

# *Soldiers of the Fields: The Bracero Program*

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Hidden within the historical accounts of minorities, workers and immigrants in American society is the story of the millions of Mexico's men and women who experienced the temporary contract worker program known as the Bracero Program. Established to replace an alleged wartime labor shortage, the Program was in fact intended to undermine farmworker unionization. *Soldiers* shows how several million men, in one of the largest state managed migrations in history, were imported from 1942 to 1964 to work as cheap, controlled and disposable workers. The documentary features the men speaking of their experiences, some even moved to tears when discussing their painful exploitation, and addresses what to expect from a new temporary contract worker program

*"They'd get us up at four in the morning...then a truck arrived to take us to the fields. They'd put a bucket of water at each end of the field trench and we couldn't drink water until we finished hoeing the trench. And you couldn't rest, if you did they'd get after you. And that was everyday."* Alfredo Gutierrez Castaneda, El Modena, California



*Soldiers* also centers the voices of wives and families who were left behind as an untold number of villages were virtually emptied of men. Villages were forced to adjust as they supplied workers for the largest US agricultural corporations. As the villages emptied of men who left to be contracted (successfully or not), wives and families, not knowing if or when they would return or where they were going to work, were deeply distressed. Family separation became an ongoing periodic experience for many villages, and for many the separation became permanent. Many speak of wives/mothers crying at night, while attempting to hide their loneliness and sadness from their children. In contrast to the dramatic economic improvement the program promised, over the 22 years of the Bracero Program the economy and living standards of the villages remained virtually unchanged

*"We stayed with our families alone, with the animals, with the little that we had to work the fields instead of the men in order to survive. Well, we felt very sad and alone... we suffered a lot."* Hilaria Garcia G., Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

**The trailer can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/2904353>. Your contribution will help provide the needed funds to complete the editing of the documentary. All contributions should be made out in checks payable to:**

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