



# ¡Mexican Chicago, Presente!: Navigating Belonging and Placemaking in Back of the Yards

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## COLLECTION

Cultural Anthropology

## EDITION

1st edition

## MARKET

College/higher education and Professional and scholarly

## This course reading...

- Uncovers a lesser-known history of Mexican settlement in Chicago's Back of the Yards, one of the city's earliest Mexican neighborhoods.
- Highlights the power of cultural placemaking as a tool for building community, fostering belonging, and resisting disinvestment.
- Combines ethnographic depth with accessible storytelling, making complex social processes relatable and engaging.
- Challenges stereotypes by showcasing the pride, resilience, and activism of residents in a historically marginalized neighborhood.
- Ideal for courses in Latino Studies, Anthropology, Urban Studies, and anyone interested in migration, identity, and community-building.

## What does it mean to belong, and how do communities turn neighborhoods into homes?

In *¡Mexican Chicago, Presente!*, readers are invited into the heart of one of Chicago's earliest Mexican neighborhoods to explore how generations of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans have built, nurtured, and protected a strong sense of place and cultural identity. Through vibrant storytelling and rich ethnographic insight, this book examines how the Back of the Yards community has fostered pride and resilience amid city-wide disinvestment and persistent stereotypes.

Far from being just a backdrop, Back of the Yards emerges as a dynamic space where cultural placemaking is both a daily practice and a powerful tool for community building. Residents not only navigate but shape their environment, turning a historically marginalized neighborhood into a hub of solidarity, activism, and belonging. This work reveals the layered ways people claim space, preserve heritage, and create home in urban America.

Ideal for students and scholars of Latino Studies and Anthropology, as well as anyone interested in urban studies, migration, community organizing, and cultural identity.

**Georgina Leal**, born in Mexico City and raised on Chicago's Southwest side, is a museum educator at the Field Museum and holds a Master's in Critical Ethnic Studies from DePaul University, with a deep passion for preserving and sharing the histories of the Mexican diaspora in Chicago.

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