives of those who occupied the great majority of the area we call Pennsylvania.”⁴⁰ Inattention to rural history is unlikely to end anytime soon. Consequently, this study is an important contribution to the history of Pennsylvania and to the history of Puerto Ricans in the United States.

Livability and Housing since the 1980s

Most Dutchiricans can trace their origins back to the rising rents of New York City. By the Clinton era, New York was experiencing a sustained period of gentrification; the increasing cost of living in such neighborhoods as Spanish Harlem and the Bronx pushed out one in every ten Puerto Ricans living in the city.⁴¹ The city government also encouraged its poor to leave. In many instances, the New York Department of Human Services paid the moving expenses of low-income tenants to encourage them to relocate out of the city.⁴² This policy was controversial in Allentown and other cities, but it underscores the role of cheap housing in attracting

Haskins and George F. Haskins, *Latinos in Lancaster County: Voices, Perspectives, Myths and Realities* (Lancaster, PA, 2007).

³⁸ Pew Research Center, “U.S. Hispanic Population by County, 1980–2011,” Aug. 29, 2013, <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/08/29/u-s-hispanic-population-by-county-1980-2011/>.

³⁹ Two exceptions are the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, based in Philadelphia, and the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, based in Lancaster.

⁴⁰ Tim H. Blessing, “A Brief Call to a Greater History,” *Pennsylvania History* 83 (2016): 131–34, quote on 131.

⁴¹ Debbie Nathan, “Adios, Nueva York,” *City Limits*, Aug. 15, 2004, <http://citylimits.org/2004/08/15/adios-nueva-york/>; Arlena Dávila, *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City* (Berkeley, CA, 2004), 14.

⁴² Laurence R. Stains, “The Latinization of Allentown, PA,” *New York Times Magazine*, May 15, 1994, 59–61.

people to Pennsylvania.⁴³ As Allen Jennings, the executive director of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, put it, “New York and New Jersey’s affordable housing program is called ‘Pennsylvania.’”⁴⁴ The 2000 US census indicates that Latinos in Lancaster paid about 18 percent less for rent (\$511) than their counterparts in the Bronx (\$604).⁴⁵ Other evidence suggests that rents in New York City continued to rise. By the 2000s, whites were moving into what had historically been black and Spanish Harlem.⁴⁶ Deteriorating conditions in the crowded, dirty city pushed twenty-eight-year-old S’elena Zapata from her home in Queens. She settled in the more affordable Allentown, Pennsylvania. “I miss the city that never sleeps,” she said, “but the rent in New York is outrageous! I had to get away.”⁴⁷

Many Puerto Ricans who moved to Pennsylvania began to purchase homes. Around a third of Latinos in Lancaster and Lehigh Counties own their homes, a rate that is considerably higher than in New York City. Latino rates of homeownership are about half that of other central Pennsylvanians, which is not surprising for people with such persistently high levels of poverty (table 4). However, if the reference point is New York, as it is for many Latino arrivals to central Pennsylvania, the region offers considerable opportunity.

Puerto Ricans saw opportunity in cities that Pennsylvania Dutch communities had largely abandoned. Boricuas moved into aged working-class neighborhoods where the housing stock (duplexes and row homes) reflects the compact development of their earlier history as walking and streetcar cities. The decline in urban industries meant that by the 1980s these neighborhoods were economically outmoded and increasingly abandoned in favor of suburban or exurban areas. During that decade, central Pennsylvania’s counties were experiencing modest population growth while extensive building occurred in the surrounding

⁴³ Backlash in Allentown led to the emergence of politician Emma Tropiano, who argued that Hispanics were destroying Allentown. As she put it, “I’m the culprit of the city. I do the shootings . . . my car has the biggest amplifier in the city . . . I’m involved in all the drug selling.” Adams, *Hidden From History*, 33–46, quote on 43.

⁴⁴ Alan Jennings, interview by Stephen Althouse, *The LVEDC Interview: Alan Jennings*, Nov. 26, 2013, <http://www.lehighvalley.org/the-lvedc-interview-alan-jennings/>.

⁴⁵ “2000 Population Census, Summary File, Median Gross Rent (Latino or Latino Householder),” Bureau of the Census, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_00_SF3_H063&prodType=table.

⁴⁶ Sam Roberts, “No Longer Majority Black, Harlem Is in Transition,” *New York Times*, Jan. 5, 2010; John Freeman Gill, “More Small Dogs and Big Home Prices,” *New York Times*, Nov. 16, 2012.

⁴⁷ Nathan, “Adios, Nueva York.”

Table 4: Rates of Latino Home Ownership and Renting, 2010

	Bronx County, NY	New York County, NY	Lancaster County, PA	Lehigh County, PA	San Juan Municipio, PR
Total	483,449	763,846	193,602	133,983	165,316
Owner Occupied	12%	7%	33%	35%	57%
Renter Occupied	89%	93%	67%	65%	43%

Source: "Tenure by Latino or Latino Origin of Householder, Occupied Housing Units," *American Community Survey, 2006–2010*, Bureau of the Census, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_B25003I&prodType=table.

suburban and rural areas.⁴⁸ Consequently, the industrial wards of cities such as Lancaster, Reading, or York were physically deteriorated, with schools that enjoyed fewer resources than their suburban counterparts.

However, many Puerto Rican parents concluded that these new schools offered better opportunities for their children. The points of comparison were schools in the Caribbean and New York, not the white suburban school districts of Pennsylvania. Yamilis Martinez recalled the indifference expressed by teachers in Puerto Rico: "Public schools, they pass you. It doesn't matter. The teachers don't really care, as long as you attend school, even if you don't do your homework . . . and we're like two grades behind. When I came here [to Lebanon] in fourth grade, they were doing division. I was already [*sic*] learning subtraction, and I had no idea about multiplication."⁴⁹ Melany Reyes observed, "I just felt like I had to fight in order to like get to the same level as everybody else."⁵⁰ Schools in small-town Pennsylvania provided a more suitable learning environment than those in New York City. Journalist Debbie Nathan wrote, "Compared to New York, this [Allentown] is *Leave It to Beaver*. No phalanxes of security guards or metal detectors mar the city's two high schools, and visitors can walk in right off the street without signing in."⁵¹ The fact that some inner-

⁴⁸ Thomas Hylton, *Save Our Land, Save Our Towns: A Plan for Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA, 2000), 16.

⁴⁹ Yamilis Martinez, interview by Kara Gunderman, Oct., 11, 2013.

⁵⁰ Melany Reyes, interview by Kara Gunderman, Sept. 13, 2013.

⁵¹ Nathan, "Adios, Nueva York."

city high schools do have metal detectors underscores why Latinos have seen the “country” as safe, or at least relatively orderly.⁵²

Like those conducted for this essay, most interviews by journalists indicate that Puerto Ricans believed their new communities to be more secure than those they had left behind. Fred Roman noted that there were many things he did not like about New York that contributed to his decision to move to Lancaster: “To make a dollar, New York is all right. You work, you make a dollar. But to raise a family is no good. It’s more quiet here and I say more safe, too. You can go on the street and leave the car open and they don’t bother you. Taxes, all that stuff, is cheaper than New York.”⁵³ Lower crime rates also appealed to Angel Figueroa. As a teenager, he was “running the streets of the Lower East Side and Harlem.” He recalls, “out of the four guys I ran with, two are dead now. In 1992, my mom gave me an ultimatum. She sent me to my uncle in Kutztown.”⁵⁴ Even though his uncle lived in a trailer park, Figueroa’s memories included “a tree in my front window, fresh air—it was the best! My life changed completely.”⁵⁵

Many conservative whites tended to see Puerto Ricans as the chief cause of crime in the Pennsylvania Dutch region. In 2011, the Harrisburg newspaper ran a story pointing out that Latinos outnumbered Amish in the region. As is typical of these stories, a lively debate took place online in the comments section. One reader remarked, “[E]xplains why the crime rate in Lancaster, Reading and Lebanon has gone through the roof.”⁵⁶ Violent crime rates are slightly higher in the city of Lebanon than in nearby suburban or rural areas, but the perception of danger is vastly different. In 2015, the rate of assault in the city of Lebanon, about 25 percent of the county’s population, was 500 per 100,000; in the county it was 527 per 100,000.⁵⁷ The conflation of urban disorder with Latinos is not con-

⁵² Jim Murdoch, “Metal Detectors Added to Hazleton Area High School,” WNEP.com, Aug. 28, 2012, <http://wnep.com/2012/08/28/metal-detectors-added-to-hazleton-area-high-school/>.

⁵³ Gregory Jaynes, “In an Old Amish Stronghold, a New Latin Accent,” *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 1979, A10. See also Adams, *Hidden from History*, 39.

⁵⁴ Nathan, “Adios, Nueva York.”

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ivey DeJesus, “Latino Country: Hispanic Population Surpasses Amish in Lancaster County, U.S. Census Data Show,” *Penn Live*, May 22, 2011, http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2011/05/latino_country_hispanic_popula.html.

⁵⁷ Reading does have a substantially higher rate of assault, 2,287 per 100,000, compared to Berks County’s rate of 638 per 100,000. The city of Lancaster has a rate of assault that is 863 per 100,000, compared to 472 for the county. Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System, accessed June 20, 2016, http://ucr.psp.state.pa.us/ibi_apps/WFServlet?IBIF_webapp=/ibi_apps&IBIC_server=EDASERVE&IBIWF_msgviewer=OFF&IBIF_ex=RUREP01&CLICKED_ON=&MAPAREA=38&FRAMECOLS=2.

finned to the Internet but is accepted folk wisdom among members of the Pennsylvania Dutch community. Of course, violence is not confined to urban centers, but most whites view rural violence as the exception to the rule. For instance, in 2012, a North Annville man with a military-grade arsenal fired fifty shots at the state police before a sniper killed him. There was no comparable insistence that Annville had become unsafe; residents perceived this incident as a tragic exception to the bucolic norm.⁵⁸ But for those with experience on genuinely mean streets, Pennsylvania Dutch cities are like the country. Linda Hernandez moved to Lancaster from Brooklyn. There, she remembers, “[I] was always watching my back, so many drugs . . .” Compared to New York, she added, “Lancaster is paradise.”⁵⁹

In Pennsylvania as elsewhere, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos have made easy political targets.⁶⁰ In the mid-2000s, Hazleton passed ordinances to restrict undocumented immigrants from renting apartments. In 2006, Hazleton’s mayor, Lou Barletta, remarked that immigrants are “a cancer” on his community; a few years later, a wave of anxiety about immigration helped propel him to Congress.⁶¹ (Millions in legal fees later, Hazleton’s ordinance was found unconstitutional).⁶² In 2008, Luis Ramirez, a Mexican youth, was beaten to death on the streets of Shenandoah, a small town in Schuylkill County, while his assailant yelled racial epithets.⁶³ When federal investigators arrived, the local police tried to cover up the fact that it was a hate crime.⁶⁴ Many residents of the Pennsylvania Dutch Country see Latinos as unable or unwilling to assimilate, even though a third of Latinos in the state speak English at home and more than three-quarters, including all Puerto Ricans, are citizens.⁶⁵ Such hostility and ignorance likely contribute to the region’s high levels of residential segregation between

⁵⁸ Brad Rihe, “Man Shot Dead to End Standoff in North Annville,” *Lebanon Daily News*, Mar. 21, 2012. See also Diana Fishlock, “North Annville Township Man,” *Penn Live*, Mar. 14, 2012, http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2012/03/north_annville_township_man_wh.html.

⁵⁹ Virginia S. Weigand, “Peaceful Life in Lancaster Draws Latinos to the Town,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Feb. 26, 1996.

⁶⁰ See Adams, *Hidden from History*, 33–46.

⁶¹ Kent Jackson, “Ferdinand: Time to Seal the Border,” *Hazleton Standard-Leader*, May 17, 2006; Trip Gabriel, “New Attitude on Immigration Skips an Old Coal Town,” *New York Times*, Mar. 31, 2013.

⁶² Kent Jackson, “Judge Orders Hazleton to Pay \$1.4 Million in Legal Costs in Immigration Case,” *Allentown Morning Call*, Oct. 7, 2015.

⁶³ Soledad O’Brien, with Rose Marie Arce, *Latino in America* (New York, 2009), 97–131.

⁶⁴ “Men Convicted of Hate Crime Sentenced to 9 Years in Prison,” CNN, Feb. 27, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/CRIME/02/23/pennsylvania.hate.crime/>.

⁶⁵ Pew Research Center, “Demographic Profile of Hispanics in Pennsylvania, 2011,” <http://www.pewLatino.org/states/state/pa/>.

inner-city Latinos and suburban and rural whites. Residential disparities between Latinos and whites in eastern Pennsylvania are among the highest in the country, in some cities exceeding the level of residential segregation between whites and African Americans.⁶⁶

Puerto Ricans and other Latinos may not be welcomed to the region, but they have become an important source of labor for its remaining factories, warehouses, and distribution centers. In 1980, Latinos were half again as likely as whites to work in manufacturing; by 2010, they were almost twice as likely to do so (table 3). Latinos made up a growing percentage of a shrinking sector of the economy. These kinds of jobs tend to have lower wages, fewer benefits, and fewer opportunities for upward movement than their unionized counterparts of the 1960s and 1970s.⁶⁷ Working on a factory loading dock, in a plant processing chickens, or in a small factory in an “empowerment zone” ensures that most blue-collar Latinos stay in the ranks of the working poor.⁶⁸ Benjamin Fluery-Steiner and James Longazel argue that Latino immigrants are the necessary counterpart to the growth of low-wage industries in the region. In 2001, CAN-DO, Inc., a Hazleton-area economic development organization, provided substantial tax breaks to Cargill Meat Solutions for moving to the area. As a resident of the “Keystone Opportunity Zone,” Cargill will not have to pay most local and state taxes for twelve years. Cargill is notorious for harsh working conditions at low wages; most locals do not take the jobs. Of 1,300 jobs created by the plant, 90 percent were taken by Latinos, many of whom came from New York.⁶⁹ Yet despite the challenges of bigotry and extremely demanding jobs, many Latinos in the region feel they have improved the quality of their lives and the prospects of their children.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Empowerment zones induce new business to invest in an area, such as the Hazleton region, through tax abatements and other incentives. William H. Frey and Dowell Meyers, “Racial Segregation in US Metropolitan Areas and Cities: 1990–2000: Patterns, Trends, and Explanations,” Population Studies Center Research Report 05–573 (Apr. 2005), 35, http://www.frey-demographer.org/reports/R-2005-2_RacialSegregationTrends.pdf.

⁶⁷ Economic Policy Institute, “Hourly and Weekly Earnings of Private Production and Nonsupervisory Workers, 1947–2011 (2011 Dollars),” last updated May 14, 2012, <http://stateofworkingamerica.org/chart/swa-wages-Table-4-3-hourly-weekly-earnings/>.

⁶⁸ Debra Lattanzi Shutika, *Beyond the Borderlands: Migration and Belonging in the United States and Mexico* (Oakland, CA, 2011); Ed Klimuska, “Farming Helped Draw Hispanics to Region,” *Lancaster New Era*, Jan. 2, 2002.

⁶⁹ Benjamin Fluery-Steiner and James Longazel, “Neoliberalism, Community Development, and Anti-Immigrant Backlash in Hazleton, Pennsylvania,” in *Taking Local Control: Immigration Policy Activism in Cities and States*, ed. Monica W. Varsanyi (Stanford, CA, 2010), 159–72.

⁷⁰ Ed Klimuska, “City’s Hispanic Population is Booming, One of the Highest in PA,” *Lancaster New Era*, Apr. 23, 1990.

How comparisons are framed is key. Historically, Latinos have earned no more than 73 percent of the median Pennsylvania household income.⁷¹ However, Pennsylvania's Latinos earn appreciably higher household incomes than their counterparts in New York City. The 2012 American Community Survey indicated that Latino household income was about 10 percent higher in Lehigh and Lancaster Counties (\$32,944 and \$30,396, respectively) than the New York City counties of the Bronx and New York (\$26,207 and \$27,952, respectively).⁷² Newcomers to Pennsylvania often frame their new home against older experiences and expectations. Mike Montero moved his violin business from New York to Allentown and noted the comparative advantages: "It is incredibly reasonable to live here. . . . From a taxes standpoint, it is a no-brainer. I meet some local people who complain about their taxes. I say you should live in New York."⁷³

Dutchirican residents also compare the Pennsylvania Dutch countryside to Puerto Rico. Substantial evidence points to the idea that many prefer rural areas because it reminds them of where they were raised. In his 1987 dissertation, Joel Rodkin asked thirty Puerto Ricans what they liked about Lancaster. The top response was "a safe, clean, environment." Tied for second place was that Lancaster "reminds them of Puerto Rico."⁷⁴ It is unlikely that boricuas thought Lancaster was tropical but instead appreciated that it was relatively rural and peaceful. Newspaper accounts and interviews paint a similar portrait. Obituaries from Lancaster's *New Era/Intelligencer Journal* and Allentown's *The Morning Call* offer evidence that Puerto Ricans from smaller towns migrated to Lancaster rather than Allentown, which was much closer to New York and is considerably more urban than Lancaster. Of the more than three hundred Puerto Ricans whose death notices appeared in the Lancaster papers, it was more likely they were born in small towns such as San German than urban centers such as San Juan. Allentown was also made

⁷¹ "Median Income in the Past Twelve Months," *American Community Survey, 2006–10*, Bureau of the Census, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_5YR_S1903&prodType=table.

⁷² "Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (Latino or Latino Householder)," *American Community Survey, 2012*, Bureau of the Census, http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_5YR_B19013I&prodType=table.

⁷³ Scott Kraus, "No End in Sight to Valley's Population Growth," *Allentown Morning Call*, July 14, 2012.

⁷⁴ Joel S. Rodkin, "A Study of the Puerto Rican Migration to Lancaster, Pennsylvania and the Response of the Public School System," (EdD diss., Temple University, 1987), 93.

Table 5: Birthplace of Puerto Ricans Who Died in Allentown

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Died in Allentown</u>	<u>Proportion of PR</u>	<u>Proportion born in one of ten largest PR municipalities</u>
San Juan*	27	6.9%	11.0%	6.9%
Patillas	17	4.3%	0.5%	
Ponce*	17	4.3%	4.6%	4.3%
Arecebo*	15	3.8%	2.7%	3.8%
Corozal	13	3.3%	1.0%	
Caguas*	11	2.8%	2.3%	2.8%
Humacoa	10	2.5%	1.6%	
Allentown	9	2.3%	NA	
Ciales	9	2.3%	0.5%	
Orocovis	9	2.3%	0.7%	
Salinas	8	2.0%	0.9%	
Total	393	36.8%	25.8%	17.8%

Source: Obituaries and Death Notices, *Allentown Morning Call*, 1984–2013. Author searched online database for obituaries within the *Allentown Morning Call* that mentioned “Puerto Rico” within the text. Next, those obituaries were further examined in order to find only those individuals who had been born in Puerto Rico or had close family ties to Latinos in Puerto Rico. Then, key points were extracted from the obituaries and transcribed into a spreadsheet. This step was to provide for a more quantitative analysis for religion and birthplace. Tables were produced from that spreadsheet, and percentages were taken from the aggregate of obituaries transcribed.

up of people from small towns, but they were nearly half again as likely to have been born in one of Puerto Rico’s ten largest cities (17.8 percent) than those who migrated to Lancaster (12.2 percent) (tables 5 and 6).⁷⁵ It is likely that as with Dover, New Jersey, or Waterbury, Connecticut, some small-town Puerto Ricans moved to places that reminded them of home. Pennsylvania’s boricuas report that New York is exciting but crowded, stimulating but dangerous. By contrast, even inner-city Lancaster or Lebanon is comparatively safe, orderly, and affordable.

⁷⁵ See obituaries and death notices in the *Lancaster New Era/Intelligencer Journal* and *Allentown Morning Call* from 1984 until 2013.

Table 6: Birthplace of Puerto Ricans Who Died in Lancaster

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Died in Lancaster</u>	<u>Proportion of PR</u>	<u>Proportion born in one of ten largest PR municipalities</u>
Ponce*	28	9.0%	4.6%	9.0%
Guayama	15	4.8%	1.3%	
Arecibo	13	4.2%	2.7%	
Orocovis	12	3.8%	0.7%	
Patilla	12	3.8%	0.5%	
San German	11	3.5%	1.0%	
Yabucoa	11	3.5%	1.1%	
San Juan*	10	3.2%	11.0%	3.2%
Utua	9	2.9%	0.9%	
Lancaster	8	2.6%	NA	
Coamo	7	2.2%	1.1%	
Total	313	43.5%	24.9%	12.2%

Source: Obituaries and Death Notices, *Lancaster New Era/Intelligencer Journal*, 1984–2013. Author searched online database for obituaries within *Lancaster New Era* newspapers that mentioned “Puerto Rico” within the text. Next, those obituaries were further examined in order to find only those individuals who had been born in Puerto Rico or had close family ties to Latinos in Puerto Rico. Then, key points were extracted from the obituaries and transcribed into a spreadsheet. This step was to provide for a more quantitative analysis for religion and birthplace. Tables were produced from that spreadsheet, and percentages were taken from the aggregate of obituaries transcribed.

Abandoning Catholicism, Embracing New Faiths

Religion offers additional clues about the identities of Dutchiricans. Reflecting religious trends throughout the United States, growing numbers of Puerto Ricans in the commonwealth are leaving Catholicism in favor of evangelical and charismatic churches.⁷⁶ Puerto Ricans in eastern and central Pennsylvania appear attracted to, or influenced by, the religious affiliation of the surrounding community. In Lehigh County, amid

⁷⁶Pew Research Center, “The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States,” May 7, 2014, <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/05/07/the-shifting-religious-identity-of-latinos-in-the-united-states/>.

Table 7: Religion of Puerto Ricans Who Died in Allentown

<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Non-Catholic</u>	<u>Not Reported</u>
67%	33%	
72	149	221

Source: Obituaries and Death Notices, *The Morning Call* (Allentown, PA), 1984–2013.

Table 8: Religion of Puerto Ricans Who Died in Lancaster

<u>Catholic</u>	<u>Non-Catholic</u>	<u>Not Reported</u>
38%	62%	
64	103	161

Source: Obituaries and Death Notices, *Lancaster New Era/Intelligencer Journal*, 1984–2013.

a sizeable Catholic community, Puerto Ricans have been likely to remain members of that church. Of the 221 Puerto Ricans whose *Morning Call* obituaries or death notices identified a religion, 67 percent reported being Catholics (table 7). Catholics make up the largest religion in Lehigh County, composing 44.5 percent of the population, while evangelical churches constitute just 13.5 percent.⁷⁷ By contrast, in Lancaster County, just 38 percent of Puerto Ricans whose death notices identified a religion indicated that the deceased was Catholic, with the remainder reporting membership in such religious communities as the Spanish Assembly of God, the Mennonites, or the Spanish Congregation of the Jehovah's Witnesses (table 8). Lancaster County has half as many Catholics (21 percent) as does Lehigh County and three times as many members of evangelical churches (50 percent).⁷⁸ About 7 percent of non-Catholic Puerto Ricans who indicated a religion were members of Mennonite churches. Such regional variations in the religious affiliations of Puerto Ricans suggest either a self-sorting process in part by religious preference or conversion to the dominant religions, such as the Mennonite tradition, in the new region.

⁷⁷ Association of Religion Data Archives, "Court Membership Report: Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, Religious Traditions, 2010," Nov. 1, 2013, http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/c/42/rcms2010_42077_county_name_2010.asp.

⁷⁸ Ibid.; Paula Wolf, "Daylong Trip to Highlight the History of Lancaster's Hispanic Mennonites," *Lancaster Online*, Aug. 16, 2014, http://lancasteronline.com/religion/daylong-trip-to-highlight-the-history-of-lancaster-s-hispanic/article_b6e29524-2349-11e4-8604-001a4bcf6878.html?mode=jqm.

Along with African Americans, Latinos are the fastest growing demographic within Mennonite churches in the United States.⁷⁹ Some of the first Latino Mennonites were Puerto Rican farm workers who came to Pennsylvania Dutch Country in the 1940s. Mendez Rivera began working at Elmer P. Weaver Sr.'s farm in 1952. His daughter recalled that the Weavers "liked him so much they wanted him to stay. They kind of adopted him." The Weavers gave Rivera money to bring his family to Lancaster. By this time, Rivera had become an Anabaptist. Rivera's wife and children also converted, and his wife assumed the plain dress of other parishioners.⁸⁰ Esther Eby Glass, a reporter from *Christian Living*, put it this way: "Strangers in the country become friends in the field first, then brothers in the church."⁸¹

A few Puerto Ricans were Mennonites *before* they came the region. Don Jorge Gonzalez came from rural Puerto Rico to Lancaster in the early 1950s and supported himself at first by working the land. Gonzalez knew many Mennonite conscientious objectors and missionaries who had come from the United States to work in his hometown of La Plata, Puerto Rico. According to one of his daughters, Gonzalez did not come to the United States to work as a migrant laborer but to study and become a minister. Mennonites helped him by leasing him land on which to farm. After a few crop failures, Gonzalez went into the ministry, supporting himself by sharpening knives in Victor Weaver's poultry processing plant. Compared to other Puerto Ricans who came to work in rural areas, men like Gonzalez and Rivera received unusual amounts of assistance from local residents, who helped them find housing, jobs, clothing, and, of course, places to worship.⁸²

Don Jorge Gonzalez founded the first Spanish-language church in Lebanon and continued the Mennonite mission by helping those in need. In the 1990s, when Maribel Gonzalez's mother (no relation) could not support her family, she consulted Don Jorge. He arranged for a local Mennonite family to take Maribel temporarily. She spent several happy years on their farm. Maribel recalled that Mennonites emphasized what she saw as traditional Puerto Rican values, including family, faith, hard

⁷⁹ Felipe Hinojosa, *Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith, and Evangelical Culture* (Baltimore, 2014), 218–19.

⁸⁰ Wolf, "History of Lancaster's Hispanic Mennonites."

⁸¹ Esther Eby Glass, "One Fellowship, Two Tongues," *Christian Living*, Oct. 1961, 7.

⁸² Miriam Lauver, interview by Ivette Guzmán-Zavala, Mar. 4, 2015; anonymous, interview by John Hinshaw, Mar. 4, 2015.

work, and respect for elders. She did not become a Mennonite, but she cherished her time with that family.⁸³

A sociological study of a Mennonite church in rural Pennsylvania reveals the ways that Spanish-speaking migrants and non-Latino Mennonites interact with each other. Latino church members were poor and socially isolated, and the Mennonite church provided an important way for them to connect with others and with God. One member reported that the church was technically Mennonite but in practice evangelical.⁸⁴ According to the pastor, “a lot of Latinos or Hispanics tend to have a little warmer-type, more life-type of worship. We have a lot of colors and shapes and forms within the Mennonite church.” He added, “the biggest deal with the Mennonite church is reconciliation, peace and justice. So we learn to get along with our [ethnic and other] differences . . . [O]ur pastoral vision makes us different, too. My wife and I, we like evangelism. . . . [T]his church has gotten that evangelistic type vision for gaining people for the kingdom.”⁸⁵ In this view, the spirit of reconciliation makes Mennonites particularly well suited to incorporate people from a variety of nationalities into a community.

Puerto Rican and Latino Mennonites today are a small but culturally significant group. Anabaptists are widely associated with their regional nickname, the Pennsylvania Dutch. Rolando Santiago, the Director of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (LMHS), estimates that about three hundred Latinos are Mennonites.⁸⁶ If that estimate is correct, the proportion of Latinos in Lancaster County who are Mennonite is actually higher than in the general population.⁸⁷ Some Latino Mennonites marry non-Latino Mennonites. For instance, after the Puerto Rican wife of Don Jorge Gonzalez died, he married a “plain” Mennonite woman from central Pennsylvania. One Cuban émigré observed, “there is a lot of intermarriage, a lot of mingling of people, and that’s how it should be.”⁸⁸

⁸³ Maribel Gonzalez, interview by Ivette Guzmán-Zavala and Emely Gutierrez, Nov. 25, 2014.

⁸⁴ Emily Steiner, “Identity, Spirituality, and ‘Assimilation’ in Rural Latino Immigrant Churches” (BA honors thesis, Bucknell University, 2009), 11.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 12.

⁸⁶ Wolf, “History of Lancaster’s Hispanic Mennonites.”

⁸⁷ There are 50,000 Latinos in Lancaster County, whose total population is 500,000. “QuickFacts: Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Population Estimates, July 1, 2015 (V2015),” Bureau of the Census, <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/42071,00>. There are about 1,500 Mennonites in Lancaster County. See also Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, “Lancaster, PA, City/County Anabaptist Groups,” Feb. 18, 2010, <http://www.lmhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/pa-stats-2010-02-18.pdf>. According to our analysis of obituaries, about 7 percent of the Puerto Ricans in Lancaster who published death notices were Mennonites. This might reflect that Mennonites publish more death notices than other groups.

⁸⁸ LZ, interview by Tim Arthun, Dec. 1, 2009.

Some Mennonites reject the wider society's emphasis on language or skin color. Darwin Martin and others at the LMHS took a DNA test to better understand their family's histories. Somewhat surprisingly, Martin's closest match in the LMHS was Rolando Santiago, who was born in Puerto Rico. Santiago's family had roots in Galicia, which was populated in the fifth century by Suebi migrants from what is now Switzerland. Members of those Germanic tribes stayed closer to home, and a millennium later they became Anabaptists. As Martin reflected, "this is but one of countless examples of how DNA connects families across time zones, cultures, religions and ethnic barriers in surprising and complex ways. We are far closer to those who are very different from us than anyone would have guessed prior to the knowledge of one's deep ancestry—made possible through studying DNA."⁸⁹

The emergence of a Puerto Rican Mennonite tradition reveals an unusual chapter of Puerto Rican history. Numerous Puerto Ricans worked as agricultural workers in the 1940s and 1950s, and varied scholars have noted that farmers typically subjected migrant workers to harsh and exploitative conditions. Eileen J. Suárez Findlay found that despite promises of good pay, some workers in the sugar beet fields of Michigan received less than a dollar total for months of backbreaking work. The rest was deducted for travel, room and board.⁹⁰ Carmen Teresa Whalen concludes that the small numbers of Puerto Ricans outside of Philadelphia before 1970 probably resulted from "racism and discrimination in rural areas."⁹¹ One farm worker in Pennsylvania complained that the farmer had provided him a house where the linens had been unchanged in five weeks and that he was not able to send much money home. As he wrote home to his family, "these people are really bad."⁹² In rural Bucks County, in the late 1970s, the American Friends Service Committee reported that mushroom workers in Kennett Square worked such long hours that they could be described as "working dead."⁹³ One laborer, Angel Luis Jimenez, observed

⁸⁹ Darwin L. Martin, "DNA Connects Swiss, Puerto Rican Mennonites," *The Mennonite*, July 2011, 41.

⁹⁰ See also Eileen J. Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left without a Father Here: Masculinity, Domesticity, and Migration in Postwar Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2014), 179.

⁹¹ Whalen, *From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia*, 77.

⁹² Quoted in Jorge Duany, *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011), 93.

⁹³ Frank Espada, "Chester County," *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Themes in the Survival of a People* (Vancouver, Can., 2007).

that “when there is work, all you know is that there is a starting time . . . but you don’t know about quitting time. . . . I’ve worked many days seventeen or eighteen hours, without anything to eat . . . and if you complain, they tell you to leave and to not come back.”⁹⁴

Given this pattern, it is noteworthy that some Mennonite farmers leased land to Jorge Gonzalez in the hopes that he could become independent, or that businessmen like Victor Weaver financially supported Puerto Rican churches.⁹⁵ Some Mennonites saw these efforts as attempts to control workers’ drinking habits.⁹⁶ Indeed, early Puerto Rican converts encountered deeply conservative, if not colonialist, attitudes. In the 1950s, fellow Mennonites convinced Jesús Flores to change his name to Jessie Flowers, as “there is only one Jesus.”⁹⁷ But in the annals of Puerto Rican farm workers, it is atypical for farmers to drive to the airport to pick up workers’ families, as Elmer Weaver did with Mendez Rivera. The Weaver family did put the Riveras in a much smaller house—really a converted chicken barn—but Rivera’s daughter, Ramona Rivera Santiago, remembered Elmer Weaver as “Papa Weaver.” Reportedly, Weaver memorialized Weaver by praising how he “always treated . . . with respect” even those who left the Mennonite church, including many Puerto Ricans who grew disillusioned with the conservative churches. For this and other reasons, Rivera Santiago felt that “many people, especially those Puerto Ricans whose lives you touched . . . with word or deed will always remember you.”⁹⁸ Racism and colonial attitudes abounded, but there were also shared feelings of community and family. The history of Mennonites reveals that at least some members of the Puerto Rican and Pennsylvania Dutch communities grew closer over time. As time marches on and people worship together, share interests, and intermarry, we will see more and more examples of such “Dutchiricans.”⁹⁹

The story of Puerto Ricans in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country is a small but important chapter in the larger history of Puerto Ricans. Nationally,

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Miriam Lauver, interview by Ivette Guzmán-Zavala, Mar. 4, 2015; anonymous, interview by John Hinshaw, Mar. 4, 2015; Weaver and Weaver, “Early Days of Puerto Rican Employees at Victor F. Weaver, Inc.”

⁹⁶Merle Good, *Happy as the Grass Was Green* (Scottsdale, AZ, 1971), 105–6.

⁹⁷Ramona Rivera Santiago, talk at Rawlinsville Mennonite Church, Oct. 31, 2015.

⁹⁸Ramona Rivera Santiago, “A Tribute to Elmer P. Weaver, Sr.,” in Shirley Boll, *At Every Gate A Pearl* (Harrisonburg, VA, 1986), 129.

⁹⁹Pedro Cruz, interview by John Hinshaw and Ivette Guzmán-Zavala, Nov. 28, 2014.

Pennsylvania has the fourth-largest population of boricuas (behind New York, Florida, and New Jersey). As Puerto Ricans leave the island during the current crisis, Pennsylvania is the second-most popular destination, behind Florida.¹⁰⁰ However, the Puerto Rican studies literature has traditionally emphasized New York City, Chicago, or such fast-growing areas as Orlando, Florida. Studies of Puerto Ricans in the United States refer to Philadelphia or Lancaster as secondary centers of migration and community formation, but Pennsylvania (especially rural Pennsylvania) remains relatively understudied.¹⁰¹ Understanding why Puerto Ricans come to the region, and what the region has meant to them, helps clarify the ways that Puerto Ricans, as Jorge Duany puts it, remain a “nation on the move” in terms of geography, economics, and identity.¹⁰²

Conclusion

Pennsylvania’s Dutch Country is being transformed by Puerto Ricans. In such cities as Lebanon and Lancaster, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos make up half or more of the school-age population.¹⁰³ Puerto Ricans represent a sizeable portion of factory workers, and in some sectors, including poultry processing, meat packing, or distribution, they are the majority—or even the overwhelming majority—of workers.¹⁰⁴ A disproportionate number of Puerto Ricans are members of the working poor; they are younger and poorer and possess fewer resources than other Pennsylvanians.¹⁰⁵ Although Puerto Ricans have lived in the region since the 1940s, recent arrivals from New York and the Caribbean have transformed the demographics and culture of the region in ways that earlier immigrants did not.

Many migrants indicate that they like the area because it is a comparatively safe and quiet place to raise their families. Many non-Latino natives of the area see such cities as Hazleton and Lancaster through the lens of the past; they often decry that these cities have become run

¹⁰⁰ Collin Deppen, “Puerto Ricans Fleeing to Pennsylvania Find a Changed and Changing State,” *Penn Live*, June 7, 2016, http://www.pennlive.com/news/2016/06/puerto_ricans_fleeing_debt_cri.html.

¹⁰¹ Carmen Teresa Whalen, “Colonialism, Citizenship, and the Making of the Puerto Rican Diaspora: An Introduction,” in Whalen and Vázquez-Hernández, *The Puerto Rican Diaspora*, 3; Acosta-Belén and Santiago, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*, 98–101. See also Suárez Findlay, *We Are Left without a Father Here*, 77, 84, 152.

¹⁰² Duany, *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move*.

¹⁰³ School District of Lancaster, “Who We Are,” Dec. 11, 2014, <http://www.lancaster.k12.pa.us/who-we-are/>.

¹⁰⁴ LP, interview by Nick Quadrini, Oct. 27, 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Pew Research Center, “Demographic Profile of Hispanics in Pennsylvania, 2011.”

down, drug-ridden, or violent.¹⁰⁶ Gangs and drug dealers do exist. Yet the observation of historian Mike Davis is apt; as he noted, “surveys show that Milwaukee suburbanites are just as worried about violent crime as inner-city Washingtonians, despite a twenty-fold difference in the relative levels of mayhem.”¹⁰⁷ For instance, levels of assault in Altoona, with a Latino population of 1 percent, are twice that of Lebanon, where the Latino population is almost 40 percent.¹⁰⁸ It is relatively easy to forget that deindustrialization impoverished Pennsylvania’s cities before Puerto Ricans came in large numbers or that organized crime and political corruption shaped the coal region long before Dominicans moved to Hazleton.¹⁰⁹ Yet the frame of reference for most Puerto Ricans lies in New York City or Puerto Rico itself, which helps explain why deindustrialized ghettos and the region more generally appear attractive. The Pennsylvania Dutch Country and the anthracite region are not paradises, but they do provide relatively cheap housing, comparatively safe neighborhoods, and jobs that are as good as anywhere else in the Northeast. Eastern Pennsylvania’s relative proximity to the greater New York region explains why Lebanon and York have larger numbers of young people than do their western Pennsylvania counterparts, such as Altoona.

Moreover, some Puerto Ricans moved to Pennsylvania to return to small towns and cities like those in which they had grown up on the island. This is apparently true of other small-town centers in the Northeast.¹¹⁰ Indeed, throughout the country, Latinos are increasingly moving to rural areas. For instance, from 2000 to 2010, the number of Latinos in rural Kansas increased by 50 percent. *New York Times* reporter A. G. Sulzberger notes that they are attracted “by the opportunity to live quiet lives in com-

¹⁰⁶ For instance, see Kent Jackson, “City Under Siege: Citizens Seek to Solve Hazleton’s Crime Problem,” *Hazleton Standard-Speaker*, Mar. 10, 2013, <http://standardspeaker.com/news/city-under-siege-citizens-seek-to-solve-hazleton-s-crime-problem-1.1456168>. One commentator remarked, “[B]ring back the ‘Mob.’ We had no crime when the Mafia was around.” For recent crime statistics, see Lindsay Lazarski, “Year-End Crime Stats for Pa. Cities Are Out, but Only Tell Part of the Story,” *Keystone Crossroads*, Feb. 9, 2015, <http://crossroads.newsworks.org/index.php/keystone-crossroads/item/76986-year-end-crime-stats-for-pa-cities-are-out-but-only-tell-part-of-the-story>.

¹⁰⁷ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York, 1990), 224.

¹⁰⁸ Pennsylvania Uniform Crime Reporting System, <http://www.paucrs.pa.gov>. 2015 rates for Altoona: http://www.paucrs.pa.gov/ibi_apps/WFServlet?IBIF_ex=RUREP01&MAPAREA=07; 2015 rates for Lebanon: http://ucr.psp.state.pa.us/ibi_apps/WFServlet?IBIF_ex=RUREP01&MAPAREA=38.

¹⁰⁹ Matt Birkbeck, *The Quiet Don: The Untold Story of Mafia Kingpin Russell Bufalino* (New York, 2013).

¹¹⁰ Millard and Chapa, *Apple Pie and Enchiladas*; Mary E. Odem and Elaine Cantrell Lacy, *Latino Immigrants and the Transformation of the U.S. South* (Athens, GA, 2009).

munities more similar to those in which they were raised.”¹¹¹ Sulzberger goes on to observe that “Hispanics are arriving in numbers large enough to offset or even exceed the decline in the white population in many places. In the process, these new residents are reopening shuttered storefronts with Mexican groceries, filling the schools with children whose first language is Spanish and, for now at least, extending the lives of communities that seemed to be staggering toward the grave.”¹¹² There, tension and mistrust have started to give way to intermarriage and acceptance.

The Pennsylvania Dutch Country has more people than western Kansas—a fact that provides more social space for segregation—but here, too, one sees evidence that new identities are emerging. The growth in the number of Puerto Rican Mennonites reveals that significant cultural changes have already begun. The vast majority of second-generation Puerto Ricans speak English, many are adopting new religions, and some are marrying into native-born white families. When individuals say that they are Dutchiricans, it is both a play on the tension between native-born members of the Pennsylvania Dutch community and an acknowledgement that this region is their home. Dutchirican is a model—and clearly not the only identity in the region—to describe some of the cultural changes that are occurring, often well beneath the conflict that dominates the newspaper headlines.

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¹¹¹ A. G. Sulzberger, “Hispanics Reviving Faded Towns on the Plains,” *New York Times*, Nov. 11, 2011.

¹¹² *Ibid.*