

## **Fresh Faces Are Making an Impact on the L.I. Landscape**

The New York Times

May 5, 1996, Sunday, Late Edition - Final

Copyright 1996 The New York Times Company

**Distribution:** Long Island Weekly Desk

**Section:** Section 13LI; ; Section 13LI; Page 42; Column 1; Long Island Weekly Desk ; Column 1;

**Length:** 918 words

**Byline:** By DOREEN CARVAJAL

By DOREEN CARVAJAL

### **Body**

---

ON the surface, Port Washington is a quintessential Long Island suburb, peopled by yuppie commuters clutching Starbucks coffee cups and bound for the next train to Pennsylvania Station.

Its Main Street is so prim that the locals are leery of sharing the sidewalk with McDonald's, but they have quietly made room for one bodega, two international money couriers, a Spanish-speaking domestic service and a pay telephone center where lonely immigrants squeeze into special booths to summon the sweet voices of home in El Salvador, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

Off Main Street, its fortresslike stone Roman Catholic church, St. Peter's, is crowded on Sunday mornings with immigrants from El Salvador -- women who work as live-in maids for as little as \$150 a week and men who struggle to pay rent and send money home to Central America on a landscaper's pay.

These are the new **faces** of Long Island, immigrants who made up more than a third of the people who moved to the island last year while a majority of people departing were native-born, many of them retirees or former military workers.

The trend is as visible as the restaurants selling pupusa meat pies in Hempstead, where the concentration of Salvadorans is so large that the Republic of El Salvador briefly opened a satellite Government office and some residents have nicknamed the area Little El Salvador.

According to March estimates by the Census Bureau, the net international immigration to Nassau County was 28,993, and 18,229 to Suffolk County. But Census experts consider the unofficial growth rate much higher because it does not count undocumented immigrants.

"We estimate that there are about 100,000 Salvadorans living in Hempstead, Freeport and Uniondale," said Miguel Ramirez, president of the Centro Salvadoreno, a Hempstead community organization for Salvadorans. "It's not growing as dramatically as it was before, mainly because it's more difficult for undocumented people to get a job. All these myths have been created that we're stealing jobs from U.S. citizens."

This is the season to spot the latest immigration trends, when the street corners of communities like Westbury and Franklin Square or Glen Cove and Inwood fill with immigrant day laborers in search of gritty work as landscapers and construction workers. Many are so new to the country that they need to use a special list of basic English

## Fresh Faces Are Making an Impact on the L.I. Landscape

expressions provided by a local community group. The list carefully spells out the phonetic pronunciations: "I want to work on the books!" and "I have rights, too."

Already, one community organizer, Omar Henriquez of the Workplace Project in Hempstead, has noticed the early signs of new immigration streams from other countries. "On some corners, there are more Hondurans now than Salvadorans," he said. "In others, there are more Mexicans. I don't know what's happening in Honduras, but there must be something going on there with the economy. There's a lot more coming."

The new Census estimates do not give an ethnic breakdown of the newcomers, but anecdotal evidence indicates they are mostly Asian and Hispanic. Long Island's original immigrants were English Protestants, who squeezed out the native Indians and dominated the area from the colonial period to World War I.

The development of aircraft industries and suburban housing led to a new wave of immigration after World War II, and an influx of people of mostly Irish, Italian, Polish, German and Russian backgrounds.

And now, with yet a third wave of immigration, members of some of the earlier ethnic groups are watching with some dismay as a pattern unfolds that they experienced themselves. Since 1979, Salvadorans have come searching for the same kind of low-wage, unskilled jobs that drew Italian immigrants to Glen Cove decades earlier to work on the great estates of the Gold Coast.

The Salvadoran population was originally small, but in a common pattern of immigration, the original pioneer scouts invited their relatives. Their numbers grew through the pull of jobs and the push of the intensifying 12-year civil war in El Salvador, which ended in 1992. Their numbers grew, through the push of war and the pull of jobs. Most came from the rural town of Poloros in the province of La Union, where much of the fighting was concentrated.

Italians remain the largest ethnic group in Glen Cove, but now the Loggia Sons of Italy shares the main street downtown with a Hispanic grocery store. The rest of the community also shares a parking lot with a group of immigrant men who gather early mornings in search of day work. But the arrangement is not always amicable; typically police enforcement against such offenses as loitering or disorderly behavior becomes tougher and more unyielding in the months before a mayoral election.

With the start of the spring landscaping season, the same tensions are already starting to surface in other communities like Westbury, where the immigrant day workers and the local police recently met to develop a compromise labor site after complaints increased about the gathering of the men.

But as long as there is demand for their labor, the corners will not be empty. "In suburban communities and the rest of the country, you can expect to see more immigration," said Douglas Massey, a University of Pennsylvania sociology professor who has studied immigration trends. "Immigration goes where the low-wage jobs are. And as those jobs shift from the cities to suburbs, they will be there."

## Graphic

---

Photos:

Fariba and Moise Chaolpur

FROM: Iran

LIVE IN: Great Neck

YEARS ON L.I.: 6

OCCUPATIONS: She: Homemaker. He: Salesman in garment district in Manhattan.

FAMILY ON L.I.: Children, Simon, 5,

## Fresh Faces Are Making an Impact on the L.I. Landscape

and Doreen, 3 1/2

Nan Ni Gilbert

FROM: China

LIVES IN: North Bellmore

YEARS ON L.I.: 1 1/2

OCCUPATION: Piano teacher and acupuncture student

FAMILY ON L.I.: Husband

Nila Minkovsky

FROM: Russia

LIVES IN: Glen Cove

YEARS ON L.I.: 7

OCCUPATION: Cardiorespiratory therapist at North Shore Hospital in Glen Cove

FAMILY ON L.I.: Husband, also from Russia. Baby due in August.

Mona Lafontaine

FROM: Canada

LIVES IN: Floral Park

YEARS ON L.I.: 2

OCCUPATION: Teacher

FAMILY ON L.I.: Husband, from El Salvador, and children, Gabriel, 5 1/2, and Eric, 2

Valentina Bonilla

FROM: El Salvador

LIVES IN: Seaford

YEARS ON L.I.: 10

OCCUPATION: House cleaner

FAMILY ON L.I.: Daughter. Brandy, 4 1/2, sister and brother-in-law

Errol G. Viraswami

FROM: Guyana

LIVES IN: Central Islip

YEARS ON L.I.: 8

OCCUPATION: Accountant, comptroller at N.Y. Wholistic Health Center, Syosset

FAMILY ON L.I.: Wife, Savitree

Jung S. Yoo

FROM: Korea

## Fresh Faces Are Making an Impact on the L.I. Landscape

LIVES IN: Hicksville

YEARS ON L.I.: 7

OCCUPATION: Manicurist and manager of Pinky Nails in Syosset

FAMILY ON L.I.: Husband and son, 20

Roberto Valenzuela

FROM: Chile

LIVES IN: Syosset

YEARS ON L.I.: 1

OCCUPATION: Facility manager, Wholistic Health Center, Syosset

FAMILY ON L.I.: Former wife and son, 12

(Photographs by Vic DeLucia/The New York Times; Linda Covello for The New York Times)

## Classification

---

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Subject:** IMMIGRATION (90%); TRENDS (88%); CENSUS (86%); COMMUNITY ACTIVISM (78%); ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS (76%); WOMEN WORKERS (76%); LANGUAGE & LANGUAGES (76%); COMMUTING (73%); CHRISTIANS & CHRISTIANITY (72%); RELIGION (70%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (67%); CRAFT & TRADE WORKERS (66%); CATHOLICS & CATHOLICISM (55%)

**Company:** US CENSUS BUREAU (54%); US CENSUS BUREAU (54%)

**Organization:** US CENSUS BUREAU (54%); US CENSUS BUREAU (54%); US CENSUS BUREAU (54%); US CENSUS BUREAU (54%)

**Industry:** RESTAURANTS (71%)

**Geographic:** EL SALVADOR (94%); HONDURAS (92%); UNITED STATES (92%); DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (79%); CENTRAL AMERICA (73%)

**Load-Date:** May 5, 1996