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Notes from the Community: New Roots/Nuevas Raíces Oral History Initiative

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New Roots/Nuevas Raíces

Oral History Initiative

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The New Roots/Nuevas Raíces Oral History Initiative documents the arrival and settlement of Latin Americans in North Carolina. It contains more than 180 audio-recorded interviews (more than 230 hours) with abstracts, full transcriptions, field notes, and tape logs, and produces around twenty new interviews annually. In 2017 New Roots/Nuevas Raíces staff completed a three-year project to create a web-based digital information system and bilingual website (<https://newroots.lib.unc.edu>) to connect public audiences to oral history materials, interactive maps of migrant journeys, and options to browse by interview themes, country of origin, and North Carolina county of arrival.

THE NEW ROOTS/NUEVAS RAÍCES ORAL HISTORY INITIATIVE DOCUMENTS the arrival of diverse Latino communities in North Carolina, where foreign-born populations have grown at more than twice the national rate and Latinxs number close to one million people. New Roots is an ongoing research and archival initiative started in 2007 by the Latino Migration Project, a collaborative program of the Institute for the Study of the Americas and the Center for Global Initiatives at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The oral histories are archived with the Southern Oral History Program's collections in the University Libraries at UNC Chapel Hill.

The New Roots initiative contains more than 180 audio-recorded interviews (more than 230 hours) with complementary materials—abstracts, full transcriptions, field notes, and

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tape logs—and produces around twenty new interviews annually. The average duration of interviews is forty-five minutes to one hour. Interviews are conducted by staff and students at the Latino Migration Project, which trains scholars with Spanish-language fluency in oral history methodology. Many interviewers and staff are native Spanish-speaking immigrants or the children of immigrants. The voices in *New Roots* are many and diverse, consisting of migrants from Latin America who have settled in North Carolina and other Southern states, second-generation youth, “Dreamer” activists, Latino/a/x college students, teachers, public figures, business owners, and professionals. Because of the migratory nature of Latino communities in the South, many contributors have lived and worked throughout the United States. *New Roots* has stories that describe the experiences of settling in rural and urban communities unfamiliar with Spanish-speaking cultures and raising children who became the next generations of North Carolinians. Youth voices in *New Roots* reflect critically on coming of age in an era of deportation, border enforcement, and economic recession, experiences that led to the formation of the Dreamer youth social movement to pass comprehensive immigration reform and improve access to higher education.

In 2017 *New Roots/Nuevas Raíces* staff completed a three-year project to create a web-based digital information system and bilingual website to connect public audiences and targeted constituencies to oral history materials. This system uses the open-source software Omeka and was created collaboratively with migrants in North Carolina, Latin American scholars, and K-12 teachers. The project was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to the Latino Migration Project, the Southern Oral History Program, and the University Libraries at UNC Chapel Hill. This bilingual website, <https://newroots.lib.unc.edu>, features interactive maps of migrant journeys and browsing by interview themes, country of origin, and North Carolina county of arrival. It features a bilingual themes dictionary, an ethics and methods statement, and streaming and downloadable audio and text materials that include transcripts, abstracts, and field notes. Users can click on the themes assigned to an individual interview to find related content. The project also included the creation of a short documentary by Andrea Patiño Contreras and Victoria Bouloubasis that features three people who had contributed their oral histories to *New Roots*. These resources aim to enhance access to transnational public audiences and scholars, and to enable people outside of the United States to listen to stories and share research.