
DELANO DIARY

The Visual Adventure
and Social Documentary Work
of Jon Lewis,
Photographer of the
Delano, California Grape Strike,
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ABSTRACT: An account of Jon Lewis, photo-journalist and participant in the National Farm Workers Association's (NFWA) Delano, California, grape strike and march on Sacramento in 1966, that explores the struggle to treat participants with dignity while experiencing first-hand the hardships they underwent. In retrospect, Lewis helped to define César Chávez, *La Causa*, and photo-journalism.

When we think about photography in California, we tend toward the iconic. Familiar figures come to mind—Ansel Adams, Dorothea Lange, Eadweard Muybridge, Carleton E. Watkins, and Edward Weston, to mention the most prominent figures. For decades, scholars have highlighted the same people. Perhaps it is time for a new approach. Perhaps it is time to stop recycling a story heavily skewed toward long-dead photographers encountering the unspoiled landscape or expressing personal artistic achievement. Perhaps by shifting our perspective into the realm of living photographers of great accomplishment who, but for a twist of fate, escaped hagiography and remained anonymous, we

might begin to glimpse a picture that turns out to be infinitely more complex and interesting than anyone ever imagined. If we are to initiate such a reconstruction, we would do well to begin by contemplating the life and work of Jon Lewis who, in January 1966, moved to Delano, California, volunteered his services to César Chávez and his fledgling National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), and produced an epic insider's view of a seminal event in the civil rights movement. How tragic that over forty years have passed before we learn the full story of his accomplishment.¹

Jon Lewis and his Delano grape strike photography remind us that there is hardly a single photographer from whom we cannot learn something. As we splinter, compartmentalize, and submerge in professional tribes, we can all benefit from reaching out, learning from each other's experiences, and extracting whatever encouragement and lessons apply. Visual biographies such as this offer immense opportunities, the greatest being that we can witness a significant moment in time at the very instant that a perceptive photographer selects and frames his scenes. Astride the optic nerve, we watch decisions being made, images selected, vantage points chosen, and a larger, sequenced narrative taking shape, even as the photographer cycles through despondency and fatigue, then rises to the moment with the moral effect being that such examples help us ward against our own despair. But more than anything else, we discover in Jon Lewis an exemplar of the social documentary impulse. The unique, handmade book of his strike photographs (*From this Earth*), the images he published in *El Malcriado*, and the work he placed in *Ramparts*, *The Movement*, and other activist magazines exemplify that unique and powerful way of seeing that has dominated the visual culture of the twentieth century, and that has so many great names associated with it.²

Scholars have never been very comfortable with definitions of social documentary photography. The debate over what is and is not social documentary photography has ebbed and flowed for three-quarters of a century. Terms such as *historical* and *factual* have been considered and cast aside as too cold and unconcerned with photography's magical power to keep people looking again. About all that anyone can agree on is that a good social documentary photographer is concerned with conveying messages and telling stories, usually centered on the less fortunate; that such photography should originate in reality, not in one's own inner creativity; and that it should tell an audience what it feels like to be an actual witness. A social documentary photographer does not set out to create

art, although art might result from the effort. But for all the haggling over definitions, we know social documentary photography when we see it. And through the lens of Jon Lewis we see social documentary photography performed on the deepest level, with a rigorous “attitude of engagement” by an activist operating on a shoe-string budget, without any institutional affiliation, independent of any news organization, with two cameras, three lenses, and a meager diet of coffee, beans, and tortillas.³

Born in Burwell, Nebraska, on April 18, 1938, Jon Lewis was the only son of two tired corn farmers who moved west in 1940 to work in the San Diego defense industry. A high school science and mathematics wiz, Lewis attended San Diego State University intending to become an engineer. While hanging out with “the bohemian set,” he became interested in photography and switched his major to journalism. Entering the Marine Corps in his junior year, Lewis acquired practical experience covering events as a military photographer, then enrolled at San Jose State University, where he graduated with a degree in journalism in 1965. While earning a little extra money photographing school theatrical productions, he met Luis Valdéz, son of migrant workers, who was involved in a theater department production of *The Head of Pancho Villa*. After graduating from college, Valdéz had visited Cuba (a trip always held against him by foes), then returned to San Francisco and was working with the San Francisco Mime Troupe when Lewis reconnected with him. Valdéz said that something was happening in Delano. Grape pickers were on strike under a charismatic leader named César Chávez. He wanted to meet Chávez and perhaps create a theatrical component to the strike, El Teatro Campesino (The Farmworker Theater). Lewis intended to head north for a gig photographing the Shakespearean Festival in Ashland, Oregon, then to enroll in the graduate photojournalism program at San Francisco State University. Valdéz talked him into visiting Delano. “College is always there,” Valdéz would tell him. “La Huelga [the strike] is now.”⁴

Neither man owned a car. A bus ticket for the 150-mile trip east was beyond their meager financial resources. After a day helping out at the San Francisco boycott office, they snagged a ride with Marshall Ganz, a Bakersfield rabbi’s son who had left Harvard University to work for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Mississippi during Freedom Summer. Ganz was headed to Delano to meet Chávez. He intended to offer his experience from the civil rights movement. He offered to take Valdéz and Lewis to Delano in his small, red, two-door

automobile. There was not enough room for the baggage, so Lewis lashed his sea bag to the trunk. That night, Lewis, Ganz, and Valdéz drove through a foggy night into the heart of the \$4-billion agricultural industry that journalist Carey McWilliams described as overflowing with irony, paradox, and tragedy that “completely belies the sense of peace and lassitude that seems to hover over rural California.”⁵

The movement that drew the three young men to Delano had begun taking shape in the early 1960s, as organized labor and allied groups like the national Advisory Committee on Farm Labor campaigned to protect American workers against the adverse effects of the bracero program.⁶ Finally, on December 31, 1964, what had seemed impossible had finally occurred. Under incessant attack from organized labor and liberal activist groups, Congress allowed the bracero program to lapse into history. The following spring, Filipino members of the AFL-CIO sponsored Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) stormed out of the vineyards after learning that a group of braceros allowed in under a temporary exemption to pick grapes were earning fifteen cents an hour and fifteen cents a box more than local workers. As the harvest moved north, sporadic strikes erupted around Arvin, in the southern San Joaquin Valley, then spread to Delano, where a small, soft-spoken man named César Chávez had spent two years building the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), a quasi-union organization with several hundred members. A hesitant Chávez at first pondered whether to jeopardize his young organization to join Larry Itliong, who had directed local Filipino members of AWOC conducting a sit-down strike in the labor camps. On Saturday, September 16, 1965, one thousand Filipino and Mexican grape pickers packed into the parish hall at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic church. Surrounded by posters of Emiliano Zapata, the Mexican revolutionary hero, and huge red banners of the NFWA black eagle in a white circle, they voted overwhelmingly to join the strike. No one then realized that the Filipino grape workers, Mexican activists, and an agglomeration of church activists and college volunteers had set in motion events that would envelop an entire industry and reverberate across the United States for the next half century.⁷

All of this seemed vague and unreal at 3 AM, when a sleepy Lewis and his pals rolled into Delano, a community of 14,000 astride Highway 99 about thirty-five miles north of Bakersfield. Nearly split down the middle by the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, Delano was really two towns. Most of the Anglos, along with the banks, automobile dealerships, upscale

motels, the high school, hospital, and the Lions, Elks, and Rotary Clubs were located east of the highway. This was the lair of the mostly Croatian immigrants whose fathers had arrived in the area in the 1920s and then struggled to carve vineyards out of the raw landscape. Proud and clannish, their names were Pandol, Pavich, Caratan, Gimarra, and Zaninovich—a half-dozen Zaninoviches. To the west sprawled the dusty labor camps, Mexican cafés, poker parlors, worker hotels, boardinghouses, and bars, many named after regions in Mexico (e.g., Guadalajara, Sonora) along with a Mexican bakery and the People's Bar. The grape pickers living on the west side earned \$1.25 an hour—minimum wage for crouching under the vines and loading boxes of grapes—and had an annual income of \$1,378 for their seasonal work. Eight of ten farmworker families earned an annual income below the federal poverty level of \$3,100 and could expect to live an average of 46 years, compared to between 69 and 76 for the general population. Most worked the “circuit,” using Delano as a home base. At peak harvest, between three thousand and five thousand of them worked in the surrounding vineyards.⁸

A few minutes after arriving in town, Lewis found himself at NFWA headquarters, an otherwise nondescript battered old store-front building near the city dump in the southwest corner of Delano. A jumble of dusty automobiles clogged the sidewalk. After negotiating their way through the maze, Lewis, Valdéz, and Ganz stepped inside an open lobby strewn with folding chairs and lit by a single lamp. Not a soul stirred. Surveying the scene, Lewis found a nest of plywood partitions, mimeograph machines, old desks, doors on cinder blocks serving as work tables, typing paper, empty soda bottles, maps, and ashtrays full of cigarette stumps. Lewis could not find a place to flop and headed to a stucco NFWA building known to all as the “Pink House.” Stepping over volunteers and strikers sprawled in sleeping bags covering the living room, he found a vacant corner, set down his sea bag, rolled out his gear on a cold linoleum floor, and spent the first of many restless nights with the union. That morning, still wearing the same rumpled clothes, he had the first of many meager breakfasts consisting of strong coffee and tortillas slathered with butter. Soon he was pitching in, typing up forms for NFWA secretary Ester Uribe. Later in the day, Lewis met Chávez. Lightly dressed in a checkered, short sleeve shirt, his eyes were bloodshot. He seemed much in charge. Valdéz introduced him to Lewis. “Check out our movement,” Chávez said. “Everyone is welcome.”⁹

As he adjusted to the town, Lewis thought things over. Joining the strike had certain advantages. Lewis had no assignment, no connections to any news organizations, no car, no family obligations. If he decided to stay, he would not be able to afford an apartment, not to mention film, darkroom expenses, or food. Being a union member might allow him to overcome these obstacles—even turn them to his advantage. If he stayed, the NFWA would provide a floor to sleep on in what was referred to as the “Gray House,” directly behind the union’s headquarters. Staying would either be a foolish move consigning him to poverty, wrecking his plans to attend graduate school, and exposing him to danger, or the opportunity of a lifetime that would place him in the center of a watershed movement. Lewis saw opportunity. Only NFWA volunteer Eugene Nelson and *El Malcriado* editor Bill Esher were photographing the faltering strike, along with *Valley Labor Citizen* editor George Ballis, and *People’s World* writer/photographer Sam Kushner. Unlike Nelson and Esher, who had not trained as photographers, Lewis brought a wealth of experience to the task. And in contrast to Ballis and Kushner, who could not be on the spot twenty-four hours a day, Lewis was going to be there every second of every day. He was going to become part of history. He was going to record the strike as it was happening.

Here was a chance to work to the fullest of his ability. Here was a self-assignment that would test his mettle, allow him to assign his own stories, frame pictures as he desired, bypass editors lordling over his work. But it was not a career move. Nor was it a stepping stone to fame and a reputation. Lewis felt privileged to be at Delano. He identified with the NFWA. He liked its leaders. He liked the SNCC and CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) members he met. He found the atmosphere electric and exciting. He believed in the cause. Such proud faces, old and young. Sunburned. Weathered. Determined. Everyone he met seemed such salt-of-the-earth people. They were putting their all on the line. How could he turn his back on such people, at such a pivotal moment, in such a place? So he became one of them.¹⁰

After deciding to stay at Delano, Lewis briefly returned to San Francisco State University and withdrew from the journalism program. Borrowing \$150 from one friend and \$50 from another, he purchased a Durst 606 enlarger, begged an enlarging lens from photojournalist Paul Sequeira, packed everything in a box, loaded it all on a Greyhound bus, and returned to his quarters in the Grey House at Delano. Given an alcove/washroom near the garage, Lewis wedged his bed along one side,



"The photographer in his first week on the picket line in January 1966. [Already [considering] not returning to San Francisco State University at month's end to start graduate school and [instead] joining the struggle at \$5 a week. Preposterous." January 1966. Unless otherwise noted, photos are courtesy of Jon Lewis.



"I appropriated the wash room off the garage of the 'Grey House.' It was only six feet wide but had running water and electricity—if no air conditioning. I had to use it for processing nights, as days were sweltering. But it was far superior to the lab I set up [the] next year." February 1966. *Laurie Ohman (Jon Lewis Collection).*

installed a clothes rack at the other end, and using lumber and materials scrounged up by NFWA volunteers, built a developing sink along one wall with an enlarger and drying rack at the far end between the door and his bed. Beneath his clothes rack, a long, narrow shaft served as a drying cabinet for wet film. His only luxuries were a small portable radio, a reading light, and a tiny desk where he spotted prints. He filed his work in empty Luminos photographic paper boxes. Because he did not trust the photography shops in Delano, Lewis established an account of sorts with a photography shop in Bakersfield. He typed up a press pass and pasted in a self-portrait from his days at San Jose State University. With that he became the first official NFWA photographer.¹¹

A few days after settling in, union volunteer Laurie Olman took a break from her job running the mimeograph machine and snapped a picture of Lewis reclining on his bed, legs kicked up. Thin and sporting a crew cut, he looked very much the fit ex-Marine. Except for the developing trays and enlarger, the photograph might have been mistaken for a college student in his dormitory room, not an activist photographer just back from dawn patrol on the picket lines during a labor strike.

Working conditions in his Grey House darkroom were uncomfortable at best. Freezing cold or boiling hot, depending on the weather, it had only one small window and could not be properly ventilated. Chemical fumes built up, permeating his clothes and bedding. Lewis later recalled,

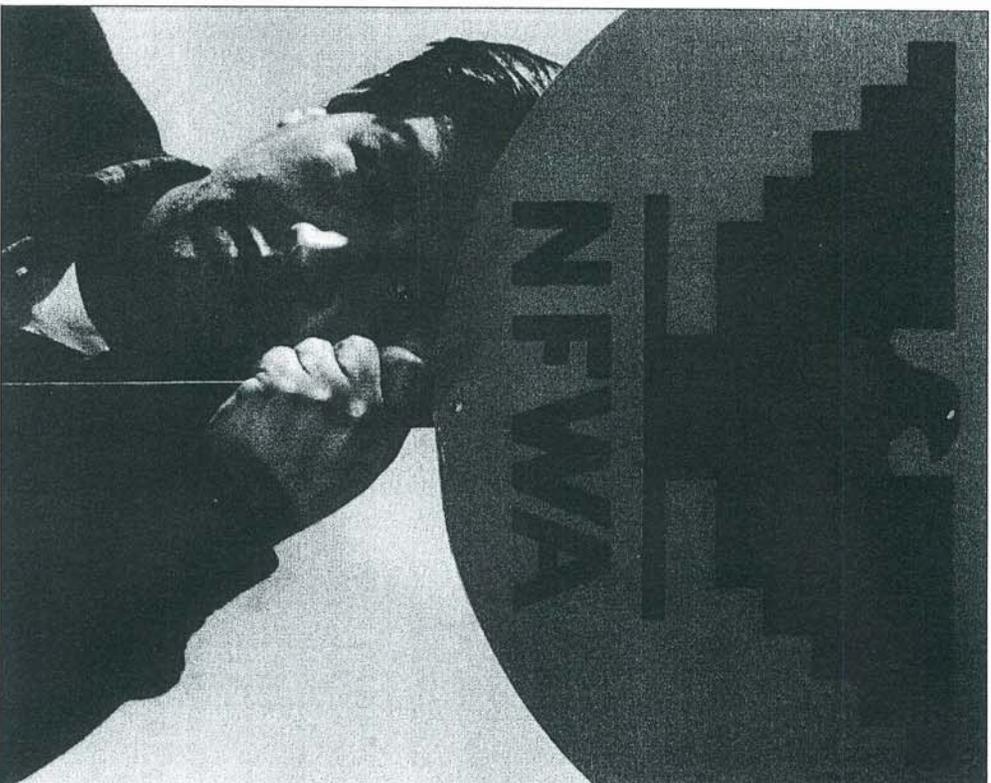
It was crowded. The house was stacked floor to ceiling with canned food, eggs, sacks of rice and beans, and second-hand clothing. We were always cramped for room. People were coming and going all of the time. . . . They would be tossing bedrolls everywhere, in the yard, on the floor, on the lawn, and on couches in all of the rooms. You'd rub elbows with students studying for law degrees, MAs, and PhDs. It was never quiet. The phones were always ringing. Every day was a crisis. A car would break down and need parts. People would be there trying to find money to feed and house strikers. Donations would be arriving and [being] stockpiled. There was non-stop laughter, constant banter in English and Spanish. People would be up all night stuffing envelopes in the living room. Typewriters would be clanking away. *El Malcriado* was coming out weekly. There was a mimeograph machine in the next room, and it would run all night cranking out material for mailings. El Teatro Campesino was in the garage, and members would often be up all night writing their "actos." There was activity twenty-four hours a day. The place was just a zoo.¹²

A week later, Lewis was at NFWA headquarters when Chávez walked in and sat down. On one occasion he had been passing by the darkroom and stopped to tell Lewis that he had some personal photographs he wanted developed—landscapes mostly. But he never followed up. Chávez was seldom on the picket lines, and Lewis had hardly seen him since then. He desperately wanted to make a good portrait, but the light in Chávez's office was very bad, and Lewis never tried to photograph there. But that day, the light in the union front room was soft and diffused and there were hundreds of Huelga signs lying about, apparently just delivered. Lewis looked at them and got an idea. He asked Chávez for a few minutes of his time and then had him pose with one of the signs. He quickly made three verticals and six horizontals. This was to be a pattern of his photography

at Delano. No six-image sequence would ever be without at least one turned on vertical. Just as he finished, Luis Valdéz walked in, and Lewis put him through the same drill. It was the only time during the strike that Lewis asked anyone to pose for a photograph.¹³

On his first night after establishing his darkroom, Lewis headed over to People's Bar, a west-side watering hole favored by the NFWA. "El Corrido de Delano" often played in the jukebox, and behind the bar was a large cartoon depicting the DiGiorgio ranch as an octopus—an obvious reference to the Frank Norris novel about the Southern Pacific and its tentacles of control extending far into the California countryside. Lewis liked to toss a beer back at People's with Luis Valdéz and "Augi" (Augustin) Lira. He called Lira and Valdéz "the golden boys," stars of El Teatro Campesino—Valdéz with his wildly hilarious actos, and Lira with his wonderful songs. Lewis often watched them writing their "actos" on pieces of butcher paper or on anything else that could hold ink or pencil marks. On one occasion, Lewis loaned Augi Lira \$1 so that he could purchase a burrito and heat it up in a small oven. On \$5-a-week pickets' wages, the loan represented 20 percent of his income and left him little money for his principal vice, Pall Mall cigarettes. A few days later, Lewis made one of his most well-received images, a group picture of Lira and others. Lewis later sold six 8 × 10-inch enlargements for \$1 each. "The guys who bought pictures were making \$5 a week as pickets," he recalled. "After buying a beer or two and maybe a pack of cigarettes, they were in the same financial straits as me—completely broke. That money allowed me to buy enough film to keep shooting for another week." At about the same time he made an even more well-received image of Chávez, who often frequented People's Bar in the evenings. When Chávez hunched over a pool table to make a shot, Lewis recorded one of his best-known images of the labor leader. Compared to the more heroic images of Chávez, it reveals a more human side of a man able to put aside the turmoil of the day and relax with friends.¹⁴

From this crude base of operations, Lewis became a one-man photo agency. His principal outlet was *El Malcriado*, the devilishly clever NFWA newspaper edited by Bill Esher. To make glossy prints, Lewis obtained four 16 × 20-inch highly polished ferrotype tins. He would squeegee the prints onto the plates and then place them on the lawn in the hot sun. This yielded six to eight glossy prints each day. On hot days, when his darkrooms became a chemical sauna, Lewis did all of his printing and developing during the coolest part of the night, between 1 and 5 am.



“The only posed shot I took of César. I don’t know what the picket signs were doing around the office[,] but they saved my act.” February 1966.



“People’s Bar gave us use of the pool tables—where else to hang out? César didn’t come by too often, but still had a touch on the table from his younger days as a pachuco.” Summer 1966.

Often he went straight from an all-night printing marathon out into the fields. Of his routine, Lewis later recalled,

As vineyard pruning began, we started patrolling the back roads. We would meet in the strike kitchen, a mile west of town, where the pickets assembled for a breakfast varying from toast and coffee to eggs and bacon, depending on the donations coming in. There would usually be two caravans—the “Zapatistas” and the “Villaistas.” You had to pay attention which car you jumped into because it would be cold in the morning, and later in the day, when it got warm, we would all strip off our jackets and shirts and throw them in the car. If you put your jacket in a Zapatista car and you were riding with the Villaistas, that might be the last you would see of it. The Villaistas might take off to picket another vineyard and you would not see them again for days. We would load up four or five to a car then form a caravan behind our picket captain and head for a location scouted the previous day. At the first ranch we had scouted we would set up at the entrance and wait

for the workers to arrive and greet them. Sometimes crews turned away in support of the strike or because they did not want any trouble, but many drove right through the picket lines. By mid-morning we had done about as much as we could do, so we would load up and look for another vineyard to picket. When we saw cars parked along a road we knew a crew was at work and we would set up a picket line and begin the chant: "Huelga.." "Huelga.." "Huelga.." Sometimes we would add "Esquiro!, ¡Afuera!" [scab, stand aside]. We would often return to the kitchen for lunch, and then we would go back out to the fields again. Most days it was just a lot of sweat. You didn't shoot a hell of a lot of film. Some days you didn't take a single picture. When it got warm, you'd get sleepy. Then there would be moments when things broke open and the adrenalin would flow. Foremen would see us and begin driving their trucks up and down the roads, kicking up dust and sending us diving. Occasionally the photography was like combat.¹⁵

A typical day began at 6 AM, when Lewis met with pickets at strike headquarters. Looking for strikebreakers somewhere within the 38,000 acres of vineyards around Delano, Lewis and the six or seven pickets would spend hours crammed into an automobile. Whenever they found pruning crews, they radioed the locations back to headquarters. While a few pickets felt intimidated by nearby growers and foremen, most remained defiant. They shouted back insults—referring to the foremen in unmentionable terms, often accompanied by gestures with upraised middle fingers. While these dramas played out, Lewis scrambled on top of cars and water towers, moved in and out of the picket lines, photographing from every possible angle. He photographed confrontations when pickets caught scabs passing through the picket lines and when deputies declared the picket line an unlawful assembly and ordered everyone to disperse. Soon he began to exhaust the compositional possibilities. Strike leaders shouting through bullhorns at midday made for undramatic images, so Lewis began composing images at daybreak, reducing the pictures to silhouettes against the sky. He did the same with picket lines. The immutable routine reminded him of his stint in the Marines. "You got up early, wolfed down a breakfast, hurried out to the cars, headed out to a vineyard, and then stood around," he recalled. "It was the old 'hurry-up and wait' of military life. Meals, such as they were, became the big reward of the day. It wasn't all that unfamiliar to me."¹⁶

Watching these dramas play out, Lewis quickly assimilated a lesson known to previous generations of farmworker activists and studied in detail by countless labor relations specialists—that in the distended agricultural environment, tactics that worked elsewhere failed. Picketing had

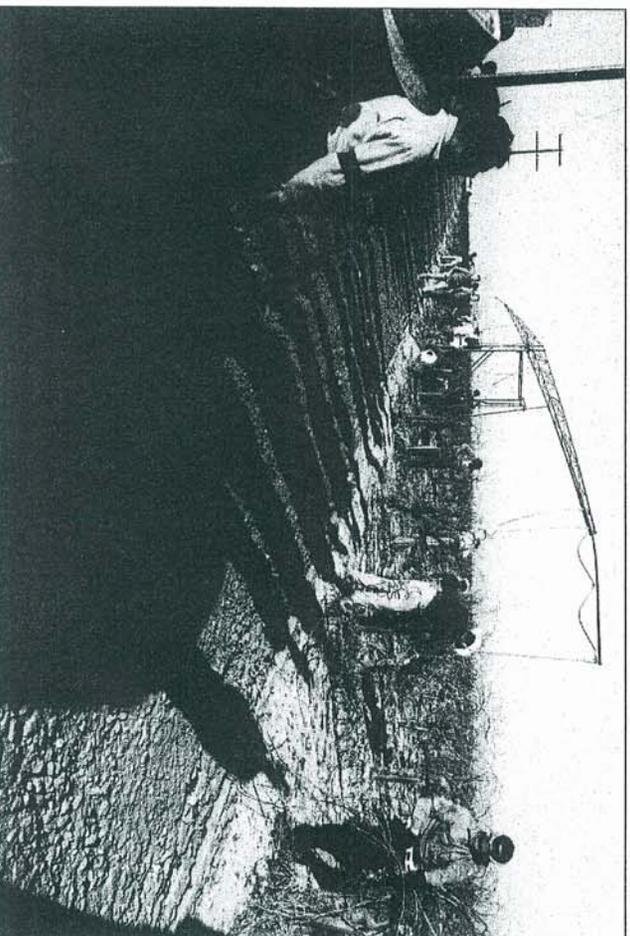
little effect. Because there were so many farms so widely spread out, a union might succeed in shutting down operations in one vineyard while work continued elsewhere. The logistics were simply impossible. You could not tie up operations the same way the United Auto Workers Union clogged the entrance to an auto assembly plant or the way the United Mine Workers tied up a mine entrance as tight as a wet knot. One journalist compared picketing the vineyards around Delano to trying to cover a factory with a thousand entrance gates spread over forty square miles, where the plant location changed daily and you had no idea where the entrance gates were located.¹⁷

Although Lewis had ample opportunity to explore living conditions at Delano, he decided early in the strike to avoid such images. While not averse to recording what he encountered, he was repulsed by the idea of intruding on farmworkers. He later recalled,

I found it hard to photograph poverty. When some photographers began poking around I saw a lot of the farmworkers just placing their hands in front of their faces and motioning for the photographers to stop. I was always photographing strength, strong men and women standing. I did not want to do degradation, although that was what the boycotters wanted. "Give us starving kids," they would say. Well, the kids didn't know they were that poor. I never tried to document living conditions. I could not go into people's homes to show how bad off they were. Any number of people lost homes and cars because they went on strike. That's a powerful commitment. But I would not photograph their grief.¹⁸

After six weeks of nonstop photography, Lewis found himself looking through the open front door of the Gray House thinking that it all seemed so futile. "All this work, the long hours," he asked himself, "was it worth the effort? Was I having any effect?" Lewis was depressed and worn out. He had been photographing nonstop. "Get up early, patrol, develop film, print, and about a hundred other things, like typing up union fliers and addressing envelopes," he recalled. "Endless work. I just wanted to take a long hot shower and lay [sic] down on a clean bed. I did not think I could continue much longer."¹⁹

He was not alone in his doubts. By early March 1966, NFWA members were broke. Volunteers missed their families. Schenley industries and DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation appeared unfazed by the NFWA/awoc boycott of their products. Delano seemed isolated and forgotten. Food donations from urban groups were tailing off. A sense of doom hung over union headquarters. Every so often, pickets would succeed in pulling a crew out



Confronting pruning crews, early A.M. "Here I did trespass, as the police were at the far end of the picket line. I did have a press pass from *Ramparts* magazine, but I was obviously a union supporter and hardly objective, so they could have hauled me off to the slammer." January 1966.

of the fields, and Lewis would agonize over their fate. Many had no place to go. They would flop on the floor at NFWA headquarters. The next day they were gone. Lewis photographed them packing up their meager belongings and beat-up luggage into the trunks of their automobiles. Everyone was trying to come up with another gimmick, some tactic, some way to buy time, build support, lift spirits, generate favorable images, expand awareness of the strike, and win public support.²⁰

And then, as he would do so often, Chávez stepped forward with a plan. Of the remarkable strategic decision that Chávez made in the middle of these depressing times, Lewis later recalled,

He found inspiration from field hands who had been sprayed with sulfur dust while picking the Schenley ranch the previous year. Many had vowed to protest by undertaking a cross country pilgrimage to Schenley's corporate headquarters in New York. They were going to walk across the country. Chávez rejected the plan as too dangerous and expensive, although he had once used the march as an organizing tactic while working for the Community Services Organization in Oxnard. But he liked the concept, especially



“A worker leaving DiGiorgio’s Sierra Vista ranch on strike. Of a certain age with uncertain prospects, he walked with immense dignity and commanded our respect.” Spring 1966.

after seeing the publicity generated two years earlier by the Freedom March on Selma, Alabama. And he had read all about Gandhi and knew that he had used similar tactics. He thought that he could rekindle interest, generate new imagery, and create what amounted to a massive photo opportunity that projected the kind of picture that he wanted the public to see.²¹

A day later Lewis accompanied Chávez and a small group of NFWA leaders to a retreat in the Sierra Nevada Mountains east of Visalia. He had no idea what was going on until NFWA members taped a huge piece of butcher paper on a wall inside one cabin. Late in the afternoon, Chávez convened a meeting to announce that on March 17 seventy-five farmworkers would begin walking 300 miles north from Delano to Sacramento—approximating the distance Gandhi had covered on his famous Salt March to the Sea in 1933. Chávez referred to the march as *La Peregrinación* (the pilgrimage). Modeled on the Lenten *peregrinaciones* of Mexico, it would supposedly underscore the theme of “Penitence, Pilgrimage, and Revolution.” He identified towns along the way and drew the route of the march in red ink: east from Delano to Richgrove, cut

north to Highway 65, pass through Ducor, Terra Bella, Porterville, Strathmore, Lindsay, Exeter, Farmersville, Visalia, Cutler, Orosi, Parlier, then pick up Highway 99 at Malaga, just south of Fresno, and on to Sacramento by way of Madera, Chowchilla, Merced, Modesto, Stockton, Manteca, and Lodi. The marchers would average ten miles each day and arrive on the steps of the state capitol on Easter Sunday, April 10. Each night, marchers would stop in one of the small farmworker towns along the way. Chávez would address them in an attempt to build support for the strike and boycott. By relying on the locals for food and shelter, the marchers would involve them in the event, whether they realized it or not. A truck carrying supplies, a makeshift ambulance, and a mobile first-aid station would support the marchers. Thousands of farmworkers and their supporters would join them at a rally to demand that Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown intervene in the grape strike.²²

Of the plan, Lewis explained, "It took us all by surprise. It injected new life in the strike. It certainly got me excited. I had been in the Marines when the big civil rights marches had occurred in the South. Now I was going to see the California equivalent here in the Central Valley. You can't imagine how exciting it was. I photographed Chávez unveiling the map and later addressing NFWA members. That night we all watched *Salt of the Earth*. We were really inspired. We were ready to go."²³

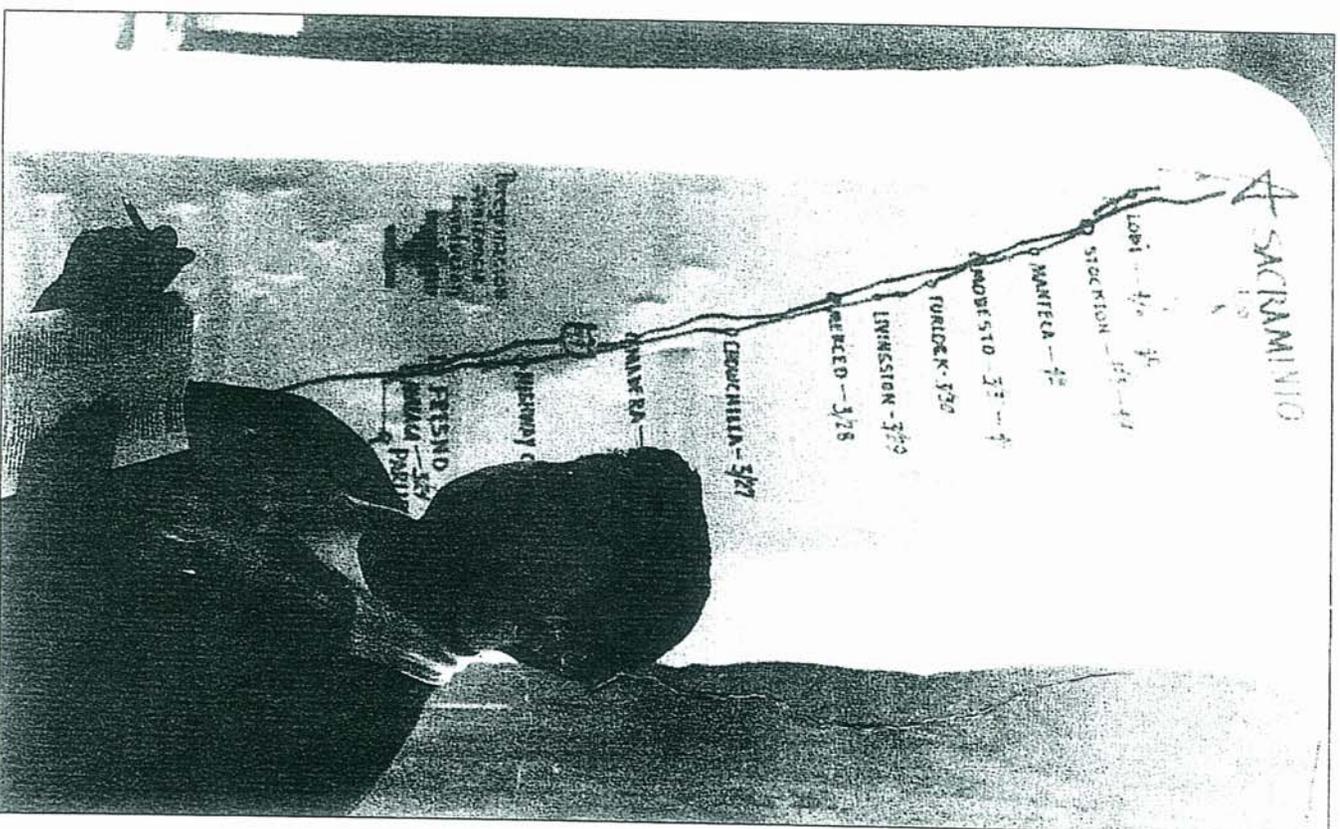
As Lewis prepared for the march, United States Senator Harrison (Pete) Williams brought his Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor to the Central Valley. Busy getting things in order, Lewis ignored the first two hearings in Sacramento and Visalia. But the Delano hearings, scheduled for March 16, promised considerable excitement because Robert F. Kennedy, who had undergone a considerable metamorphosis following the assassination of his brother, was going to be present. Lewis was backstage to document the galvanizing effect Kennedy exerted on all present. He recalled,

About one thousand farmworkers packed into the Delano high school auditorium. The place was a sweat box, hot and uncomfortable. Many of the farmworkers held hand-lettered signs and waved banners. I spent some time in the audience shooting pictures but I could not get outside, where several hundred people unable to enter the building waited, some of them trying to crawl in through open windows. Seats had to be cleared for the growers. They arrived in a gruff and very hostile mood. I made few interesting images of the actual hearings. What can one do with men sitting behind long tables speaking into microphones? I snapped a few cover-your-ass shots of the committee and of union members reacting to testimony. Like everyone else, I

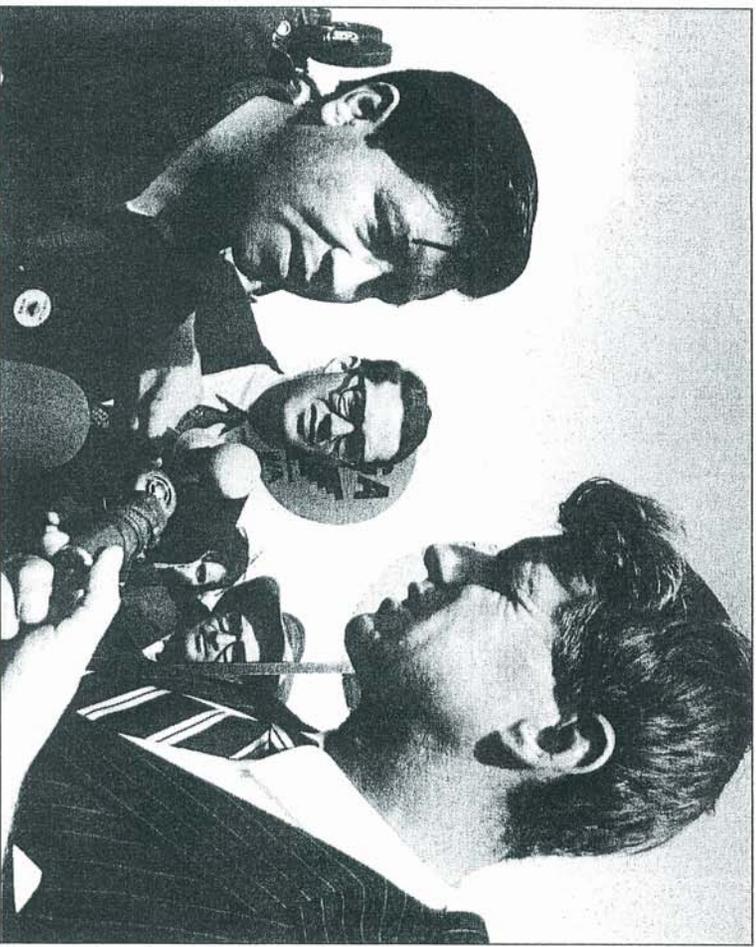
was waiting for Senator Robert Kennedy to speak. When he appeared on stage, I caught a picture of him surrounded by farmworkers, including two young children who were just in awe of him.²⁴

After documenting Kennedy excoriating Kern County Sheriff LeRoy Gaylen for conducting extensive photographic surveillance of peaceful pickets and union members, Lewis followed Kennedy and Chávez through Delano and out to the picket lines at DiGiorgio's Sierra Vista ranch. Kennedy plunged into the picket line, showing a genuine concern for the strikers. Lewis shot an entire roll of film as Kennedy shook hands and chatted with NFWA members. That evening, watching Kennedy's images appearing on the still-damp film, Lewis reflected on his brief sojourn at Delano. It had been a strange six weeks, alternating between boredom and excitement. Lewis had by now exposed sixty-five rolls of film. Whatever was going to happen, he was not going to miss it. He wondered about the pilgrimage. He had seen pictures of civil rights marchers being beaten, arrested, and harassed in Mississippi and wondered if Californians would react with equal hostility. Would his cameras be smashed and his film ripped out and destroyed? Whatever the outcome, Lewis was going to do more than merely record the march. Following a variety of journalism asserting that in order to understand something you must witness it over a long period of time, Lewis vowed to become a participant observer. Instead of a notebook, he would pack a camera. He would lend his body to the event. This was why he had come to Delano. This was the essence of the type of photography he most cherished and admired—up close, in the middle of a historic event.²⁵

Rising before dawn on the morning of March 17, Lewis stuffed his sleeping bag and toiletries inside his sea bag and carried it to the NFWA truck. Because his camera gadget bag weighed him down, Lewis obtained a war surplus belt and stuffed his camera lenses into pouches hooked to the belt. He headed over to the Pink and Grey Houses, where the marchers were gathering. Now joined by John Kouns, a former UPI photographer who had driven his Volkswagen bug to Delano and camped out with Lewis in January, and Gerhard Gscheidle, a twenty-three-year-old German with a strong interest in photography and a degree in steel fabrication, Lewis kept busy photographing the unfolding banners of the Virgin of Guadalupe and of various support organizations and unions. Along with Kouns and Gscheidle, he was going to march all the way to Sacramento, covering the entire event from the inside.



"César Chávez displays a map of the march on Sacramento,"
March 9, 1966.



"Much hoopla and a media circus surrounding RFK's [Robert Kennedy's] visit in March 1966, of which I was part. He did shake hands with actual workers later." March 16, 1966.

Lewis was certain that Chávez intended to provoke an incident, that he would do something dramatic, that he would create scenes that would embed themselves in the popular imagination. The chief of police was warning the NFWA about where it could and could not walk, and Lewis was sure that Chávez would bait authorities and make them arrest him. Shortly after photographing a Catholic mass in the backyard of the Pink House, Lewis had to scramble when Chávez changed plans and, without obtaining a permit, led everyone along Albany Street through the middle of the Delano city manager district. Already wary of unfavorable images, the Delano city manager decided to avoid an incident and allowed the march to proceed. "They wanted us to arrest them," Police Chief James Allen explained to writer John Gregory Dunne a few months later. "They were all down on their knees with their priests saying their words and

what not. It would make them look good if we arrested them with all that press and tv there.”²⁶

Decades later, Lewis remembered the moment as if it were yesterday:

Wherever you turned there was something interesting—an old union member, a family, the flags, the march, the cops watching, or some detail. People were holding up portraits of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Some had large crosses. Someone had a Star of David. There were Mexican banners. American flags. Awoc cloth banners. Old WWII veterans even had their service caps. Valdéz had a manifesto he had been working on, and was going to read each evening. He called it the “Plan of Delano,” but it was really modeled on Zapata’s “Plan de Ayala,” a radical demand for basic human rights. It was an environment rich in photographic material. You could set your lens on infinity, hold it up, mindlessly snap pictures, and get good pictures. I thought the confrontation lasted only a few minutes, but later everyone present said we were held up for hours. That’s how quickly time passed.²⁷

As the march moved east on County Line Road toward Ducor and Richgrove, Lewis realized that there was a down side to participating. He was not going to be able to see the larger picture. Without a car, he could not explore the larger environment that he was passing. Nor was he going to have the energy required to “work” the situation. By committing to the march, he was lending an extra body to the NFWA, but he realized that it was not the best way to cover the event. There was no way to do both. Given the choices, Lewis chose to walk. He would be a participant first and a photographer second.

By the time he reached Malaga on March 24, Lewis had developed a photographic rhythm centered on variations of essentially the same dramatic scenes. Category one: pageantry, union members carrying statues of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a large cross, and the Mexican, American, and NFWA flags waving in the spring breeze; images very similar to photographs of civil rights marchers moving through the American South. Category two: images placing the march within the larger agricultural environment as it moved through thousands of acres of vineyards. Category three: spectators along the way, a rich reservoir of faces and gestures from people cheering the marchers and feeding them in town parks. Category four: El Teatro Campesino performing on stages rigged on a flatbed truck or city bandstand, where vividly goofy characters like the *esquirrel* (scab); *contratista* (labor contractor); *patrónico* (a well-fed boss in sunglasses, unable to speak English); and *huelgista* (striker) provided Lewis with an ever-changing cast of characters and scenes. Another favorite

subject was Peggy McGivern, the quiet NFWA nurse who, by the end of the second day of the march, had lanced so many blisters that she would have a recurring nightmare about a giant blister bursting and drowning her in an avalanche of pus. Somewhere along the way, Lewis made an “artsy fartsy” self-portrait that included his own reflection in the wing-mirror of an automobile as the march passed along the highway.²⁸

And so it went. Covering the event for the various national news publications, a gaggle of contract photographers buzzed by for a day, spent a night in a clean motel room, shipped their film, and departed. Older photographers could not walk the entire distance. Harvey Richards, who had been covering farmworkers for a decade, would tag along in his station wagon. Lewis recalled him parking ahead of the march and climbing onto his roof-top platform to shoot both stills and movie film, beginning with telephoto shots and switching to a wide angle lens as the marchers passed below. Only impending deadlines and concern for the large amount of film Lewis was shooting caused him to take a day off when the entire march, far ahead of schedule, paused for a day. Lewis hitched a ride with Kouns back to Delano. He recalled, “I got to stinking pretty good. I showered, then stayed up all night developing film and printing. I did a load of wash. I really needed to clean up. By the next morning I was back trudging north. I only missed a couple of hours covering the entire march.”²⁹

At 10 AM on Easter Sunday, a jubilant Lewis and between three and four thousand marchers followed the fifty-seven “originals” ten blocks south from the bridge over the Sacramento River to the State Capitol. He could scarcely believe that he had walked all the way from Delano. So great was the interest and so without parallel in California was the gathering that Lewis suddenly found himself competing for position with swarms of other photographers. He recalled, “It was so chaotic. People were playing guitars. Blowing trumpets. Pushing baby strollers. People on stilts. People waving Mexican flags, California flags, American flags. A Mexican dressed in full regalia riding a white horse in front of the march. News helicopters overhead. Police walkie-talkies cracking and hissing. You could not find a sour face.”³⁰

On the Capitol steps, Lewis photographed a ceremony in which marchers returned the Our Lady of Guadalupe banner to Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, which had loaned it to the NFWA. Tired and dehydrated, Lewis did not have the energy to elbow his way into the crush of journalists photographing Dolores Huerta making a rousing speech,

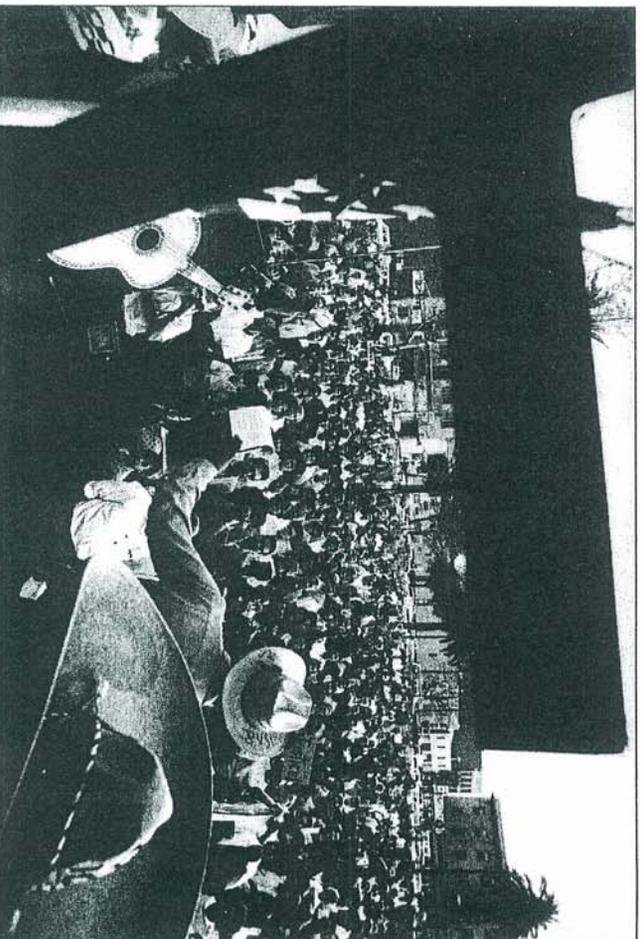


“A gully provided the chance to show the march without that vast open sky [see cover image]. Maybe the arc of that tree branch propels the line of march forward.”
April 9, 1966.

and he completely missed Chávez. Stationing himself near the speaker's podium, Lewis swung around and used his 135-millimeter portrait lens to capture people in the crowd. For the first time since arriving at Delano, he found it difficult to concentrate:

The whole event was monumental. You just wanted to enjoy it, file it away in your memory. Governor Brown emerged as a real striker. NPWA leaders delighted in announcing that he had skipped town to play golf with Frank Sinatra in Palm Springs. After a while, it began to drizzle, and the excitement died down. I began to lose interest after the speeches went on and on, hour after hour, in English and Spanish. Over all, it was a great moment. Watching it, I kept thinking about those photographers who had been present for the great triumphant moments in history—V-E Day in New York City, the liberation of Paris in 1944. I knew this was like that, on a smaller scale, but really a historic moment in California, certainly a moment that we would refer back to again and again.³¹

Back in Delano a few days later, Lewis finished developing the last of the 106 rolls of Tri-X black-and-white film that he had shot since late



"The evening's rally in Stockton's central square [enroute to Sacramento]. I was perched precariously on the back rail of the flat bed truck and got some strong images without falling off—including the sea of faces used effectively in my film, *Nosotros Venceremos*." April 1966.

January, then quickly made prints without any contact sheets. Looking back on his adventure, Lewis remembered scurrying up telephone poles, crouching down in gullies, climbing anything remotely resembling a hill, shooting from any highway off-ramp or overpass just trying to vary his perspective and overcome the flat landscape. By late April, he was exhausted. Taking time off to do his laundry, he spent a few days tidying up and had his hair cut by NFWA Vice President Julio Hernandez. A few weeks later, he met Jim Lorenz, a young lawyer who had just received a grant to start the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA). Lewis mentioned that he might better crack into the national market by photographing in color. Lorenz helped him by purchasing prints for his new office. With profits from the sale, Lewis bought one hundred feet of surplus 35-millimeter movie stock, then bulk loaded it into used Tri-X film canisters that he had saved. By early May, he was the only photographer around. His daily mantra became, "obtain more film, stay another day."

For the rest of the month, Lewis focused not so much on the hard news of confrontation as the soft news of everyday activities. And then, suddenly, he was in the middle of another crisis—the charged atmosphere of the campaign to represent workers employed by DiGiorgio Farming Corporation at its Sierra Vista ranch.³²

As the boycott of DiGiorgio's S&W Fine Foods and Treasweet labels began to eat into profits, the company agreed to a secret-ballot union representation election. But when company guards attacked a NFWA picket, Chávez broke off negotiations, and DiGiorgio began allowing the Teamsters Union to recruit members on its property while barring NFWA organizers. As the campaign for the June 24 election heated up, Lewis split his time between the DiGiorgio picket lines and NFWA crews harvesting grapes in the Schenley vineyards under the movement's first union contract. On election day, he joined three hundred NFWA members strung out along both sides of the road to Sierra Vista ranch. Writing in his diary, he observed, "With our own eyes we saw most of the workers stay on the trucks, and heard their foremen threaten them if they didn't get out and vote. We stood there for twelve hours as they brought some of the crews back two and three times to try and get them to vote. The Teamsters won, 283 to 6 for the NFWA. But the workers were with us, and most of the people [whol] voted were maintenance men and office helpers, not farmworkers. Half of DiGiorgio's employees refused to vote."³³

At the end of June, Lewis sent out over four hundred photographs, most to union boycott offices but also to various news outlets and activist magazines. For the next two months, he concentrated his efforts on the struggle at Sierra Vista, where NFWA was pushing for a second election after an American Arbitration Association investigation declared the first election a fraud. Every morning, again at noon, and then in the evenings, Lewis followed organizers making their rounds between the fields and labor camps. After spending a lunch break being harassed by Teamsters, Lewis wrote in his diary, "The Teamsters had the muscle men to work us over. They could break a nose or camera, but they couldn't break our spirit. One of us [Luís Valdez] sitting and talking to a group of workers was suddenly hit in the face with a beer can. He didn't fight back and was attacked. When we pulled the teamster goon off of him, he said "Is this the kind of union you want?" [T]he workers heard, and we were not fooled."³⁴

Lewis retaliated by going through his prints and finding various shots that included clear images of a half-dozen of the most vicious teamsters.

He then enlarged each head shot to the size of a ping pong ball, carefully cut them out with an X-acto knife, photographed the inside of a befouled portable toilet, and pasted the head shots all around the picture of the toilet. Of his metaphorical artistry, he recalled, "The Teamsters were turds. That's what we thought of them. Turds and goons. My picture made them into pieces of crap all over the place. I tacked that shot up inside one of the toilets where they were sure to see it."³⁵

Not long after that, Lewis was trespassing on Sierra Vista ranch when security guard Hershel Nuñez spotted him and began ordering Lewis to leave. When Lewis moved too slowly, Nuñez charged him, slapped at his camera, and then attempted to rip it away. Of the incident, Lewis recalled,

Nuñez never got to me. I was too quick. But I got a picture of him trying to block my way. I never really got my ass kicked like some other photographers before and after me. I was scared some of the time. There were some mean SOB's out there. There were some red necks. Working with the union and packing a camera, you're a visible target. Plus you're a college student, or an outside agitator, someone who's suspicious. You did not look like the strikers. You stood out and were immediately recognized. You stayed on the other side of town, on the other side of the tracks. You had to be careful. You didn't want to be caught in a dark alley with some of those guys around Delano.³⁶

A few days later, Lewis got in a tussle with Art Chavarria. A stout Teamster organizer with a thin mustache, crow's nest of black hair, and an unusually high laugh, Chavarria seemed to be able to talk nonstop. Lewis hated him with a passion that sent him into the darkroom that evening searching for pictures of Chavarria. He found one, then went to work manipulating it by bending the photography paper beneath the enlarger in such a way that Chavarria's smile was distorted to look like a snarling mouth full of fangs. After making dozens of small prints, he scattered them around another befouled portable toilet, then photographed the scene, made several sets of prints, and made sure everyone on the picket line saw them. Later, Fred Ross handed several to Chavarria, who pretended to be flattered.

Between the first election and the second one, scheduled for August 30, Lewis kept busy covering the long-expected merger between NFWA and awoc. The night that the union became the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), AFL-CIO, Lewis was in Filipino Hall for a rally celebrating the merger and the impending election at Sierra Vista. Although he sometimes used a strobe, he preferred to capture scenes in Filipino Hall using available light by slowing his shutter speed way down

and opening up his lens. Lewis did not sleep that night. When the first picket car left the Grey House at 5 AM, Lewis was ready and grabbed a ride. Arriving at Sierra Vista that morning, Lewis thought the place resembled Main Street in a small village just before the circus arrived. “All of the polling booths were decked out in red and white and blue curtains. There were workers all over the place, just waiting to vote. It was not a tense atmosphere. Everyone was excited. We all knew that we were witnessing a turning point in history. Nothing like this—a union representation election—had ever occurred in agriculture. I was not going to miss anything. One of my first shots was a wide view of the Sierra Vista complex, with hundreds of farmworkers lined up, cameramen in the street, the Virgin of Guadalupe shrine in the center.”³⁷

Lewis spent the entire day at Sierra Vista, refusing to leave until late in the evening, when officials for the American Arbitration Association collected the sealed ballot boxes and transported them to San Francisco to be tabulated. After a quick nap, he rose early to develop his film and make prints. The next day, everyone packed into the Albany Street headquarters awaiting the election results. As expected, the teamsters won the vote in the sheds, 94 to 43. But in the first certified election for union representation among field workers, UFWOC won 60 percent of the vote—530 to 331—with 12 votes for “no union.” Lewis never forgot the scene at union headquarters: “People shouting. Pure joy. Tossing their hands in the air. Yelling in English and Spanish. Singing. Dancing around. I photographed the celebration, stoic old NFWA veterans throwing paper into the air, hugging one another, just delirious with joy. That night, when everyone gathered at Filipino Hall, it was pure pandemonium. It was nothing but: ‘¡Viva la huelga!’ ‘¡Viva la causa!’ ‘¡Viva César Chávez!’” No one had the foggiest idea what to do next. But everyone knew that something had radically changed.”³⁸

At the end of the evening, Lewis made one of his most precious images. He started making a sequence documenting Chávez addressing union members, pausing for the applause to subside, then resuming, and finally being raised on the shoulders of his workers in victory. But the images he cherished most were not of Chávez, but the workers as they described what victory meant—especially an old woman with no teeth, and a man with a wrinkled face and dirt under his fingernails. “Those images spoke from the heart,” he recalled. “They captured pride and a sense of accomplishment. They captured La Causa.”³⁹



Woman praying at "make-shift shrine built into the back of a station wagon outside of DiGiorgio's Sierra Vista ranch, during the 'phony' election of June 1966. I think it remained there until the August 30 election, with people maintaining an around-the-clock vigil." Summer 1966.

Lewis stayed in Delano until the end of August. When the union set up a gas station across from the county dump on the far western edge of town, a forlorn place called Forty Acres, Lewis helped build the cooperative gas station. Although he detested mixing adobe for bricks, by far his worst task centered on digging a service pit, where union members changed oil and lubricated their cars by descending into a pit dug into the ground.

By noon we would be so tired that we would have to knock off and go over to People's Bar for a beer. After that, I would have to take a nap. If we had enough energy, we would go back and dig some more in the evening. When we finished I was so proud of what we had done with our own hands. I photographed Mike Kratko, the NFWA mechanic and jack-of-all trades. Kratko had been a mechanic at Cararan and had gone on strike with AWOC. He could repair anything. I remember him sitting in one of the primitive porties we had there, just covered in dust and dirt, smoking a cigarette. I snapped his picture then shot some pictures of the gas station at sunset. The gas station was a failure. It never had enough traffic to stay open and eventually was abandoned.⁴⁰

Nearby was a weathered fence that caught his eye. Click! One of his most famous images. "Viva Pancho Villa" and "Viva Juarez, Zapata, and Chavez," in bold white letters. During his last week in Delano, Lewis also paid close attention to chronicling volunteers unloading donated food and clothing from cars and trucks and the efforts of strikers to stretch every morsel of food as far as it would go. Many afternoons, he photographed the wives of strikers lining up outside the storehouse to receive an allocation of donated provisions.⁴¹

By the end of August 1966, Lewis was physically and financially exhausted. Between his arrival in mid-January and the election at DiGiorgio, he had exposed 256 rolls of film. His accomplishment was in many ways comparable to what photographers accomplished during the darkest days of the civil rights movement. He had lived through the cold winter, the hottest of summer, into the fall victories. He had been at the center of the greatest protest in California history. He had recorded the first union election won by farmworkers and participated in a mass march in which Mexican Americans had challenged a way of life in the same way that African Americans were challenging the Jim Crow South. Throughout it all, he had kept his eye on the action. He had lived in a town full of paranoia, and he had lent his body to the cause—as a picket and a photographer and at other times as a construction worker and a writer.

When the union announced a rally in San Francisco to celebrate the DiGiorgio victory, Lewis caught a ride back home and reenrolled in graduate school. He had exactly \$2 in his pocket. Too poor to pay tuition, he pawned his precious cameras for \$130, just enough to get him through a month until his GI benefits arrived. Over the next year, he returned to Delano often, shooting many of his images on the picket lines at Giunarra Vineyards, one of the largest table grape growers in the world and the focus of UFWOC's organizing activities. With his cameras in hock, Lewis used an Olympus half-frame camera that produced seventy-two images.

Lewis had been thinking about doing a photographic book on the strike. In spare moments, he began outlining its structure and fleshing out ideas. Much of the work was done on the fly. "I would cut out of town by skipping a late class on Fridays and catch the 3 pm Greyhound," Lewis recalled. "I wrote a lot of text for my book on those long bus rides. I would arrive about 8 pm, just in time for the Friday evening meetings. After that we would all head over to People's [Bar] and have a brew and catch up."⁴² While events were unfolding, Lewis was stuck in the darkroom printing contact sheets. While photographing at Delano, he had adopted the deadline photojournalist's technique of holding his negatives up to a light source, quickly "reading" them like a news photographer, and selecting what to print. To obtain a better sense of what he had done, Lewis followed a dawn-to-dusk darkroom routine. Each day he removed his negatives from their glassine sleeves and arranged six images per line, six for each of over 260 sheets of paper, then sandwiched each between a plate of glass and photographic paper.

Seeing many of his images for the first time, Lewis began selecting and printing individual frames. Dodging and burning (holding back light and adding it) and then cropping them to achieve the desired print quality were painstaking processes that yielded a half-dozen good prints a day. Lewis was especially frustrated by the printing problems caused by the harsh midday light under which he had worked. This caused innumerable problems—negatives overexposed in one section and underexposed in another—which required considerable manipulation before yielding acceptable results. But as one image after another appeared in his developing trays, Lewis greeted them as old friends, recalling the people and circumstances he had documented. Every contact sheet held multiple images worth printing. Lewis poured his soul into his darkroom task. Soon, hours turned into days. Days became weeks. Lewis kept at it from



"History's progression as painted on a fence in the parking lot at the union's [NFWA] Arroyo Camp on the west side of [Delano]. A bit further left was a 'Viva Pancho Villa,' both done by Luis Valdéz, as I recall." Summer 1966.

October 1967 until February 1968, with occasional forays back to Delano to renew friendships and to photograph.

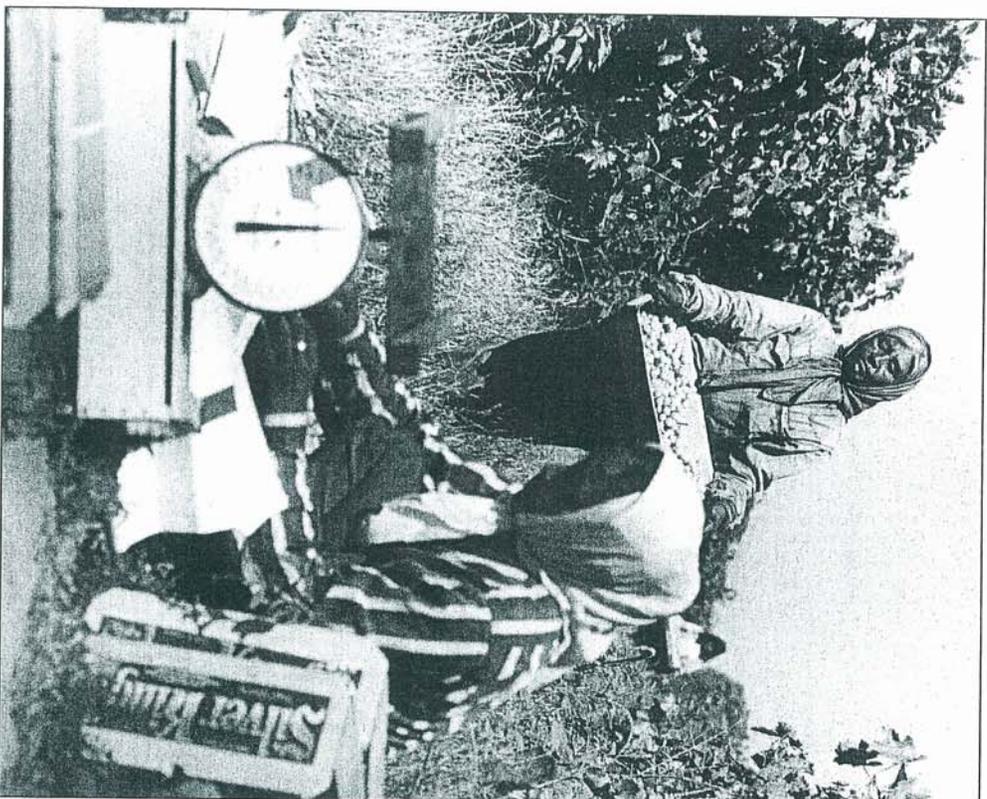
While Lewis printed, farmworker unionists grew impatient with the slow pace of the movement. With the strike sputtering along and the grape boycott not yet effective, activists had started blowing up irrigation pumps, scattering tacks on access roads to puncture police and grower vehicles, and roughing up individuals suspected of union disloyalty. To regain moral authority and inject new life in the movement, Chávez had moved into a small room at Forty Acres. Midway through February 1968, he began to fast. Hundreds of people converged on the site.

Submerged in his darkroom marathon in San Francisco, Lewis did not read a newspaper. He was unaware of these developments when he took a break from work and hopped a bus to Delano late in February. Upon stepping off the bus, Lewis immediately recognized that something was happening:

All kinds of people were pitching tents at the Forty Acres, so no one was sleeping there yet, but there was food being served to the good-sized crowd that attended a mass that evening. I . . . remember an electricity in the air among the people. . . . In one corner of the gas station that I had helped build the year before, the union created a kind of shrine and chapel. Across the breezeway César was holding forth in a room that only had a single bed and dresser and resembled a kind of monastic cell. Long lines of people were standing there beneath a big, black union flag waiting to visit Chávez. They stood there for hours, quietly, just waiting their turn, hoping to meet the man before he died. Growers were calling the whole thing a circus. A lot of UFWOC members were also uncomfortable with the fast. But for photographers it was just an endless string of opportunities. You saw farmworkers pitching tents, farmworkers maintaining a vigil for Chávez, elderly women crawling on their knees from a highway to the room at Forty Acres where Chávez resided. Even for those of us who had seen it all, and who had covered the march on Sacramento, the pageantry of the fast seemed a visually spectacular, surreal admixture of metaphor and document. César would talk to people privately and would attend a mass every night. I could see that the fast had quickly become an amazingly powerful organizing tool. I remember Leroy Chatfield saying that it was just like the march, only instead of César going to the people, the people came to César.⁴³

With press photographers unable to penetrate security, Lewis and others aligned with the union shot most of the images of Chávez at this critical point. Following him through the day, Lewis created a picture of life in the little room at Forty Acres where the leader of the UFWOC slept on a cot, read, prayed, and greeted visitors. He recalled, "You could not shoot worth shit in the corner of that gas station where César was staying. It was too dark. I got my best pictures when they took him out to attend mass. They would trot him out from his bed and lead him to a front row pew. He would be slumped over, tottering, not really listening, just out of it. He had a handkerchief on his head and looked to be at death's doorstep."⁴⁴

When Chávez ended his twenty-five-day fast during a rally and mass on a drizzly March 11 afternoon in Delano Memorial Park, Lewis was stranded in San Francisco, pouring his soul into his self-published book on the Delano grape strike. He called it *From This Earth* because it was about people who knew the taste of the land, who breathed its dust, who felt it in their hands, and who watered it with their sweat and blood. Published in late 1969 with a cover shot of the hand of César Chávez's brother, Richard, sifting a dry soil through his fingers, the book appeared just as table grape growers were beginning to move toward negotiations. It was completely handcrafted—photographed, designed, written set in type, bound, and dis-



"Photographers are obnoxious and I felt like I was invading the beautiful lady's privacy as I shot 8 to 10 frames within 5 minutes' time. She should have been home making tamales for the grandchildren in an air-conditioned kitchen—watching color TV." July 1966.

tributed by the same resolute photographer. Over the next six months, Lewis began working on a film adaptation. He called it *Nosotros Vencemos* (We Will Triumph). Lewis was synching songs and music to pans and dissolves of his still pictures when word reached him that all twenty-six Delano table grape growers would meet Chávez on July 29, 1970 to sign a contract in the newly erected Walter Reuther Hall at Forty Acres.⁴⁵

By now, Lewis had retrieved his old Nikon F from the pawn shop. He hopped a bus to Delano and arrived just as the contract signing was to begin. Stepping inside Walter Reuther Hall, he immediately began working an event he recalled as being completely set up for and dominated by photographers.

Of the contract signing, Lewis recalled it as a typical gang-bang affair:

Everyone was there for the same shot. No one wanted to be blocked. Photographers kept moving to make sure that they would have a clear view. You staked out a spot and defended it. If you got between a photographer and the stage, you got shoved out of the way. When Chávez began to speak it was pandemonium. The room erupted in an explosion of strobe flashes. For the next 10 or 15 minutes, every gesture inspired a wave of shutter clicks and flashes. I tried to fit my shots into the ebb and flow of events, when my exposures would not be overwhelmed by all the light. I remember just staying focused. You were aware of all this commotion, but you kept everything framed in your viewfinder.⁴⁶

Chávez ignored the commotion. Speaking to the packed hall, he recalled that when the strike had started, farmworkers had asked for \$1.40 an hour and twenty cents for each field-packed box of grapes. Now they would receive \$1.80 an hour and twenty-five cents per box. Chávez also stressed that growers had agreed to pay ten cents an hour into the Robert Kennedy Health and Welfare Fund, two cents an hour into a special service fund, and accept a union hiring hall arrangement. With that short speech, he prepared to sign the contract. Sensing the historic picture, Lewis and the other photographers crowded even closer. A few fired off “cover your ass” shots of John Giunarra Jr., smiling uncomfortably, as he rose from his seat, addressed the crowd, dismissed the past, and hoped for a new relationship. Chávez then moved to a position alongside him and said a few words. When Bishop Joseph Donnelly of Hartford, Connecticut (who had assisted in negotiations) leaned over between Chávez and Giunarra and thumbed through the agreement, Lewis snapped a picture. Whatever Chávez said next has forever been lost because one photographer, unable to wait for events to unfold naturally, shouted for Chávez to

shake hands with John Giunarra Sr. At that moment, Giunarra Sr., threw his hands over his head in a victory sign. His son smiled. Bishop Joseph Donnelly and Monsignor George Higgins started clapping. Larry Itliong beamed. As the audience broke into uproarious applause, Lewis and every other photographer present started snapping pictures. Lewis recalled, "The place was a blur of flashes. We shot that historic moment from every possible angle. Photographers momentarily drowned out every sound in a whirl of motor drives advancing film through their cameras. I had no motor drive, so I just kept advancing the film manually and shooting."⁴⁷

Following the contract signing, Lewis was saying goodbye to old friends when a representative from some Los Angeles trade union papers approached him and asked to borrow his film. "He said that he would pay for the film, return it, and that I would be given credit," recalled Lewis. "I was so naive. I let him have the film and never saw it again. Otherwise I would have used it in my film. I never saw that film again."⁴⁸

Lewis last photographed at Delano when the farmworker movement was triumphant, having won contracts with the entire table grape industry. Chávez had even appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. Then, three years later, there was a repeat of the preceding eight years. Growers refused to re-sign with the UFW, and another battle was on. Between June and August 1973, more than three thousand union members protesting anti-picketing injunctions clogged the rural jails between Indio and Delano. Two farmworker pickets were killed. No one went to prison for their murders.

During 1974 and 1975, the UFW seemed to regain lost momentum. In 1975, the California state legislature passed a farm labor law that inspired a wave of union representation elections. Four years later, the union won a vegetable strike—pushing wages up significantly—and the awesome legal staff that Jerome Cohen assembled won one victory after another. Briefly it seemed that unionization of agribusiness was inevitable, and that growers had dropped their pathological hostility. Then it all began to unwind.

A succession of Republican governors (especially George Deukmejian) systematically undermined and gutted the State Agricultural Labor Relations Act, leaving union members without contracts decades after voting for a union. Within a few years, the union had lost all but a few of its contracts in the vegetable industry.⁴⁹

Top organizers left or were forced to leave by Chávez. The squeeze had actually started in the late 1960s when Chávez gave the boot to a

dozen Anglo leftists—many of them volunteers with Trotskyite and Maoist sympathies. The purges accelerated in 1976. At a meeting at La Paz, Chávez went on and on about Nick Jones, the union's boycott director, accusing him of sabotaging the union's campaign to save the Agricultural Labor Relations Act. Jones resigned in 1976 after Chávez accused him of "harboring leftists and disrupters of the union," something Jones says is ridiculous. Internal struggles further split the union. In 1977, the executive board fired one-third of the central staff. In 1978, Chávez dismantled the grape and lettuce boycotts to concentrate on preserving the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. He then dismissed Elisio Media, a dynamic young executive board member. Media, who had questioned the shift in tactics, seemed to be emerging as a successor. In 1980, Chávez forced Gilbert Padilla to leave. Padilla had been the number-two man in the union since its inception. "If there was an argument, you got accused of being negative," Padilla told a reporter for the *Village Voice*. "And if you're negative, you're against him [Chávez]. You're no longer fit, you're out of step. So he asked me to leave." But dissent only grew. Hand-picked executive board members loyal to Chávez continued to champion the boycott method even as rank and file workers demanded strikes and grass roots organizing; ranch committees protested the undemocratic and increasingly hierarchical leadership and the fact that decisions emanated from leaders in the union's headquarters in an isolated former tuberculosis sanitarium in the Tehachapi Mountains. As annual union conventions turned into staged affairs, with little conflict, and loyal Chavistas endorsed proposals by the executive board, Chávez further alienated long-time supporters by maintaining a strange alliance with the drug rehabilitation organization Synanon and its megalomaniacal leader, Charles Dietrich. In 1981, Chávez dismissed Salinas office director José Rentería for questioning his leadership. Soon thereafter, the executive board "fired" nine of the union's paid representatives who had backed Rentería. Among them was Mario Bustamante, who had been with the union since 1970. The UFW then went on to suspend other dissident members, whom Chávez labeled "traitors" and "deserters." Next to go were Marshall Ganz, the union's fanatically dedicated organizer, and Jerry Cohen, who had built the union's legal department into an awesome and respected team. Both resigned in frustration after Chávez accused them of disloyalty. By 1984, four of nine executive board members were members of the Chávez family—César; his wife, Helen; his brother Richard; and his son-in-law Arturo Rodríguez. "The rest," wrote Jeff Coplon of the

Village Voice (which the UFW sued for libel), “are devoted Chavistas. They include Oscar Mondragon, who improperly joined the board within five years of an arson conviction.”⁵⁰

Chávez tried to rekindle the movement with yet another dramatic fast in August 1988, breaking bread with Jesse Jackson ostensibly to renew the table grape boycott and draw public attention to pesticide poisoning. But in 1993, Chávez died suddenly in his sleep, not far from the Arizona homestead where he had been born. He had been giving testimony in a long and protracted court case against the Bruce Church Company, a large Salinas Valley–based vegetable growing company that was about to win a \$9.2 million lawsuit against the UFW. Chávez was 66 years old. He had led such an overloaded life full of crises and tension that close friends said he appeared to be 122.⁵¹

Since then the movement has bounced between dramatic highs and lows. Within a few years of one another, Jim Drake and Fred Ross died. Dolores Huerta retired. Larry Itliong faded into the background. Jerome Cohen left the union for private practice. Chávez’s son Richard never stepped forward to fill his father’s shoes. After thirty years, the union faced a steadily declining membership. One after another, union contracts expired. By the early 1990s, the union seemed to have declined from a fighting organization into something one historian describes as “more a cross between a farmworker advocacy group and a small family business.”⁵²

The hopes and aspirations and the struggle for justice that had driven Chávez and his followers did not disintegrate. These continue among campesinos and campesinas in California, in Mexico, and across the United States, carried forward by Arturo Rodríguez, Chávez’s son-in-law and the new president of the UFW, and a new generation of leaders. But in the fifteen years since Chávez passed from the scene, new organizing drives and boycotts have achieved mixed results. Old problems remain. As hostile to labor organization as ever, growers have developed new mechanisms to thwart unionization. And the labor force, constantly replenished by waves of new immigrants, had but a dim notion of who Chávez was and, in many cases, no idea that the UFW ever existed.

Today, symbolic victories increasingly pass for material progress. Politicians honor March 31, the birthday of César Chávez, as a mandated holiday for state employees and an optional one for public schools. But life and labor in the fields continue to worsen.

Labor contractors now control the flow of workers, insulating growers from responsibility. Relative to the cost of living, wages have fallen 25 percent from their highs in the 1970s. Housing conditions in some places are worse than those of the Great Depression. Revisionist historians and union veterans who have long kept silent are busy rewriting farmworker history, underscoring a distinction between Chávez as the sainted “first president of the Chicano nation” and his unofficial position as president of the United Farm Workers Union—a position one scholar described as “so fraught with contradiction and difficulty, so filled with betrayal and tragedy, that a proper historical account evokes emotions that dwarf these common ironies.”⁵³

Lewis remained on the periphery of these developments. In 1971, he finished his film, *Viva la Causa*. He considered it his best work. Sound recordings made by Eleanor Risco amplified his pans, dissolves, and zooms in and out of his still pictures. Lewis took the film on tour, showing it in Europe, and even attempting to smuggle it into Franco’s Spain. Then he all but disappeared. For eight years, he lived in a sequence of dingy residential hotels. After getting back on his feet, he operated a storefront studio in the Castro District and for a time made a good living selling silk-screened prints of pictures he had made of Machu Picchu, Mexico, and Egypt. Eventually, he found work on the night shift of a photo offset press. After stripping film for eight hours, he would ride the bus home at 2 AM each morning. He had little time to follow up his documentary work. His images continued to appear in countless publications, sometimes with credit, never with payment. His images of picket lines at Schenley’s vineyards in January 1966 and of members of La Causa on the long march to Sacramento in April 1966 are spread over the front- and back-end papers of Jacques Levy’s *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of the Farmworker Movement*; his dramatic image of La Peregrinacion outlined against the sky appears on the title page of Levy’s book.⁵⁴

And then, just after retiring in 2007, he was scraping by on a small pension in a rent-controlled apartment on Valencia Street in San Francisco when he finally returned to the archive that he had set aside thirty-five years earlier. He offered it to numerous libraries and museums in California, all of which ignored him. The Smithsonian Institution looked at his work and said nothing. The Huntington Library was uninterested. The Bancroft Library expressed interest but failed to follow through. And then, acting on the recommendation of Yale University professor and César Chávez biographer Stephen Pitti, the curator of Western Ameri-

cana at Yale University's Bienecke Library, George Miles, tracked down Lewis, sat for hours poring through contact sheets and looking at vintage prints, and then offered to purchase the entire archive.

Energized by funds and an assignment to organize his life's work, Lewis went back into the darkroom. For the first time in his life, he had both the time and money necessary to properly evaluate his work. Sifting through his contact sheets, Lewis discovered hundreds of photographs that he had passed by during the hectic crisis days forty years earlier. Finally, for the first time, both the general public and scholars of American labor would see and appreciate the full power of his work. It was about time.

Jon Lewis paid a steep price for his pictures. He sweat bullets. He did not sleep for days. He stank and had no time to eat a proper meal. And he never received due credit for his accomplishment. Watching his images appearing in his developing trays, I am reminded that visual history has a byline. It was not *California Farmer*, the Farm Security Administration (FSA), or United Press International (UPI) that took these images. It was Jon Lewis who stood in these spots, recognized the significance of the drama unfolding before him, and engaged in an intellectual process involving intricate, concurrent decisions, many of them intuitive, all coming together when finger and intellect joined forces in a fraction of a second.

To listen to him talking about his journey is to hear a worldly individual now coming back with experiences and insight. At day's end, it is like sitting around the campfire delighting in his stories and adventures and recollections. We wonder if we would have been up to the challenge. Another effect Lewis has on us is that we find ourselves catching something of the excitement of his visual journey. Following him on assignment can be a dark trek into the valley of the shadow of death, a reality tour off the beaten paths, or an enlightening journey of self discovery. Through such photographs and such a photographer, we appreciate many of the defining characteristics of the profession. And to the debate over what, if anything, makes California photographers unique, the discovery that Lewis—along with so many other photographers not ordinarily considered in the same breath, from Ansel Adams to Max Yavno—holds great significance as evidence that a defining characteristic of California photographers is the common bond of their work in the fields.⁵⁵

Assessing the impact of such work, one cannot develop any verifiable proof that Lewis changed history. Critics often claim photographers like him alter and “uglify” a picture to underscore the negative in order to

advance their careers. There is also a strain of thinking that says through constant exposure to images of suffering and confrontation we develop “compassion fatigue,” requiring ever more sensational images. I reject such criticism. As someone who followed in his footsteps, I find in Lewis a man who has created the ultimate in anthropological and historical documents—something Black Star Photo Agency head Howard Chapman calls “a visual time capsule for our generation and those to follow.”⁵⁶

Lewis projected the Delano grape strike far beyond the vineyards into the larger public arena. By making the public more fully conscious of the nature of agricultural abundance and the dimensions of modern food culture, he helped the NFWA and its successors launch a boycott of table grapes that awakened the American conscience as much as any striking group of coal miners or auto workers. By publishing his strike images in the pages of *El Malcriado*, he helped a movement establish its identity and chronicle its activities. By offering his images to boycott offices and for sale at fund raising activities, Lewis furthered La Causa and helped the union raise funds. And through publication of his handmade book, *From this Earth*, and his film, *Nosotros Venceremos*, Lewis had provided a way for those far beyond Delano to grasp something of the drama that was unfolding in the vineyards. With the exception of the civil rights movement photojournalists, few other causes have been so strongly impacted by a photographer and his photography.

To see the images that Lewis made at Delano is to better understand the world around us. We overcome geographic separation—the schism between farm and suburb—discovering a nexus of nature and culture, myth and reality, petro-farming (farming with the aid of pesticides, herbicides, anti-mildew chemicals, fertilizers, and petroleum-derived fuels) and advanced irrigation, and the industrialization of resources and human beings on a gigantic scale. We are forced to confront an exploitive labor system resting on the backs of successive waves of immigrants. We wonder if a food production system riding on waves of dispossessed people excluded from the privileges enjoyed by most Americans is not a variety of California apartheid.

Through Lewis, we glimpse the emergence of La Raza. We sense the pride and solidarity among a small band of audacious union members and community activists who are forging new identities and seizing power. We realize that the farmworkers employed in California agriculture are as important to fruit and vegetable farmers as the sun, water, soil, and tech-

nology. Just as scenes of police truncheons and fire hoses unleashed against peaceful African American protestors in the American South seem incredible to many citizens elsewhere in the nation, scenes of mass marches, fasts, arrests, and non-violent protests have had a similarly galvanizing effect on public attitudes toward the farmworker struggle in California and the United States. None of this would have developed if Lewis had not been such a unique and completely worthy individual—a visually creative, physically brave, and emotionally engaged guide whose example stands as a model of engaged submergence photography, and whose photographs guide subsequent generations through a farm labor system that *The Nation* editor Carey McWilliams described as “California’s most profound and vexatious social problem.”⁵⁷

NOTES

¹ Lewis is not mentioned in any of the books on civil-rights-era photography, which tend to focus overwhelmingly on the African American experience. See Steven Kasher, foreword by Myrtle Evers-Williams, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954–1968* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996); Fred Powledge, *Free At Last? The Civil Rights Movement and the People Who Made It* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991); Michael S. Durham, text, Andrew Young, intro., *Powerful Days: The Civil Rights Photography of Charles Moore* (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1991); Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, *Freedom: The Photographic History of the African American Struggle* (New York: Phaidon, 2002). Perhaps most humiliating of all, a book on farmworker-movement volunteers—Randy Shaw, *Beyond the Fields: Cesar Chavez, the UFW, and the Struggle for Justice in the 21st Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008)—omits him entirely. See also Jerald B. Brown, “The United Farm Workers Grape Strike and Boycott, 1965–1970: An Evaluation of the Culture of Poverty Theory” (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1972); Janet Marie Yert, “Farm Labor Struggles in California, 1979–1973. In Light of Reinhold Niebuhr’s Concepts of Power and Justice” (Ph.D. diss., Graduate Theological Seminary, 1980). Nor is Lewis found in any of the surveys of photography in California. In *Bears of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769–1913* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), I make a stab at integrating visual history into the general history of California farmworkers.

² Robert Coles, *Doing Documentary Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); F. Jack Hurley, *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972); William Stout, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Chicago: Oxford University Press, 1973); Arthur Rothstein, *Documentary Photography* (Boston: Focal Press, 1986); Beaumont Newhall, “A Backward Glance at Documentary,” in David Featherstone, ed., *Observations: Essays on Documentary Photography* (Carnell Friends of Photography, 1984), 2–3; Leslie C. High, “The Documentary Idea in Depression America” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1973); Maren Stange, “Documentary Photography in American Social Reform Movements: The FSA Project and Its Predecessors,” in Daniel P. Younger, ed., *Multiple Views: Logan Grant Essays on Photography, 1983–89* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991); Maren Stange, *Symbols of Ideal Life: Social Documentary Photography in America 1890–1950* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Suzanne B. Riess, “Paul S. Taylor: California Social Scientist,” oral interview, Regional Oral History Project, 1: 238–38A, Bancroft Library; Ken Light, ed., *Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000); Holly Edwards, “Cover to Cover: The Life Cycle of an Image in Contemporary Visual Culture,” in Mark Reinhardt, *Beautiful Suffering: Photography and the Traffic in Pain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 75–95.

³ Paul Von Blum, *The Art of Social Conscience* (New York: Universe Books, 1976), ix; Susan Sontrag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 117.

⁴ *La Huelga* (the strike). Street, interviews with Jon Lewis, March 4, 1981; July 9, 1988; September 22, 2008, San Francisco, author's possession; Stan Steiner, *La Raza: The Mexican-Americans* (New York: Harper, 1970), 129–30, 132, 218, 224, 229, 237, 264–65; "El Teatro Campesino—Right off the Picket Lines," *UJD Agenda* 3 (February 1967): 16–17; Luis Miguel Valdez, "El Teatro Campesino," *Ramparts* 5 (July 1966): 55–56.

⁵ Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Fields: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (New York: Little, Brown, 1939), 7.

⁶ What became known as the "bracero program" began on September 29, 1942. Under an agreement between the US and Mexican governments, 500 braceros (literally, "strong-armed men") came north to stem the labor shortage of World War II. What had originally been a temporary expedient quickly became a permanent fixture. As their numbers grew in California to over 40,000 in 1952 and 65,000 in 1964, braceros became the cornerstone of a self-fulfilling farm labor relations prophesy. By employing braceros, growers kept wages low. Because wages were low, domestic workers avoided farm labor. And because so many domestic workers avoided farm labor, growers appealed for more braceros and, when necessary, hired undocumented workers. In 1948, the system changed to one of individual contracts between workers and employers negotiated between the two governments. Under the pressure of the Korean War farm labor shortages, Congress in 1951 enacted Public Law 78, a supposedly temporary measure to extend the bracero program, subsequently extended again and again, with cosmetic revisions. All of this occurred far from public view, away from visual scrutiny, in remote and isolated labor camps, where a phantom labor force sent home remittances essential to the survival of hundreds of impoverished rural villages, and to the Mexican economy. During the bracero era, growers requested and received Mexican workers almost as easily as channeling water down the furrows or applying fertilizer and pesticides to their crops. Wages in bracerodominated crops remained frozen and in some districts even dropped, while wages in other industries rose. Because farm labor organizing efforts were doomed to failure as long as growers could tap into a south-of-the-border pool, a succession of unions concentrated on building public pressure to protect American workers against the adverse effects of the bracero program. They kept hammering away until what had seemed impossible finally occurred: on December 31, 1964, when serious unemployment provided added pressure to kill the bracero program, Congress allowed Public Law 78 to lapse into history. It had become indefensible to argue in favor of a program to import foreign labor at a time when more than four million US citizens were looking for jobs.

See Orey M. Scruggs, "A History of Mexican Agricultural Labor in the United States, 1942–1954" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1958); Henry Anderson, *Fields of Bondage: The Mexican Contract Labor System in Industrialized Agriculture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963); Richard B. Craig, *The Bracero Program: Interest Groups and Foreign Policy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); N. Ray Gilmore and Gladys W. Gilmore, "The Bracero in California," *Pacific Historical Review* 32 (August 1963): 265–82; James F. Rooney, "The Effects of Imported Mexican Farm Labor in a California County," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 20 (October 1961): 513–21; Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story (An Account of the Managed Migration of Farm Workers in California, 1942–1960)* (Santa Barbara: McNally and Loftin, 1964); Larry Manuel Garcia y Ortega, "The Bracero Policy Experiment: U.S.–Mexico Responses to Mexican Labor Migration, 1942–1955" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1988); George C. Kiser and Martha Woody Kiser, eds., *Mexican Workers in the United States: Historical and Political Perspectives* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 1–8, 67–124; Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1; Ellis Hawley, "The Politics of the Mexican Labor Issue, 1950–1965," *Agricultural History* 40 (July 1966): 157–76; Fred Schmidt, *After the Bracero: An Inquiry into the Problems of Farm Labor Recruitment* (Los Angeles: Institute of Industrial Relations, 1964); Victor Salindini, "The Short-Run Socio-Economic Effects of the Termination of Public Law 78 On the California Farm Labor Market for 1965–1967" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University, 1969).

⁷ Jacques Levy, *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Casa* (Minneapolis, MN: W. W. Norton, 2008 [1976]); Richard Griswold del Castillo and Richard A. Garcia, *Cesar Chavez: A Triumph of Spirit* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); San Kushner, *Long Road to Delano* (New York, 1975); Dick Meister and Anne Lotits, *A Long Time Coming: the Struggle to Unionize America's Farm Workers* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1977); Susan Ferris and Ricardo Sandoval, *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers Movement* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1997); John Gregory Dunne, *Delano* (New York, 1971); Linda C. Majka and Theo J. Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State* (Philadelphia:

- Temple University Press, 1982); Ronald B. Taylor, *Chavez and the Farm Workers* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975); Craig Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency: the Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Mark E. Thompson, "The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, 1959–1962" (master's thesis, Cornell University, 1963); Richard Mines, "The API–CIO Drive in Agriculture, 1958–1961" (master's thesis, Columbia University, 1974); Joan London and Henry Anderson, *So Shall Ye Reap: the Story of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers' Movement* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970).
- ⁸ Street, interview with Stephen Pavich, August 12, 1986, Richgrove, CA, author's possession; Street, "Jack Be Nimble," *California Business* 4 (April 1988): 32–40, 48–50; William G. Jeff, "The Roots of the Delano Grape Strike" (master's thesis, California State University, Fullerton, 1969); Robert F. Barnes, *The California Migrant Farm Worker: His Family and the Rural Community* (Research Monograph No. 6, Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences, UC Davis, 1967); Wallace Smith, *Garden of the Sun: A History of the San Joaquin Valley, 1772–1939* (Fresno, CA: Linden Publishing Co., 2006 [1939]), William B. Secret, Jr., ed., 539; Frank Bergan and Murray Norris, *Delano—Another Crisis for the Catholic Church* (Fresno, CA: Citizens for Facts, 1968); "Delano: Another Selma?" *Ave Maria* 103 (January 1, 1966): 16–17; James P. Degan, "Monopoly in the Vineyards: the Grapes of Wrath Strike," *Nation* 202 (February 7, 1966): 151–54; "Dispute in Delano," *Commonweal* 84 (January 28, 1966): 491.
- ⁹ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, March 4, 1981, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ¹⁰ Ida Cousino, "Recollections," in www.farmworkermovement.us; Jacques Levy, interview with Manuel Chavez, Jacques Levy Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University; Dick Meister, interview with Manuel Chavez (n.d.), Dick Meister Collection, Bancroft Library.
- ¹¹ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, October 11, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession; Street, interview with Paul Siquiera, November 24, 2008, Chico, CA, author's possession.
- ¹² Street, interview with Jon Lewis, August 23, 1998, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ¹³ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, October 17, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ¹⁴ Street, interviews with Jon Lewis, August 8 and October 17, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ¹⁵ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, March 4, 1981, San Francisco, CA, author's possession. See also Bill Esher to Ernest Lowe, n.d., Ernest Lowe collection, Oakland, CA.
- ¹⁶ Street, interviews with Jon Lewis, August 8 and 23, 1998, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ¹⁷ Alexander Morin, *Organizability of Farm Labor in the United States* (Harvard Studies in Labor Agriculture, No. 2-HL, Cambridge, MA, 1952); Harry Schwartz, *Seasonal Farm Labor in the United States, With Special Reference to Hired Workers in Fruit and Vegetable and Sugar-Beet Production* (Columbia University Studies in the History of Agriculture No. 11, New York, 1945); Lloyd Fisher, *The Harvest Labor Market in California* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953); Ronald D. Knudson and Bernard L. Evans, "Organizational and Institutional Changes Needed in an Industrialized Agriculture: Bargaining, Unionization, Unemployment Insurance," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 52 (December 1970): 790–91; Karen Kozlarska, "Collective Bargaining on the Farm," *Monthly Labor Review* 91 (June 1968): 3–9.
- ¹⁸ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, September 7, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ¹⁹ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, March 24, 1981, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ²⁰ Dolores Huerta to Irwin DeShelder, March 13, 1966, Irwin DeShelder Papers, Archives of Urban and Labor History, Wayne State University; Dunne, *Delano*, 96; Charles McCarthy, "Diary of a Grape Strike," *Ave Maria* 103 (January 15, 1966): 19–22.
- ²¹ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, March 22, 1981, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ²² César Chávez, "Peregrination, Penitencia, Revolution," *Town and Country Church* 188 (May–June 1966): 16; Mike Miller, "The Strike of the Grapes," *Commission on Religion and Race Reports* 2 (May 1966): 1–7.
- ²³ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, September 7, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ U.S. Senate, Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, *Hearings of the Subcommittee on Migratory Labor*, 89th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, DC, 1966), 369; Taylor, *Chavez*, 165–66; Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 205.
- ²⁶ Gerhard Oscheidle to author, May 1 and May 28, 2003; Street, interview with Gerhard Oscheidle, May 12, 2003, Stuttgart, Germany, author's possession; Dunne, *Delano*, 133; LeRoy Chatfield, "John A. Kouns photos, 1966–1970, 1973–1974, 1995–1996," in Chatfield, *Farmworker Movement Documentation Project*, www.farmworkermovement.us; James B. Moore, "Photographer with a Social Conscience: An Oral History with John Kouns, and a Discussion of his Photographs (master's thesis, California State University, Northridge, 2005).

- ²⁷ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, August 8, 1998, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ²⁸ Street, interviews with Jon Lewis, August 8, 1998; October 17, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession; Moore, "Photographer with a Social Conscience," 142, 144; Gerhard Gscheidle to author, June 3, 2003, author's possession; Street, interview with John Kouns, March 26, 1981, Mill Valley, CA, author's possession; "March of the Migrants," *Life* 60 (April 29, 1966), 93-94.
- ²⁹ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, August 8, 1998, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ³⁰ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, May 13, 1998, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ³¹ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, September 12, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ³² Street, interview with Jon Lewis, September 7, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ³³ Lewis, *Strike Diary*, June 26, 1965, courtesy of Jon Lewis.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, July 11, 1966; Cousins, "Recollections," www.farmworkermovement.us.
- ³⁵ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, October 17, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ³⁶ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, March 4, 1981, San Francisco, CA, author's possession; Street, "The FBI's Secret File on Cesar Chavez," *Southern California Quarterly* 128 (Winter 1996/97): 347-84; Craig Scharlin and Lilia V. Villanueva, *Phillip Vera Cruz: A Personal History of Filipino Immigrants and the Farmworker Movement* (Los Angeles, 1992), 34-36; Philip Martin, *Promises to Keep: Collective Bargaining in California Agriculture* (Ames, IA, 1960, 86-87. Some sources claim that 2,700 farmworkers were present at the Cuatralupe Church vote meeting; others say it was no more than 500.
- ³⁷ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, May 28, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ³⁸ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, July 14, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, October 17, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ⁴¹ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, July 29, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession; Dunne, *Delano*, 86.
- ⁴² Street, interview with Jon Lewis, August 31, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession; Chatfield, "Nick Jones Photos, 1966-1976"; Chatfield, "Mark Jonathan Harris Photos 1966?"; Nick Jones, "Nick Jones, 1966-1976"; and in Farmworker Documentation Project, www.farmworkermovement.us.
- ⁴³ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, August 31, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession; Lewis to author, September 27, 2008, author's possession. For press coverage, see *San Francisco Examiner*, March 11, 1968; *Fresno Bee*, March 10, 1968 [photographs by Ronald B. Taylor], reprinted in Taylor, *Chavez*, 221-22; UPI telephoto HCP1585938, March 10, 1968; UPI telephoto HCP031031, March 10, 1968; Hub Segur (aka Ojo Negro), "Hub Segur Photos, 1969-1973, 1987-1989" in LeRoy Chatfield, *Farmworker Documentation Project*, www.farmworkermovement.us.
- ⁴⁴ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, September 12, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ⁴⁵ Jon Lewis, *From this Earth*. . . *Of the Delano Grape Strike* (San Francisco, CA, 1969); Dick Meister, "From this Earth," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 5, 1969; Gerhard Gscheidle to author, June 3, 2003, author's possession; Street, interview with Jack Walport, March 11, 1979, San Anselmo, CA, author's possession.
- ⁴⁶ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, October 22, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.
- ⁴⁷ Street, interview with Jon Lewis, August 7, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession; Street, interview with Sam Kushner, August 7, 1973, Arvin, CA, author's possession; Street, interview with George Ballis, May 13, 1983, Fresno, CA, author's possession; "Beyond Peace at Delano," *America* 123 (August 22, 1970): 80; Roy Bongartz, "La Raza in Revolt," *Nation* 210 (July 1, 1970): 664-66; William F. Buckley, "Victory of Cesar Chavez," *National Review* 22 (September 8, 1970): 965; "The Candor that Refreshes," *Time* 96 (August 10, 1970), 59; "Cesar Chavez: La Causa and the Man," *American Labor* 4 (February 1971): 20-30; "Chavez Strikes Back," *Newsweek* 77 (January 25, 1971), 64-66.
- ⁴⁸ This was one of three such incidents in which Lewis loaned out his film to people who exploited his generosity and rewarded him by failing to carry through on promises to pay him and return the film. After the march on Sacramento, Lewis loaned a roll of film to an individual who said he represented an East Coast newspaper and that he was leaving in the afternoon and would quickly use the images and then return them with payment. "The big city hustlers and the farm boys," Lewis recalled. "I never saw the film again." Decades later, Lewis saw this same individual working for the Arthur Laffer group promoting Reaganomics and thought that he had really been a neo-conservative, not at all interested in using his work. When Lewis left for college in 1966, he gave César Chavez's wife, Helen, a box of color slides that he had developed and sealed in their mounts with a hot iron. The whereabouts of the slides remains unknown. Street, interviews with Jon Lewis, August 31, September 1, and October 17, 2008, San Francisco, CA, author's possession.

- ⁴⁹ Street, "Maggio Strikes Back," *California Farmer* 256 (December 13, 1986): 6–7, 16–19; Street, "Cutting the Farm Labor Law," *The Nation* 240 (March 23, 1985): 330–32; Philip Martin and Susan Vaupel, "Agricultural Labor Relations in California," in Walter Fogel, ed., *California Farm Labor Relations* (Los Angeles, Institute of Industrial Relations Monograph and Research Series, No. 41: 1985), 1–15.
- ⁵⁰ Jeff Coplon, "Cesar's Fall from Grace, Part II," *Village Voice* (August 21, 1984), 21.
- ⁵¹ Jeff Bartacke, "Cesar Chavez: the Serpent and the Dove," in Clark Davis and David Iglter, eds., *The Human Tradition in California* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002), 220. See also 209–25; Jeff Coplon, "Cesar's Fall from Grace," *Village Voice* (August 14 and 21, 1984); Clerns Daniel, "Cesar Chavez and the Unionization of California Farmworkers," in Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, eds., *Labor Leaders in America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 350–82.
- ⁵² Susan Ferris, "Fields of Broken Dreams," *Image Magazine: Sunday San Francisco Examiner*, July 18, 1993; *Arizona Republic*, April 22–23 and June 11, 1993; Jacques Levy, interview with Larry Ithlong, April 4, 1969, Jacques Levy Collection, Bienecke Library, Yale University.
- ⁵³ Street, "Life in the Canyons: Photographs of San Diego's Immigrant Shantytowns," *Labor's Heritage* 11 (Winter 2001): 36–59; Street, interview with Pablo Espinoza, June 12 and July 17, 2005, and May 3, 2006, Woodlake, CA, author's possession.
- ⁵⁴ One of many books using his images is Rodolfo Gonzales, *I Am Joaquín/Yo Soy Joaquín: An Epic Poem* (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), 6.
- ⁵⁵ Street, *Photographing Farmworkers in California* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), xx–xxii, 217–18; Street, *Everyone Had Cameras: Physiography and Farmworkers in California, 1850–2000* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 6–11, 429–37, 466, 496; Drew Heath Johnson, ed., *Capturing Light: Masterpieces of California Photography, 1850 to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), ix–x; Louise Katzman, *Photography in California, 1945–1980* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1984), 24; Susan Kismaric, *California Photography: Remaking Make Believe* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), 50.
- ⁵⁶ Howard Chapnick, "Forward" in Marianne Fulton, ed., *Eyes of Time: Photojournalism in America* (New York: Little, Brown, 1988), iv–vi; Chapnick to author, email, May 12, 1983, author's possession. See also Vicki Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed our Lives* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 19, 39, 59, 103, 123–25, 163, 191, 217; Lill Corbus Benner, *Photography and Politics in America: From the New Deal into the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 1–12; David Freberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 157; David Levi Strauss, *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics* (New York: Aperture, 2003), 6–7, 44; Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1984); Peter Stephan, ed., *Icons of Photography: The 20th Century* (New York: Prestel Publishers, 1999); Stephanie Barron, Sheri Bernstein, and Ilene Susan Fort, eds., *Made in California: Art Image, and Identity, 1900–2000* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), ix–x.
- ⁵⁷ Carey McWilliams, *Miscellaneous Notes*, MS., n.d., Carey McWilliams Collection, Bancroft Library; Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Fields*; McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception* (New York: Current Books, 1949), 150; Beverly S. Tangri, "Federal Labor Legislation As An Extension of United States Public Policy Toward Agricultural Labor, 1914–1954" (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1967); Judith C. Glass, "Conditions Which Facilitate Unionization of Agricultural Workers: A Case Study of the Salinas Valley Lettuce Industry" (Ph. D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1966); Paul S. Taylor, "California Farm Labor: A Review," *Agricultural History* 42 (January 1968): 49–53; Henry Anderson, *Fields of Bondage: The Mexican Contract Labor System in Industrialized Agriculture* (Berkeley, mimeograph, 1963); Kitty Calavrita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 1.