

ADDENDUM TO:
FORTY ACRES
30168 Garces Highway (Northwest Corner of Garces Highway and
Mettler Avenue)
Delano
Kern County
California

HABS CA-2878
HABS CA-2878

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

Addendum to

FORTY ACRES

HABS No. CA-2878

Location: 30168 Garces Highway (Northwest Corner of Garces Highway and Mettler Avenue), Delano, Kern County, California

Forty Acres is located at latitude: 35.764956, longitude: -119.285283. The coordinate represents the northeast corner of the property. The coordinate was obtained in 2006 and the datum is North American Datum 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Present Owner: Cesar Chavez Foundation

Present Occupants: Cesar Chavez Foundation and United Farm Workers

Present Use: The buildings at Forty Acres are used for a variety of purposes, including retirement housing, office space and meeting space for the United Farm Workers, educational functions, and private parties. The property as a whole also provides a site for rallies and festivals associated with the activities of the United Farm Workers and other allied organizations.

Significance: Forty Acres is closely associated with the life of Cesar Chavez and the history of the farm worker movement he led from 1962 until his death in 1993. Located on the outskirts of Delano, California, Forty Acres served as the headquarters of the United Farm Workers (UFW) from 1969 to 1972. The property also served as the farm worker movement's flagship "service center," under the auspices of the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. (NFWSC), from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. Forty Acres was the site of several significant events between 1968 and 1993, and it continues to serve as an important locus of collective memory. Forty Acres was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2008.

When the NFWSC acquired a lease to the forty-acre parcel of land in September 1966, Chavez's labor union had been engaged in a strike against Delano's table grape growers for one year. At the outset of the strike, Chavez's union had joined forces with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), and the two unions eventually merged to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC). Anticipating a need for additional administrative space and a need for space to provide services to union members, Chavez began developing plans for "Forty Acres." Although many aspects of these plans would not come to fruition, the NFWSC did construct four buildings on the property: a mission revival gas station and automobile repair shop (1968), a steel-frame administration building (1969), a mission

revival health clinic (1971), and a mission revival residential building for retired Filipino farm workers (1974).

Chavez's historical significance and that of the farm worker movement are widely recognized. Although Chavez emerged as a civil rights leader among Mexican Americans in California during the 1950s, he became better known during the 1960s as the leader of the farm worker movement and then as the president of the United Farm Workers—the first enduring agricultural labor union in the history of the United States. As president, Chavez steered the union to a series of unprecedented victories, including labor contracts that covered more than 70,000 farm workers, raised wages above the poverty level, funded health care and pension plans, mandated the provision of clean drinking water and restroom facilities in the fields, regulated the use of pesticides, and established a fund for service projects. More broadly, the strength of the farm worker movement prompted the passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, the first law in the continental United States that recognized farm workers' rights to engage in collective bargaining. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the farm worker movement intersected with and inspired currents within the broader labor movement, the civil rights movement, the Chicano movement, and the environmental movement. Chavez's association with all of these movements made him the most important Latino leader in the United States during the twentieth century.

The four buildings at Forty Acres—and indeed the property as a whole—are historically significant for five reasons. Forty Acres is closely associated with Cesar Chavez's leadership of the farm worker movement and his inspirational vision of a movement dedicated to the service of others. Forty Acres embodied the farm worker movement's lack of financial resources and its members' undeterred sense of resourcefulness. Forty Acres was the site of several historically significant events. Forty Acres highlighted how the farm worker movement transcended the concerns of a modern labor union. Finally, Forty Acres acquired lasting significance as a locus of collective memory.

Historian: Raymond W. Rast, Ph.D., Department of History, Gonzaga University.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Dates of erection: The Tomasa Zapata Mireles Co-op Building was the first structure erected on the site, in 1967-1968. The Roy Reuther Administration Building was added in 1968-1969, followed by the Rodrigo Terronez Memorial Clinic, in 1971. The Paulo Agbayani Retirement Village was erected in 1973-1974. 2. Architects: The architect for

the Tomasa Zapata Mireles Co-op Building was James Holland, of Bakersfield, California. The Roy Reuther Administration Building was designed by Richard Chavez, of Delano, California. Molly Malouf, of Marin County, California designed the Rodrigo Terronez Memorial Clinic. The Paulo Agbayani Retirement Village was designed by Luis Piña, of San Jose, California.

Landscape Architect: The landscape plan for the Paulo Agbayani Retirement Village was the work of Dennis Dahlin, of Berkeley, California.

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses:

1966-1968: California Center for Community Development (CCCD) – the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. (NFWSC) leased the property from the CCCD and began to develop it, including landscaping work and the construction of one building

1968-1972: National Farm Workers Service Center – the NFWSC continued to develop the property (including the construction of two additional buildings) and managed the property as the headquarters of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) and as a service center for farm workers

1972-2011: National Farm Workers Service Center – the NFWSC continued to develop the property (including the construction of a fourth building) and managed the property as a regional office of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) and as a service center for farm workers

2011-present: Cesar E. Chavez Foundation – the Cesar E. Chavez Foundation merged with the NFWSC in 2011 and has continued to manage the property as a service center and regional office of the UFW

4. Contractors: The contractor for the Tomasa Zapata Mireles Co-op and the Roy Reuther Administration buildings was Richard Chavez, of Delano, California. Molly Malouf, of Marin County, California was the contractor for the Rodrigo Terronez Memorial Clinic. The Paulo Agbayani Retirement Village was built by George Solinas, of Santa Barbara, California.

5. Original plans and construction: Forty Acres acquired its historically significant appearance between 1967 and 1974. When the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. acquired access to the property in 1966, it was undistinguishable from its rural environment. During the next year, Cesar Chavez's brother (Richard Chavez) sank a well, leveled the terrain, and began to cultivate a shade park in the southwest quadrant of the property. The first building constructed at Forty Acres was a small, mission revival automobile service station located in the southwest quadrant of the property, near the shade park. The second building was a large, steel-frame administration building with no defining architectural style. This building was located north of the service station building, near the property's western periphery. The third building, a mission revival health clinic built by connecting two barracks-like buildings end-to-end, was located in the northwest quadrant of the property. The fourth building, a U-shaped mission revival retirement building with a courtyard and other amenities designed for retired Filipino farm workers, was located in the northeast quadrant of the property. A paved parking lot and a recreational field were located between the clinic and the retirement village, and the entire southeast quadrant of the property was fenced and used as a pasture. Open space thus separated the buildings from each other and defined the property's character

as much as the mission revival buildings. Taken together, the buildings, open space, and climate-appropriate trees and plantings (including dozens of palm trees) allowed Forty Acres to retain its character as a rural property in the southern San Joaquin Valley.

6. Alterations and additions: Although the four buildings at Forty Acres have undergone minor changes (including some superficial changes to the exteriors and remodeling of the interiors), the buildings and the overall character of Forty Acres have not undergone any major changes since 1974. The interior of the service station building was remodeled during the 1980s, and the gasoline pumps were removed during the 1990s. The interior of the administration building was remodeled during the 1980s to reduce the number of offices and create larger meeting spaces. The interior of the clinic was remodeled during the 1990s to facilitate a conversion from medical use to administrative use. Trees and plantings on the property have matured, but the open space and rural setting that help define the property's character remain unchanged.

B. Historical Context

Forty Acres is closely associated with the life of Cesar Chavez and the history of the farm worker movement he led from 1962 until his death in 1993.¹ Located on the western outskirts of Delano, a farming town in California's San Joaquin Valley, Forty Acres served as the administrative headquarters of the labor union now known as the United Farm Workers (UFW) from 1969 to 1972. Equally important, the property served as the farm worker movement's flagship "service center," under the auspices of the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. (NFWSC), from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. Forty Acres was the site of several significant events from 1968 to 1993, and it continues to serve as an important locus of collective memory more than twenty years after Chavez's death. Forty Acres was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2008.²

¹ It has become common practice among scholars to use accents in Chavez's name (César Chávez). Chavez did not use accents, nor did his brother Richard Chavez, and I have chosen to spell their names as they spelled them. Where titles of published works have used accents, I have retained that usage.

² This discussion of historical context draws on Raymond W. Rast, Gail L. Dubrow, and Brian Casserly, "Forty Acres," National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Program, 2008); Raymond W. Rast and Gail L. Dubrow, "Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement in the American West," Theme Study (draft ms., 2009); and key works of scholarship, including Linda C. Majka and Theo J. Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); J. Craig Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency: The Farm Worker Movement in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Richard Griswold del Castillo and Richard A. Garcia, *César Chávez: A Triumph of Spirit* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); Laura Pulido, *Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996); Susan Ferriss and Ricardo Sandoval, *The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers Movement* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997); Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Philip L. Martin, *Promise Unfulfilled: Unions, Immigration, and the Farm Workers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Randy Shaw, *Beyond the Fields: Cesar Chavez, the UFW, and the Struggle for Justice in the 21st Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Miriam Pawel, *The Union of Their Dreams: Power, Hope, and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009); Marshall Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Frank Bardacke, *Trampling Out the*

When the NFWSC acquired a lease to the undeveloped, forty-acre parcel of alkali land in September 1966, Chavez's labor union—formerly known as the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) and comprised mostly of Mexican American farm workers—had been engaged in a strike against Delano's table grape growers for one year. At the outset of the strike, members of the NFWA had joined forces with Filipino farm workers who belonged to another union led by Larry Itliong, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), and the two unions eventually merged to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC).³ The UFWOC had opened contract negotiations with two corporations that owned Delano-area vineyards, and the union's leaders were confident that contract negotiations with Delano's other growers would soon follow. Anticipating a need for additional administrative space and a need for space to provide services to a growing number of union members, Chavez began developing plans for the property that came to be known as "Forty Acres." Although many aspects of these plans would not come to fruition, the NFWSC did construct four buildings on the property: a mission revival gas station and automobile repair shop (1968), a steel-frame administration building (1969), a mission revival health clinic (1971), and a mission revival residential building for retired Filipino farm workers (1974). Other acreage on the property was devoted to a shade park, a grazing pasture, and a recreational field, all of which helped the property maintain many characteristics of its rural environment.

Chavez's historical significance, and that of the farm worker movement, are widely recognized. Although Chavez emerged as a civil rights leader among Mexican Americans in California during the 1950s, he became better known during the 1960s as the leader of the farm worker movement and then as the president of the United Farm Workers of America—the first enduring agricultural labor union in the history of the United States. As president, Chavez steered the UFW to a series of unprecedented victories, including labor contracts that covered more than 70,000 farm workers, raised wages above the poverty level, funded health care and pension plans, mandated the provision of clean drinking water and restroom facilities in the fields, regulated the use of pesticides, and established a fund for service projects. More broadly, the strength of the farm worker movement prompted the passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, the first law in the continental United States that recognized farm workers' rights to engage in collective bargaining. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the farm worker movement intersected with and inspired currents within the broader labor movement, the civil rights movement, the Chicano movement, and the environmental movement. Chavez's association with all of these movements made him the most important Latino leader in the United States during the twentieth century.

The four buildings at Forty Acres—and indeed the property as a whole—are historically significant for five reasons. First, Forty Acres is closely associated with Chavez's charismatic leadership of the farm worker movement and, more specifically, with his inspirational vision of a movement dedicated to the service of others. Second, Forty Acres embodied the defining characteristics of the farm worker movement as a

Vintage: Cesar Chavez and the Two Souls of the United Farm Workers (New York: Verso, 2011); Matt Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory: The Triumph and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); and Miriam Pawel, *The Crusades of Cesar Chavez: A Biography* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014).

³ The UFWOC received financial support from the AFL-CIO. The union would be admitted to the AFL-CIO as an independent union, the United Farm Workers of America, in February 1971.

whole: its fundamental lack of financial resources and its undeterred sense of resourcefulness. Third, Forty Acres was the site of several events that were significant to the life of Cesar Chavez and the history of the farm worker movement. Fourth, Forty Acres highlighted how the farm worker movement encompassed yet also transcended the concerns of a modern labor union. Finally, Forty Acres acquired lasting significance as an important locus—arguably the single most important locus—of collective memory for those who joined the farm worker movement, those who supported it, and those who continue to draw inspiration from it.

Historical Significance of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement

Cesario Estrada Chavez was born in the North Gila River Valley near Yuma, Arizona, on March 31, 1927.⁴ His parents, Librado Chavez and Juana Estrada Chavez, were Mexican immigrants who built a small grocery business and helped manage the Chavez family farm where Cesar and his four siblings spent their childhood. When the Great Depression took their business and then the farm, the family joined the stream of migrant laborers seeking work in California. As they cycled through the seasons, working in the cotton fields near Brawley, the beet fields near Oxnard, and the cherry orchards near Beaumont, for example, they faced racist discrimination, difficult working conditions, and the hardships of poverty, including hunger and homelessness. The close-knit family drew strength from Juana's Catholic faith and Librado's sense of solidarity with other workers, but the young Cesar was pained by the pervasive injustice he discovered in California during the late 1930s and early 1940s.

After spending two years in the Navy, Chavez returned to California in 1948, married his girlfriend Helen Fabela, and sought to start a new life in East San Jose. There he met Father Donald McDonald, a young priest who helped him discover that his Catholic faith was an activist faith. He also met Fred Ross, a community organizer who taught him the skills he would need to build community power and affect change in East San Jose and beyond. Chavez helped found the San Jose chapter of Ross's Community Service Organization (CSO) in 1952 and then helped organize other CSO chapters among the Mexican American residents of Oakland, Oxnard, and other cities and towns in between. When Chavez became the executive director of the CSO in 1959, he tried to expand the organization's traditional urban focus to include farm workers in rural California, but others in the organization resisted his efforts. Chavez finally decided to leave the CSO in 1962 in order to create a new organization for farm workers in the San Joaquin Valley. He did so with support from Helen, his brother Richard, his cousin Manuel, Reverend Chris Hartmire and Reverend Jim Drake from the California Migrant Ministry, and two other CSO organizers, Dolores Huerta and Gilbert Padilla.

Chavez moved his family to Delano and spent the summer of 1962 meeting with farm workers and building the foundation for an organization he called the Farm Workers Association (FWA). Like a traditional labor union, the FWA would focus on wages and working conditions, but the FWA also would focus on the services once provided by Mexican mutual benefit societies, such as death benefits, financial lending, unemployment insurance, and health insurance. Three years later, the newly-renamed National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) was a small organization with several

⁴ For basic biographical information begin with Griswold del Castillo and Garcia, *César Chávez*; Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*; Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*; and Pawel, *Crusades of Cesar Chavez*.

hundred dues-paying members, a variety of member benefits, and offices in Delano. The NFWA had engaged in two strikes, but neither fully prepared its members for the strike that began in September 1965, when Filipino members of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) voted to go on strike against Delano's grape growers, and Chavez's organization voted to join them. This strike, which lasted almost five years and brought the merger of the two unions, was defined by the multi-racial harmony of its participants and supporters, Chavez's insistence on nonviolence in the face of their opponents' brutality, and an outpouring of support from students and religious groups. The farm workers' arduous march from Delano to Sacramento in 1966 and Chavez's twenty-five-day fast in 1968 did much to galvanize this support, but it was the economic pressure from the union's international boycott of table grapes that finally convinced Delano's growers to sign contracts in July 1970.

With more than eighty-five percent of California's table grape growers now under contract with the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (soon to become the UFW), and with Chavez now recognized across the nation as an influential labor leader, the union looked ahead to new campaigns in other crops and other regions, beginning with the lettuce growers of the Salinas Valley. The continuing strength of the union's boycott network ultimately pushed California's growers to accept a legal framework for union elections and contract negotiations—and the resulting California Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA) of 1975 was a remarkable victory for the farm worker movement—yet costly territorial battles with the Teamsters Union, combined with limited enforcement of the ALRA, reversed many of the movement's gains from the previous decade. Internal struggles over staff salaries and matters of strategy, declining support from consumers, internal challenges to Chavez's leadership, and a changing political environment marked by the rise of Ronald Reagan proved too much to overcome during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The union's membership began to decline and Chavez's influence began to wane, but he never ceased to advocate on behalf of farm workers, immigrants, and the poor, and he fought even harder against the use of pesticides that threatened the health of workers, consumers, and the environment. After leading the farm worker movement for more than three decades, Chavez died in his sleep in 1993.

A range of political and social leaders recognized Chavez's significance well before he died. Robert F. Kennedy, for example, first developed admiration for Chavez in 1966, when he traveled to California to investigate the conditions of migrant farm labor and listened to Chavez testify at a public hearing. Two years later, Kennedy sat by Chavez's side in Delano's Memorial Park as the union leader ended his first public fast. By then, Kennedy had begun to view Chavez as a political ally. Minutes before his assassination in June 1968, Kennedy stood on a stage with Dolores Huerta and thanked her, Chavez, and the farm workers of California for securing his victory in California's Democratic presidential primary.⁵ Martin Luther King, Jr., likewise developed admiration for Chavez. Congratulating him on an important victory in 1966, King acknowledged that "the fight for equality must be fought on many fronts—in the urban slums, in the sweat shops of the factories and [in the] fields."⁶ A few weeks before his own assassination in March 1968, King sent Chavez a telegram noting that he was deeply moved by Chavez's fast and his ongoing fight for justice. King's telegram explicitly recognized Chavez's growing stature: "I commend you for your bravery, salute you for your

⁵ Rast and Dubrow, "Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement," 67, 79.

⁶ King quoted in Jacques E. Levy, *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), 246.

indefatigable work against poverty and injustice, and pray for your health and your continuing service as one of the outstanding men of America. The plight of your people and ours is so grave that we all desperately need the inspiring example and effective leadership you have given.”⁷ Three California governors—Jerry Brown, Ronald Reagan, and George Deukmejian—recognized Chavez’s significance and understood that he was a figure to be reckoned with. Labor leaders such as Walter Reuther and George Meany saw Chavez as an important force within the labor movement. Religious leaders such as Cardinal Roger Mahony and activist Dorothy Day acknowledged Chavez’s influence and admired his commitment to the values they shared. Mexican American activists such as Bert Corona and younger Chicano leaders such as Rudolfo “Corky” Gonzales recognized Chavez’s national stature and embraced him as a leader. Even Chavez’s adversaries—including growers and Teamsters as well as officials in J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI and Richard Nixon’s White House—recognized his far-reaching influence and political power.⁸

Chavez’s death brought renewed recognition of his historical significance. President Bill Clinton noted that Americans had lost “a great leader,” and he encouraged all Americans to take pride in the fact that Chavez brought “dignity and comfort . . . to the lives of so many of our country’s least powerful and most dispossessed workers.” Clinton concluded that Chavez “had a profound impact upon the people of the United States.”⁹ President Carlos Salinas de Gortari of Mexico remembered Chavez for his courageous leadership and constant struggle to improve the lives of all workers of Mexican descent. Pope John Paul II issued a statement praising Chavez for his spirituality, courage, and untiring efforts to improve the lives of the working class and the poor.¹⁰ In 1994, President Clinton awarded Chavez the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Presenting the posthumous award to Helen Chavez, Clinton noted that Chavez “brought dignity to the lives of so many others, and provided for us inspiration for the rest of our nation’s history.”¹¹ Five years later, the U.S. Department of Labor made Chavez the first Latino member of the Labor Hall of Fame. In 2003, the U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp that honored Chavez and recognized his historical significance. The U.S. Department of Interior affirmed Chavez’s significance, and that of the farm worker movement, when it designated Forty Acres a National Historic Landmark in 2008 and when it designated Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz a National Historic Landmark in 2012. President Barack Obama likewise recognized Chavez’s historical significance in 2012 when he established the Cesar Chavez National Monument, a site dedicated to the remembrance of “the extraordinary achievements and contributions to the history of the United States made by Cesar Chavez and the farm worker movement.”¹²

Even before his death, Chavez became the subject of more published work than any other Latino leader, past or present. Since his death, scholars and other writers have continued to affirm his historical significance. In 1994, historian Richard Griswold

⁷ Griswold del Castillo and García, *César Chávez*, 86.

⁸ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 44-101 passim.

⁹ Richard Griswold del Castillo, “César Estrada Chávez: The Final Struggle,” *Southern California Quarterly* 78, no. 2 (1996): 200.

¹⁰ Griswold del Castillo and García, *César Chávez*, xiii.

¹¹ President Clinton’s remarks are available at <http://chavez.cde.ca.gov/ResearchCenter> (accessed May 15, 2014).

¹² Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 4; President Obama’s proclamation is available at <http://www.nps.gov/cech> (accessed May 15, 2014).

del Castillo observed that “Cesar Chavez’s place as a major figure in American history is assured.” Chavez not only “changed the way a whole generation thought about farm workers,” he was “responsible for changing the nation’s consciousness about the social and economic problems of Mexican Americans.” In their 1995 biography, Richard Griswold del Castillo and Richard García explain that Chavez was “a well-known labor and union leader of the farm workers” but also “a spiritual leader of the Chicano movement.” In 2002, scholars Richard Jensen and John Hammerback noted that Chavez “built the first successful farm worker union in the history of the United States” and that this success “vaulted him into national prominence, making him a hero to many people.” The same year, historian Richard Etulain stated that Chavez “belongs among the most important Americans of the second half of the twentieth century.” As historian Mario García concluded in 2007, “there is no question that César [is] . . . the most recognized Latino figure in U.S. history.”¹³

Chavez deserves all of the posthumous recognition he has received, but he would have redirected this recognition toward farm workers themselves. In truth, the achievements that Americans associate with Chavez are inseparable from the achievements of the farm worker movement as a whole. Just as Chavez assumed major roles in the farm worker movement but also the larger labor movement, the civil rights movement, the Chicano movement, and the environmental movement, farm workers drew strength from those movements and strengthened them in turn. Members of the farm worker movement fought for their right to engage in collective bargaining—a right that the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 specifically denied to agricultural laborers. Facing opposition from growers and their hired guards but also judges and law enforcement officers, members of the farm worker movement realized that they had to expand their fight into the realm of civil rights. Insisting upon their rights to free assembly and free speech, farm workers responded to grower intransigence, court injunctions, and police brutality with the nonviolent tactics associated with the civil rights movement. Their unflinching commitment to dignity and justice in the face of hostility instilled a sense of pride in the young members of the burgeoning Chicano movement. But members of the farm worker movement spoke to a much wider swath of Americans, informing them about the dangers that pesticides posed not only to the farm workers who were exposed to them in the fields but also to the consumers who unknowingly brought them to their dinner tables.¹⁴ With the support of Chicano student activists, politically-informed sympathizers, and pesticide-conscious consumers across the country, members of the farm worker movement achieved unprecedented successes, including the creation of the first permanent agricultural labor union in the history of the United States and the passage of the first law in the continental United States that recognized farm workers’ collective bargaining rights. The farm worker movement’s interwoven relationships with other reform movements, its unprecedented successes, and its enduring legacies confirm the movement’s historical significance.

¹³ Griswold del Castillo, “César Estrada Chávez,” 200; Griswold del Castillo and García, *César Chávez*, xiv; Richard J. Jensen and John C. Hammerback, *The Words of César Chávez* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), xiv; Richard Etulain, “Preface,” in *César Chávez: A Brief Biography with Documents*, ed. Richard W. Etulain (New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2002), vii; and Mario T. García, ed., *The Gospel of César Chávez: My Faith in Action* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 2007), 2.

¹⁴ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 44-101 passim.

No other property in the United States shares the same association with Cesar Chavez and the farm worker movement as Forty Acres. In the late 1970s, former UFW Vice President Philip Vera Cruz observed that “when you say ‘Forty Acres,’ there are people all over the world who know that you are talking about the United Farm Workers, Cesar Chavez, the farm workers, the grape pickers. Forty Acres is really synonymous with the farm workers movement, and the UFW, which is the legal body of that movement.”¹⁵ As the remainder of this narrative explains, Vera Cruz’s observation holds true. Forty Acres possesses historical significance by virtue of its close association with Cesar Chavez and the farm worker movement but also because it reflected Chavez’s inspirational vision of a movement dedicated to the service of others, it embodied the defining characteristics of the farm worker movement as a whole, it was the site of several events that were significant to Chavez and the farm worker movement, it highlighted how the movement transcended the concerns of a modern labor union, and it acquired lasting significance as an important locus of collective memory for those who participated in and supported the farm worker movement and for those who continue to draw inspiration from it.

The Acquisition of Forty Acres

In September 1966, the farm worker movement acquired a lease to an unremarkable parcel of land on the western outskirts of Delano, California. Most visitors to the property would have seen nothing but a sun-scorched patch of alkali land overgrown with weeds and littered with debris, but Cesar Chavez looked at the property and envisioned a place that would be as inviting, useful, and meaningful to farm workers as the union they were building. “This place is for the people, [so] it has to grow naturally out of their needs,” Chavez explained to a writer as the property began to take shape. “It will be kind of a religious place, very restful, quiet,” he continued. “It’s going to be nice here.”¹⁶

Members of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) had felt a pressing need for such a place since voting on September 16, 1965, to join the Filipino farm workers who had gone on strike against Delano’s table grape growers eight days prior.¹⁷ The first six months of this strike were especially difficult for the NFWA. Its members lacked the support that their Filipino counterparts affiliated with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) received from the AFL-CIO. The NFWA’s membership base was strong, but its finances were tight, its meeting and administrative spaces were small, and its capacity to sustain a strike was limited.¹⁸ Still, the farm workers began to benefit from certain alliances, strategies, and tactics. First, Larry Itliong—Chavez’s counterpart within the AWOC—invited the NFWA to share the resources of his union’s strike headquarters, the Filipino Community Hall in central Delano. The NFWA retained its own administrative offices in two buildings it rented in southwest Delano, but the

¹⁵ Craig Scharlin and Lilia V. Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz: A Personal History of Filipino Immigrants and the Farmworkers Movement*, 3d ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 3.

¹⁶ Chavez quoted in Peter Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes: Cesar Chavez and the New American Revolution* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1969), 27. On this point see also Paul Chavez, interview by author, Keene, CA, Sept. 16, 2004.

¹⁷ The following discussion draws heavily on Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 56-72.

¹⁸ Marshall Ganz, “Resources and Resourcefulness: Strategic Capacity in the Unionization of California Agriculture, 1959-1966.” *American Journal of Sociology* 105 (January 2000): 1031-37.”

Filipino Hall provided a crucial space for larger meetings and shared meals. Second, Chavez advocated wide participation in picket lines, which required courage from union members but also fostered a sense of commitment. “The picket line is where a man makes his commitment,” Chavez observed, “and the longer he’s on the picket line, the stronger the commitment.”¹⁹ A close observer of the civil rights movement, Chavez also insisted upon nonviolent responses to harassment along picket lines, promising that “we can turn the world if we can do it nonviolently.”²⁰ Third, Chavez decided in December 1965 to launch a boycott of Cutty Sark whisky and other goods produced by Schenley Industries, a corporation that owned among its other companies the second largest grower operation in Delano. Members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee worked with a small number of farm workers to coordinate the boycott within a dozen western cities.²¹

The farm workers also benefited from three early events. First, United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther visited Delano in December 1965 and endorsed the strike. Reuther announced that the AFL-CIO and the United Auto Workers each had allocated \$2,500 per month to support the strike and that this money would be split between the AWOC and the NFWA. Second, Robert F. Kennedy visited Delano in March 1966 and embraced the striking farm workers as well. Kennedy’s visit, like Reuther’s, brought a wave of national attention and support to the farm workers. Third, NFWA leaders decided to stage a 250-mile-long march from Delano to Sacramento, timed to coincide with the final weeks of the Lenten season in 1966. The 25-day march involved thousands of farm workers and supporters, inspired thousands more, and received sympathetic media coverage during its entire duration.²²

Toward the end of this march, grower resistance began to break. As marchers approached Sacramento during the first week of April 1966, Schenley Industries agreed to sign a contract. While Dolores Huerta negotiated for pay raises and other provisions, Chavez shifted the union’s boycott to Delano’s other corporate grower, the DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation. Now strengthened by the support of the AFL-CIO, the boycott targeted DiGiorgio’s popular TreeSweet and S&W Fine Foods products and expanded into eastern cities. With local picketers maintaining pressure through the 1966 growing season, DiGiorgio finally agreed to hold elections to see if its employees desired union representation. In advance of these elections, the NFWA and the AWOC merged to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), which received a monthly operating budget of \$10,000 from the AFL-CIO. In August 1966, the UFWOC won elections among the field workers of DiGiorgio’s three ranches. Although Delano’s other table grape growers continued to hold out, the union soon secured contracts with seven wine grape growers. By the spring of 1967, the UFWOC was responsible for administering contracts covering 5,000 farm workers, most of whom were union members.²³

Soon after the Delano strike began, Chavez decided to move forward with plans to develop the first of a series of “service centers” for farm workers. When Chavez

¹⁹ Chavez quoted in Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes*, 84.

²⁰ Chavez quoted in Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 195-96.

²¹ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 56-72. See also Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*, 141-42.

²² Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 56-72.

²³ *Ibid.*

founded the Farm Workers Association three years prior, he wanted it to be more than just another labor union. It would not exist simply to negotiate for higher wages and better working conditions; rather, it would exist to improve the lives of farm workers through “economic, political, and cultural empowerment.”²⁴ By September 1965, the NFWA provided its members a modest death benefit, membership in a credit union, advocacy and assistance with government agencies, and a subscription to their own newspaper, *El Malcriado*. Within a few months, the NFWA also would offer basic medical services to its members, and it would begin planning a co-op where members could purchase low-cost gasoline, groceries, and other necessities. Most of the NFWA’s services were administered from one of the small buildings that the organization rented on Albany Street in southwest Delano, but the strike revealed the growing need for more space—for management of the strike and for the administration and expansion of services.

In October 1965, Chavez asked LeRoy Chatfield to find that space. A month later, Chatfield sent a letter to his friends explaining that he was leaving the Christian Brothers in order to work full-time for the NFWA as the Director of Co-op Development, a position that would allow him to spearhead the consolidation of pre-existing services and the creation of the co-op and other new services.²⁵ Chatfield, then 31 years old, had joined the Christian Brothers (a religious order within the Catholic Church) when he was 15. He graduated from St. Mary’s College seven years later, taught at Garces High School in Bakersfield, spent four years at Sacred Heart Seminary in San Francisco, then returned to Garces High School as a vice principal. Chatfield was drawn to the work of the NFWA during summer 1965, when the organization supported a rent strike among farm worker families who lived in labor camps operated by the Tulare County Housing Authority.²⁶ He came to know Chavez and was deeply moved when Chavez asked him to come work for the NFWA full time, not as a staff member but as the director of what would emerge as an independent organization, the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. (NFWSC). As Chatfield recalled, he “marveled . . . at the realization that Cesar was so concerned with implementing his vision—or dream—of what a farm worker union should be, that he chose . . . to ignore the most important strike in NFWA history for the sake of promoting and organizing farmworker cooperatives.”²⁷ Chatfield was reluctant to leave the Christian Brothers, but he embraced this new opportunity to pursue social justice.

As Chatfield explained to his friends in November 1965, “our idea is to build a complex of CO-OPs (clinic, pharmacy, credit union, garage, etc.)” that would be “owned and controlled by farm workers themselves.” Chatfield’s job would be “to organize these CO-OPs by setting up their over-all economic and legal structures and to recruit professional men and women . . . to work for the poor through the CO-OP at prices that farm workers can honestly afford to pay.”²⁸ A key to the success of his early efforts was

²⁴ Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*, 89.

²⁵ LeRoy Chatfield to friends, Nov. 12, 1965, National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) Collection, Series III, Box 7, Folder 18, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit (hereafter ALUA, WSU).

²⁶ Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*, 147.

²⁷ LeRoy Chatfield, “LeRoy Chatfield, 1963–1973,” <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essay/essays-by-author> (accessed May 15, 2014).

²⁸ Chatfield to friends, Nov. 12, 1965, NFWA Collection.

the support he received from the Reverend Chris Hartmire. As director of the California Migrant Ministry, Hartmire would prove to be one of Chavez's most important allies. Hartmire also served as the president of the board of directors of the California Center for Community Development (CCCD), a service organization that began to receive funding from President Lyndon Johnson's Office of Economic Opportunity. In January 1966, Hartmire informed his fellow board members that the NFWA "needed a new location for its credit union, cooperative store, cooperative garage and administration offices" and that the "continued effectiveness of NFWA's organization of the poor depended upon its obtaining another lease."²⁹ The board agreed to acquire a suitable property and lease it for a nominal amount until the NFWA could afford to purchase it outright.

Within a few months, Chatfield found a property that he thought might work—a forty-acre parcel of undeveloped land on the western outskirts of Delano, about three miles west of downtown. Chatfield arranged to look at the property, and he was joined by Cesar's younger brother, Richard Chavez, a full-time carpenter who played an instrumental role in the growth of the union and later served on its executive board. The men drove west on Garces Highway until they came to Mettler Avenue. At the northwest corner of the intersection they saw a barren swath of alkali land, overgrown with weeds and littered with debris, some of it from the city dump immediately to the north. They said to each other, "This would be great!" Richard thought that the property's location was ideal. "We [had been] looking and . . . [thinking], 'We'll have to get something one of these days,'" he recalled, "because . . . we were here to stay. In other words, we were getting started but we were here to stay. And so we came and looked at it [and decided that] it was *just* far enough out of the city . . . [that] we could *really* build something."³⁰ The property was not too far from the residential areas of Delano, but it was far enough from the city to provide a promising degree of sanctuary and security.

The two men learned that the owner was a woman living in Pasadena who had inherited the property but did not want to keep it. She was asking for \$2,700. "And so we went to Cesar, all excited," Richard recalled. "I said, 'Cesar, here's this property, and she only wants \$2,700, and it's forty acres, and it looks like shit, but we can . . . clean it up!'" Cesar balked at the expense and told his brother to negotiate. Chatfield knew that the price was well below market value, and he encouraged Richard to pay the asking price. "Cesar would kill us, both of us," Richard responded. "That's okay," Chatfield said, "let's just buy it, and he'll kill me first. . . . I'll volunteer to be first, if he's going to kill anybody." So the men bought the property with funding from the CCCD. "We never did things like that," Richard noted, "but in this case, [we thought] we could do it and get away with it. . . . And so we went and bought it. We made the deal."³¹ Cesar was disappointed that the men failed to negotiate, but this feeling dissipated when he visited the property. "Well, it *is* a lot of land," he conceded. "The first thing you need," he told Richard, "[is] to plant some trees."³²

²⁹ California Center for Community Development, meeting minutes, Jan. 15, 1966, National Farm Workers Association Collection, Series III, Box 7, Folder 1, ALUA, WSU.

³⁰ Richard Chavez and Rudy Delgado, interview with author, Keene, CA, Sept. 16, 2004.

³¹ *Ibid.* LeRoy Chatfield recalls that the woman lived in Alhambra and sought \$5,000 for the property; see LeRoy Chatfield, "Forty Acres, Delano: United Farm Worker Facilities," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/category/commentary> (accessed May 15, 2014).

³² Chavez and Delgado, interview.

LeRoy and Richard would plant some trees and pursue other plans for the property, but first they helped create the National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc. (NFWSC), an organization that was affiliated with the NFWA but legally independent from it. The NFWSC began to lease the forty-acre property from the CCCD in September 1966. The NFWSC incorporated two months later, received tax-exempt status in April 1967, and secured a clear title to the forty-acre property by March 1968.³³

Articulating a Vision

Forty Acres derives historical significance from its association with Cesar Chavez's charismatic leadership of the farm worker movement and, more specifically, with his inspirational vision of a movement dedicated to the service of others. Chavez wanted Forty Acres to be a manifestation of that vision—a *place* dedicated to the service of others. Although Forty Acres never completely matched Chavez's vision, analysis of this vision offers insight into the larger dynamics of the farm worker movement and Chavez's leadership of that movement.

Chavez envisioned Forty Acres as a place dedicated to the service of others and as a place where the buildings and other physical features enhanced feelings of community. Susan Samuels Drake, who served as Chavez's personal secretary during the 1960s, published a poem in the 1990s that recaptured the first vision and conveyed some of its power. Chavez had acquired "forty acres of clay" that was "just this side of the dump," she wrote.

One look at these forty acres in the 1960s
a person would have to believe in miracles.
Whirling dust
or miring mud,
flies. . . .

If someone were going to plant a new Mecca
someone who imagined
a credit union,
a clinic,
offices
and a place for worn-down workers to retire,
a whole complex in adobe and terra cotta
and that someone had no money. . . .

But when Cesar looked into the distance
at impossible dreams
our eyes followed
the visions came true.³⁴

³³ LeRoy Chatfield to Cesar Chavez, Sept. 15, 1966, NFWA Collection, Series I, Box 2, Folder 2, ALUA, WSU; "Report on 'The National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.' A Parallel Structure to the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO of Delano, California, March 31, 1968," 5, 11, UFWOC Collection, Box 3, Folder 12, ALUA, WSU.

³⁴ Susan Samuels Drake, "Forty Acres," in *Fields of Courage: Remembering César Chávez and the People Whose Labor Feeds Us* (Santa Cruz, CA: Many Names Press, 1999), 41-42.

When Chavez visited the barren forty acres of land outside of Delano, he looked past the whirling dust and flies and instead imagined a place where farm workers could access basic services that would help them live their lives, raise their children, and even retire with dignity. His remarkable ability to conceive and share such a vision fueled his success as the leader of the farm worker movement.

Moreover, Chavez envisioned not just services but buildings and other physical features that would give farm workers a sense of community and a sense of place. Writing about the migrant farm workers whom Chavez sought to serve, historian Rodolfo Acuña once explained that “when you are in a rural area, you are very vulnerable, especially if you are living from hand to mouth. There is very little integration of other ideas that’s taking place when you’re constantly moving . . . [and you] never form a sense of place.” The structure of the agricultural industry, and the subordinate position of farm workers within that structure, required most farm workers to sacrifice long-term attachments to place that most Americans take for granted. “You’re constantly worrying if you’re going to have enough money to pay [for] the gas, or if you’re going to have enough money to buy the food,” Acuña explained. “It’s a tremendous feeling of isolation [and] fear,” one that transforms mobility into a necessity and transforms rootedness—a sense of attachment to place—into a luxury.³⁵ Yet Chavez saw Forty Acres as a place that would belong to all farm workers and provide them a sense of community, no matter where they lived or worked. It would provide an environment that was inviting, safe, and restful.

LeRoy Chatfield and Richard Chavez shared Cesar’s vision for Forty Acres. Chatfield, in particular, helped to articulate the vision, and he worked to raise the funds necessary to begin implementing it. When the National Farm Workers Service Center began leasing the forty-acre parcel of land from the California Center for Community Development in September 1966, Chatfield sent a memo to Cesar outlining his sense of the initial goals for the property. After leveling the land, digging a well, laying pipes, and installing a septic system, Chatfield wanted to build a gas station and auto parts store that would function on a co-op basis. The next building would serve as a general merchandise store for co-op members. A third building would provide space for union meetings, a hiring hall, and a fourth building would house the union’s administrative offices, including those of the credit union and the newspaper. A fifth building would serve as a health clinic.³⁶ This plan for the development and functions of Forty Acres mirrored Chatfield’s efforts to implement an organizational structure for the NFWSC itself. In his proposal for the organization of the newly-created NFWSC, Chatfield suggested five central operations: the credit union, the health clinic, a services department (providing advocacy and assistance with government agencies), the newspaper, and the co-op.³⁷ For Chatfield, Forty Acres would offer a central location—and the first of many locations in California and beyond—where farm workers could find basic services that would improve their lives.³⁸

³⁵ Acuña quoted in *CHICANO!: A History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*, Galán Productions, 1996.

³⁶ Chatfield to Chavez, Sept. 15, 1966, NFWA Collection.

³⁷ A sixth operation, the theater troupe known as El Teatro Campesino, would remain independent of the NFWSC.

³⁸ Untitled report (ca. 1967), NFWA Collection, Series III, Box 5, Folder 19, ALUA, WSU.

By the time Chatfield articulated his sense of initial goals for Forty Acres to Cesar, he had raised more than \$22,000 for development of the property. More than \$13,000 came from individual donors, another \$7,000 was raised from a Pete Seeger benefit concert at UCLA, \$1,500 came from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, and the United Auto Workers donated \$1,000 to support what Chatfield referred to as “our co-op garage dream.” Much of this money came from church congregations and community groups who heard Chatfield speak about the Delano strike and the union’s focus not just on wages and working conditions but also its own commitment to services and self-empowerment.³⁹

Such successes in fundraising, while modest, allowed Chatfield and other contributors to the planning process to begin dreaming even bigger. In July 1967, Chatfield prepared an outline for a master plan for Forty Acres with input from the NFWSC board of directors. A preamble to the outline recognized that the National Farm Workers Association was “more of a movement than a union” and that it viewed a farm worker’s family as “the basic organizing unit.” In other words, unlike traditional unions, the NFWA would draw strength from men, women, and children and from the ties that united them and the members of their extended families—and it would serve these families in turn, with its credit union, co-op businesses, health clinic, and so on. “It would seem obvious then that as the union grows all farm workers and all poor people of rural areas will be affected,” the preamble concluded. “Remember that this was initially an effort to organize a community. From our discussions it is obvious that is still the direction. Our own gas station, our own clinic, our own stores. Our own health, education and research facilities. Our own garages, our own tire recapping and engine rebuilding plants. And then . . . our own swimming pools, our own tennis courts, our own cultural center, our own opera house. Our own ballet company.”⁴⁰ Indeed, the plan outline envisioned Forty Acres as a place that would serve union functions, such as strike management, contract negotiations, training, and research. Forty Acres would offer union services, including the credit union, health clinic, and the administration of union benefits. Forty Acres would offer commercial services, such as the gas station and general merchandise store, but also an auto repair shop, farmers’ market, beauty shop, barber shop, bakery, and more. Finally, Forty Acres would offer swimming pools, tennis courts, picnic grounds, gardens, a cultural center, and even a “farm workers’ cathedral.”⁴¹

For farm workers like those whom Rodolfo Acuña described—those who were moving with the seasons, living from hand to mouth, and lacking a sense of place—Forty Acres might offer a safe harbor and perhaps even a home. Although the NFWSC board of directors specifically noted that they did not want Forty Acres to become a residential subdivision or a migrant labor camp, Chatfield had floated the idea of making Forty Acres a rest stop or “way station” for migrant farm workers, with a lavatory and shower and laundromat services. He also suggested “a small development of housing,” perhaps with a small number of trailer homes.⁴² Yet whether Forty Acres would be a symbolic home or something more, it was clearly understood to be a place that would serve farm workers’ needs and fuel their aspirations.

³⁹ Chatfield to Chavez, Sept. 15, 1966, NFWA Collection.

⁴⁰ “Memorandum Concerning Master Plan for National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.” (July 19, 1967), preamble, National Farm Workers Service Center Records, Keene, CA.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1-4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1, 3; Chatfield to Chavez, Sept. 15, 1966, NFWA Collection.

With this vision in mind, Cesar, Richard, LeRoy, and other contributors to the planning process began to focus on the physical development of the property. Cesar and Richard agreed that they wanted the architectural style of Forty Acres to be mission revival. Cesar and Helen had toured California's Franciscan missions on their honeymoon in 1948, and Cesar—a lifelong Catholic—always associated the missions with feelings of stability, peacefulness, and spirituality.⁴³ Richard affirmed that he and his brother “loved” mission style architecture. “In fact,” he added, “we used to constantly take trips to go see the missions. . . . [We’d] go visit the missions and admire how beautiful they were. . . . And so [Cesar] said, ‘When we build here, it’s going to be all mission style.’”⁴⁴ Yet the adoption of mission style reflected more than a personal indulgence. As Cesar explained to writer Peter Matthiessen, other union members wanted “something more modern—you know, kind of flashy—to show that they had a terrific union going here, but I wanted something that would not go out of fashion, something that would last.”⁴⁵ Indeed, Cesar, Richard, LeRoy, and other contributors developed plans for Forty Acres with the conviction that their union had achieved permanence, and they envisioned the construction of buildings that would be useful but also inviting to farm workers for generations to come. Accordingly, when Chatfield prepared the outline for the master plan for Forty Acres in July 1967, he noted a consensus that Forty Acres should be “something unique and ageless,” that it should “reflect the culture of Mexico and the Philippines,” that it should have “a religious environment,” and that it should incorporate “mission style architecture—adobe, tile, timbers, etc.”⁴⁶

While the July 1967 plan outline emphasized the creation of an environment at Forty Acres that would be peaceful and park-like, an architectural site plan, completed around the same time, suggested the construction of as many as two dozen buildings, including a hospital, a clinic, a medical research building, a large auditorium, several union office buildings, a chapel, a gas station, several buildings for a grocery store and other shops, and a cultural center. Four months later, Chatfield and other contributors prepared a more detailed narrative plan for the physical development of the property. By that point, Chatfield perhaps had gained a better appreciation of the challenges that building construction posed. Landscaping and other projects could be undertaken with volunteer labor, but the buildings would “require a different kind of organization.” This November 1967 plan called for most of the buildings suggested by the July 1967 plan—buildings related to union administration, health care and other services, co-op services, and culture—but the new plan noted that “this is a very ambitious program.” Given “their great expense” and “high degree of technical skills needed,” the plan concluded, “it will be years before all the buildings are completed.”⁴⁷

The November 1967 plan prioritized landscape development, which could begin “immediately” because farm workers would volunteer their labor. Planned features of the landscape included a plaza, an arcade, two recreational areas, a small pond fed by an artificial creek, a wall around the perimeter, roads and a parking lot, and several gardens

⁴³ As Chavez told writer Jacques Levy, “the missions always have fascinated me.” See Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 87.

⁴⁴ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

⁴⁵ Chavez quoted in Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes*, 26.

⁴⁶ “Memorandum Concerning Master Plan,” 1, Cesar Chavez Foundation Archives.

⁴⁷ “How to Get the Job Done,” 3, 15, United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) Collection, Box 3, Folder 14, ALUA, WSU.

and planting areas. The plaza would be the focal point. It would provide a grassy, park-like space—crossed by the creek and walking paths, with trees and fountains scattered throughout—but it would be large enough to hold ten thousand people attending “rallies, special occasions, and celebrations.” An arcade would define the boundaries of the plaza. It would be symbolic at first—created by a double row of poles with red union flags strung across. As each building surrounding the plaza was constructed, the arcade would become a reality. The recreational areas would be located in opposite corners of the property. The northeast corner would feature the pond, swimming pools, tennis courts, and a playground. The southwest corner would include a fiesta barbecue area, a chapel, and a monument. Running diagonally across the property, the creek would connect the two areas, and its “flowing, bubbling water” would bring a sense of “peace and tranquility” to the entire property. Similarly, the wall would provide “an atmosphere of unity, security, and protection.” It would help define planting areas along the perimeter of the property, but its true importance would come from its “impressive entrances” and “great visibility.” The wall would tell everyone, “This Is Ours.”⁴⁸

With this vision for Forty Acres taking shape during the second half of 1967, and with the service station building under construction that fall, the NFWSC launched a contest to name its property, which Chatfield referred to as “the Service Center” but other people already called “Forty Acres.” As the entry form for the contest noted, the NFWSC acquired “40 acres of land west of Delano” in 1966.

Upon that land will be built the center—the heart—of the Union. Construction is now being completed on the Co-op Gas Station. Final plans include the Farm Workers’ Medical Clinic, Hiring Hall, Service Center, National Union Offices, etc. This center will belong to each Union member. Join with us in finding a name for the 40 acres that will describe the goals and aspirations of the Farm Workers Union.⁴⁹

The contest received around fifty entries, many of which included multiple recommendations. These suggested names reveal a widespread sense of optimism about the future of the farm worker movement. They also reveal the extent to which farm workers embraced Cesar Chavez’s leadership and his vision of a movement—and a place—dedicated to the service of others. Ramon Hernandez, for example, suggested “Centro de Aspiraciones y Beneficios Campesinos Cesar Chavez” (Center of Aspirations and Benefits [for] Farm Workers [with] Cesar Chavez). Lupe Guardado suggested “Victory Acres.” John Zamora suggested “Heart of the Union.” Other names included “Paraiso de Campesinos” (Farm Workers’ Paradise), “Lugar de Libertad” (Place of Liberty), and “La Ciudad del Campesino” (The City of the Farm Worker). Several suggestions incorporated the union’s symbol, such as “Eagle Nest Center” and “Thunderbird Lodge.” Other suggestions focused on Chavez himself, including “La Villa Cesar Chavez” and “Plaza Cesar Chavez.” Many entries simply suggested the name “Cesar Chavez.”⁵⁰ Although it is not clear which of these names might have won the contest, none of them took hold. It is perhaps fitting that the simplest name for the property—Forty Acres—continued to stick.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 6, 4, 7.

⁴⁹ “Name the 40 Acres Contest,” United Farm Workers (UFW) Administration Department Records, Box 8, Folder 11, ALUA, WSU.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

The Embodiment of the Farm Worker Movement

Writing in 1980, historians José Pitti, Antonia Castañeda, and Carlos Cortés recognized that Forty Acres embodied the farm worker movement. Forty Acres, they explained, “is a visible manifestation of the campesinos’ struggle to organize their own union, to bargain collectively, to labor with dignity . . . and to determine their own destiny.”⁵¹ This recognition echoed Cesar Chavez’s own enduring emphasis on the importance of self-determination. As early as 1964, Chavez explained that the farm worker movement was more than just a union—and more than just an effort to create a union. He used the word “union,” but what he described was the farm worker movement and its struggle for self-determination: “A union is not simply getting enough workers to stage a strike,” he insisted. “A union is building a group with a spirit and an existence all its own. . . . [A] union must be built around the idea that people must do things by themselves, in order to help themselves.”⁵² Unlike traditional labor unions, which focused primarily on wages and working conditions, the farm worker movement focused more broadly on self-determination.

Forty Acres was a manifestation of the farm workers’ struggle for self-determination, but it also was the product of purposeful strategies. Chavez and other leaders of the movement knew that farm workers did not have significant financial resources, but they did have time and patience, they were willing to work hard and make sacrifices, they were willing to ask for help, and they had growing numbers of supporters who were prepared to give it. Forty Acres thus derives historical significance from the fact that it reflected and embodied the defining characteristics of the farm worker movement: its members’ fundamental lack of financial resources and their undeterred sense of resourcefulness.⁵³ The history of the property’s construction clearly reflects the movement’s financial constraints, but the property also reflects the farm workers’ efforts to make the most out of the resources they had.

Richard Chavez’s earliest work on the property illustrates the point. Shortly after the NFWSC began leasing Forty Acres in September 1966, Richard began working to sink a well and install a water pump. He knew that clearing and leveling the terrain and rehabilitating the soil would take more time, especially since he and other union members were organizing and picketing six days a week. “I went and found . . . this rancher that was sympathetic to us,” Richard recalled. “I told him about the project we had and he said, ‘Do you have time?’” Cesar Chavez and other union leaders were fond of telling doubters and reassuring supporters that “we have more time than money.” They recognized, in other words, that one of their most abundant resources *was* time. The union’s limited financial resources forced its members to be patient and resourceful—to find creative ways to get things done. The rancher offered Richard the loan of an old, dual-wheel tractor with a scraper to use in leveling the terrain. “It will take you more time,” he warned, “but you can do it. You can get it done. It’s the way I did mine.” Richard, of course, accepted the offer. “So I would come here [on Sundays], and all [day] . . . I would just scrape and knock the big hills down and put [the dirt] in the

⁵¹ José Pitti, Antonia Castañeda, and Carlos Cortés, “A History of Mexican Americans in California” (1980), in *Five Views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California* (Sacramento: State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, 1988), 231.

⁵² Chavez quoted in Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*, 89.

⁵³ On the farm worker movement’s limited financial resources and its members’ resourcefulness see Ganz, *Why David Sometimes Wins*; Ganz, “Resources and Resourcefulness.”

lowest places,” he explained. “And it took about nine months, but . . . I had it all leveled. So there’s a lot of me in this place!”⁵⁴ Indeed, Richard began placing his imprint—and that of the farm worker movement as a whole—on the landscape of Forty Acres almost immediately after the NFWSC acquired use of the property.

The early efforts of John Duggan and other volunteers offer a second illustration. As Richard finished leveling the terrain at Forty Acres during spring 1967, he suggested that they “grow a little park” at the property. At that point, Cesar was skeptical. He thought that they might plant some trees and bushes, but getting them to grow well in the alkali soil would be impossible. Still, Richard wanted to experiment. “Like I said, we had nothing,” he emphasized. “All we had was *time*, you know?”⁵⁵ That summer, John Duggan—a former Catholic priest and longtime supporter of unionization efforts among farm workers—moved from Stockton to Delano and offered to work for the movement. He joined the picket lines and assisted in other ways, but he soon began to work more closely with Richard and LeRoy on the development of Forty Acres.⁵⁶ Duggan began gathering information about alkali soil in November 1967. He consulted researchers at the University of California’s Agricultural Extension Service in Bakersfield, he talked with neighboring property owners, and he read pamphlets with titles such as “Ornamental Plants Tolerant of Saline and Alkali Soils.”⁵⁷ Doing so, Duggan learned that ash trees, mesquite bushes, and bermuda grass might do well at the property. He also discovered techniques for reducing the amount of alkali in the soil. As Richard recalled, Duggan learned that “if you chisel the ground and then flood it, the alkali will go down. You’ll leach it, in other words. You’ll wash it.” After Richard and some other volunteers flooded part of the southwest quadrant of the property, a small park began to take shape. Their reliance on volunteer research, their own volunteer labor, and their decision to plant inexpensive yet salt-tolerant trees such as Modesto ash, fruitless mulberry, and magnolias reflect the fact that the farm worker movement’s financial resources were limited but also that Richard and his crew tried to be resourceful—they tried to make the best use of what they had. Cultivating the park, in Richard’s words, was “a labor of love. . . . You really had to care for it.”⁵⁸ The same could be said for the property as a whole.

Tomasa Zapata Mireles Co-op Building

The first building constructed at Forty Acres was an automobile service station—a combined gasoline station and automobile repair shop—located in the southwest quadrant of the property. Work on the building began in August 1967, and the building was completed in January 1968. The building’s materials and manner of construction reflected and embodied the farm worker movement’s limited financial resources and its members’ resourcefulness.

⁵⁴ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ John Duggan, “John Duggan Autobiography,” 43-44, <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essay/essays-by-author> (accessed May 15, 2014).

⁵⁷ John Duggan, “Project Beautification at Forty Acres” (Jan. 4, 1968), UFWOC Collection, Box 3, Folder 14, ALUA, WSU; John Duggan to Cesar Chavez, Nov. 26, 1967, UFWOC Collection, Box 3, Folder 14, ALUA, WSU.

⁵⁸ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

Recognition of a need for a service station building dates back to October 1965, when Cesar Chavez and LeRoy Chatfield began discussing the creation and operation of a farm workers' cooperative, which would include a gas station and repair shop. As Chavez knew, gasoline, auto parts, and repairs were burdensome expenses for farm workers. Thus he and Chatfield decided that the first cooperative would revolve around automobiles, selling not only gasoline but also oil, tires, batteries, spark plugs, and other parts and supplies at cost plus fifteen percent. A repair shop would provide low-cost repairs as well as job training for farm workers seeking to leave the fields.⁵⁹ A service station remained a priority in July 1966, when the "Farm Workers Co-op" was formally established, and in November 1966, when the National Farm Workers Service Center (NFWSC) was incorporated. The NFWSC finally opened a gas station co-op in March 1967, when it began leasing a vacant Texaco gas station near downtown Delano. Within a few months, the operation employed a station manager, two station attendants, a mechanic, and a bookkeeper, and it provided lower-cost gasoline and other goods and services to union members, but Chavez and Chatfield continued to seek a permanent space.⁶⁰

By August 1967, Chavez and Chatfield had decided that the service station building would be the first building constructed at Forty Acres, and they had agreed that mission revival architectural style would hold an enduring appeal for farm workers. This decision, however, meant that the NFWSC would need to secure unique and potentially expensive building materials, including barrel roof tiles, adobe block, and heavy timber beams. Richard emphasized how important it was to negotiate for lower prices for the adobe block and other materials. "In those days we didn't have any money," he explained, "so we had to get things donated, or buy them really cheap." As the building neared completion, Richard had not yet been able to find affordable roof tiles. "Finally I found half of the tile . . . [piled near a building] here in Delano," he recalled. "And one day I stopped and said I was interested, and . . . [the owner] said 'It's probably not even good anymore,' not knowing that tile is good forever, you know." After looking at the tile, Richard returned and feigned a degree of disinterest, saying "yeah . . . I think I *may* be able to use it." The owner asked Richard for an offer, and he made one "over here when it should have been over *here*." When the owner said she wanted more, Richard raised his offer slightly and the owner accepted. After recruiting some union members to help him load the tiles, Richard realized that he could not purchase new tiles to cover the other half new because the tiles would not match. But soon thereafter he was driving toward Fresno and happened to see what he thought were "big piles of tiles" off from the side of the road. "We found the road and drove in there, and sure enough, there was this big pile of tiles. And I counted and found out how many squares and everything, and it was *exactly* what we needed!" Richard found the owner and negotiated a price the NFWSC could afford to pay.⁶¹

The manner in which the service station building was constructed—primarily with volunteer labor—similarly reflects the farm worker movement's limited financial resources and its members' resourcefulness. The fact that much of the labor was

⁵⁹ Untitled report (ca. 1967), NFWA Collection.

⁶⁰ "Report on 'The National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.,'" 9, UFWOC Collection. Difficulties in securing a building permit delayed construction at Forty Acres. See Jim Holland, "Jim Holland, 1967–1969," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essay/essays-by-author> (accessed May 15, 2014).

⁶¹ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

voluntary does not mean it was not professional. On the contrary, the bricklayers who assisted Richard in building the service station, for example, were highly skilled. Thus when Richard suggested that they make the walls “look rough,” like those of California’s Franciscan missions, they did not quite know what to do. “I was gone or something,” Richard recalled, and when he returned he saw that “they made it look rough!” The bricklayers had laid the first ten courses of adobe blocks of the east side of the front wall, and nine individual blocks jutted out noticeably, making the bricklayers’ work appear sloppy more than rough. “And I said, ‘No! No! Not *that* kind of rough!’ But they were already set,” Richard remembered with a laugh. “And I said, ‘Just continue like you do, it’ll be rough enough. . . . We’ll just do it with the grout. Don’t clean the grout that much.’” As Richard learned, “it’s very hard to tell somebody who knows only how to do it right, *not* to [do it right]. . . . But we had a lot of fun.”⁶²

Construction of the service station building began in August 1967 with the laying of the northwest cornerstone, which included a time capsule that Richard created and filled. The building was completed in January 1968, just a few weeks before Cesar set up a cot in the building’s empty interior and began his first public fast. The building was used for storage purposes until summer 1969, when gasoline pumps and underground storage tanks were installed and the area surrounding the building was paved.⁶³ The building was dedicated on September 14, 1969, and named in honor of Tomasa Zapata Mireles, a 24-year-old boycott volunteer who died from cancer.⁶⁴ The service station opened for business in October 1969, and by the end of the year farm workers were purchasing roughly 16,000 gallons of “Huelga Gas” per month at a savings of five to six cents per gallon. The station also sold discounted auto parts and handled minor repairs.⁶⁵

Roy Reuther Administration Building

Following the completion of the service station building in January 1968, the NFWSC moved a small building to Forty Acres to provide office space for the union newspaper, *El Malcriado*. The NFWSC also would relocate a mobile home and a trailer home that already were used for the operations of the health clinic. These temporary additions to the property reflected the farm worker movement’s limited financial resources as much as its growing strength. As union member Rudy Delgado observed, however, the NFWSC constructed the second permanent building at Forty Acres thinking “hey, we’re going to be here.”⁶⁶ Practical needs still dictated the course of development. Richard Chavez explained that, by summer 1968, the union “needed some space. . . . [W]e knew we were on our way to being something. We knew that we needed a hiring hall, and we needed some office space.” Indeed, the UFWOC’s decision to target the Giumarra Brothers Fruit Company, its decision to boycott California’s entire table grape industry, and Cesar’s first public fast in February and March 1968 brought the farm worker movement unprecedented levels of media attention, national support,

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ “National Farm Workers Service Center Annual Report” (1969), 3, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 15, Folder 34, ALUA, WSU.

⁶⁴ “Program,” UFWOC Collection, Box 1, Folder 19, ALUA, WSU; *El Malcriado*, Sept. 15-Oct. 1, 1969.

⁶⁵ “National Farm Workers Service Center Annual Report” (1969), 4, UFW Administration Department Records.

⁶⁶ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

and strength. “And so,” Richard noted, “we came up with the idea of building [a multipurpose administration building].”⁶⁷

As with the service station building, the NFWSC began seeking donations and negotiating for lower costs on materials for the multipurpose administration building, which would be located on the western side of the property. Thus the Apache Flooring Company and the Mills Floor Covering Company, for example, agreed to donate flooring materials such as the wallbase and adhesive from their warehouses in Santa Ana, California.⁶⁸ Likewise, when Cesar expressed concern about the costs of renting a crane capable of hoisting steel arches and beams, Richard sought donations of equipment. “You couldn’t believe how we put it up, those big steel beams and all of that,” he explained. “We had an old skip loader somebody donated. So we rigged it up so we could raise those beams. . . . And we’d get up there and we’d have scaffolds and we’d say, ‘Okay, put the bolts in! Tighten ’em up!’ And that’s the way we put every one of those beams in there,” he continued. “They said, ‘Oh, you’ve gotta have a crane.’ No, you don’t have to have a crane. You just find [other] ways of doing it.”⁶⁹

The manner in which the administration building was constructed similarly reflected and embodied the resourcefulness of the farm worker movement, especially its members’ willingness to ask for help. During the course of construction, members of various union locals from throughout the state came to Delano to donate their labor and expertise, prompting writer Sam Kushner to speculate that “no construction job has ever been more deserving of the union label.”⁷⁰ Construction of the building began in May 1968, with Richard Chavez serving as the contractor. He had a small crew working with him—Emil Fackler, Candido Becerra, Mike Kratko, Juan Tavena, Isidro Taay, and Luis Melendez—and these men received assistance from cement finishers, carpenters, plumbers, painters, tile setters, and others. As Richard explained, “people wanted to help us, because they knew we didn’t have money, but we had needs.” When the building was ready for wiring, for example, the NFWSC notified the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers of its needs. Forty-seven electricians from Local No. 11 in Los Angeles responded. Richard described their response with a laugh: “nine hours and about twenty cases of beer later, it was done! The guy said, ‘Yeah Richard, we’ll come. Just have enough beer, that’s all we ask!’ . . . But the guys were responsible, . . . and they got it done in nine hours, from start to finish.”⁷¹ For these and other volunteers, the weekends spent working on the multipurpose building presented their first opportunity for face-to-face interaction with farm workers. As Kushner observed, “some of their unions had made financial donations, but that was a relatively easy thing to do. Giving one’s free labor, sharing the food in the strike kitchen and having a beer or two with these . . . [farm] workers was something else again.”⁷² Such projects provided valuable opportunities for UFWOC members to organize workers from sympathetic

⁶⁷ Ibid. See also Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 75-79.

⁶⁸ Fred Adam to Mills Floor Covering, Oct. 2, 1969, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 1, Box 24, Folder 6, ALUA, WSU; Fred Adam to Warren Burton, Oct. 2, 1969, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 1, Box 24, Folder 6, ALUA, WSU.

⁶⁹ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

⁷⁰ Ibid.; *El Malcriado*, June 1, 1968; *El Malcriado*, Aug. 15-Sept. 15, 1969; Sam Kushner, *Long Road to Delano* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 174.

⁷¹ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

⁷² Kushner, *Long Road*, 175.

unions. AFL-CIO regional director Irwin DeShetler told Kushner that these volunteers “were real sellers [of the strike] later on. They went around and told others about it.”⁷³

Other volunteers continued to come and go—members of Carpenters Local No. 743 from Bakersfield, Painters Local No. 127 from Oakland, Carpet and Linoleum Workers Local No. 1247 from Los Angeles—but progress on the building was slow.⁷⁴ Writer Peter Matthiessen toured the building with Cesar Chavez in August 1968, just after the electricians had finished their work. “You should have seen it [when the electricians were working],” Chavez told Matthiessen. “I could hardly get into the building.” As the two men made their way through the north hallway, Chavez exuded enthusiasm. “Those guys *really* went to town,” he said repeatedly. “The first center for farm workers in history!”⁷⁵ But soon afterward, in Richard’s words, “the crunch came.” The momentum of the boycott against the table grape industry was growing and completion of the building had to wait. Upon returning to Forty Acres in summer 1969, Matthiessen observed that progress on the building had been negligible. “We’re so damn busy,” Richard told him, “and there’s always something that needs the money more.”⁷⁶ Progress resumed by August 1969, however, and the building was completed in early September at a total cost of \$9,000.

At a union meeting in August 1969, Cesar noted that four hundred members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) were coming to Delano for three days in September to join farm workers on the picket lines. He proposed to name the multipurpose building in honor of Roy Reuther (the late brother of UAW president Walter Reuther) and to invite the auto workers and the Reuther family to attend a dedication ceremony. As Cesar explained, Roy was a visible supporter of the union when it became active in Texas in 1967, and he secured a donation of \$50,000 from the UAW in 1968—part of which funded construction of the building.⁷⁷ The dedication ceremony took place on September 14, 1969, with Walter Reuther and Roy’s son, Alan Reuther, offering words of praise and solidarity.⁷⁸ After the dedication, a writer for *El Malcriado* recognized the building’s significance as an embodiment of the union’s spirit and a symbol of the union’s enduring presence. “For those growers who still think that wishing and cursing . . . will make the union disappear, take another look [at Forty Acres]. We’re planning for the future,” the writer concluded. “We’re here to stay.”⁷⁹ As the year drew to a close, Reuther Hall (as the Roy Reuther Administration Building was commonly known) came alive with the activity of the union’s membership office, boycott office, negotiations team, accounting office, legal office, and management as well as the NFWSC’s co-op, credit union, social services center, medical plan, and management.⁸⁰

⁷³ DeShetler quoted in Kushner, *Long Road*, 175.

⁷⁴ *El Malcriado*, Aug. 15-Sept. 15, 1969.

⁷⁵ Cesar Chavez quoted in Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes*, 23-24.

⁷⁶ Richard Chavez quoted in Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes*, 24.

⁷⁷ Meeting minutes, Aug. 8, 1969, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 6, Folder 2, ALUA, WSU. See also *El Malcriado*, Aug. 15-Sept. 15, 1969.

⁷⁸ “Dedication of Roy Reuther Administration Building,” UFWOC Collection, Box 1, Folder 19, ALUA, WSU.

⁷⁹ *El Malcriado*, Aug. 15-Sept. 15, 1969. On this point see also Kushner, *Long Road*, 144.

⁸⁰ “Telephone Recommendations—Reuther Building,” UFWOC Collection, Box 1, Folder 19, ALUA, WSU.

Rodrigo Terronez Memorial Clinic

The UFWOC's decision to boycott California's entire table grape industry propelled the union toward the victories it would secure in 1970. The union diverted resources to support Robert Kennedy's campaign for president in 1968, suffered a setback with his assassination, welcomed new waves of supporters from the burgeoning Chicano movement, and struggled with tensions over Chavez's commitment to nonviolence, yet the boycott continued to spread. As writers Susan Ferriss and Ricardo Sandoval point out, the boycott campaign "cut across all age, class, and regional differences" and thus became "the most ambitious and successful boycott in American history."⁸¹ By spring 1969, the boycott had, in the words of Coachella grower Lionel Steinberg, "literally closed Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, Montreal, [and] Toronto completely from handling table grapes."⁸² Growers filed a lawsuit against the union in July 1969 revealing a loss of \$25 million in sales. By spring 1970, grower solidarity began to crumble. Steinberg signed a contract with the UFWOC in April 1970, and other growers from the Coachella Valley followed suit. The Giumarra Company finally agreed to negotiate a contract three months later, and the Giumarras met the union's demand to bring the remaining growers with them to the bargaining table. On July 29, 1970, the UFWOC signed contracts with twenty-eight Delano-area table grape growers, bringing an end to the five-year strike. By the end of 1970, the UFWOC had signed a total of almost two hundred contracts with growers covering nearly seventy thousand farm workers. Each contract mandated pay raises, provisions for job security, the use of union-run hiring halls, the regulation of pesticide use, and employer contributions to the Martin Luther King, Jr., Farm Workers Fund and the Robert F. Kennedy Health and Welfare Plan.⁸³

The Farm Workers Fund enabled the continuing development of Forty Acres into the NFWSC's flagship service center. The first building project that the contracts helped fund was the clinic building, which would be located in the northwest quadrant of the property. The building's materials and manner of construction reflected and embodied the defining characteristics of a movement that was still growing but whose members now felt a sense of permanence.

The health clinic itself dates to November 1965, when a registered nurse, Peggy McGivern, began providing free medical services to striking farm worker families, most of whom found it difficult to secure the medical attention they needed even before the strike. Inspired by the courage of the striking farm workers, McGivern moved from Palo Alto to Delano, set up a clinic in the kitchen of a farm worker's home, and recruited Dr. Jerry Lackner to visit on weekends.⁸⁴ McGivern was soon joined by Marion Moses, a fellow nurse who had heard Chavez appeal for support in Berkeley in October 1965.⁸⁵ As demand for the clinic's services increased, McGivern and Moses relocated the clinic

⁸¹ Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 139.

⁸² Steinberg quoted in Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*, 195.

⁸³ Rast and Dubrow, "Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement," 79-81.

⁸⁴ Henry Santiestevan, "Delano: A New Harvest For Migrants" (1967), [https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworker movement/essay/essays-by-author](https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworker%20movement/essay/essays-by-author) (accessed May 15, 2014).

⁸⁵ Marion Moses, "Cesar Chavez, 1927 – 1993," *The Catholic Worker* (June-July 1993), <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essay/essays-by-author> (accessed May 15, 2014).

to a room in one of the NFWA's rented houses, but that eventually proved inadequate as well.⁸⁶ By July 1966, the nurses were actively seeking a larger space, stable funding, additional staff, and additional equipment. In a written proposal, they emphasized that the clinic was part of the farm workers' struggle for self-determination:

The capacity of the agricultural laborers to help themselves has been demonstrated through the National Farm Workers Association. For years, this organization . . . has been providing self-help programs—a credit union, burial and life insurance, cooperative buying, case work services on individual problems, and democratic government. The central theme of this proposal [for an expanded health clinic] is upon self-determination—citizens taking part in their own decision making programs, working out the destiny of their own communities.⁸⁷

Four years later, the Rodrigo Terronez Memorial Clinic—named for a union vice president who died when he was unable to receive emergency treatment at the Delano hospital—was an integral part of the NFWSC's operations. The clinic was supervised by a board of directors and an advisory committee comprised of farm workers, and it employed two full-time nurses (Marion Moses and Margie Ginsberg), two part-time physicians, a nurse's aid, and several other assistants. Forty-six physicians, dentists, and specialists in optometry, pediatrics, dermatology, and other areas had volunteered time at the clinic, and together these staff members saw more than three hundred patients every month. The NFWSC had acquired a trailer home and a larger mobile home for the clinic's operations, but neither met the clinic's need for a permanent space.⁸⁸

The NFWSC also had acquired a rectangular, wood-frame building from the Kern County Welfare Department, but how the barracks-like building would be used was not immediately clear. When LeRoy Chatfield learned that the county was going to demolish the building in 1969, he expressed interest in accepting it as a donation. Richard Chavez agreed that the building was sound, and he worked with a crew of volunteers to cut the building in half and relocate both sections to Forty Acres. Some NFWSC board members thought that the building might be remodeled and used for storage, but the building sections sat unused for more than a year. "And at the same time," Richard recalled, "we were always talking about the clinic—how we needed a clinic [building] and . . . [how] the trailer can't keep up, you know. And like I told you once, we didn't have any money to do anything, we just had time. So, on Sundays, our pastime was to talk about the clinic. . . . So one day we were having this meeting . . . and we started talking about the clinic. . . . 'You know what?' I said, 'You guys come here and just . . . [talk] about a clinic and never do anything. When you get ready to build it, you call me and I'll come back to a meeting. But [otherwise] don't bother to call me.'" Richard left the meeting in disgust. Inspired to act, the board decided to remodel the county building into a health clinic.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ "Farm Workers Health Clinic," UFW Administration Department Records, Box 21, Folder 7, ALUA, WSU.

⁸⁷ "A Proposal to Establish a Health Clinic for the National Farm Workers Association in Delano, California," July 1966, UFW Central Administration Collection, Box 14, Folder 34, ALUA, WSU.

⁸⁸ "Report on 'The National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.," 8, UFWOC Collection; "National Farm Workers Service Center Annual Report" (1969), 4, UFW Administration Department Records.

⁸⁹ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

The materials used in converting the county building into a clinic building were consistent with mission revival architectural style: barrel roof tiles, adobe brick veneer, and heavy timber beams. Some of the materials used in the clinic's waiting room garnered special attention. "Because this was a clinic, we wanted it to be very pleasant while waiting here to be seen," Richard explained. The waiting room—a space created by keeping the two halves of the original county building aligned but separated—was designed with "that purpose in mind, that you would feel good being in here." The waiting room had brown brick walls on three sides complemented by brown ceramic floor tiles imported from Mexico. The plate glass windows and glass doors provided abundant daylight but also views of the level terrain extending east across Forty Acres and into the distance. As Richard noted, the windows and glass doors were "a big splurge," but the NFWSC board "agreed that it would be nice to have a lot of light, to make it nice, to make it part of the pleasantness of the waiting room." Like the service station building and Reuther Hall before it, the clinic building symbolized the growth of the farm worker movement. "We thought we were really growing big now," Richard recalled. "[We thought,] 'What are we going to do next?'"⁹⁰

Although some of the materials used in the clinic symbolized the movement's growth, the manner of construction reflected the movement's still-limited financial resources. Ultimately, the building embodied its members' continuing resourcefulness. For example, some of the need for construction was avoided by the NFWSC's acquisition of the old county building—before anyone knew how it might be used. Thus as NFWSC directors moved forward with plans to build the clinic in February 1971, they knew that they might begin by making use of what they already had on hand. A general contractor, Molly Malouf, oversaw the construction work, but the contributions of volunteers remained substantial and meaningful. Julie Greenfield, for example, returned to Delano from the boycott in New York City and immediately went to work on the clinic building. She and her sister, Wendy, "were put to work digging ditches for the foundation, which was backbreaking but a totally new and empowering kind of work for us." Julie continued to work on the building until its completion in September 1971.⁹¹

The Rodrigo Terronez Memorial Clinic was dedicated on September 12, 1971, and it began receiving patients on October 21, 1971.⁹² Within another year, the Terronez Clinic had become the inspiration for a larger effort to "upgrade the quality of care available not only to the farm worker but to all the poor. . . . Delano is the beginning," a planning document noted. "We must now look to Fresno, Salinas, Coachella, and beyond."⁹³

Paulo Aqbayani Retirement Village

The second building project that the 1970 contracts helped fund was the retirement village for Filipino farm workers, which would be located in the northeast quadrant of the property. Former UFW Vice President Philip Vera Cruz attributed the

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Julie Greenfield, "Julie Greenfield, 1968–1971," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworker/movement/essay/essays-by-author> (accessed May 15, 2014).

⁹² Handwritten notes, Sept. 12, 1971, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Box 9, Folder 4, ALUA, WSU; *El Malcriado*, Dec. 15, 1972.

⁹³ Untitled document, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 21, Folder 12, ALUA, WSU.

idea of a retirement village to Cesar Chavez. As Vera Cruz explained, “the idea of building a retirement village came from Cesar. . . . However, when the concept of the village was first discussed, it was just a long-range plan. We had to continually postpone starting the construction because the union had so many other priorities. In the late 1960s,” he continued, “the [UFWOC] had not won its contracts from the growers yet so we were really busy just fighting for our survival as a union. We were fighting the growers and the Teamsters [who also were trying to organize farm workers]; we were organizing the boycott at the supermarkets trying to keep consumers from buying non-union products; and we were on the picket lines too.” Thus the retirement village “was conceived as an idea long before we finally got around to it.”⁹⁴ When firm plans for the village began to develop in August 1969, however, Vera Cruz and other Filipino farm workers took the lead. That month, a writer for *El Malcriado* noted that a retirement village “has long been a dream of Philip Vera Cruz, Larry Itliong, and other leaders of the Filipino Community, and UFWOC Director Cesar Chavez [has] added his enthusiastic support to the project.”⁹⁵

Plans for a retirement village emerged in response to aging Filipino farm workers’ growing need for affordable housing—a need that was created by longstanding social conditions in the United States but exacerbated by Delano-area growers’ responses to the table grape strike. After the United States conquered the Philippines in 1898 and imposed a new colonial regime, thousands of Filipinos (and a small number of Filipinas) began immigrating to Hawaii and the American West. The number of Filipino immigrants to the mainland U.S. grew to the tens of thousands during the 1920s, especially after the National Origins Act of 1924 reinforced restrictions on Chinese immigration, restricted Japanese immigration, and thus created demand for new sources of agricultural and service-industry labor. The prospects of immigrating to the United States, working hard, living cheaply, sending money back to family members, and eventually returning home with wealth and prestige were tempting to young, unmarried Filipinos. By the 1930s, the Filipino population in the United States had surpassed 45,000, with two-thirds of this total residing in California and nearly the same percentage working as agricultural laborers. But these immigrants confronted an array of oppressive social conditions, including hiring practices that limited Filipino advancement into jobs not requiring manual labor, state laws that prevented Filipino men from marrying Caucasian women (making it more difficult for them to start families), and federal laws that specifically excluded farm workers from Social Security programs. As a result, thousands of Filipinos who stayed in the United States through the 1950s and 1960s found themselves working beyond the age of retirement without the financial, familial, or public resources that would have enabled them to leave their jobs in the fields.⁹⁶ As Philip Vera Cruz concluded, the story of Filipinos in the United States was “a story of racial discrimination and economic exploitation.”⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Scharlin and Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz*, 98.

⁹⁵ *El Malcriado*, Aug. 1-15, 1969.

⁹⁶ Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919-1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony “The Public Household: Filipina/o Americans, Chicano/as, and the United Farm Workers,” unpub. essay (2002); Veta R. Schlimgen, “Filipino-American ‘Nationals’ and Transnationals: Forging Community and Citizenship During the Interwar Period” (M.A. thesis, University of Oregon, 2002); and Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, new ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1998), 315-54.

⁹⁷ Philip Vera Cruz, “Paulo Agbayani Filipino Village,” UFW Administration Department Records, Box 4, Folder 8, ALUA, WSU. See also *El Malcriado*, May 1, 1970.

Consequently, the Filipino farm workers who went on strike in September 1965 already were facing precarious situations. Most of them, of course, had little choice but to live in the labor camps owned by the growers for whom they worked—and against whom they went on strike. Once it became clear that these aging Filipino bachelors would stand firm in their demands for wage increases and contracts, growers began evicting them from the camps. Many of the men were forced to sleep in their cars or in open fields and to cook meals over camp stoves. The AWOC arranged for these men to use the facilities of the Filipino Hall in Delano, but the need for a long-term housing solution was clear.⁹⁸

The NFWSC began developing plans to address this situation in August 1969. That month, Philip Vera Cruz began meeting regularly with other Filipino farm workers at the Filipino Hall to discuss what they would want in a retirement village. The building they envisioned would provide communal spaces—including a dining room where all residents were served three meals a day, a living room, and a recreation room with a pool table—but it also would offer new comforts for Filipinos used to living in labor camps, such as indoor bathrooms, modern plumbing and electrical wiring, telephone lines, and central air conditioning. The latter, Vera Cruz noted, was “an unheard of luxury for farm workers who spent endless summers bending over ten hours a day in scorching hot fields from one end of the San Joaquin Valley to the other, where a temperature of 100 degrees was normal.”⁹⁹ Other components of the village would contribute to the communal atmosphere, including shared garden plots, rooster pens, a brick barbecue pit, and a large grazing pasture. “The men don’t want the traditional kind of retirement home,” Philip explained before construction began. “Those places are too confining. The men want a place where they can have some freedom. They like to garden. They also want to enjoy their own Filipino culture.”¹⁰⁰ The overall design of the village—which San Jose architect Luis Piña finalized and donated to the NFWSC—responded to these desires.

As plans for the village began to take shape, Vera Cruz thought that the NFWSC might acquire a separate property somewhere in or near Delano for the project, but the NFWSC board of directors ultimately decided to locate the village at Forty Acres. Thus the village—comprised of six wood-frame buildings connected to form a U—featured materials consistent with mission revival architectural style, including barrel roof tiles, adobe brick veneer, heavy timber beams, and Mexican floor tiles. An arcade and inner courtyard with a fountain enhanced the village’s inviting, communal atmosphere. Designed by landscape architect Dennis Dahlin, the courtyard featured eucalyptus, Chinese pistache, blackwood acacia, carob, and camphor trees.¹⁰¹

Union members participated in a ceremonial groundbreaking in December 1971, but the need for additional funding delayed construction until April 1973. George Solinas, a general contractor from Santa Cruz, supervised the project. His anchor crew, which started with five members and grew as large as twenty-two, received the assistance of

⁹⁸ Chris Braga and Barbera Morita, “Agbayani Village,” in *Letters in Exile: An Introductory Reader on the History of Pilipinos in America*, ed. Jesse Quinsaat (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1976), 144. See also Mark Day, *Forty Acres: Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers* (New York: Praeger, 1971), 177-81.

⁹⁹ Scharlin and Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz*, 98.

¹⁰⁰ Vera Cruz quoted in Day, *Forty Acres*, 181.

¹⁰¹ Scharlin and Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz*, 99.

more than one thousand volunteers—all of whom contributed to a building project that embodied the farm worker movement's enduring resourcefulness. Skilled volunteers included carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, tile setters, and sheet-metal workers from various union locals. Members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local No. 11, and the Mexican American Electrical Society, for example, completed the wiring. Tapers from the Painters Union, Local No. 1348, came from Los Angeles for three weekends in a row to tape and plaster the sheet rock. Members of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association, Local No. 1080, taught other volunteers how to work with sheet metal. Tile setters came from Los Angeles, plumbers came from Santa Barbara, and carpenters came from San Diego. Unskilled volunteers included members of the Third World Women's Alliance, who spent two days laying tile, the Japanese American Community Services, who helped move fifty tons of tile up onto the roof, the San Francisco Mime Troupe, who nailed sheeting over the passageways during the day and taught songs at night, the American Friends Service Committee, the Union of Democratic Filipinos, and dozens of other church, campus, and community organizations. As Philip Vera Cruz noted, groups of volunteers came from Canada, England, Switzerland, Germany, France, and Japan specifically to work on the village. Thus historians, observers, and residents themselves have consistently made special note of the manner in which the village was constructed. "To me, this is the most beautiful home in the whole world," future resident Sebastian Sahagun wrote as the village neared completion. "It is beautiful because it is being built by strong, beautiful hands of men and women whose hearts are filled with love, spirit of unity and determination to remake this world into a better place to live in."¹⁰²

The NFWSC dedicated the village on June 15, 1974, naming it honor of Paulo Agbayani, a union member who died from a heart attack while on a picket line in 1967. As a press release explained, the union lacked the money to buy Agbayani a head stone in 1967. Seven years later, the village would serve as a living memorial. Most of the first residents who moved into the village in February 1975 were, like Agbayani, Filipino immigrants. These fifty-seven men and one woman averaged 68 years in age, and they paid \$100 per month for rent and meals.¹⁰³ In the short term, they were happy with the village and its guiding principles: "self-help and mutual cooperation." In the coming years, the NFWSC would continue to view the village as a pilot project for "find[ing] a way to serve the hundreds of homeless farm workers of retirement age, most of which are Filipino."¹⁰⁴

A Stage for Significant Events

Forty Acres derives historical significance from its association with significant events in the life of Cesar Chavez and the history of the farm worker movement, including Chavez's first public fast in February and March 1968, the signing of union contracts that ended the five-year table grape strike in July 1970, Chavez's last public fast in July and August 1988, and Chavez's memorial service in April 1993.

¹⁰² Press release, June 15, 1974, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 4, Folder 8, ALUA, WSU; Sebastian Sahagun letter reprinted in Braga and Morita, "Agbayani Village," 143.

¹⁰³ Press release, June 15, 1974, UFW Administration Department Records; Chris Braga, "Report on Agbayani Village" (Dec. 24, 1974), Philip Vera Cruz Papers, Box 3, Folder 28, ALUA, WSU.

¹⁰⁴ "Agbayani Village: A Communal Settlement for Elderly Farmworkers," 1, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 4, Folder 8, ALUA, WSU; "National Farm Workers Service Center Annual Report" (1969), 5, UFW Administration Department Records.

Chavez's First Public Fast (February–March 1968)

The genesis of Cesar Chavez's first public fast came, to some extent, from an influx of younger Chicanos and Chicanas into a farm worker movement that had just begun to engage its staunchest opponents, was preparing to begin the third year of its strike, and was about to launch its famous boycott against California's entire table grape industry. As picket lines spread across the country—from the fields of California to the supermarkets of major cities—Chavez worried that farm workers and other movement members would abandon their commitment to nonviolence. Indeed, changing social conditions were making it harder for exhausted movement members to exercise restraint. By spring 1968, the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, and the Chicano movement were growing more militant. The first six months of 1968 would see escalations of revolutionary rhetoric from the Black Panthers, the eruption of riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., hundreds of student protests against the Vietnam War, and an intensification of Reies López Tijerina's campaign of armed resistance against the federal government. Given this context, it is not surprising that some members of the farm worker movement began to conclude that Chavez's nonviolent tactics had been tried and found wanting. They thought that it was time to adopt a more confrontational approach.¹⁰⁵

Chavez was aware of this changing sentiment. "There came a point in 1968 when we were in danger of losing," he later explained. "[A] sudden increase in violence against us, and an apparent lack of progress after more than two years of striking [led some movement members to conclude] the time had come to overcome violence by violence. . . . There was demoralization in the ranks, people becoming desperate, more and more talk about violence. People meant it, even when they talked to me," Chavez continued. "They would say, 'Hey, we've got to burn these sons of bitches down. We've got to kill a few of them.'"¹⁰⁶ As reports of property damage and other violent activity among movement participants began to flow into union headquarters, Chavez grew profoundly disappointed. On February 19, 1968, he called a meeting at the Filipino Community Hall in Delano and announced that he had been fasting and would continue to do so until movement members recommitted themselves to nonviolence. Chavez then walked three miles west to Forty Acres. The service station building had just been completed, but the co-op business had not opened and the building remained empty. Chavez decided to set up a cot in a small storage room in the center of the building, on the west side of the breezeway. He would receive visitors and sleep there as he fasted for the next twenty-five days.¹⁰⁷

Other leaders of the farm worker movement were divided in their responses to Chavez's fast. Some thought that the fast was religious folly or, worse, a publicity stunt. Dolores Huerta, conversely, realized that Chavez's fast had deep spiritual and cultural meaning. "I know it's hard for people who are not Mexican to understand," she

¹⁰⁵ Rast and Dubrow, "Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement," 77-78.

¹⁰⁶ Chavez quoted in Cletus E. Daniel, "Cesar Chavez and the Unionization of California Farm Workers," in *Labor Leaders in America*, ed. Melvin Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 369.

¹⁰⁷ The cot was later replaced by a twin bed. The room also accommodated two folding chairs. See LeRoy Chatfield, "Fast at Forty Acres," <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/category/commentary/fast-at-the-forty-acres> (accessed May 15, 2014).

explained, “but this is part of the Mexican culture—the penance, the whole idea of suffering for something, of self-inflicted punishment. It’s a tradition of very long standing. In fact, Cesar has often mentioned in speeches that we will not win through violence, we will win through fasting and prayer.”¹⁰⁸ Countless farm workers and other movement members responded to the fast in a similar, positive fashion. Hundreds of them streamed to Forty Acres, many for the first time, to offer pledges of nonviolence and prayers for Chavez’s health. As they did so, they infused the service station building with Mexican-Catholic spirituality. As LeRoy Chatfield recalled, the large room on the east side of the breezeway was converted into a chapel. “Hand painted windows served as stained glass windows, a table was used as the altar, a large crucifix was hung on the huelga flag covering the wall behind the altar,” and, he noted, “no farm worker chapel would be complete without an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on display.”¹⁰⁹ Father Mark Day celebrated Mass in the chapel every evening, and as the number of visitors grew, a tent city sprang up in front of the building. For more than three weeks, hundreds of union members and supporters attended the services, sang songs, shared meals, and drank hot chocolate into the night.¹¹⁰

Chavez’s first public fast at Forty Acres reinvigorated the farm worker movement. As former union attorney Jerry Cohen later explained, “I’m not religious at all, but I would go to those Masses at Forty Acres every night. No matter what their religious background, anyone interested in farm workers, or with any sense about people, could see that something was going on that was changing a lot of people. The feeling of the workers was obvious. They talked at those Masses about their own experiences, about what the fast meant in terms of what the union was going to mean to them. That was a really deep feeling.”¹¹¹ The fast also drew an unprecedented level of national attention to the strike. When Chavez decided that he would end the fast on March 11, 1968, Senator Robert Kennedy arranged to fly to Delano. Union leaders made plans for a Mass and celebration at Forty Acres, but the size of the crowd forced a relocation to Delano’s Memorial Park. Kennedy visited with Chavez in the service station building, sat by his side at the Mass, and offered him his first piece of bread as television cameras rolled. Despite this relocation to the park, farm workers would continue to associate the fast and its impact with the service station building. “It’s funny how one gas station could become so famous,” Philip Vera Cruz observed almost a decade later. “Everyone . . . knows that gas station.”¹¹²

Signing Contracts (July 1970)

A second event brought similar attention to Reuther Hall in July 1970. By summer 1969—when Chavez appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine—the impact of the table grape boycott could not be ignored.¹¹³ Unionized workers in cities across the country refused to handle grapes, sympathetic consumers refused to buy them, and the industry lost more than \$25 million in sales as a result. Had the Department of Defense

¹⁰⁸ Huerta quoted in Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 277.

¹⁰⁹ Chatfield, “Fast at Forty Acres.”

¹¹⁰ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 78-79. See also Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 272-74; Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 143; and Matthiessen, *Sal Si Puedes*, 181-82.

¹¹¹ Cohen quoted in Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 283, 280.

¹¹² Scharlin and Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz*, 3.

¹¹³ *Time*, July 4, 1969.

not increased its purchases of table grapes from 6.9 million pounds in 1968 to 11 million pounds in 1969, the losses would have been even greater.¹¹⁴

Grower solidarity finally began to crumble in spring 1970. Several table grape growers in the Coachella Valley agreed to recognize the union and negotiate contracts. With the union label on their crates, sales skyrocketed. Lionel Steinberg, the first Coachella grower to sign, recalled that “the immediate response from the other growers was dismay. But to my pleasant surprise . . . we found that six or eight of the major chain stores in Canada began calling us wanting our grapes and our brand because we had the union bug. So we had an immediate advantage over our competitors of one or two dollars a box.”¹¹⁵ The Giumarra Company finally agreed to negotiate a contract in July 1970, three months after Steinberg signed. That alone was an important victory. The Giumarra Company was the largest table grape grower operation in California and the union’s strongest opponent. The company controlled 11,000 acres and planted more than half of them in table grapes, employed more than 2,000 farm workers at harvest time, and grossed \$12 million a year. It was owned and operated by Joseph Giumarra, a 72-year-old Italian immigrant. His nephew, John Giumarra, Jr., had led the fight against the union.¹¹⁶

An even more impressive victory, however, quickly came to fruition. The union responded to the Giumarras’ acquiescence by demanding that they bring the rest of the growers who were still holding out with them to the bargaining table. After three days of meetings and negotiations, union leaders gathered with twenty-eight growers in Reuther Hall. On July 29, in front of hundreds of farm workers, union supporters, journalists, and camera crews, they signed contracts that finally brought an end to the five-year table grape strike and consolidated an unprecedented achievement for the farm worker movement. Almost an entire industry was under union contract, and more than 70,000 farm workers—for the first time in their lives—had secured legal protection of their basic rights to fair wages and benefits, fair hiring systems, job security measures, and safe working environments.¹¹⁷ As Richard Chavez later explained, the table at which growers and union leaders signed their contracts was in the large meeting room on the south side of Reuther Hall. “And there were . . . hundreds [of union members], thousands, outside,” because the meeting room was filled to capacity. “And you could see the growers coming in here. The way I describe that scene,” he continued, “is like when you’re taking lambs to the slaughter. They know they are going to be slaughtered! And it was a really *great* moment. I mean . . . knowing that it was over. . . . Knowing that we had *successfully* beaten them, that we had successfully defeated them with the boycott, was a great feeling. They knew it. We knew it. Everybody knew it. So it was a great feeling.” Reuther Hall remains associated with that feeling.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 79; Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 301; Anne Meister and Dick Loftis, *A Long Time Coming: The Struggle to Unionize America’s Farm Workers* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 157.

¹¹⁵ Steinberg quoted in Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 155.

¹¹⁶ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 80.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

Chavez's Last Public Fast (July–August 1988)

A third event—Chavez's third and final public fast—brought renewed attention to Forty Acres in summer 1988. By that point, the farm worker movement had undergone considerable change. Movement leadership fractured in the late 1970s, leading to the resignation of several UFW board members. Farm workers from Salinas posed their own challenge to Chavez's leadership in the early 1980s. More broadly, the union struggled to turn election victories among workers into new contracts with growers, in part because California governor George Deukmejian's appointees to the state's Agricultural Labor Relations Board exhibited more sympathy for growers than workers. As the number of union contracts declined from approximately 100 in the late 1970s to 31 a decade later, the union's membership began to decline as well—from a peak of more than 70,000 down to 15,000 in 1988.¹¹⁹

With diminished power and influence among growers and lawmakers, the union watched as farm workers' living conditions and working conditions deteriorated in California and beyond. During the early 1980s, physicians working at the NFWSC's health clinic in Salinas, for example, treated hundreds of farm workers and family members who were suffering from malnutrition, untreated bacterial infections, chronic neck and back pain, and symptoms caused by short-term and long-term exposure to chemical pesticides. Marion Moses, a nurse who was instrumental in opening the NFWSC's first health clinic in 1965, had earned her medical degree and returned to work with the union in 1983. Moses soon drew connections between the 2.6 million tons of chemical pesticides that farmers used every year, on the one hand, and the growing number of reports of cancer clusters in McFarland and other farming communities in the San Joaquin Valley, on the other. Moses's research—combined with the anti-union drift of the Agricultural Labor Relations Board—fueled Chavez's decision to call a new national consumer boycott of table grapes in July 1984.¹²⁰

The union began production of a short film, *The Wrath of Grapes*, to publicize the impact of chemical pesticides and to raise funds for the boycott. Chavez also traveled and spoke extensively, rallying consumers and union supporters and trying to maintain pressure on growers and their allies. After four years, however, the boycott had made little impact on grape sales and growers' profits. Chavez thus decided to embark on his third and final public fast—not to generate publicity or support, but to purify and strengthen himself and the movement and to offer penance for himself and others who had not done enough to combat the use of chemical pesticides that, the union claimed, caused as many as 10,000 deaths per year among farm workers and consumers. Chavez began his "Fast for Life" on the night of July 16, 1988, and he spent the duration of the fast in an empty room at the southeast corner of Agbayani Village, receiving visitors, praying and meditating, reading and resting, and consuming nothing except water. A medical team was present to monitor Chavez's condition, but the union leader was 61 years old, and the fast took a heavy toll—not only on Chavez, who lost thirty pounds and put his own life at risk, but also on his wife, his children and grandchildren, and other loved ones and supporters. At the same time, the fast served as a rallying point for union members and supporters, thousands of whom came to Forty Acres to

¹¹⁹ *New York Times*, Aug. 16, 1988; *El Hispano*, Aug. 31, 1988.

¹²⁰ Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 230-36; Griswold del Castillo and García, *César Chávez*, 134-36; "The New Grape Boycott," *Food and Justice* 1, no. 3 (Dec. 1984): 3-6.

visit with Chavez in his room, attend Mass services at Reuther Hall, and affirm their solidarity with the farm worker movement.¹²¹

After thirty-six days of fasting, Chavez decided to break his fast on Sunday, August 21, 1988. More than 8,000 union members and supporters arrived at Forty Acres, including presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, Ethel Kennedy and some of her children, labor leader John Sweeney, state assemblyman Tom Hayden, and celebrity supporters such as Martin Sheen and Edward James Olmos. Chavez ended his fast during a Mass service, when Ethel Kennedy offered him consecrated bread as her husband, Robert F. Kennedy had done after Chavez's first public fast twenty years prior. Jackson, Sheen, Olmos, and other high-profile supporters agreed to embark upon a succession of three-day fasts to continue a "chain of suffering" that lasted for several months.¹²²

Chavez's Memorial Service (April 1993)

Chavez's death and memorial service in April 1993 again brought national attention to Forty Acres. As the farm worker movement entered the 1990s, Chavez remained active as the leader of the UFW and its ongoing boycott of grapes. He traveled and spoke throughout California and beyond, he sought reconciliation with other leaders who had left the movement on bad terms, he returned to the fields to lead new organizing campaigns, and he continued to spar with growers who mistreated their workers. In 1993, he traveled to Yuma, Arizona, to testify in a lawsuit brought by one of the union's oldest adversaries, the Bruce Church Corporation. After two days of testimony, the 66-year-old union leader seemed cheerful and determined, but he also admitted to feeling exhausted. After a quiet dinner in the home of a retired farm worker in San Luis, he retired to his room. During the early morning hours of April 23, 1993, Chavez died in his sleep.¹²³

As word of Chavez's death spread through telephone calls and then news reports, feelings of shock and sadness touched family members, friends, and countless members and veterans of the farm worker movement. Chavez's wife, Helen, their children, and other family members mourned, but they also began to plan the funeral. They decided that Chavez would be buried at Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz (his home and the union's headquarters since 1971), but the memorial service would take place, fittingly, at Forty Acres.¹²⁴

Tens of thousands of mourners from California and across the country began making their way to Delano. Those who arrived early gathered at Forty Acres, and many kept vigil through the night of April 28, 1993. The service itself took place the next day. A funeral procession started near downtown Delano, with drummers and Aztec dancers in the lead. Pallbearers took turns carrying Chavez's casket—a simple pine coffin that Richard had made, fulfilling an old promise to his brother—and they walked three miles

¹²¹ "Chavez Begins Fast," *Food and Justice* 5, no. 5 (July 1988): 8-9; *El Hispano*, August 31, 1988; Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 238-39, 245-47; Griswold del Castillo and García, *César Chávez*, 136-37. Chavez fasted in Room 37 at Agbayani Village.

¹²² "For 35 Days, Water. . . and on the 36th, Bread," *Food and Justice* 5, no. 6 (Sept. 1988): 4-13; Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 246-47; Griswold del Castillo and García, *César Chávez*, 137.

¹²³ *New York Times*, April 24, 1993; Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 254-55.

¹²⁴ Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 255-56, 260.

west on Garces Highway, past People's Bar, houses, and fields, toward Forty Acres. More than 35,000 mourners followed, some carrying red union flags and black mourning flags, others holding banners with messages of gratitude and condolence. Some sang songs and shouted "Viva Chavez," others quietly remembered Chavez and his impact on their lives. The procession stretched nearly three miles. As the leaders of the procession arrived at Forty Acres, the last of the mourners were beginning their own final march with Cesar Chavez.¹²⁵

A number of noted politicians, social leaders, and celebrities participated in the procession and the service that followed: Reverend Jesse Jackson and actor Edward James Olmos took turns as pallbearers, Ethel Kennedy walked alongside Helen, former Governor Jerry Brown walked behind Chavez's casket, Cardinal Roger Mahoney led the Mass and shared a message from Pope John Paul II, Luis Valdez and Paul Rodriguez offered words of gratitude, and Mickey Cantor conveyed the condolences of President Bill Clinton.¹²⁶ The memorial service also drew many movement veterans back to Delano, including Eliseo Medina, Marshall Ganz, Jerry Cohen, and others who had left the movement on bad terms more than ten years prior. Most of the participants, however, were ordinary farm workers and other movement members. They came to Forty Acres that day to reflect on Chavez's legacy, to express their gratitude, and to recommit themselves to the enduring goals of the movement he led. "You shall never die," Luis Valdez promised Chavez, in front of the tens of thousands gathered at Forty Acres. "The seed of your heart will keep on singing, keep on flowering, for the cause. All the farm workers shall harvest in the seed of your memory."¹²⁷

Forty Acres and the Daily Life of the Farm Worker Movement

Forty Acres was the site of several pivotal events in the life of Cesar Chavez and the history of the farm worker movement, but it also derives historical significance from the daily life associated with it—the ordinary, everyday ways that Chavez and union staff members, farm workers and their families, and other movement members used the property. Focusing on the regular activities that occurred at Forty Acres illuminates a simple but crucial point about Chavez and the farm workers he led: they launched and propelled a *social movement*, and they created and empowered a *labor union*, in that order, but the union never encompassed the entirety of the movement. Those who would later lament the union's decline often failed to appreciate this distinction.¹²⁸ If we focus on the daily life associated with Forty Acres, however, we can see that the same property served as an administrative center for the union *and* as a service center that helped define the broader movement. Likewise, Chavez and other individuals served, to the best of their abilities, as leaders of the union *and* as leaders of the movement.

Chavez certainly envisioned Forty Acres as more than just an administrative center for the union. For Cesar, as for his brother Richard and for LeRoy Chatfield, Forty Acres would offer a central location where farm workers and their family members could pursue self-reliance and self-determination by providing basic but essential services for other farm workers—and by receiving services in turn. The provision of services in this particular location would foster a sense of community and a sense of place. Cesar,

¹²⁵ Ibid., 261; *New York Times*, April 30, 1993.

¹²⁶ *New York Times*, April 30, 1993.

¹²⁷ Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 263; *New York Times*, April 30, 1993.

¹²⁸ See for example Garcia, *From the Jaws of Victory*.

Richard, and LeRoy outlined this vision during the first year of the Delano strike. As the strike ended its fourth year in fall 1969, their vision remained strong.

In January 1970, with no end to the strike in sight, Chavez decided to propose an expansion of the services available at Forty Acres. At a membership meeting that month, Chavez explained that “even though we have a union,” economic power did not “begin and end with the union.” The union was an important tool, but another important tool that the working poor could develop was “cooperativism.” Chavez noted that union members were eligible to receive three separate co-op services—those of the credit union, the gas station, and the health clinic. Chavez proposed to consolidate these services into one “Multi Service Co-op,” and several members suggested creating additional services, such as a grocery store and clothing store. Chavez welcomed these ideas. He argued that the only way for poor people to gain the political power they needed to improve their lives was to gain economic power. A labor union provided one means of gaining economic power—*but not the only means*. Thus the farm worker movement had created a union, but it also needed to strengthen and expand its co-op. “The most important thing to achieve through our co-op,” he concluded, “is education.” He believed that the expansion of the co-op services located at Forty Acres would allow members of the farm worker movement to learn that their hopes for economic empowerment and political empowerment did not rest entirely with the success of the union and its ongoing strike in Delano.

Forty Acres and Cesar Chavez

By summer 1969, Forty Acres was well on its way to becoming a service center for farm workers and their families. The service station building was completed and moving toward its opening in October 1969. The offices of the union newspaper, *El Malcriado*, were located nearby. A trailer home and a larger mobile home provided space for the health clinic, and Reuther Hall (which would provide additional space for offices and services) was under construction. Soon after the completion of Reuther Hall in September 1969, Forty Acres also became the new administrative center for the farm workers’ union (still known, at that point, as the UFWOC).

Chavez, of course, was centrally involved in the growth of the service center and the growth of the union. After Reuther Hall was completed, Chavez set up his office in the northeast corner of the building. Mark Day later described an office that was simply furnished and modestly decorated. A plain wooden table served as a desk, with a rocking chair that provided comfort for Chavez’s chronic back pain. Shelves propped up by adobe bricks held stacks of papers, a bust of Senator Robert Kennedy, and a framed picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. One wall was covered by a large poster of Mohandas Gandhi. Another wall featured a picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe and a straw crucifix from Mexico. Near the door were two large photographs: one of Dorothy Day, longtime editor of the *Catholic Worker*, and one of brothers Daniel and Philip Berrigan, priests who were imprisoned for their protests against the Vietnam War.¹²⁹

Not surprisingly, Chavez preferred to spend as little time in his office as possible. By 1969, the small farm workers’ association he founded in 1962 had grown into one of the most powerful labor unions in California, and with its growth came the creation of several major service operations. For better or worse, Chavez felt obligated to maintain

¹²⁹ Day, *Forty Acres*, 30.

intimate familiarity with the details of all of these operations. Thus he played a central role in managing all of the union's activities, but he also listened to reports and weighed in on decisions regarding the operations of the service station, the health clinic, the credit union, and other services increasingly associated with Reuther Hall. Chavez was even known to personally assist farm workers with their myriad problems—as he had done when he worked as a community organizer in the 1950s and when he built the foundation for his fledgling association in the early 1960s. Nearly every day, Chavez would set aside other work in order to sit down with farm workers who were struggling with tax forms or immigration paperwork, he would call hospital administrators and school principals on farm workers' behalf, he would confront law enforcement officers in response to farm workers' claims of harassment or brutality, and so on. Chavez was a union president, but he also was a movement leader. He made his availability known and his presence felt whenever he was at Forty Acres.¹³⁰

Forty Acres and the Union

Forty Acres became the administrative center for the UFWOC in fall 1969. Prior to that point, the union and its forerunners utilized several spaces scattered throughout Delano. In 1964, the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) began renting a building on the northeast corner of First Avenue and Albany Street in order to move its offices out of the Chavez house on Kensington Street. After the Delano strike began in September 1965, the NFWA began renting two adjacent houses: the house at the northwest corner of First Avenue and Asti Street and “the Pink House,” located immediately north. The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (the union with which the NFWA would merge to form the UFWOC) also invited the NFWA to share its own strike headquarters at the Filipino Community Hall in central Delano, and this building provided a crucial space for larger meetings and shared meals. The NFWA, however, held its own membership meetings at a small Baptist church on Belmont Street (“Negrito Hall”) and gradually developed a separate strike headquarters on Mettler Avenue (“Arroyo Camp”).¹³¹

The completion of Reuther Hall allowed the UFWOC to centralize the activities associated with these other locations. Chavez's office was located in the building's northeast corner, next to the conference room. Other union leaders used offices nearby, including Larry Itliong, Dolores Huerta, Gilbert Padilla, Richard Chavez, and Philip Vera Cruz. Four offices were reserved for the union's legal staff, two offices were assigned to the boycott operations, two offices were assigned to the accounting staff, and one office each was allocated to the membership department and hiring hall. (As discussed below, other office space in Reuther Hall was reserved for the National Farm Workers Service Center, including an office for LeRoy Chatfield.)¹³²

From these offices in Reuther Hall, UFWOC officers and staff managed many of the union's activities during the final year of the Delano strike and then through the first year of a subsequent strike centered in Salinas. Most of the union's focus during these years fell on managing its strikes, including its boycotts of Delano grapes and Salinas lettuce. By fall 1969, the union's boycott of grapes had cut off sales in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other major cities in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

¹³⁰ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

¹³¹ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 51, 60-61.

¹³² “Telephone Recommendations—Reuther Building,” UFWOC Collection.

For the most part, the boycott operations were managed from more than forty “boycott houses” established in each of the major cities, but the effort still relied upon union staff in Delano for coordination and research. In summer 1969, for example, researchers discovered that President Nixon’s Department of Defense was assisting embattled growers by purchasing California grapes and feeding them to soldiers in Vietnam. In 1968, the Department of Defense had shipped roughly 500,000 pounds of grapes to Vietnam. During the first six months of 1969 alone, grape shipments to Vietnam surpassed 2 million pounds. Making quick use of this information, boycotters across the country were able to link support for the boycott with growing opposition to an unpopular war.¹³³

On a speaking tour that began in late September 1969, Chavez himself amplified the connection between support for the boycott and opposition to the Vietnam War. Returning to Delano in late December 1969, he began a final push to end a strike that had entered its fifth year. The growing involvement of Monsignor Roger Mahony and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops helped bring the strike into its final stage, as did Coachella grower Lionel Steinberg’s willingness to concede that he could no longer weather the financial impact of the boycott. Negotiations with Steinberg began in March 1970 at a church in Palm Springs. In the coming months, negotiations with other growers also took place on neutral ground—at the International Hotel in Los Angeles, the Holiday Inn in Bakersfield, and the Stardust Motel in Delano—but Chavez insisted that any contract signings with the Delano growers would take place at Forty Acres. As discussed above, this stipulation brought twenty-eight Delano grape growers and hundreds of union members to the large meeting room in Reuther Hall on July 29, 1970, where they signed contracts and celebrated the end of the strike.¹³⁴

Watching these events from a distance, twenty-nine lettuce growers in Salinas quietly decided to sign union contracts with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, covering workers who otherwise might have joined Chavez’s increasingly powerful union. As news of these contracts spread in early August, farm workers in the Salinas Valley were angry, and thousands prepared to strike. Facing pressure from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the AFL-CIO, the Teamsters soon agreed to recognize the UFWOC’s jurisdiction. The growers, however, refused to let the Teamsters reverse course. By the end of August 1970, more than five thousand workers were picketing the fields in the Salinas Valley, bringing production to a halt in the most productive lettuce fields in the world.

The UFWOC quickly opened an office in Salinas where workers could join the union, join the strike, receive picketing instructions, and receive strike pay. More than 150 ranches were struck, and the intensive picketing activity lasted for several weeks. Salinas growers (and Teamsters) fought back with intimidation and violence, but most of the fighting took place in the courtroom. During the first week of the strike alone, local judges issued more than a dozen restraining orders covering three dozen ranches. The union’s legal staff appealed these court orders, but legal expenses began to mount. By mid-September, Chavez had decided to suspend the picketing and instead funnel the union’s resources back into its boycott operations. At a press conference, Chavez announced that the union was sending boycotters to 64 cities in the United States and

¹³³ Ferriss and Sandoval, *Fight in the Fields*, 148; Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 79.

¹³⁴ Pawel, *Crusades of Cesar Chavez*, 206.

Canada, where they would stay “until the last lettuce grower [was] signed up.” When Chavez then defied an injunction against the boycott, he was taken to the county jail. He would stay there until December 23, 1970.¹³⁵

As with the final months of the Delano strike, the union’s operations in the Salinas Valley relied, in part, on staff and resources in Reuther Hall. Yet most of the legal work unfolded in Salinas—in the county courthouse, in the UFWOC office, and in the apartment of UFWOC attorney Bill Carder. Similarly, most of the boycott activity played out in the cities to which the boycotters returned, just a matter of weeks after the table grape boycott ended.¹³⁶ In fact, the primary focus of union activity at Forty Acres from fall 1970 through fall 1971 was more mundane, yet this activity was just as vital to the strength of the union as the Salinas strike and renewed boycott.

When Chavez and other union leaders went to Salinas in August 1970, they left Richard Chavez and Larry Itliong in charge at Forty Acres. With only minimal staff support, the two men were responsible for ratifying the UFWOC’s newest contracts and administering *all* of the union’s contracts—roughly 200 contracts covering some 55,000 farm workers. The ratification process required a majority of workers at every ranch to sign cards authorizing UFWOC representation, but as thousands of tired workers waited in long lines to sign and submit their cards at Reuther Hall every day, overwhelmed staff members neglected to sort and file the cards by ranch. The disarray at Reuther Hall created an impression of administrative incompetence. “After about two and a half weeks, we kind of started seeing daylight,” Richard recalled. “But it was quite an experience, what with the politics that went on, the confusion, not knowing what we were doing, and the growers putting pressure [on us]. . . . It was the most terrible two weeks in my whole life.”¹³⁷

Richard gained confidence as the weeks went by, but the administrative challenges only grew. A key provision in the union’s new contracts was that every unionized ranch in the Delano area had to secure its workers through the hiring hall located in Reuther Hall. In theory, growers would contact the hiring hall to request the number of workers they would need in the days and weeks ahead, and the union would select the workers and dispatch as many of them as needed. Use of the union’s hiring hall was appealing, in large part, because it would replace the use of labor contractors—those middle men who sometimes over-recruited workers and then hired only those who agreed to work for the lowest wages, who sometimes skimmed off some of the workers’ earnings and blamed growers for reductions, and who sometimes demanded sexual favors from women in exchange for giving them or their family members work. The “most evil of all evils in the system,” Cesar often explained, “is the farm labor contractor.”¹³⁸

Unfortunately, the union’s process for selecting which workers to dispatch from the hiring hall only heightened the sense of administrative incompetence, at least in the short term. The union, for example, would only dispatch workers whose membership in the union was current—meaning those who did not owe any back dues (assessed at \$3.50 per month, regardless of whether a member was employed under a union contract

¹³⁵ Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 83-86. Chavez quoted in Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 422.

¹³⁶ Pawel, *Crusades of Cesar Chavez*, 222.

¹³⁷ Richard Chavez quoted in Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 362.

¹³⁸ Chavez quoted in Levy, *Cesar Chavez*, 63.

in a given month). This stipulation sometimes forced workers to pay hefty amounts of money in back dues, but it also required accurate record-keeping and efficient processing from the union's membership department staff, who were not always up to the task. The union, moreover, dispatched workers based on seniority, which was determined by the number of consecutive months or years a worker had been an active member in the union. This stipulation rewarded members who had maintained their commitment to the union, but it made it more difficult for families with differing seniority levels to work together, and it slowed the dispatching process even more. Gilbert Padilla remembered the scene at Reuther Hall during a visit in 1971: "There was a little window inside this big hall at Forty Acres. The hall was full of people . . . anxious to go to work . . . and someone was screaming from inside the window, 'Anybody here from 1962?' Few could even hear what was being said. And those who could hear couldn't understand it. 'Anybody here from 1963?' And all the way down the line. It was horrible. I went around talking to people, and they were pissed off." When hiring hall staff explained the benefits of the new system to workers who did not yet understand, their appreciation often grew, but this took time and patience that were sometimes in short supply.¹³⁹

In addition to these administrative challenges, Richard, Larry, and the UFWOC staff at Forty Acres wrestled with the election and function of ranch committees (teams of workers from each unionized ranch elected to represent their co-workers and to relay information back to them), they pursued the resolution of grievances communicated by union members to their ranch committees, they managed the union's staffing and accounting needs, they worked with the National Farm Workers Service Center staff to manage union members' benefits, and they navigated discontent among Filipino American union members who felt increasingly marginalized within a union that had begun to shift its center of activity away from Delano. Given its multifaceted relationship with the union during fall 1969, through 1970, and into spring 1971, Forty Acres was a site of important victories and immense challenges, a site of excitement and experimentation, a site of empowerment and undeniable growing pains. Focusing only on the relationship between Forty Acres and the union, however, neglects the broader story—the relationship between Forty Acres and the farm worker movement.

Forty Acres and the Farm Worker Movement

Farm workers who visited Forty Acres in 1970 or even 1971 might have formed an impression of administrative incompetence, but only if they just visited the hiring hall and then learned, for the first time, about the union's dues requirements and dispatching policies. More often, farm workers who visited Forty Acres during this period would have associated the property with a full array of union functions and wide variety of union-provided services.

For Cesar Chavez and for countless movement members who served as volunteer staff, the provision of services defined the character of Forty Acres and, indeed, the farm worker movement as a whole. It is fitting that Susan Samuels Drake's poem (discussed above) emphasizes that those forty acres of clay and whirling dust

¹³⁹ Pawel, *Crusades of Cesar Chavez*, 249; *El Malcriado*, July 15, 1970. Padilla quoted in Bardacke, *Trampling Out the Vintage*, 402. Pawel captures the frustrations of workers but, as Philip Vera Cruz pointed out, growers deliberately enflamed these frustrations, trying to drive a wedge between the workers and the union. See Scharlin and Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz*, 109-10.

near the city dump became the home of “a credit union, a clinic, offices and a place for worn-down workers to retire.”¹⁴⁰ Even though movement members like Samuels Drake and farm workers themselves knew Forty Acres as the headquarters of the union, they embraced it as the site of the co-op gas station, credit union, health clinic, and other much-needed services.

Different services were tied to each of the four buildings at Forty Acres, but a list prepared by the National Farm Workers Service Center in the mid-1970s suggests the overarching variety of services that drew farm workers and their family members to the property. In addition to the services associated with the gas station, credit union, and clinic, farm workers sought and received assistance in applying for social security numbers, applying for food assistance, securing information on low-income housing, preparing naturalization applications, translating government letters and documents, preparing income tax forms, collecting back wages from employers, completing auto insurance paperwork, applying for marriage licenses, getting letters notarized, completing armed services applications, securing donations of clothing, dealing with traffic violations, and learning about other community services and government programs.¹⁴¹ The availability of this assistance and other services drew roughly 500 farm workers to Forty Acres every month between fall 1969 and fall 1970. With an influx of new union members, funds, and volunteer staff members after the signing of contracts in August 1970, that number began to climb. By 1975, roughly 1,000 farm workers and family members visited Forty Acres every month, and the number of volunteers who worked there for only five dollars per day (plus housing and food allowances) hovered around 100. For these women and men in particular, Forty Acres was a site of daily sacrifice and service that infused the farm workers’ union but also transcended it.¹⁴²

Among the first services available at Forty Acres were those associated with the co-op gas station. Construction of the service station building was completed in January 1968, but the co-op continued to operate from a former Texaco gas station near downtown Delano prior to summer 1969, when the gasoline pumps and underground storage tanks were finally installed at Forty Acres. When the new building opened for business in October 1969, union members were able to stop there to purchase “Huelga Gas” for five cents per gallon less than they would paid elsewhere, a savings of about twenty percent. Union members, moreover, were able to purchase auto parts at reduced prices and secure minor auto repairs at reduced rates—all of which, of course, carried significant value to men and women who often drove long distances for work, especially before and after the harvest season in Delano.

Like the service station building, Reuther Hall was dedicated in September 1969, but it did not open for services until the electrical work was completed in November 1969. As discussed above, the building housed the offices of Cesar Chavez and other UFWOC leaders as well as offices for the union’s various departments, a conference room, and a large meeting room. Reuther Hall also housed NFWSC offices, including an office for LeRoy Chatfield, an office for the social services center, and two offices for the credit union.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Samuels Drake, “Forty Acres,” 41.

¹⁴¹ Press release, June 15, 1974, UFW Administration Department Records.

¹⁴² *El Malcriado*, May 1, 1970; Kushner, *Long Road*, 145.

¹⁴³ Meeting minutes, Nov. 12, 1969, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 6, Folder 1, ALUA, WSU; “Telephone Recommendations,” UFWOC Collection.

The credit union was incorporated in August 1963, and Helen Chavez's quiet but effective management helped it grow steadily. By 1967, the credit union counted nearly 900 members and nearly \$35,000 in total assets. Three years later, the credit union's membership had grown to include 1,190 members, and it had granted 1,264 loans for a cumulative total of \$281,308. Prior to the completion of Reuther Hall, the credit union was located in the rear of the Pink House, near the corner of First Avenue and Asti Street. For several years, Helen had been asking for additional staff (especially a full-time collection agent) but also for additional space necessary to provide security and privacy. Reuther Hall provided that space with two offices—one for accounting and one for meeting with farm workers who belonged to the credit union.¹⁴⁴

The other office in Reuther Hall that provided services directly to farm workers was the NFWSC's social services center. Like the credit union, this center traced its roots to the early work of the National Farm Workers Association. By 1965, the services center routinely handled what LeRoy Chatfield later described as "all of the problems that the family of a farm worker has," including "language problems, school problems, welfare, legal, and accounting problems, filling out accident and tax forms, passing a drivers' test, applying for citizenship, [and] registering to vote."¹⁴⁵ Building on the service-oriented approach that Cesar Chavez developed with the Community Service Organization during the 1950s, the services center treated farm workers not just as workers who deserved better pay and working conditions but as people who faced (and whose *families* faced) myriad challenges on and beyond the work site. The services center thus assisted farm workers in a wide variety of ways—helping them respond to problems, helping them navigate government bureaucracies and understand procedures, even helping them secure access to resources that the services center could not provide. Oftentimes, the services center provided legal advice and representation that otherwise might have been out of reach. Between fall 1969 and spring 1970, for example, attorney Bob McMillen helped save a farm worker's house from foreclosure, helped prosecute a claim for fraudulent automobile sale, pressed a business to repair an automobile or return a farm worker's money, helped a farm worker avoid suspension of his driver's license, helped get a refund from a store, assisted a farm worker with a disability claim, helped a farm worker respond to a tax audit, helped a farm worker avoid deportation, helped with an automobile insurance claim, and intervened in a case of police brutality. All of these services were available through the social services center at Reuther Hall, which was open eleven hours a day, six days a week, and was staffed by personnel who spoke English, Spanish, and Tagalog.¹⁴⁶

As with the co-op gas station, credit union, and social services center, the services offered to farm workers through the health clinic pre-dated the development of Forty Acres. When the Rodrigo Terronez Clinic opened in October 1971, these services relocated to the building but also expanded in availability and scope. Farm workers who belonged to the National Farm Workers Health Group could receive full ambulatory service in medicine, pediatrics, surgery, and obstetrics-gynecology as well as laboratory

¹⁴⁴ Untitled report (ca. 1967), NFWA Collection; "Report on 'The National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.,'" 9, UFWOC Collection; "National Farm Workers Service Center Annual Report" (1969), 4, UFW Administration Department Records; *El Malcriado*, Feb. 1-28, 1970.

¹⁴⁵ Untitled report (ca. 1967), NFWA Collection.

¹⁴⁶ "Report on 'The National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.,'" 9, UFWOC Collection; Bob McMillen, report, Jan. 22, 1970, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 15, Folder 34, ALUA, WSU.

work, x-rays, social services, and counseling. These services were provided by a professional staff of four physicians, three nurses, and three medical assistants, with support from an x-ray technician, lab technician, receptionist, bookkeeper, medical records keeper, administrator, and administrative assistant. The physicians and nurses were fluent in Spanish and relied upon translators for patients who spoke Tagalog. They provided twenty-four-hour emergency care and regular services Thursdays through Mondays, to minimize the time that farm workers might need to miss work. By the end of 1972, the clinic had served more than 5,000 farm workers and family members making more than 23,000 separate visits to Forty Acres. Roughly 30 percent of all visits to the clinic were made by women between the ages of 21 and 50. Men over 50 years old (the majority of whom were Filipinos) made roughly 20 percent of all visits, as did children under 10 years old. These patients most often sought and received curative treatment, but the clinic staff emphasized preventative medicine and routine screening—all of which improved the lives of farm workers and their families.¹⁴⁷

The clinic was a product of the union's victories at the bargaining table. Agbayani Village was as well. Yet like the clinic and the co-op gas station, Agbayani Village ultimately was associated less with the union and more with the farm worker movement as a whole. Before the retirement village welcomed its first residents in February 1975, Filipino farm workers in Delano had few options for retirement housing; indeed, the cost of decent housing made retirement an option that few could afford. Two dozen Filipino men, for example, lived together in a former labor camp owned by Schenley Industries, but this camp on the east side of Delano consisted of a bunkhouse, outdoor toilets and showers, and a crude kitchen with an adjoining dining room. As a report prepared by the NFWSC explained, the camp was poorly heated, and the outdoor facilities created a severe hardship for the elderly men, especially during the winters. Thus it is not surprising that the NFWSC received 76 applications for residence in the village's 58 rooms. Preference was given to those who launched the Delano grape strike in September 1965, and the village came to life as a testament to the courage they showed as members of a movement that predated the union.¹⁴⁸

When Philip Vera Cruz, Larry Itliong, and other Filipino leaders began developing their plans for Agbayani Village in 1969, Forty Acres was taking shape as the farm worker movement's flagship service center. The NFWSC's annual report for 1969 noted that six other service centers had been opened elsewhere in California (Calexico, Coachella, Fresno, and Orosi), Arizona (Tolleson), and Texas (San Juan). An eighth center was close to opening in Lamont, California, and additional centers were planned for Parlier, Hollister, and Livingston in spring 1970. These smaller service centers were located in rented buildings or spaces, and each relied upon one to four volunteer staff members who helped farm workers and their families with government procedures, legal problems, health problems, and other challenges farm workers faced beyond the fields. In the short term, Forty Acres served as an important source of trained volunteers who

¹⁴⁷ Untitled document, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 21, Folder 12, ALUA, WSU; Pearl McGivney, "Horizons of Hope" (1972), https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/RogeroPitt/01/RFK%20Health%20Plan_005.pdf (accessed May 15, 2014); Peter Rudd, "The United Farm Workers Clinic in Delano, Calif.: A Study of the Rural Poor," *Rural Health* 90 (July-August 1975): 332-33.

¹⁴⁸ "Agbayani Village," 2, UFW Administration Department Records; press release, June 15, 1974, UFW Administration Department Records; Braga, "Report," Philip Vera Cruz Papers.

could staff these centers, but Forty Acres also embodied a compelling strategy for the growth of the union. By the mid-1970s, NFWSC leadership would point to Forty Acres as the definitive model for linking union functions with social services, health services, and opportunities for socialization—a proven formula for fostering and maintaining workers' solidarity.¹⁴⁹

Forty Acres offered a model for other service centers, but its unique relationship with the daily life of the farm worker movement ensured that it would always stand apart. As this report has explained, Forty Acres was the first full manifestation of Chavez's inspirational vision of a movement dedicated to the service of others. Forty Acres embodied that movement, especially its members' lack of financial resources and their undeterred sense of resourcefulness. Several pivotal events that took place at Forty Acres elevated the property's significance, making it hallowed ground for movement members. When Chavez announced in February 1968 that he was fasting, for example, LeRoy Chatfield stood up at the Filipino Hall and said that "as long as Cesar was [fasting at] . . . the Forty Acres, it would be considered sacred ground." On a smaller scale, the daily delivery of services at Forty Acres—and the daily sacrifices on the part of those who provided those services—reflected and propelled the spirit of self-determination at the heart of the movement.¹⁵⁰

Thus Forty Acres became a symbol of Chavez's work and a symbol of the union, but ultimately it was a symbol of the farm worker movement—its genesis, its defining characteristics, its everyday accomplishments, and its enduring aspirations. Not surprisingly, Forty Acres impressed the movement's supporters. Men like Alan Reuther (son of Roy Reuther) associated Reuther Hall with the character of the movement. "Your building represents those values and qualities my dad cherished, especially dignity, justice, and brotherhood," he wrote. "Because the building signifies warmth, struggle, and life, I know my father would be happy to have his memory associated with it." Senator Ted Kennedy similarly heralded the Terronez Clinic. For him, the new clinic building was a product of "hard work," a "fine example of what can be accomplished," and a "cause for great hope" for all families, especially those in rural areas, "who have waited so long for access to adequate health care." The symbolism of Forty Acres as a whole resonated with representatives of philanthropic organizations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, who were "very turned on with [Cesar's] thoughts on how co-ops could change the lives of poor [people] if they were properly organized."¹⁵¹

Unfortunately, the impression that Forty Acres made upon the movement's supporters also made it a target for the movement's opponents. In April 1968, not long after Cesar completed his first public fast at the service station building, his brother Richard made a large cross using two telephone poles and erected it near the southeast corner of the property. Movement members decorated the cross with roses and

¹⁴⁹ "National Farm Workers Service Center Annual Report" (1969), 4, UFW Administration Department Records; *El Malcriado*, Oct. 15-31, 1969; "National Farm Workers Service Center General Report" (1975), 11, 15, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 2, Box 33, Folder 12, ALUA, WSU. On the importance of training opportunities see "Report on 'The National Farm Workers Service Center, Inc.,'" 10, UFWOC Collection.

¹⁵⁰ Chatfield, "LeRoy Chatfield, 1963–1973."

¹⁵¹ Alan Reuther to Cesar Chavez (ca. 1969), UFW Central Administration Collection, Box 6, Folder 12, ALUA, WSU; Ted Kennedy, telegram, Sept. 13, 1971, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Box 9, Folder 4, ALUA, WSU; "National Farm Workers Service Center Annual Report" (1969), 6, UFW Administration Department Records.

celebrated a sunrise Mass near it on Easter Sunday. Two days later, vandals cut down the cross, soaked it with gasoline, and set it on fire. Around the same time, a passenger in a vehicle driven along Garces Highway fired a gun at the service station building. No one was injured, but the impact of the bullets left several pockmarks on the front exterior. The service station building was targeted again in January 1973, when someone detonated a bomb near the southwest corner of the building. The blast caused no injuries, but it blew a three-foot hole through one of the building's steel-reinforced adobe walls, shattered the windows of a neighboring house, and shook Reuther Hall and the Terronez Clinic. The following month, vandals ransacked a UFW field office in Terra Bella, California. The same day, a healthy baby boy was born at the Terronez Clinic. Chavez reflected on the two events, and though he focused on the Terra Bella office, he could have been speaking about the bombing of the service station building. "It is beautiful how where there is destruction there is also life," Chavez told *El Malcriado*. "Our Terra Bella office was destroyed this morning, but we also saw new life. These are the things that strengthen our spirit to continue struggling day after day, week after week, year after year." The ordinary, everyday nature of that struggle—which Chavez and countless movement members experienced and understood—enhanced the historical significance of Forty Acres.¹⁵²

An Enduring Locus of Collective Memory

With the opening of Agbayani Village in 1975, the development of Forty Acres was complete. Since the mid-1970s, Forty Acres has derived historical significance primarily from its role as a locus of collective memory for those who joined the farm worker movement, countless people who supported the movement, and new generations who continue to draw inspiration from it.

To be sure, Forty Acres continued to undergo a variety of changes after 1975—in form and, more importantly, in function. Some of these changes were underway by the end of 1972, and they sprang from Chavez's decision to transfer the administrative headquarters of the UFW and the NFWSC from Forty Acres to a newly-acquired property in the foothills of the Tehachapi Mountains, thirty miles east of Bakersfield, California. Forty Acres continued to serve as a field office for the union and as the flagship service center for the movement as a whole, but the new property (known today as "Nuestra Señora Reina de La Paz" or simply "La Paz") demanded a growing share of attention and resources. After the 1970s, Forty Acres grew quieter. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, its use as a site of social gatherings, reunions, and commemorative events became more pronounced. By the early 2000s, an effort was underway to designate the property a National Historic Landmark, affirming its status as a site of movement activity but also history and collective memory.

Chavez had begun to consider moving the headquarters of the union (and his own residence) away from Delano as early as 1969. Whenever he was at the original NFWA offices in Delano and then in Reuther Hall, he would face a steady stream of farm workers seeking his assistance. As Richard Chavez later explained, farm workers would come to the offices requesting help, "and many times Cesar personally would sit down with [them]." By 1970, "everybody that came to the Forty Acres wanted to talk to Cesar." Chavez soon found himself stretched too thin. As he acknowledged to writer Jacques

¹⁵² Day, *Forty Acres*, 5; Chavez and Delgado, interview; *El Malcriado*, Jan. 26, 1973. Chavez quoted in *El Malcriado*, Feb. 9, 1973.

Levy, he had begun to long for a refuge where he would be able “to reflect on what was happening, to shed all of those million little problems, and to look at things a little more dispassionately.” At the same time, Chavez had begun to recognize that the union’s strike against table grape growers had caused many observers within and beyond California to associate the union only with Delano. A move away from Delano, he thought, might enable the union to broaden its profile and thus improve its ability to attract a broader swath of members and supporters. Finally, Chavez thought that a larger, more remote property might allow him to experiment more systematically with communal living. He still retained his original vision for Forty Acres—a place dedicated to the service of others, cooperative enterprises, educational efforts, and the cultivation of community—but he was ready to transfer that vision to a new location.¹⁵³

In spring 1970, LeRoy Chatfield learned that Kern County was selling a 187-acre property near the small town of Tehachapi, California. The property had served as a tuberculosis sanitarium for almost fifty years, and its mix of residential buildings and administrative spaces made it seem like an ideal fit. The NFWSC acquired the property with the help of a wealthy benefactor, and Chavez announced in spring 1971 that he wanted to relocate the union’s offices and his own residence to “Nuestra Señora de La Paz Educational Retreat Center.” A few movement leaders opposed this decision. Larry Itliong, in particular, worried that a move from the fields of Delano up into the mountains would put too much distance—physical and symbolic—between the union’s leaders and its members, especially its Filipino members. (Cesar’s wife, Helen, opposed the decision for more personal reasons. She had been sent to the sanitarium as a child and held painful memories of the experience. She remained in Delano with the couple’s eight children until December 1971.) Still, the relocation meshed with goals that Chavez had established and other movement leaders had endorsed, and the move was finalized in January 1972.¹⁵⁴

With the relocation of most of the union’s leadership and administrative staff to La Paz, Forty Acres began to transition from its former role as union headquarters to its new role as a field office. The development of the property continued with the construction of Agbayani Village—and Forty Acres retained its vitality as a service center—but the long-term impact of this larger transition soon became evident. Between 1971 and 1974, NFWSC spending on the operations of Forty Acres dropped from roughly \$3,000 per month to roughly \$1,200 per month. At the end of the same period, NFWSC spending on the operations of La Paz surpassed \$9,000 per month. Even in 1971 (the year before the move to La Paz), Richard Chavez had begun to worry about a backlog of maintenance work at Forty Acres, including a neglect of the trees and plants he had worked so hard to cultivate a few years prior. By 1974, this concern had become much more acute, and NFWSC Board member Frank Denison began calling for an increased budget to cover necessary (but unspecified) repairs on the buildings and sewer system at Forty Acres. When Terry Carruthers became the new NFWSC Director in December 1976, the maintenance backlog at Forty Acres had grown even longer: the grounds needed irrigation, the irrigation canals needed cleaning, the irrigation pipes needed repair, the entire property needed to be cleared of debris, the air conditioners

¹⁵³ Chavez and Delgado, interview; Levy 377; Rast and Dubrow, “Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement,” 88-89; Pawel, *Crusades of Cesar Chavez*, 235-38.

¹⁵⁴ On this point see also LeRoy Chatfield, “La Paz, UFW Headquarters, 1969,” [https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essays/essays/chatfield2009/10 LA PAZ UNITED FARM WORKER HEADQUARTERS.pdf](https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/essays/essays/chatfield2009/10_LA_PAZ_UNITED_FARM_WORKER_HEADQUARTERS.pdf) (accessed May 15, 2014).

needed repair, doors needed repair, window screens needed repair, the parking lot needed new lighting and repair, the buildings needed to be repainted, and the trees needed fertilizer. Nevertheless, the NFWSC administration plan crafted under Carruthers indicated that the maintenance needs at La Paz remained a higher priority.¹⁵⁵

Changes in the physical condition of Forty Acres were intertwined with changes in the property's function. These changes accelerated in 1973, beginning with the closure of the co-op service station. The well-known oil crisis of 1973 began in October (when OPEC responded to U.S. support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War by proclaiming an oil embargo), but the United States already was facing an oil shortage by that point. Two years earlier, the Nixon Administration had imposed price controls on oil in an effort to combat inflation, but lower prices depressed production, stimulated consumption, and thus produced oil and gas shortages across the country. By April 1973, difficulties of securing a steady supply of gas—combined with growing operational expenses and declining use on the part of union members—had prompted the NFWSC board of directors to suspend the operations of the co-op service station. During the next three years, the NFWSC tried to convert the building into a childcare center, but the Delano City Council blocked the organization's efforts, citing dangers from city's own expansion of a sewage treatment facility immediately north of Forty Acres. By the 1980s, the co-op building was used primarily as a meeting space, with some space for storage. The gasoline pumps and underground storage tanks were removed during the 1990s.¹⁵⁶

When the NFWSC closed the co-op service station in April 1973, the UFW was focusing on a much larger challenge. The contracts that the UFW signed with Coachella Valley and San Joaquin Valley growers in 1970—beginning with Lionel Steinberg in April 1970 and culminating with the Giumarra Company and other Delano growers at the end of July 1970—were three-year contracts. By spring 1973, most of these growers had decided to follow their Salinas Valley counterparts in signing contracts with the Teamsters. The spring and summer months of 1973 were marked by strikes, picketing, and arrests; the renewal of the UFW's table grapes boycott; and violent confrontations with Teamsters members and law enforcement officers, culminating with the tragic deaths of two union members, Nagi Daifullah and Juan de la Cruz. The renewal of strike activity and the boycott brought renewed financial support from union sympathizers across the country, but changing priorities and the continuing growth of activity at La Paz led the NFWSC to consolidate the use of space within Reuther Hall. By the end of 1973, the NFWSC had converted the north one-third of the building (including Chavez's former office in the northeast corner) into storage space for unused furniture and equipment. The UFW retained its hiring hall and membership office in Reuther Hall, but the remainder of its former office space was no longer needed. Similarly, the NFWSC

¹⁵⁵ Proposed budgets, Nov. 27, 1971, UFW Administration Department Records, Box 5, Folder 3, ALUA, WSA; NFWSC Statement of Income and Expenses, Aug. 31, 1974, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 2, Box 14, Folder 2, ALUA, WSU; Richard Chavez to Cesar Chavez, May 20, 1971, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 1, Box 25, Folder 21, ALUA, WSU; Administrative memos, April 8, 1973, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 2, Box 14, Folder 4, ALUA, WSU; "NFWSC General Administration Plan," (Dec. 1976), UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 2, Box 14, Folder 5, ALUA, WSU.

¹⁵⁶ Administrative memos, April 8, 1973, UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection; *Bakersfield Californian*, Feb. 20, 1974; *Delano Record*, Nov. 11, 1976; Chavez and Delgado, interview. On the 1973 oil crisis see Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Free Press, 2009), 570-94.

retained offices for the credit union and social services center and an office for Philip Vera Cruz, but the other offices were converted into conference rooms and a larger meeting room. The meeting hall (the largest space in the building) continued to house membership meetings and a variety of other events, including private events such as wedding receptions, into the 1980s.¹⁵⁷

Unlike the co-op building and Reuther Hall, the Terronez Clinic and Agbayani Village retained all of their original functions into the early 1980s. At that point, the NFWSC board of directors transferred management of the Terronez Clinic to the National Health Service Corps, which operated the clinic until the NFWSC decided to close it at the end of the decade.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, the NFWSC leadership wrestled with the challenges of managing Agbayani Village, especially as the number of surviving Filipino farm workers—most of whom arrived in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s and helped lead the Delano grape strike in the 1960s—began to decline. By the early 1980s, only seventeen of the Filipino farm workers who launched the Delano grape strike in 1965 were still alive, and even though the NFWSC worked to attract additional renters, Agbayani Village was only about sixty percent full. Unfortunately, the NFWSC's periodic efforts to raise the rent paid by the remaining residents only heightened a sense of distance between the Filipinos in Delano and the movement leadership at La Paz, a concern that Larry Itliong had articulated a decade prior.¹⁵⁹

A growing number of social events at Forty Acres allowed Filipino retirees and other members of the farm worker movement to set such concerns aside, at least temporarily. As early as 1979, students at UCLA and other colleges and universities began to organize visits to Agbayani Village, where they would meet with retired Filipino farm workers, honor their struggles, and learn from their experiences. Such gatherings continued through the 1980s and into the 1990s. Along with other social events at Forty Acres (union rallies, community barbecues, and family gatherings for births at the clinic, first communion celebrations, quinceñeras, and wedding receptions), reunions and commemorative events helped transform Forty Acres into a locus of collective memory. When the union wanted to celebrate an anniversary—such as the twentieth anniversary of the 1966 March to Sacramento—Forty Acres provided the most suitable location.¹⁶⁰

By 1993, when Chavez's memorial service brought more than 35,000 mourners to Forty Acres, the leadership of the UFW and the NFWSC recognized the place that Forty Acres held in the collective memory of the farm worker movement. One year earlier, Craig Scharlin and Lilia Villanueva had published Philip Vera Cruz's autobiographical narrative. As noted near the beginning of this report, the longtime movement leader told Scharlin and Villanueva that "when you say 'Forty Acres,' there are people all over the world who know that you are talking about the United Farm

¹⁵⁷ Rast and Dubrow, "Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement," 93-97; floor plan for Reuther Hall (undated, ca. 1973), UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection, Part 2, Box 14, Folder 3, ALUA, WSU.

¹⁵⁸ Chavez and Delgado, interview.

¹⁵⁹ "NFWSC General Administration Plan" (Dec. 1976), UFW Office of the President Cesar Chavez Collection; Peter Velasco to Chris [Braga?], July 21, 1981, Philip Vera Cruz Papers, Box 4, Folder 1, ALUA, WSU; Peter Velasco to Richard Chavez, March 24, 1982, Philip Vera Cruz Papers, Box 4, Folder 1, ALUA, WSU. Fred Abad, the last of the original Filipino farm workers to go on strike in 1965, died in 1997.

¹⁶⁰ "Third annual trip to Agbayani Village" (1981), Philip Vera Cruz Papers, Box 3, Folder 29, ALUA, WSU; Flyer (ca. 1986), Philip Vera Cruz Papers, Box 3, Folder 29, ALUA, WSU.

Workers, Cesar Chavez, the farm workers, the grape pickers. Forty Acres is really synonymous with the farm workers movement, and the UFW, which is the legal body of that movement.”¹⁶¹ Vera Cruz lamented that the UFW had “abandoned” Forty Acres. Chavez and other movement leaders would have disputed this charge, but either way, the NFWSC’s unwillingness or inability to launch any additional construction or redevelopment projects at Forty Acres after the 1970s allowed the property to retain much of its physical integrity as a historic site through the 1980s and 1990s. By 2002, the National Park Service and the Cesar Chavez Foundation had begun an effort to nominate Forty Acres as a National Historic Landmark. In 2008, forty years after Chavez’s famous fast in the humble service station building, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne granted this designation.¹⁶²

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

See individual reports on the four buildings at Forty Acres for detailed architectural information:

HABS No. CA-2878-A: FORTY ACRES, TOMASA ZAPATA MIRELES CO-OP BUILDING

HABS No. CA-2878-B: FORTY ACRES, ROY REUTHER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

HABS No. CA-2878-C: FORTY ACRES, RODRIGO TERRONEZ MEMORIAL CLINIC

HABS No. CA-2878-D: FORTY ACRES, PAULO AGBAYANI RETIREMENT VILLAGE

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Interviews:

Paul Chavez, interview by author, Keene, CA, September 16, 2004.

Richard Chavez and Rudy Delgado, interview by author, Delano, CA, September 16, 2004.

Arturo Rodriguez, interview by author, Keene, CA, September 18, 2004.

B. Archival Collections:

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National Farm Workers Association Collection, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs,
Wayne State
University, Detroit, MI

¹⁶¹ Scharlin and Villanueva, *Philip Vera Cruz*, 3.

¹⁶² Rast, et al., “Forty Acres.”

Philip Vera Cruz Papers, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

United Farm Workers Organizing Committee Collection, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

United Farm Workers Administration Department Records, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

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IV. PROJECT INFORMATION:

The documentation of Forty Acres was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP) of the National Park Service, and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; Richard O'Connor, Chief of HDP; and Catherine C. Lavoie, Chief of HABS. Funding was provided the Cultural Resources Directorate of the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. and utilized by the university through a cooperative agreement with the Cal Poly Pomona Foundation, Inc., G. Paul Storey, Executive Director, an auxiliary organization of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. The measured drawings were produced by students Sabrina Blackman, Allyson Bradford, Frank Chang, Cynthia Garcia, Chance Jackson, and Leah Schoelles, under the direction of Luis G. Hoyos RA, Professor; Department of Architecture, and Principal Investigator for the Forty Acres project. Robert R. Arzola, HABS Architect of the Washington DC office supervised the project, also providing review and guidance, and assistance in the development of the scope of work in conjunction with Luis G. Hoyos. The written historical reports of Forty Acres were produced by Raymond W. Rast, Ph.D., Department of History, Gonzaga University,

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