



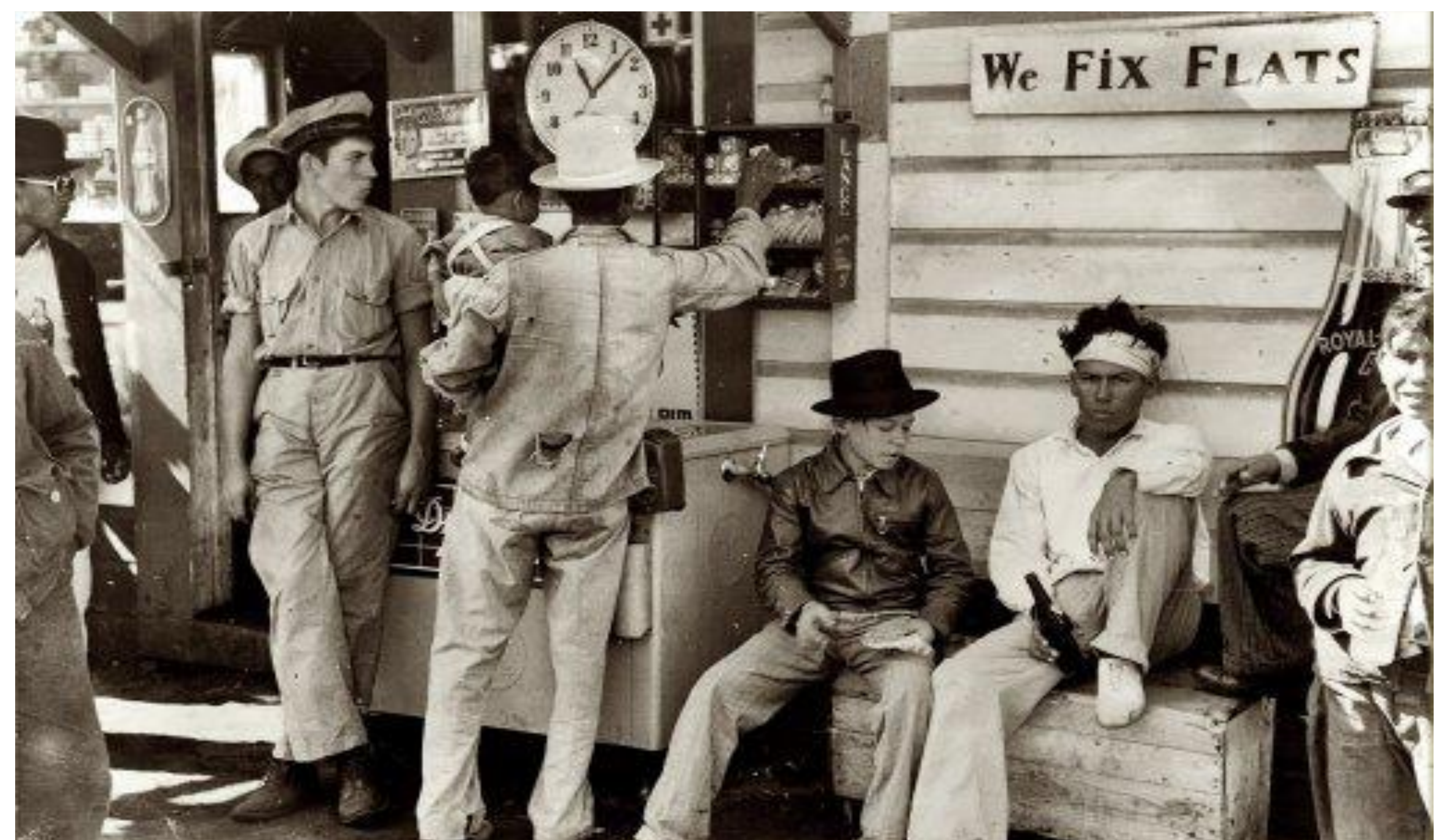
Mexican Influence on Texas History, from an agriculture perspective.



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Mexican *vaqueros* introducing cattle began a lucrative ranching history with Texans during the eighteenth century, but it was not until the westward expansion of settling Americans in the early twentieth century did agriculture benefit from such a relationship. Cotton was the major crop at the time and being labor intensive it required many workers. Between 1900 and 1930 tens of thousands of Mexican workers, some fleeing the Mexican Revolution, began an expansion north to the Texas northern plains to work as cotton pickers. Within newly founded *colonias* Mexican culture blended with Texans to develop one of today's popular styles of food. Tex-Mex is a common meal that has developed from the blending of Mexican maize and legumes with Texas beef. The Mexican people even introduced the word *frijoles refritos* to describe the Texas method of preparing beans. Since the "Big Swing" north there has always been controversy regarding Mexican immigrants, largely due to their effect on the US economy. Opposing arguments conclude that without

the migrant worker many of the labor intensive crop production systems in Texas would fail. Farm production systems like lettuce, citrus, carrots, tomato, watermelon, pecan, celery, corn, cotton, and grapefruit would fail if it were not for migrant workers. Texas prides itself as the number one producer of both Cattle and Cotton. The success of both of these major commodities is a direct result of the Mexican people who assist in all aspects of our agriculture system. Now 247,000 farms spanning over 130 million acres are being farmed each year in Texas, which would not be possible if it were not for the influence of Mexico.



Mexican Cotton Workers in Neches, Texas 1939