



# North for the Harvest

*Jim Norris*

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Throughout most of the twentieth century, thousands of Mexicans traveled north to work the sugar beet fields of the Minnesota-North Dakota Red River Valley. North for the Harvest examines the evolution of the relationships between American Crystal Sugar Company, the sugar beet growers, and the migrant workers. Though popular convention holds that corporations and landowners invariably exploited migrant workers, Norris reveals that these relationships were more complex. The company often clashed with growers, sometimes while advocating for workers. And many growers developed personal ties with their migrant workers, while workers themselves often found ways to leverage better pay and working conditions from the company. Ultimately, the lot of workers improved as the years went by. As one worker explained, something historic occurred for his family while working in the Red River Valley: "We broke the chain there." Praise for North for the Harvest "North for the Harvest is beautifully conceived, very well written, and nuanced and original in its arguments. Norris demonstrates that labor relations in the Red River Valley beet industry was a 'three-corner game' that cannot be fully understood without examining all the players." --David Vaught, author of Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875-1920 "This story of the long-established and productive contributions of Latinos to Minnesota and North Dakota needs to be heard. It has never been told in such depth and with such style." -- Jeffrey Kolnick, Associate Professor of History, Southwest Minnesota State University.

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