

*Saints, Peaches and Wine: Mexican migrants and the transformation of  
Los Haro, Zacatecas and Napa, California*

by Sandra Nichols (2002)

From the Introduction:

**A web of connection**

In California's Napa Valley they are Mexican farmworkers, wage laborers and professionals, collectively lumped together as "Latino immigrants." In the Jerez Valley, back in their home state of Zacatecas, they are farmers, ranchers, shopkeepers and successful emigrants. In Napa they plant and care for the vineyards, pick the grapes and work for some of the world's most celebrated wineries; they also tend the gardens and maintain the Valley's carefully manicured landscapes; they clean the hotel rooms, raise their families and strive to improve conditions for themselves and for fellow Mexican migrants. Still, they manage to stay in close touch with their small village, their rancho of Los Haro, Zacatecas where they grow peaches, own their own homes, support their aging parents, and return as often as possible for vacations, family reunions and to render service to San Rafael, their patron saint. This evolving and ever-changing relationship between Los Haro and Napa is but one of hundreds, indeed thousands, of similar ties between migrant-sending communities in Mexico and migrant-receiving places in the United States. Collectively these border-spanning communities have woven a vast, transnational web of connection that binds villages and towns throughout Mexico with towns, cities and regions across the United States. With some 19 million Mexicans now living in the United States, this great web is one of the most salient features of the contemporary U.S.-Mexico relationship, and one whose impact is felt everyday in thousands of communities on both sides of the border. Understanding this web, in its nuance, complexity and diversity of features, offers a new way to think about the relations between our peoples, our cultures and our two countries.