

A SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN-MEXICANS
IN TOPEKA, KANSAS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND | 4 |
| III. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AMERICAN-MEXICAN CULTURE | 16 |
| Personal information concerning individuals interviewed | 16 |
| American-Mexican housing level on the rise | 23 |
| To satisfy cultural needs | 27 |
| To satisfy spiritual needs | 28 |
| Family and family attitudes | 32 |
| Adult education | 41 |
| Educational attitudes | 41 |
| Minority problems in the Topeka Public Schools, 1970 | 45 |
| IV. ORGANIZATIONS AIDING IN SOLVING DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES | 48 |
| Job opportunity expanding | 48 |
| Discrimination in employment | 49 |
| Goals of American-Mexican organizations | 54 |
| V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS | 58 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 65 |

LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. Number of Children per Family | 19 |
| II. Pochismo | 38 |

MAP

| | |
|--|----|
| I. A Map of the Mexicans in Kansas | 15 |
|--|----|

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to make a survey and report of the American-Mexican* living in Topeka, Kansas. This study includes information concerning persons born in this country of Mexican parentage and of two families born in Mexico. Information was obtained from Father Theophane Mayora, priest of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, the assistant principals at Topeka High School and Highland Park High School, the Human Relations Commission and the Office of Economic Opportunity in Topeka. In addition to these public institutions, personal interviews with the personnel managers of the following Topeka businesses: Sears Roebuck and Company, Kansas Power and Light Company, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Hill Packing Company, Hallmark Cards, Incorporated and the Merchants National Bank.

Personal attitudes and specific data were obtained through a questionnaire in English for English-speaking people and in Spanish

*The reason for referring to this minority group in study as American-Mexican needs some clarification. People of Mexican descent, as well as those born in Mexico, identify themselves as members of LA RAZA (the race). Some of the younger generation call themselves CHICANOS, which seems to have evolved in the United States. They also refer to themselves as MEXICANS or MEXICANOS, but tend to resent these terms when applied to them by a majority population. Some think it is more polite to call them Spanish, but this is misleading since this survey is a study of people of Mexican origin. According to Celia Heller, a well-known author on minority groups, "people of Mexican descent" resent the hyphenated term "Mexican-American." The Topeka Board of Education suggested that Spanish-speaking people or American-Mexican be used. The latter was chosen for the sake of convenience.

for the two who preferred to speak Spanish. An effort was made to schedule the interview with both the husband and wife, but due to summer activities of many families, the majority of the interviews were conducted with the wife of the family. The interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 1970. The survey includes mainly the families whose children attend Holliday Junior High School where this investigator has been a Spanish teacher for four years. One person interviewed was a women's physical education teacher who is of Mexican descent and also teaches at Holliday. Another person who was interviewed does not live in the Holliday district, but is a Spanish high school teacher and is of Mexican descent.

In total, thirty families were interviewed. There were forty-four families with Spanish surnames enrolled at Holliday in 1969-70. It is not the policy of the Topeka Public Schools to classify students according to race; therefore, it is not possible to have an accurate account of students of Mexican descent.

The writer compiled the questionnaire by using for background a Questionnaire for Cultural Patterns received from Mr. Lemoine Tubach, Associate Professor of Foreign Languages at the Kansas State Teachers College. Appropriate reading material of recent books and current events were also used. In this survey the technique used was entirely that of a personal interview with the questionnaire in the hands of the interviewer. No answers in written form were filled in by those interviewed.

It is hoped that this survey of the American-Mexicans in Topeka may be used as an index to emphasize that there are inconsistencies in the feelings that Anglo-Americans and American-Mexicans hold about each

other. According to Harry Barron in his book, Selected American Minorities, Anglo-Americans assume that Mexican-Americans are their potential, if not actual, peers, but at the same time assume that they are inferior.¹

¹Milton L. Barron, Minorities in a Changing World (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1967), p. 301.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In order to place the study in its proper perspective with regard to American-Mexican history and culture, it is first necessary to present a resumé showing how the American-Mexican migrated to the United States and to the city of Topeka.

Spanish explorers first brought the Spanish language to the United States. Between 1528 and 1602 they traveled thousands of miles slowly and painfully over the vast landscape all the way from the Mexican state of Sonora to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and up the west coast of Mexico to Monterey, California. They were always seeking gold and silver and were encouraged to look for it by the Indians who were forever telling them that it existed somewhere else so they would leave the Indian lands.

In 1539, Friar Marcos of Nice left Mexico in order to search for the reputed rich towns of the Indians in the United States. In New Mexico he found the Pueblo Indians and assumed that they had knowledge of gold and silver. Returning to Mexico, he assured the viceroy of Mexico that richer towns lay beyond this territory in the United States.

As a result of Marcos' report, Francisco Vásquez Coronado, governor of a Mexican province, set out to conquer new territory and wealth for the country of Spain. Coronado and his expedition of Spaniards explored Lower California, discovered the Grand Canyon,

crossed Arizona, New Mexico, the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, and reached east central Kansas. Disillusioned by not finding great wealth, he returned to Mexico in 1542. He left behind his fine horses which reverted back to a wild state in the Southwest of the United States.²

There is some dispute as to how far Coronado actually came into Kansas. Some historians believe that the expedition probably ended its journey somewhere near Junction City, Kansas, sometime in 1541.³

The Spanish explorers came mostly in search of gold. Behind them came the colonizers. In his book, North from Mexico, Carey McWilliams tells about such a colonizer, Juan de Oñate of Zacatecas, one of Mexico's four richest men. He traveled northward in 1598 with eighty-three carretas, (carts), seven thousand head of stock and four hundred soldiers, planning to colonize New Mexico. Oñate, who was probably the first colonizer, came first to El Paso, then followed the Rio Grande to a place near Santa Fe. His followers dealt ruthlessly and selfishly with the Pueblo Indians they found living there. Although by 1630, they founded about twenty-five missions and several settlements, everything they had accomplished was destroyed fifty years later when the Pueblo Indians turned on them. In three days they killed four hundred settlers and drove the rest out of New Mexico.⁴

²Ruth Landes, Latin Americans of the Southwest (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 25.

³Arthur Grove Day, Coronado's Quest (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1940), p. 247.

⁴John Tebbel and Ramón E. Ruiz, South by Southwest (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969), p. 2.

In 1601, Juan de Oñate came with a body of soldiers as far as the Kaw River in Kansas. Oñate tells enthusiastically of the fertility of the soil and describes the buffalo and his battles with the Indians in Kansas.⁵

Spanish speaking people have reason to believe that the Southwest once belonged to Spain and Mexico. As the Spanish explorers traveled through the United States, they left their own surnames. Names such as Cortez, Colón (Columbus), Coronado, Magallanes (Magellan), López, and León are common. Needless to say, they regard themselves as rightful Americans, not as aliens, and therefore resent being treated as a minority group.

There is further evidence that the Spanish speaking people helped to develop the southwest section of the United States. Dr. Landes refers the development in the following manner:

Carey McWilliams describes the Southwest's famed law of community property of BIENES GANANCIALES, which regulates wealth acquired during marriage and guarantees the wife her share. He describes the laws concerning irrigation and water-conservation which are vital in the arid land. Such water laws come from those which the conquering desert Moors taught the Spaniards in the tenth century; and they come also from Pueblo Indian practices in the Rio Grande Valley, which was conquered by Spain. McWilliams shows how the existence of drought-ridden Los Angeles was saved by invoking the Spanish-Mexican law that water rights belong to the community, not to individuals. Another law, of Spanish-Mexican origin, governs cattle and horse brands; others regulate ranges, fences, and sheep pastures; others regulate work and property in mines.

⁵Socorro M. Ramirez, "A Survey of the Mexicans in Emporia, Kansas" (unpublished Master's thesis, The Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas, 1942), p. 4.

Ranchers engaged in raising cattle and sheep use Spanish-Mexican techniques in breeding, range-feeding, and shearing. Many books describe the cowboy on his Spanish mustang, a wild horse descended from Arabian steeds brought to the New World by Columbus.⁶

As mentioned previously, Spanish explorers brought the Spanish language to the United States. Spanish names, though anglicized, have been given to towns (like El Paso), rivers (like Rio Grande); Spanish terms are used in place of the English ones, for ravine (canyon), farm (rancho) and public square (plaza).

What made the Mexicans migrate to the United States and to Topeka? There were two basic reasons: revolutions and poor economic conditions in Mexico.

In 1876, Porfirio Díaz, a mestizo (those descended from Indian and Spanish ancestry) took over the government of Mexico. He was able to do what no leader had done before; that is, he was able to bring order out of chaos but once again at a terrible cost. The following is a concise description of Mexico's internal conditions which caused the departure of many from their homeland:

Mexico at this time had only a few miles of railroad track, not many more telegraph wires, and its industries and sanitation were primitive. Poverty held the people in an iron hand.

With a firm hand and a driving purpose, Díaz took hold of the Mexican economy and government machinery. Díaz solved the problem of the middle class by making them the government's civil servants. They rewarded him by proving to be neither patriotic nor trustworthy. Corruption came to be the order of the day. Díaz kept the businessmen in hand by taxing them and kept the common people under control by force if it proved necessary. Peasants, Indians, and laborers were forced to work without pay on new roads, buildings, and factories.

⁶Landes, op. cit., p. 15.

Díaz believed that an elite government should rule the country in union with private business and called this theory "scientificism." When the middle-class civil servants discovered that the benefits of "scientificism" weren't passed on to them, a large crack appeared in the structure. Inflation caused another crack as wages were held down while prices rose. The aristocratic rich governors of the states who had their own little empires of mines and railroads caused another crack. A quarter of the land which the lower classes needed so badly had passed into private hands. The Indians were robbed of what they owned and food was scarce and costly.

The structure, which Díaz had built so painstakingly, collapsed in a great struggle lasting from 1910 to 1917. It was the first social revolution in the history of Latin America. Mexicans fleeing the revolution streamed into the Southwest of the United States.⁷

In 1890, there were only fifteen American-Mexicans in the State of Kansas and all fifteen of these resided in Kansas City, Kansas.⁸ The immigrant population increased enormously in Kansas from 1900 (seventy-one persons) to 1910 (9,429 persons). By 1921, the Mexican population of Kansas had grown to 13,700. This was probably due to the fact that Kansas City became a temporary stopover and important distributing center of immigrants going to the Midwestern states where the demand for Mexican labor was greater.⁹

According to this survey the greatest number came to Topeka between 1911 and 1920. No one knows who came first. According to

⁷Tebbel, op. cit., p. 46.

⁸Bliss Isley, Four Centuries in Kansas (New York: McCormick-Mathers Company, 1936), p. 339.

⁹Manuel Gamio, Mexican Immigration to the United States (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. 25.

Bill Wright, one of the first was Estéban Soto, a Santa Fe Railway fireman who became a foreman here in 1907, and may have become the colony's first resident.¹⁰

The reasons for the great increase in Mexican immigration between 1911 and 1920 are twofold: some are related to favorable conditions in America and some to unfavorable conditions in Mexico.

In the United States, the major reason for this tremendous increase in migration by the American-Mexican was apparently brought about by World War I. The involvement of the United States in the war resulted in the stoppage of European immigration due to the quota restriction law which extended through 1924. It is not surprising then, that with the ever increasing demand for cheap labor during the war and later as a result of the quota laws, that Mexicans began to pour North and East to supply the demand of industries and agriculture that was previously met by Europeans.¹¹

It is quite probable that most of the early immigrants to the United States thought of immigration as a temporary solution from social insecurity and the absence of opportunity to rise from misery and chronic semi-starvation.

At first they did not bring their families with them. It was employers who encouraged them to bring their families to this country so that they would remain settled in one place. Many did certainly

¹⁰Bill Wright, "Heritage of a Colony," The Topeka [Kansas] Daily Capital, December 17, 1961, Part 1.

¹¹Robert Morris McLean, That Mexican! As He Really Is, North and South of the Rio Grande (New York: Fleming H. Revell and Co., 1928), p. 120.

return to Mexico, especially during the depression years, but it is also true that many came back again legally or illegally.¹² For those who weathered the depression years, husbands sent after wives, and friends lured friends; over the years the families began to reassemble. John Caro Russell, Jr. says:

By 1930, there were in Kansas 11,000 foreign-born Mexicans and over 8,000 native born, making a Mexican population in the State of approximately 19,000, a significant increase over the Mexican population at the turn of the century.¹³

In the earlier years the majority of Mexicans in Kansas constituted a class of unskilled laborers. Many lived in the cities or in the fringe areas of the cities. While there are some Mexicans in ninety-five of the counties of Kansas, and over one hundred in forty-three counties, almost thirty percent of the total number are in Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita. (See map page 15) These cities are important division points on the Santa Fe Railroad.¹⁴

In these cities Mexicans are also employed in large numbers by the meat packing companies. In Topeka there is the Hill Packing Company which employs people of all races. Two of those who were interviewed have jobs there which are in the supervisory category. In the western part of the state, the beet crop has been dependent on Mexican labor,

¹²Hector Franco, "The Mexican People in the State of Kansas," (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Wichita, Wichita, Kansas, 1950), pp. 63 and 66.

¹³John Caro Russell, Jr. and Walter D. Broadnax, "Minorities in Kansas: A Quest for Equal Opportunity," Report of Minority Group People in Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: Office of the Governor, 1968), p. 57.

¹⁴Domingo Ricart, "Just Across the Tracks," (Report on a Survey of Five Mexican Communities in the State of Kansas, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1950), p. 11, citing T. J. Woofter, Races and Ethnic Groups in American Life, p. 5.

especially around Goodland. The salt mines of Hutchinson and Lyons employ large numbers of Mexicans and there is a rather large colony living in Lyons, Kansas. In the largest cities with industrial plants, increasing numbers of American-Mexicans are employed as skilled laborers. The new generation is attending high school, vocational education courses, colleges, and universities. Consequently, they are entering into skilled occupations and professional work.

The majority of the Mexicans who migrated to Kansas came to seek jobs with the Santa Fe, Union Pacific, and Rock Island Railroad Companies. The largest part of the immigrants found jobs with the Santa Fe Railroad and settled their families around the Santa Fe shops. Many of the people interviewed are first-generation Americans, i.e., they were born of immigrant parents who migrated from Mexico between 1914 and 1920. Those interviewed or their parents came from the following locations: six from Guadalajara, twelve from Guanajuato, two from Chihuahua, two from Durango, three from León, two from Monterrey, five from Silao, two from Sonora, one from Torreón, two from Zacatecas, and eight were not certain of the location but knew that their parents were born in Mexico.

When the immigrants entered the United States, usually at El Paso or Laredo, they were met by representatives of employment agencies who promised them permanent work, transportation, and lodging. The railroad companies may have exaggerated their conditions, but the Mexican was willing to work for any wage that he could get, because it was better than what he had been receiving. Railroad life was hard; the men were sent out on work trains and had to perform demanding hand labor on the track gangs. They worked ten or twelve hours for \$1.00

or \$1.25 per day and returned home at night to live in box cars that were stationed on a side-track.¹⁵ It was a migratory existence since they were sent out in work trains, gradually moving along the tracks from town to town as the work progressed.

Around 1910, many of them came to Topeka with their families. They began to settle here and to build inexpensive and small houses mostly on twenty-five foot lots clustering around the Santa Fe shops, and "Little Mexico" was born.

The original colony consisted of eight families amounting to approximately forty people. There were thirteen box-car lumber houses, numerous gardens, barns, sheds, and garages. There were no modern sanitary facilities, yet there seemed to be little illness.¹⁶

The Mexican settlement grew rapidly, especially during the First World War when labor was scarce. New housing could not keep up with this rapid increase, as families continued to grow and new ones arrived from Mexico. There was some progress made in the Twenties, but the railroad strike of 1921 and the depression of the Thirties caused conditions to go from bad to worse. Following the end of World War II, building conditions became more favorable, and "Little Mexico" was torn down in 1939.

¹⁵Domingo Ricart, "Just Across the Tracks," (Report on a Survey of Five Mexican Communities in the State of Kansas, Kansas University, Lawrence, Kansas, 1950), p. 11, citing T. J. Woofter, Races and Ethnic Groups in American Life, p. 5.

¹⁶Editorial in the Páginas Sociales, Topeka, Kansas, September, 1969, p. 1.

Mr. Allen Ecord, principal of Branner and Branner Annex Schools in 1932, gives this description of the school situation.

The impact of all these newcomers on the schools was rather terrific. Very few of the parents and practically none of the children could speak or understand English. The teachers could not speak Spanish. Classes were large, most all of them forty or fifty and, in a few cases, classes of over sixty have been reported.

In an attempt to meet this problem, Branner Annex School was started in 1918. It was located at Second and Madison, which placed it near the greatest concentration of the Mexican settlement. There was a footbridge over the tracks at Second Street so that children from across the tracks in the Branner School area could cross over without danger of trains. Branner School consisted of four portable rooms and two old brick toilet buildings. All Mexican public school children attended this school in kindergarten and the first three grades, by which time it was hoped they would have sufficient mastery of English to proceed in the regular rooms at Branner or Lincoln Schools. None of the teachers had any special training for this type of work, and none of them spoke Spanish. A few Mexican parents were found who could speak both languages and they were often called upon to assist in conferences with parents.¹⁷

Mr. Ecord states that they tried to change the curriculum that the schools were offering to include vocational courses, but they did not succeed in doing so. He comments that there has been gradual change in the attitude of the people of Topeka toward the American-Mexican citizens. In the early days, they were not accepted either socially or in the business community.

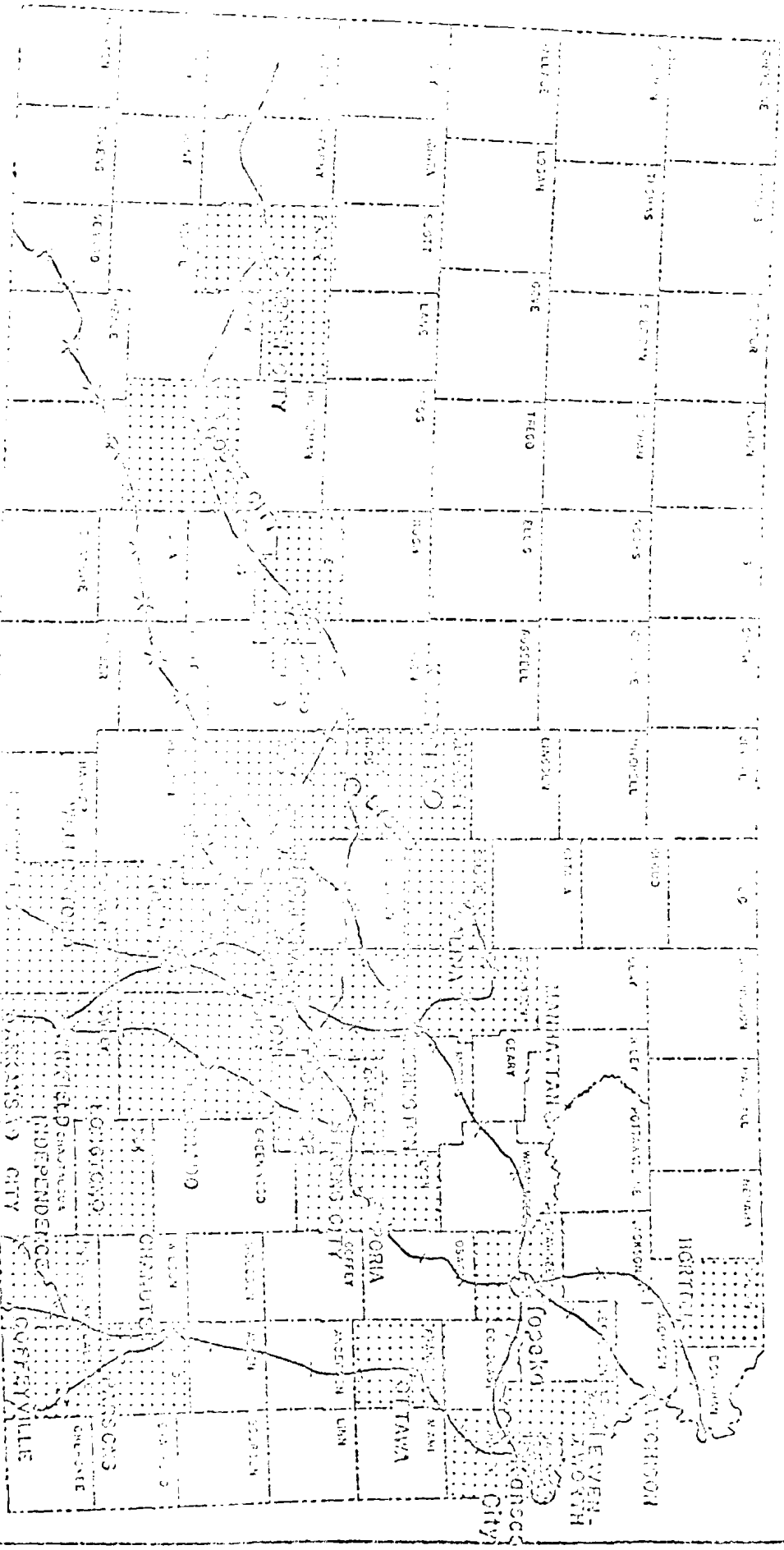
Though the struggle continues, a statistic highlights the colony's advances; thirty years ago, ninety-five of every one hundred

¹⁷Allen Ecord, "A Principal Looks at Urban Renewal," an essay written for The Research Department, Menniger Foundation (Topeka, Kansas: April, 1967), p. 3 ff.

Mexicans employed by the railroad were laborers; today four out of five hold skilled or semi-skilled jobs.¹⁸

¹⁸Bill Wright, "Heritage of a Colony," The Topeka [Kansas] Daily Capital, December 17, 1961, Part I.

Maxims in Kansas



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CHAPTER III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AMERICAN-MEXICAN CULTURE

In order to provide a background of the persons interviewed, personal questions were asked. The following categories in this chapter summarize the answers provided by the questionnaire. The questionnaire is given in the appendix.

I. Personal Information Concerning Individuals Interviewed

The majority of the persons interviewed were parents or heads of the family, and most of them were between the ages of thirty-four and forty-five, with the youngest being twenty-five and the oldest fifty-six. Two of the youngest persons were not married, and three of the women were widows. Twenty-three of the thirty interviewed were born in the United States. Six persons were born in Mexico in the following locations: one was born in Guadalajara, one in Silao, one in Durango, and three in Guanajuato. One was born in El Salvador, and his wife was of Mexican descent. The majority of the immigrants came to the United States looking for better job opportunities. Five people left Mexico due to the aftermath of the revolution. Two families, who were considered rich, fled Mexico seeking safety from political enemies and fearing of being robbed by Pancho Villa. One Spanish speaking lady came for the public education that her children would receive in the United States.

Twenty-two families classified themselves as belonging to the

middle class, seven to the low-middle class, and one to the lower class.

The American-Mexican occupations for the male population are variable. In 1961, there were about four hundred members of the Mexican colony who worked for the Santa Fe. At that time eighty per cent worked in skilled or semi-skilled jobs.¹⁹ At the time of this survey, twelve persons, or forty per cent of the American-Mexicans interviewed, work for the Santa Fe in skilled or laborer positions. The Hill Packing Company employs three men; two of them work as supervisors. Some of the remaining occupations are the following: school teacher, nursing assistant and supply clerk at Veterans Administration Hospital, custodian, and mechanic for the Kansas Highway Commission. Nineteen men reported that they were happy in their work; one remarked that he was not happy, but was satisfied; and another stated that his work was boring. One man, working for the Santa Fe as a laborer, reports that he had opportunity to advance, but he was happier as a laborer and decided to stay in that capacity where he knew what he was doing and had many years of seniority.

The most unusual occupation listed was that of Mr. Tiburcio Vasquez Jr., who is a bull-fighter in Mexico. Mr. Vasquez resides in Topeka part time and also in Mexico City during the bull-fighting season. After returning from Mexico this spring, Mr. Vasquez was kept very busy making public appearances at various civic organizations in order to describe the art of bull-fighting. His presentations to the public schools were free of charge. He began his education in Topeka,

¹⁹Bill Wright, "Heritage of a Colony," The Topeka [Kansas] Daily Capital, December 17, 1961, Part IV.

moved to Mexico, and finished his high school education at Topeka High School. One of the family's main reasons for returning to Topeka was for educational purposes.

Fourteen of the American-Mexican women have jobs outside of the home as well as being housewives and mothers. One unmarried lady is a public school teacher. Other positions listed were: night-charge registered nurse, Stormont-Vail Hospital; census enumerator, medical secretary, general cleaning, nurse aid, orthodontist assistant, and seamstress.

Dr. Key, in his report concerning Urban Renewal to the Menniger Foundation, voiced his appreciation to Mrs. Cecilia Rodriguez for her work with the project. He wrote the following:

Words are inadequate to describe my admiration for that remarkable trio of women who carried out the relocation program so successfully and so uncomplainingly. All three of them worked both on relocation and as members of the research project staff. They are Mrs. Margaret Canfield, Mrs. Cecilia Rodriguez, and Mrs. Georgia Williams.²⁰

The larger size of the American-Mexican family is a noticeable characteristic. The number of children per family averaged slightly over five children. The table on the following page shows the number of children per family.

The tremendous respect that the children show to their parents in the homes greatly impressed this investigator. Their children were polite, and the entire family make visitors feel welcome. The homes were always orderly, and if the children were present in the room, they

²⁰William H. Key, "When People are Forced to Move," Final Report of a Study of Forced Relocation (Topeka, Kansas, April, 1967), p. iv.

TABLE I
 NUMBER OF CHILDREN
 PER FAMILY

| Number of families | Number of children per family |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0 | 1 |
| 0 | 2 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 2 | 4 |
| 7 | 5 |
| 2 | 6 |
| 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 8 |
| 3 | 9 |
| 1 | 11 |
| 1 | 13 |

NOTE: This table should be read as follows: no family had 1 child; no family had 2 children; and 7 families has 3 children. Twenty-eight families were used in the survey.

practically never interrupted the conversation. If they did enter into the conversation, it was from the older children offering to give information. One family with seven children had lost their home in the tornado in 1966. During the interview a hard rain began to pour down, and the wind was strong. The children had been quietly playing on the back porch under the supervision of an older boy. The mother, worried about the wind, wanted the children to come into the house, so they would not be afraid. They came in quietly through the living room and played in a bedroom for the remainder of the evening.

The American-Mexican families make it possible for their children to have the advantage of traveling back to their ancestral homes. Eleven of the families have taken trips to Mexico, not only to the border towns of Juarez and Nuevo Laredo, but to more southern cities such as Tampico, Mexico City, and Guadalajara in order to visit their relatives. Only two were not able to make any trips beyond the State of Kansas. The states most frequently visited were California and Texas where they visited their relatives. Miss Dolores Oliva, physical education teacher at Holliday Junior High School, was fortunate enough to be chosen as a member of the organization called Operation Crossroads Africa. In addition to working with the people who lived in villages in Africa, she traveled to Canada, England, Switzerland, Egypt, and Greece.

The typical content of the American-Mexican families' breakfast is basically American. This is due, in part, to the children preferring to follow American customs and the time element involved. Working mothers do not have time to prepare the typical Mexican foods. Eleven

families occasionally serve flour tortillas with their breakfast.²¹ Many times the older members of the families preferred tortillas instead of toast. One mother, who was visited, makes a huge amount of tortillas weekly. She freezes them for later use and gives them to her sons' families. Many of the younger generation are losing the art of Mexican cooking.

One mother, a resident of Guadalajara for twenty-six years, reports that she serves blanquillos, leche, frijoles, y pan tostado (eggs, milk, pinto beans, and toast). Another remarked that her husband, who was raised in Mexico, complained about the monotonous breakfast of bacon and eggs. Occasionally, he would want her to arise at 5:00 A.M. and prepare beans, potatoes and tortillas. She said that she never prepared such a breakfast.

An interesting variety to their breakfast meat is chorizo. Mr. Tavares of the Tavares Market prepares the chorizo and sells it in his market for the American-Mexican families. It is considered a delicacy; the older generation and some of the young say that it is delicious.

The Tavares Market stocks the shelves with various Mexican foods: piñatas, molcajetes,²³ Instant Masa-Harina,²⁴ pickled Serrano

²¹Tortillas are made of cornmeal or flour. They serve as bread for the American-Mexican. Few in Topeka make cornmeal tortillas. It is customary to grind by hand their own cornmeal, which is time consuming.

²²Chorizo is predominantly a pork sausage with spices, especially chili powder, and vinegar is added.

²³Molcajetes, a mortar, either of burnished clay or stone, used to grind spices or small seeds.

²⁴Masa-Harina, a flour mixture used for making tortillas, tamales, and other Mexican dishes.

Peppers, green pickled Jalapeño peppers, taco sauce, Mexican chocolate, diced nopales,²⁵ refried beans, and mole en pasta.²⁶ Guthrie and Sons' Market at Fourth and Lake also sells Mexican food.

Generally speaking, the American-Mexican family eats American food, especially hamburgers and fried chicken. However, many prepare Mexican foods (toastadas,²⁷ tacos,²⁸ mole, or sopa²⁹) on week ends when they have more time for preparation. One widow says that her family likes American food, but it is cara (expensive). They eat American food when they have the money, and they serve Mexican food when the money is scarce. The spices commonly used are chili powder, oregano, camino seed (cumin) and cilantro (a green plant similar to parsley used in salads and soups, named coriander in English).

Topekans have a fine opportunity to enjoy Mexican food at the La Siesta Restaurant in Oakland. Mrs. Lola Alcala and her late husband, Joseph, opened the restaurant in 1955. The excellent quality and variety of their Mexican food, served in a charming and friendly atmosphere, has made it a favorite for Topekans. Also, they are manufacturers of tortillas, taco shells, and taco sauce which are available in many local food stores.

²⁵Nopales, cactus plant of the beaver-tail variety.

²⁶Mole en Pasta is the best known sauce in Mexico consisting of peanut oil, toasted bread, cinnamon, garlic, onion, and chilies. It is often served over turkey, chicken or pork.

²⁷Toastadas are tortillas fried to a hard crust and spread with mashed beans, chopped lettuce, and grated cheese.

²⁸Tacos are tortillas folded in half and deep fried. They are filled with fried hamburger, beans, sliced tomato and lettuce.

²⁹Sopa, rice seasoned with chicken broth and spices.

The majority of the persons interviewed were in good health. Sixteen families have yearly examinations, and three families visit a doctor every two years. Twelve families see a doctor only when ill. No one objected to vaccinations or injections.

Few families use home remedies for their ailments. However, six families have used the remedy called hierbabuena. This remedy is a tea made from mint leaves. Some added honey or cinnamon to the tea, and the tea is used for the relief of colic or nausea. Two ladies mentioned that their mothers had rubbed tomatoes on their children's feet for reducing fever. None reported the use of a curandero, a practitioner employing psychic-powers in order to cure a sick person.

A most unusual home remedy was mentioned, but it is rarely in existence today. One mother reported that when her child was ill, her mother came to the bed-side with an egg in the shell. She would pray for the child three times and begin rubbing the child's body with the egg. Then, she made the sign of a big cross on her chest with a broom straw. Later, the egg was placed under the bed. The theory was that the fever would pass from the child to the egg. However, if the child did not improve, the mother called the doctor.

II. American-Mexican Housing Level on the Rise

The politician's proud boast, "I was born in a log cabin," has a jarring parallel in the pioneer history of Topeka's Mexican colony. For as H. W. Jones, Principal of Branner School in 1916, reported,

"Most frequently these families arrived in a railroad boxcar. After a time this boxcar is set off and the first home life starts."³⁰

The next step up from a home in a boxcar was a shantytown in the railroad yards along Hancock and Branner called, "Little Mexico." Little Mexico was uprooted in 1919, and it moved beneath the East Sixth Street Viaduct. Mr. and Mrs. Nate Morales, leaders of their community, live presently at the base of the viaduct in a comfortable two story home.

A new traffic-way, cutting through the east side of the Santa Fe yards, spelled the end to "Little Mexico." The little city within a city, behind the high board fence, became too visible from the Sixth Street Bridge.³¹

A fifth of the Mexican Colony, one hundred twelve, was forced to move again by the Urban Renewal Project. In the Urban Renewal sample, more than three-fifths (61.9%) of the Mexican families, one-third of the white families, and one-fifth of the Negroes were homeowners prior to relocation.³²

The American-Mexican people have been accused of clanishness which prevents them from cooperating outside the family group. An example of the close family ties concerns an American-Mexican family who, before the 1966 Topeka tornado, lived in houses clustered around their parents. After the houses were destroyed in the tornado, they were rebuilt in the same pattern, i.e., the home of the parents in the

³⁰Wright, op. cit., Part V.

³¹Ibid.

³²Key, op. cit., p. 82.

center and their children's home was rebuilt in the same immediate neighborhood.³³

By observing the newspapers, it is noticeable that Topeka's American-Mexican couples are moving from the Colonia and settling in newer residential areas. Though the main drift is toward the east and north, others move west and south as far as the Highland Park High School area. One teacher that was visited lives in a lovely wooded area in a rather new suburban section.

A question was asked if the homeowners preferred to live in the Oakland area. Fourteen replied that they were happy in Oakland. In addition these comments were made:

It is my choice to live here due to the convenience of being close to the church as I play the organ each morning.

I'm so used to it that I don't want to leave, and I'm close to the church.

I found the type of house I wanted, and I like the schools.

I would rather live in the country, because in Oakland the houses are so close together.

Do we have a choice?

With the exception of one family, all of the families owned or were buying their homes. One family lived in a rental house.

A variety of types of homes were visited. The American-Mexicans were proud of owning their freshly painted homes, and several volunteered the information that they were paid for. Two homes were less than three years old which they had rebuilt with their own hands

³³John Caro Russell and Walter D. Broadmax, "Minorities in Kansas: A Quest for Equal Opportunity," Report of Minority Group People in Kansas, (Topeka, Kansas: Office of the Governor, 1968), p. 69.

after the tornado. Others were remodeled and in perfect condition. In some of the larger families, it was necessary to convert the dining rooms into bedrooms, but they always managed to keep the living rooms free. Twenty-four homes contained air conditioning, and three homes had central air conditioning. The remaining six homes used fans for cooling the house.

The walls are commonly adorned with family photographs, and in some homes there are photos of handsome service men. However, the majority of the families did not have children old enough for the armed forces.

Three people definitely believe that real estate agents demonstrate discrimination when they offer houses for sale to the American-Mexican family. In contrast to this belief, four people believe that the agents showed them all the houses that they desired to view. There are reports that homeowners do poll the neighborhood before selling, in order to determine the reactions of the possibility of an American-Mexican family living in their midst. A family who purchased their home thirteen years ago reported having difficulty finding a home. When they did find a house, they were positive that the price had been raised. The woman admits that she is attached to the neighborhood, and the neighbors are friendly with each other. One family, involved in Urban Renewal, was only shown a limited number of houses. Finally, it was necessary to settle in Tecumseh, Kansas, in order to find a desirable location.

Nine people reported that they did not know of any trouble. The same number (nine) reported that there is no discrimination when purchasing a home. One lady, who moved into a block containing all

Anglo homeowners, said that ten years ago, there was tension when they first moved into the block. Now the neighbors accept them; she believes this is due to "common-sense communication" with each other.

III. To Satisfy Cultural Needs

The first Mexican Fiesta was held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in 1933. The annual Fiesta means money for the church and school, fun for children, and for their parents, a chance to sample tacos, tortillas and enchiladas.

It also means traditions in the area nestled beside the Santa Fe shops. It is a tradition, truly Mexican, with Mexican musicians playing in the background. Mexican dancers, dressed in traditional holiday costumes, entertain the crowd. The fiesta has been held continuously since its beginning, with the exception of the flood years from 1951 to 1953. It was not held this year due to recent disturbances and unrest in the city. Twenty-six people in this survey either attended or participated in the preparation of food, music, or dances.

All American-Mexican families enjoy music. The parents usually listed Mexican music as their favorite kind, especially the boleros, rumbas, and mariachis. The younger generation listens to rock and roll, and three people enjoy classical music. Twenty-three families have children that play a musical instrument.

As one would expect, their hobbies or past-times were varied. Sports, with baseball as their favorite, topped the list. Ramón Ortega, who now plays for the American Legion team, has received offers to play professional baseball with contracts that would pay for his college education. Two ladies spend their time working in their beautiful

rose gardens. Two others are proficient at crocheting. Many individuals dedicate their time and talents to the Parent Teacher Organization of the parochial school. The G. I. Forum Veterans Organization is another organization that is highly supported by the American-Mexicans.

IV. To Satisfy Spiritual Needs

Figures showing the proportion of Catholics in the entire American-Mexican population in the United States are not available. However, a study of a specific community, San Jose, California, cites the following estimate of the religious affiliations of its American-Mexican residents in 1955. Only four per cent of them had no church affiliation, seventy per cent were Catholic, and twenty-six per cent were Protestant.³⁴

It is assumed that a higher percentage of American-Mexicans in Topeka attend church than indicated by the study in California. This survey mainly concerns those living in the Holliday area. Twenty-five persons in the survey go to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church located on the corner of Crane and Chandler. Twenty-four persons attempt to attend church every Sunday. Two members are of the Catholic faith and attend Saint Joseph's and Assumption Church. One listed the Jehovah Witness as his church and another the Oakland Nazarene Church. Only one denied having any church affiliation, but they were married in the Catholic Church, and their children were baptized in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

³⁴Celia S. Heller, Mexican American Youth (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 17, cited by Clark S. Knowlton, The Spanish Americans in New Mexico (July 1961), pp. 448-55.

Bill Wright gives his impression of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Church in these words:

Neither the Spanish tile nor the ornamental ironwork can more hint at the intimate embrace in which Our Lady of Guadalupe Church enfolds the Topeka Mexican Colony.

The dull beige bricks almost melt with the shadow falling from the railroad shops where Crane blunts itself against the Brannon overpass. The church facade and bell tower resemble an old Spanish Mission and the delicate colors of the interior add emphasis to the vivid Mosaic mural of the Virgin of Guadalupe behind the altar.³⁵

Five hundred fifty families worship in the church according to Father Mayora. Father Mayora received his education at the oldest university in Spain, the University of Salamanca. Early masses are recited in Spanish and later in the morning, a mass is recited in English.

The church rectory separates the church from Our Lady of Guadalupe School. The school is a very modern building of gleaming steel and glass. One hundred seventy American-Mexicans attend classes there.

In addition to the Catholic Church, the American-Mexicans attend the First Mexican Baptist Church and the Third Presbyterian Church.

On June 14, Angela Barranco and Jesse Villegas were married at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The bride was given in marriage by her ninety-four year old grandfather, Simón Serna. The wedding was attended by this investigator in order to obtain information concerning American-Mexican wedding customs.

³⁵Wright, op. cit., Part II.

A typical wedding begins in the morning with the bride walking down the aisle of the church accompanied by organ music, and the day ends with a fandango at midnight.

The bride takes her first steps down the center aisle on the arm of a close relative. She passes the Stations of the Cross and the religious figures that are recessed into the columns of the nave.

When the bride and groom reach the altar, they and their attendants kneel as the priest chants the mass.

A Mexican tradition observed in many weddings is that of a mancuerna. The mancuerna is a chain of pearls consisting of two circles which are joined together in the center. During the ceremony the chain is draped over the shoulders of the bride and groom. The chain symbolizes unity; man and wife are bound together throughout life. Father Mayora explained that cuerna in Spanish means horns. In Mexico the farmers were accustomed to plow the earth with oxen, and their horns were actually tied together so they would pull together.

Another custom brought from their ancestors is that of the monedas or arras which are thirteen dimes that the bridegroom gives to his bride. The coins are representative of his responsibility to support his wife. Before the dimes are presented to the bride, they are blessed by the priest.

When the nuptial ceremony is nearly finished, the bride places a bouquet of red roses at the feet of the statue of the Virgin Mary. They are a token of love, asking for guidance in her marriage.

From the church, the newlyweds and the members of the wedding party proceed to the wedding breakfast, consisting of Mexican bread and chocolate. The chocolate, specially flavored with cinnamon, once

was considered a luxury among the natives of Mexico. It can be purchased at Tavares and Guthries Markets.

Mexican bread either has to be homemade or ordered from a special bakery in Kansas City. The bread resembles ordinary breakfast rolls but has less filling and less frosting.

The breakfast is followed by the wedding feast with traditional Mexican food. A menu could consist of the following: Spanish rice, chicken served in mole, and combination salad. Following the meal, the bride cuts an American style cake.

At night there is a wedding dance with American and Mexican dances alternating. As the hour approaches midnight, the newlyweds dance alone on the dance floor. Then the women line up behind the bridegroom, and the men form a line behind the bride. They begin to cut in on the couple, and when each dancer has had his turn, he hands them a dollar bill. It is the "money dance" and it is not unusual for a couple to receive from two hundred to three hundred dollars.

At midnight the dancers break up the party, and the couple departs after having entered the church for the ceremony more than sixteen hours earlier.

The majority of the parents interviewed were proud to say that their wedding contained all of the Mexican customs described above. Some of the customs are beginning to change due to economic factors, the high cost of food, and the cost of renting locations for the dance and dinner. The breakfast and dinner sometimes are being replaced with an American reception. In fact, one person commented that even in Mexico, the reception is becoming more commonplace.

In the Barranco-Villegas wedding this June, they incorporated all of these Mexican traditions except the breakfast.

V. Family and Family Attitudes

In past years the American-Mexican women remained home with the children. Home was the women's world, where the father and eldest sons were titular heads. As was previously stated concerning the number of women working outside the home, the role of the American-Mexican woman is gradually changing from a housekeeper to a career woman.

Another trend that is evident is the number of fathers that help with the work in the house and yard. The majority help in the yard and the house. One said that her husband seldom helped and another that her husband never helped in the yard or house.

In 1942, one American-Mexican woman said that her husband was too strict to permit her to have opinions of her own.³⁶ The majority of the ladies here said that their husbands assume family authority, but they usually discussed major household purchases and planned their vacations together. There were two exceptions. One woman said that she never went anyplace without her husband's consent. Another woman had absolutely no authority over the control of the children or minor purchases. She is very unhappy about the situation and does not approve of this strict authority.

All of the people interviewed have relatives living in Topeka. They visit with them on occasions, especially at the holiday season.

³⁶Socorro M. Ramirez, "A Survey of the Mexicans in Emporia, Kansas," (unpublished Master's thesis, The Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas, 1942), p. 19.

They also tend to care for their widowed parents since several have either a father or mother living with them.

Again in the 1940's in Emporia, whipping was considered as necessary for punishment by half of the persons interviewed; however, it should be only applied on serious occasions when other forms of punishment are futile.³⁷

This theory has disappeared. The greatest number of parents agree that using psychology, and reasoning are the first steps in solving disciplinary problems. The taking away of privileges and social activities are the next step. If all these measures fail, spanking should "be applied to the seat of learning." One family, with eleven children, suggested the following procedures: scolding, boxing the ears, and then using the strap.

In only one of the homes is an allowance given to the children. The same family encourages their children to find outside jobs. The remainder of the children are given money, but only when needed for necessary items. All of the girls are expected to help with the household duties. In one home, the younger children help with the cleaning, cooking, dishwashing, etc. When the older children find jobs and earn money, they are expected to pay the younger children for continuing with the housekeeping work. In the same family the young person having a job divides his earnings three ways. One part is given to the parents for board and room, another to the younger children, and he keeps a third part for himself which he is expected to save or spend wisely.

³⁷Ibid.

The mother added that the wage earner never objects as they are so happy to have money of their own.

Many of the parents desire that their daughters be trained for a career in addition to some training for the care of the home. One mother commented that her daughter had no desire to learn about the care of a home until she was married, so it would depend on the girl. All parents were in favor of education for their girls if they wanted it.

Thirty years ago American-Mexican parents were hesitant about permitting their daughters to go out alone with boys, which was probably due to the custom of having chaperons in Mexico. The parents of this generation believe that chaperons are not necessary, as the parents and the church have instructed them on good morals and right from wrong. They feel that if parents do not have confidence in their girls that they should not be dating at all. Two parents felt that their children should date in couples or be accompanied by an older brother until they were engaged. The average age for allowing their girls to date is sixteen or seventeen years old. They wanted their children to be home by ten o'clock on school nights or soon after school functions. Midnight seems to be acceptable on week ends.

Most American-Mexicans prefer to see their children marry within their own racial group due to the Mexican cultural and religious background. They feel that there are social repercussions for their children to overcome. Marriage to a Negro is an example of such social repercussions. One man believed that God made us different, and we should remain so. However, they were willing to permit intermarriage with other nationalities in the white race. Four families had children

who had married Anglos, and one had married a German man. The result is that the couples are very happy, and the Anglo-husbands were more considerate and helped more in the home than American-Mexican men. One lady believes that mixed marriages cannot be prevented if the couple sincerely love each other. Also, in larger cities, there are more mixed marriages, and people aren't so concerned about intermarriage.

The majority of the families use English predominately in the home. Ten parents speak Spanish to their children often, fifteen seldom, and five practically never speak it at home. Only three families have children who speak it well and often in the home. Some of the parents make a concentrated effort to speak Spanish every day; some admit that they revert back to Spanish only when they are angry or when they scold the children. Many of the children understand almost all the Spanish that is being spoken to them, but they have not practiced answering in Spanish. If they do answer, they only speak in words or phrases. One teenage girl said that she did not want to learn Spanish since she was afraid that it would leave her with an accent like her mother's.

Moreover, it was most encouraging to discover that all except one encouraged their children to enroll in Spanish in school. Two added that they did not have to encourage them to take it in school; they always enrolled in it on their own. It was interesting to hear their reasons for encouraging the study of Spanish in school. The following are some of their replies:

As a child I didn't understand the importance of it. As a bull-fighter in Mexico City, I am grateful for having learned Spanish. I would encourage children to study French and German, also.

We should be bi-lingual or tri-lingual if possible. It gives a broader insight on people's culture and helps reduce prejudice.

Two languages are good, especially since Spanish is spoken around here. Elderly people appreciate being able to speak Spanish in a doctor's office or in office buildings.

Spanish enables you to express yourself among Spanish speaking people. You are expected to speak it in the service by your buddies whether they are Anglo or Mexican.

It helps you in vocabulary, spelling, English and Latin. Since languages have developed from the Latin in Rome, many words are similar.

So they can speak to their relatives. My mother doesn't speak English. When I was in the hospital, my daughter had to speak Spanish with her. My mother was annoyed that she couldn't always understand her, but they were able to communicate with each other.

It is nice to know another language for travel and for our visiting relatives who do not speak English.

You should speak both languages well. Every race should know their own language. What's the use of being Mexican if you can't speak Spanish?

To keep in contact with your father country. Spanish is semi-universal.

In reading these responses, Spanish teachers should be encouraged to learn that the American-Mexican people are interested in preserving their heritage, especially their own language. It is fortunate to have American-Mexican students in the Spanish classes, for no one knows better than they about their own culture. They add so much interest to the classes by telling of their own experiences in their homes or of their visits to Mexico. At the Holliday Junior High School in Topeka, the American-Mexican students are eager to teach the Jarabe Tapatio (Mexican Hat Dance) and other Mexican dances to the Spanish students. All the students enjoy learning the various dances.

In general, the Spanish spoken in Topeka is easily understood and is considered "good" Spanish. The parents feel that the Spanish taught in the public schools is an asset for their children learning the language. Some of the immigrants came here with only a few years of formal education. By necessity they were required to work at an early age without any further opportunity to continue their education. The American-Mexicans lived and worked in an environment in which English was the language spoken. A Mexican adult would pick from English and introduce into his conversation in Spanish, words designating things and operations with which he was not familiar when he learned his language. Sometimes they knew the word passively, but it did not come quickly to their memory; so they took the English word and put a Spanish ending on to it. Table II on page thirty-eight gives an example of a few words; some of them are in current use in Topeka.

There are few folk tales told to their children that are of Mexican origin. The majority of the parents and many of the children were familiar with, but do not believe in, La Llorona, The Weeper. The story concerns a woman who has several children and since she feels overburdened with work drowns them in a river. Later she regrets her wicked act and feeling guilty, she would go back to the river at night, usually at midnight, and weep. Neighbors living near her were accustomed to hear her weeping after darkness fell. A few in Topeka still report that they hear her weeping in the night. In fact, one lady interviewed, said that her mother-in-law had heard her crying just a few nights ago. The children delight in hearing the story just as any child would upon listening to ghost stories. One man said that he

TABLE II
 POCHISMO
 (English words hispanized)

| Words used in Topeka | Spanish Word | English Definition |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| blanquillos | huevos | eggs |
| troca | camión | truck |
| reque | choque | wreck |
| mechas | fósforo | matches |
| wátchale | cuidado | watch out |
| trinche | tenedor | fork |
| sobrechuses | chanclos | overshoes |
| chuses | zapatos | shoes |
| yaque | gato | car jack |
| yonque | trozada | junk |

had not ever told any such stories to his children, because they lived near a creek in a wooded area, and he did not want to frighten the children.

Several families try to keep alive Mexican customs while living in the United States. One custom is Las Mañanitas, the birthday serenade which is sung very early in the morning to the person having a birthday. Since the neighbors do not appreciate being awakened so early in the morning, sometimes it is sung at midnight. Then the family celebrates with a party. Other times the parents use the record of Las Mañanitas in order to awaken their children on their birthdays. Also, mothers make or buy piñatas for the smaller children's birthday parties.

One family often celebrates Mexican Independence Day by attending a dance held on September 16, in Chanute, Kansas. One leader in the community stresses respect for the clergy and people in authority to his family. Speaking Spanish is another method used to strengthen their knowledge of Mexico. One home that was visited is completely furnished in Spanish decor including Mexican paintings and the Aztec calendar.

Their customs are gradually beginning to fade away. The younger girls, spending more time with careers and education, are not learning the Mexican methods of cooking, and some do not prefer the spices and chillies. It is becoming more difficult to find young people who are willing to dance for the Mexican fiestas.

The food served on holidays is a method of preserving Mexican customs. Tamales are practically always served after midnight mass on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day. Sometimes the younger wives call

on their mothers to help prepare them. Making tamales takes several hours, so this custom is becoming harder and harder to maintain. On Good Friday, nopales (cactus), camarones (shrimp), and capirotada (bread pudding) with a caramel sauce are eaten often. The cactus leaves may be purchased in the Mexican markets, or they are grown by certain members of the community. They, too, are becoming difficult to find.

Twenty years ago Domingo Ricart described the American-Mexican family unity in this manner:

It is generally recognized that one of the distinctive traits of the Mexican character and culture is the strength of family ties. This is most probably an ethnical trait that has been accentuated or protected by the Spanish influence and traditions which are also for a strong and integrated family.³⁸

Furthermore, external conditions were bound to have influenced their lives, having been up-rooted from their homeland and entering into a foreign country which did not speak their language. This change in atmosphere created a longing for security which they found in their family relationships and by settling among other American-Mexicans in a Colonia. This need for security is disappearing and the Colonia atmosphere is changing. Some parents seem alarmed by the greater independence that their teenagers are showing. It is too soon yet to evaluate and to predict the effects of a growing integration into American life and customs.

³⁸Domingo Ricart, "Just Across the Tracks," (Report on a Survey of Five Mexican Communities in the State of Kansas, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1950), p. 16.

VI. Adult Education

The majority of the parents have received from eight to twelve years of education, and a few attended school from five to six years. One had attended business college, another finished nurses training, and two have college degrees. Only four of these received their education in Mexico. Some of the women explained that their parents did not believe in education for girls. In order to further their opportunities and housekeeping abilities, some have attended night school taking the following courses: Spanish, typing, knitting, driver's education, wood-working, sewing, and speech courses. The majority prefer to read magazines rather than books, reading such magazines as the Reader's Digest, Good Housekeeping, Newsweek, and Today's Health. Some find material to read in Spanish, but these materials are becoming harder to find. One person reads the Selecciones, the Spanish edition of Reader's Digest. All families have access to a library card.

VII. Educational Attitudes

About one third of the families have taken the advantage of sending their children to the parochial school. Some children have gone the entire eight years and others began school at Guadalupe school and finished elementary school in the public schools. The expense of paying for tuition and the purchase of the books have made it a factor in the choice of their school.

When asked the question whether they would want their children to enter into skilled or professional work, half responded to

professional work, and exactly half answered that it would depend upon the desires and the abilities of the child. Only two wanted their children to work in skilled labor. However, their major desire was that they have the opportunity to have a better life whether it be professional or skilled work.

Only one individual strongly believed that being an American-Mexican makes it more difficult to succeed in school. His reasons were that some teachers and students are prejudiced and, consequently, the American-Mexican student does not receive equal advantages. Five individuals believed that in some instances the Anglo-students were given more advantages. One instance was reported by an American-Mexican student concerning a make-up test in a shorthand class. An Anglo student was also present in order to take the test. The American-Mexican girl was given the dictation at a rapid pace, while the Anglo was given dictation at a much slower speed. However, it is possible that there may have been unknown reasons for the difference in the speed. For instance, the Anglo girl may have been taking a test covering new material, or the teacher may have had an impending appointment. However, if similar situations were to occur frequently, one could assume that the teacher was prejudiced against people of other races.

The remaining twenty-six families stated that success in school depended upon the effort of the student and the encouragement received from the home. They mentioned that all races have the same opportunities and that it is the responsibility of the student to take advantage of the instruction offered him. One mother indicated that if

a student, regardless of his race, participates in class, the teacher will be most considerate.

One half of the parents think that the Anglo-teachers understand their children's interests and problems. These same parents feel that the teachers are well qualified and that the children receive a fine education. Also, when there are problems, it is the responsibility of the parent to confer with the teacher in order to help the child. Often the problem is student oriented and is not related to race prejudice. It is understandable that some are better teachers than others, but a difference in their race is not the cause. Many of the Anglo-teachers have encouraged their children to seek higher education in order to compete with others in this country.

There are isolated cases in which the parents felt that the teacher did not show good judgement in dealing with American-Mexican students, but these cases do not represent the Anglo-teachers in general. One parent believes that a teacher has to be a member of a minority race to fully understand, but adds that good relations depend on the attitudes of the child, also.

Three parents cited occasions in which they, as parents, were concerned about the attitude of the teacher toward their child, or about the lack of aid that the child was receiving in class. One parent re-enrolled his child in another school in order to avoid racial problems with a teacher.

A few parents would prefer to have more American-Mexican teachers in our schools, but they realize the difficulty in finding certified teachers. A majority of the parents were not concerned about the race of the teacher as long as he is well qualified. A parent

would like to increase the number of American-Mexican counselors in the schools, since they would understand the social, cultural, and educational barriers which the student is confronted with.

Generally, the parents are content with the public schools in Topeka and, upon being asked, they offered suggestions for improvement. Some think that the schools should be more strict and that rules and regulations should be enforced by stricter methods.

One parent suggested that more academic pressure be placed on the student in order that he work at his highest ability. A program for the slow student or for the disinterested student would be advantageous, also.

The schools should employ good teachers who are genuinely interested in children and who treat all equally. Another parent would like for the teachers to encourage the students to speak good English.

Several people would be in favor of adding to the curriculum a course for the study of Mexican history and culture. The one semester course could include the studies of Mexican literature and art. Perhaps such a course would stimulate interest in Spanish language courses.

About one third of the parents interviewed were opposed to the course. Their reasons being that the basic courses are more important and that other nationalities should be studied, also. Some felt that it was the responsibility of the parents to teach their children about the culture of their ancestors.

Two families have one child each who has dropped out of school. One boy was taken out of school in his tenth year by his mother, as he

had always been a disciplinary problem in his classes. The other boy was discouraged with his grades and needed only one semester to graduate. He intends to enroll again this fall.

At Highland Park High School, the drop-out ratio is negligible and those who do leave go to work or into the military service. At Topeka High School, the assistant principal says that there are very few American-Mexican students who leave school.

Most of those interviewed during this study attend the Parent Teacher's Association meetings and participate in school activities. Their interest indicates that the parents are concerned about their children's schooling or education.

VIII. Minority Problems in the Topeka Public High Schools, 1970

On April 15, 1970, about one hundred twenty-five Americans of Mexican descent walked out of classes at Topeka High School and marched to the Board of Education Building and City Hall.

The marchers were joined by students from Highland Park High School and Hayden High School. The group presented their request for more American-Mexican counselors and teachers. They also wanted a course in Chicano history to be taught in the public schools. The students expressed their desires to Dr. William Howard, Associate Superintendent of the Topeka Schools. They wished to unite their community in order to elect an American-Mexican to the school board.

Other complaints consisted of being called taco, spic, or frito-bandito as they walk past white students in the hall.

After talking to Doctor Howard at the Board of Education Building, the group walked on to City Hall to talk to Mayor Gene C. Martin. The students said that they resented being left off the 1970 census form when other groups including Hawaiians and Koreans were listed.³⁹

Those students, who walked out of their classes, were granted by the Topeka Board of Education a ten day "cooling-off" period. During this period their attendance to classes was voluntary. Teachers were instructed to provide for make-up lessons upon their return to classes.

The Topeka Council of Churches, the Topeka School Board and several organized groups in the minority community formed an Ad Hoc Committee in the spring of 1970 in an effort to deal with the specific demand of minority groups. The Ad Hoc Committee consisted of persons from all minority groups. Jasper Garcia and John Mendoza Jr. represented the Americans of Mexican descent.

The Topeka School Board adopted the following proposals which were presented by the Ad Hoc Committee:

Each major ethnic group will be guaranteed representation on the cheerleading squad, drill team, and student government in Topeka Schools according to the percentage of ethnic and racial groups enrolled.

The principal of each school is to establish selection or election procedures that will insure representation of all racial and ethnic groups served by the school in any organization having a limited membership. Representation should approximate the percentage of ethnic and racial groups enrolled.

³⁹News Item in The Topeka Daily Capital, April 16, 1970,

Procedures for selection of student representation shall be filed with the Office of the Superintendent at least 45 days prior to election. (These rules do not apply to debate or athletics.)

School personnel is to integrate supplemental material of ethnic group history and cultural contributions into the curriculum.⁴⁰

According to the local newspapers, the Topeka Public Schools have succeeded in hiring personnel from minority groups.⁴¹

Percy Stillin said the district had hired twice as many new teachers from minority groups for next fall (1970) as in the previous years. Of 140 new teachers, 21 are from minority groups.

Dr. Howard said that the district has always wanted to hire teachers from minority groups, but very few applied for the available positions.

The Ad Hoc Committee is establishing procedures whereby grievances concerning racism in the public schools can be brought to the attention of the committee for investigation and action. The committee is open to suggestions at all times. It is hoped that those students, who are hesitant to go to the administration with a complaint, will voice their grievances and receive satisfaction before high feelings are reached.

During the school year of 1970-1971, American-Mexican students at Topeka High School may consult with Mr. Vincent Serrano, the American-Mexican counselor. American-Mexican teachers have been assigned to Topeka High and Highland Park High School for the school year of 1970-71.

⁴⁰News Item in The Topeka Daily Capital, June 20, 1970, p. 1.

⁴¹Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATIONS AIDING IN SOLVING DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES

The major hardship of minority groups is their difficulty in locating well-paying jobs. This chapter discusses discrimination in employment based on the replies from the questionnaires and from interviews with various Topeka firms.

I. Job Opportunity Expanding

For many years, the Santa Fe Railroad has been the major source of income for the American-Mexican wage earner in Topeka. A half a century ago, times were tough and work was scarce. If a Mexican on the track gang strayed far off the job, he could usually expect a hail of stone and metal scraps thrown by "Anglos" jealous of their seniority.⁴²

As indicated in Chapter III, job opportunities at the present time are not limited to the Santa Fe Railroad. They are working in such jobs as supply clerks, nursing assistants, mechanics, and carpenters.

Unfortunately, the American culture places a premium on the amount of formal education that an American attains. Previously, the American-Mexican has found himself at a tremendous disadvantage due to

⁴²Bill Wright, "Heritage of a Colony," The Topeka [Kansas] Daily Capital, December 17, 1961, Part IV.

the lack of education. Some have broken the educational barriers by becoming teachers, social workers, nurses, business machine computers, comptrollers, and civil engineers. Also, some have become lawyers but have not remained due to the lack of opportunity to compete in the judiciary areas.

A scarcity of capital has thwarted the ambitions of many American-Mexicans from entering business for themselves, but some have developed successful business establishments. One is Manuel J. Vargas, interior decorator and proprietor of Vargas Furniture and Upholstery Company. Joseph Alcalá is the owner of La Siesta Restaurant, and Perfecto Torrez is the owner of Perfect's Plumbing and Sewer Service. Augustina Tetuan is the proprietor of the Lucky Five Latin Restaurant. Other American-Mexican business establishments are the Tavares Market with Marcelino Tavares as its proprietor; Pedro Lopez Company Incorporated, owned by Antonio Lopez; and the Ralon Sales Company, owned by Ruben Alonza.

II. Discrimination in Employment

There is little doubt that discrimination still exists in a lesser degree in Topeka. A year or two ago, American-Mexicans tended to react to this discrimination passively rather than actively. As an example of this passiveness, Mr. Martinez states:

A Topeka girl who was top secretarial material applied for a position. She was told that the position had been filled, but learned later that it was still open. Rather than taking this information to legal channels such as the Civil Right's Commission,

she chose to remain silent; offered no opposition and accepted the elevator operator job without protest.⁴³

The rising leaders of today, whether called militant or liberal, are changing matters. More than ever before they are demanding help from their people and all Americans in their efforts to gain economic and social status in the American community.

In order to understand the underlying reasons for the development of prejudice in the United States, Dr. Landes describes the situation quite clearly in this paragraph:

A factor which helps to maintain Anglo prejudice is the class of Mexicans who migrate. From 1900 on, the immigrants have largely been peons (farm workers) and small townsmen, unskilled, illiterate, except for sprinklings of individuals from professional and other middle class families. Mexico had a long and tragic revolution that began in 1910. Fleeing its terror, the refugees were glad to share even marginally in Yankee order and wealth. Before 1910, Mexico's ruling groups had accustomed the lower classes to extreme economic and social abuses. When these people migrated to the Southwest, they met similar experiences through migratory labor, unfair hiring and firing practices, and prejudices regarding their race and religion.⁴⁴

According to this survey, exactly one half of those interviewed believe that there is discrimination against people of Mexican ancestry when applying for jobs or for advancement in jobs. According to Mrs. Nate Morales, a lifetime resident of the Colony, one can see an increase in the employment of American-Mexicans in the Santa Fe Office's Motor Department. However, she does not believe that there is an equal ratio of American-Mexicans employed in the offices compared

⁴³John Caro Russell and Walter D. Broadnax, "Minorities in Kansas: A Quest for Equal Opportunity," Report of Minority Group People in Kansas, (Topeka, Kansas: Office of the Governor, 1968), p. 69.

⁴⁴Ruth Landes, Latin Americans of the Southwest (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 16.

to the total number of employees. The American-Mexican population in Topeka numbers roughly between five to six thousand.⁴⁵

There are two incidents recorded in this survey which indicate that practices of discrimination are present in Topeka. One incident concerns a recent graduate of a local high school. She received good grades and good recommendations from the department of the school. She was unable to find a secretarial position for several months. Finally, the administrators of the school were informed of her situation. The administrators were influential in securing for her a position as a mail clerk in a Topeka office. She was promised an advancement to the position of typist as soon as a position was available. At the present time, she remains a mail clerk.

Another incident concerns a youth who was well qualified as a programmer for computer machines. Due to his shortness in height, he was refused employment by a local firm. His parents discovered that all programmers should be provided with a step stool in order to read the numbers at eye level. Later he was hired as a programmer for the firm due to his parent's persuasion.

The persons who stated that there is discrimination often qualified their statement by adding that their inability to advance is not always due to prejudice. They realize that in order to secure jobs or to advance, it is necessary to be well-trained and to qualify for the job.

According to one gentleman, the employment of American-Mexicans for unskilled labor has become a habit with the American people. He

⁴⁵Russell, op. cit., p. 67.

feels that the American-Mexican people have to prove to others that they are capable of skilled labor or professional work. In order to prove their capabilities, they must be given the opportunity. He suggests that the American-Mexicans improve their personality and that they strive for higher educational status. He stated that in the last two years there has been much improvement, recalling that in 1948, only two girls from the Colony were employed in secretarial jobs. Recently, many are employed in downtown office buildings.

One half of those interviewed do not believe that there are discriminatorial practices at the present time; however, they admit that there has been discrimination in employment in previous years. This group stresses that success depends on one's attitude toward others and on his qualifications.

Vincente T. Ximenes, Commissioner of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity, voiced his opinion concerning discrimination at a GI Forum convention this spring:

It is easier for a person of Mexican descent to become a doctor or a lawyer than to get a job as an electrician.

Discrimination has been practiced against Mexican-Americans as a group in Topeka. Three companies here employ 7,000 persons among them, and only 56 of those are persons of Mexican descent.⁴⁶

In order to obtain adequate information concerning the employment of minority groups, this study includes information from the personnel managers of various Topeka business firms.

The Kansas Power and Light Company, having a total employment of four hundred eighty four persons, employ Americans of Mexican

⁴⁶News Item, The Topeka [Kansas] Daily Capital, June 28, 1970,

descent. The Southwestern Bell Telephone Company maintains a policy of not publishing the number from minority groups employed in their firm. However, they do publish copies of their "Affirmative Action Program" which denotes their willingness to hire members of minority races.

Their general policy is as follows:

The Southwestern Bell Telephone Company has maintained a policy of nondiscrimination in employment. Moreover, our belief in the fundamental fairness and rightness of equal opportunity has been demonstrated in our hiring practices and in the nationwide Plans for Progress and National Alliance of Businessmen programs.

The Company will seek minority group individuals who qualify for employment. This may be accomplished in several ways but shall include obtaining referrals from government agencies, civil rights organizations, colleges and universities, high schools, and recognized minority social and religious groups in the community.

Qualified minority group employees will continue to be considered as candidates for participation in appropriate job training programs.⁴⁷

The Hill Packing Company has approximately one hundred fifty employees. Twenty-five per cent of their employees are estimated to be from minority races. Their records reveal that one American-Mexican laborer tops the list for seniority status, having begun his employment there in 1939.

Sears Roebuck and Company also maintains a policy of withholding information concerning the number of employees from races employed at their store. The company replies that they have a shortage of applicants for jobs there and would like to encourage the American-Mexicans to apply.

⁴⁷General Personnel Department, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Affirmative Action Program, May 1970, p. 1.

Hallmark Cards, Incorporated employs five hundred twenty-nine people. They estimate that nine per cent of their personnel are from minority races, mostly American-Mexican.

The Merchants National Bank have very few American-Mexican applicants. At the present time, two men of Mexican descent are employed in the bank. One is located in the credit department, and the other is an I. B. M. programmer. Both men are highly trained and, according to their employer, are doing fine work.

Nothing but favorable comments were made concerning the quality of work of the American-Mexicans from all of the personnel managers. Generally speaking, the people from this minority group are competent and dependable.

III. Goals of American-Mexican Organizations

The foremost organization, promoting American-Mexican progress is the American GI Forum. World War II veterans of Mexican descent throughout the Southwest created the GI Forum to provide civic education for their people. Members of the Forum study political issues, take public stands on them, and get voters to the polls.

A Topeka chapter of the Forum was founded in Topeka about fifteen years ago. The present chapter contains about four hundred members. Alfonso Gonzales, chairman of Topeka GI Forum, pointed out the following accomplishments: great increase in membership, a member on the Shawnee County Selective Service Board, new chapter headquarters, college scholarships, and increased participation in skilled crafts. A current goal of the organization is to encourage persons of Mexican descent to become involved in social and economic developments.

The following are some facts concerning the patriotism of the American-Mexican service men, compiled by The American GI Forum of Kansas.

Over a half-million served in World War II and Korea.

Not a single man with a surname such as Gonzales, Garcia, Rodriguez, Ramirez, Silva or any other Spanish surname, betrayed his Country or became a turncoat . . . and to this day in the Viet Nam conflict, they have no draft card burners or deserters.

More than two hundred and fifty thousand lost their lives or were wounded in battle.

More Congressional Medals of Honor were awarded to American-Mexicans than to any other ethnic group in the nation . . . (War Dept. figures).⁴⁸

LASSO (Latin American Student Service Organization), formed in 1969 at Washburn University, sponsors tutoring and counseling programs, emergency loan and free book projects, the Helping Hand Scholarship program, and Chicano Week at the University.

Phil Muñoz, present chairman of Topeka, agrees that:

LASSO had been labeled "radical" almost before it began. The national feeling was that all students were radical or rebels. We were labeled even more because we were very tangible, very visible.⁴⁹

The thirty member group consists overwhelmingly of married students with children. The LASSO group was formed because the campus seemed to be conscious of either the black or white students, leaving the American-Mexican to shift for himself. One member of LASSO at

⁴⁸"Facts about American-Mexicans," The Community Insight by Topeka's Human Relation's Commission (City Hall, Topeka, Kansas, Summer 1969), Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 5.

⁴⁹The Topeka Daily Capital, July 12, 1970, Midway, p. 15.

Washburn University flies the flag of Mexico from the antenna of his auto, a symbol of pride and unity.

A small group of young Topeka youths wear brown berets which to them is a symbol of pride. The berets do not indicate that they are an organized chapter.

On June 29, 1970, some difficulty arose when the Brown Berets entered the Civic Auditorium, desiring to be admitted to a dance sponsored by the State GI Forum Convention. They were forced to leave by policemen, and though the Brown Berets were sighted in the area of City Hall later, no trouble was caused the remainder of the evening.

UMAVK (United Mexican-American Voters of Kansas) presently registers from two hundred to two hundred fifty members. Their chairman Mike Marmolejo returned recently from Washington, D. C., where he talked to United States Census Bureau officials, at their invitation, concerning the lack of designation on 1970 census forms of persons of Mexican descent. The problem is that the American-Mexicans will be enumerated solely on the basis of smaller samplings and may not achieve truly proportionate representation in government programs and offices.

UMAVK is a nonpartisan political group. Recently, the group has endorsed some Republican candidates, but it so happened that the candidates were more susceptible to the American-Mexican requests than candidates from the Democratic party.⁵⁰

The majority of the voters in this survey listed their party as being Democratic. Two women are not citizens of the United States.

⁵⁰Ibid. p. 17.

The one lady finished citizenship lessons at Guadalupe School but has been unable to apply for citizenship papers since the fee has risen from ten to twenty-five dollars. The English language is the obstacle barring the other lady from becoming a citizen.

In terminating this section concerning the movement of "La Raza" (the race), the college organizations stress the need for American-Mexican recognition by the faculty and the student body of Washburn University. The political organizations encourage American-Mexicans to strive for a voice in our government, thus providing for more equal representation in the State of Kansas.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The data and impressions gathered by the interviews with the American-Mexican families in the Holliday district of Topeka form the substance of this thesis. Limitations of both quantity and area suggest caution in formulating conclusions and must be kept constantly in mind; nevertheless, the facts and their interpretations are indicative of certain patterns of possible significance. It is hoped that this study will create a better understanding and concern for this group of American citizens.

The Mexican immigrants came to Topeka for economic reasons or to escape the revolution in their own country. Their principal obstacle in adjusting to this country was the language difficulty, especially in the schools. Most of the young American-Mexicans are making rapid cultural changes, in spite of social and economic handicaps.

The Santa Fe Railroad remains a major source of employment for the American-Mexicans. Due to better education, their opportunities are increasing, and they are being employed by various industries, hospitals, and medical and government offices. The women are able to supplement the incomes by working in skilled and professional positions. In previous years the young boys and girls became discouraged and would not strive for higher goals. An accumulation of hope and self-reliance form year after year as the American-Mexicans pioneer new fields.

The Colonia style of life is changing. While the older generation prefer the chilies and tortillas, the younger people are adapting to American food more and more. Since English is predominately spoken in the homes, their sense of security has been strengthened. Consequently, the young married couple considers living in other areas of the city. The purpose of the Fair Housing Law is to provide every person in the United States an equal opportunity to choose housing suited to his needs and financial ability wherever he would like to live. Generally, the real estate agents comply with the law; however, some Anglo-homeowners are known to be opposed to members of Mexican descent living nearby. The American-Mexicans feel that prejudice among home owners will diminish by proving that they make good neighbors and by communicating with one other.

Religious and Mexican traditions show less intensive interest, but the community is still much concerned with family and church activities. The parents send their children to the parochial school and the young people marry at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church.

Americanization has erased the Spanish mode of courtship with the disappearance of the chaperons. More intraracial marriages are being permitted, especially with Anglo partners.

The attitude toward education for the girls is practically always in favor of preparation for a career as opposed to training for the care of the home.

Although the parents in this study are not of an age to have many children attending college, they desire a college education for their young people.

Education is the most powerful weapon to promote change, a change that should eventually erase prejudice. The schools need to consider the economic environment that exists among the American-Mexicans. Concentration in unskilled occupations means, of course, that American-Mexicans earn much less than other groups in the United States.

Thus in 1960, the median annual income of all wage and salary earners among the "white" segment of the United States population was slightly more than \$3,000, while the comparable figure for American-Mexicans in the Southwest was close to \$2,000 dollars.⁵¹

According to this survey, seventeen persons listed their salary as average, and eight were listed as below average. It was noted that a few who listed their income as average would probably have much difficulty in providing a college education for even one child without financial aid.

It would be beneficial if higher educational institutions would initiate more scholarships for the American-Mexican undergraduates and graduates. Information concerning grants, scholarships, fellowships, and loans should be readily available and discussed with the high school seniors.

Schools need to consider the cultural environment that surround the American-Mexican citizens. Having become a minority group in the land that their ancestors explored and claimed for Spain, these people have existed in a system dominated by Anglo institutions--governmental, educational and economic. Some are expressing their rebellion by withdrawing from the educational system, such as by the recent boycott in

⁵¹Celia S. Heller, Mexican-American Youth (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 14.

the high schools. American-Mexicans have a proud heritage, and they deserve to learn about it in school. They should study histories of Latin America, literature and art from Spain, and biographies of contemporary American-Mexicans who are contributing to the American scene. Successful American-Mexican community leaders and college students should be brought into high schools to discuss career attainment. Similarly, successful American-Mexican high school students should speak to junior high students in order to point out the advantages of an education.

The public schools should increase vocational courses, especially in the junior high schools for the student not capable of excelling in academic studies or for those who are disinterested in school.

The majority of the parents are well satisfied with the educational system and the teachers of the public schools in Topeka. (All parents were not interviewed. A few did not wish to become involved with the questionnaire, either because of feeling inferior, or because of disinterest.) A minority of individuals feel that teachers do not always give equal opportunity to all students. It is possible that some parents were reluctant to say anything that might stir up trouble since minority groups are becoming quite vocal and militant in larger cities, especially in California. It was noted during the interviews that a number of American-Mexicans did not sympathize with the minority of students who had walked out of the schools.

It is important that teachers show respect for the language and the culture of the American-Mexican students. It is equally

important that they show unbiased consideration to all students at all times.

The assignment of American-Mexican teachers to public schools will help eliminate the feeling that the school program is more designed for the Anglo-student. American-Mexican teachers understand their students and are the best possible role models for their group's children.

The poverty of any minority group remains largely as the result of unfair conditions of employment. Evidently discrimination is a barrier for American-Mexicans who are seeking employment, making it difficult to provide an adequate income. On the other hand, it appears that ambition and proper qualifications are the major factors for success in employment.

The American-Mexicans must strive for better education or vocational training in order to compete with Anglos in the area of employment. In addition to better qualifications, civic organizations must continue to encourage good public relations between employers and minority races. Recently, much improvement has been accomplished in providing equal opportunity for all races, but the American-Mexicans desire greater equality in all areas of employment.

With the exception of the League of United Latin American Citizens, the American-Mexicans do not have many nation-wide organizations dedicated to the promotion and defense of their interests, comparable to Negro organizations such as NAACP. Previously, there has been an absence of leadership in the community, and a need for active organizations. The situation is improving with the development of student, political, and church organizations. UMAVK helped to

create sufficient interest that persons of Mexican descent were named to the governor's advisory committee, were elected to city offices at Newton and Hutchinson, and were appointed to city and state positions.

The American-Mexicans general comments concerning life in the United States were stimulating. They appreciate the freedom to cast a vote for the candidate of their choice, and they are proud to be Americans where their children can be educated and never be hungry. Being citizens, they are rightly concerned about inflation, riots, and the generation gap. One young man is disturbed about too many young people who are not contributing to the future of the United States, the Brown Berets for example. An ex-service man, with a forty per cent disability in Viet Nam, regrets that freedom is being abused in this country.

Another individual believes that life would be great if all the democratic ideals of our constitution were carried out. The greatest problem is not the assimilation of the American-Mexican into the Anglo mainstream, but the acceptance by the Anglos of the American-Mexicans as true fellow Americans.

The American-Mexican families treasure their visits to Mexico, but they do not desire to return and to adjust to Mexico's standard of living. Finally, one fine gentleman said, "My father and mother were content here, and my wife and I are happy in the United States. We try to obey the laws and to be good citizens."

It is the opinion of this investigator that the Americans of Mexican descent in Topeka are worthwhile citizens of the United States. They desire to have an equal opportunity for education, employment, and a higher social status. The American-Mexicans have contributed to

he development of this country, and they will continue to play an important role in the future development of our nation.

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APPENDIX

Dear Informant:

I would like to inform you that the following information will be used by me personally in order to gather statistics for the writing of my master's degree thesis at the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia.

Each person's questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. I will compile the information from all the questionnaires and then I shall write about the conclusions concerning the American-Mexican inhabitants here in Topeka.

If there should be questions which you prefer not to answer, please do not hesitate to mention it to me.

I sincerely appreciate your time and the information concerning your daily life. The paper would be impossible to write without your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Frances Braun
Topeka Spanish teacher

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AMERICAN-MEXICAN CULTURE

1. Name of the informant:
2. Age:
3. Occupation
4. Birthplace:
How many years did you live there?
5. City of residence:
How many years have you lived here?
6. Travels (where and when):
7. Where was your father born?
Mother?
Grandparents?
8. How many are there in your family?
9. What social and economic class do you belong to?
10. For what reason did you or your family leave Mexico to live in the United States? Economy, freedom, adventure, visit.
11. Are you familiar with anyone who has recently arrived from Mexico? Are you aware of any problems that they have encountered?

Food, Breakfast

1. What is the typical content of your breakfast?
2. Does the entire family eat breakfast? If not, for what reason?

Food, Dinner or the largest meal

3. Who usually prepares the meals?
4. What styles of cooking do you prefer? Frying, broiling, baking?
5. What spices do you prefer?
6. What are your favorite dishes?
7. What is the typical content of your dinner or your largest meal?
8. What type of bread do you prefer? Do you substitute tortillas or sweet bread for bread?
9. Do you grind your own corn meal for tortillas? Do you make your own tortillas? Sometimes? Never?

Beverages

10. What beverages are drunk? Beer, wine, alcoholic drinks? How much, since what age?
11. Which beverages are usually on the table?

Market

1. Do you buy the majority of the food in a supermarket or a privately owned store?
2. Who in your family shops for the food?
3. Do you have a garden? If so, do you preserve the food for later use?

Shelter

1. Is your house constructed of wood, brick, stone, stucco, or (other) _____?
2. How many floors? Bedrooms? Bathrooms? A dining room? A basement? A recreation room?
3. How would you classify your house?
 - a. a housing project
 - b. a rental home
 - c. a rental apartment
 - d. buying your home
 - e. buying your apartment
4. Do you have air-conditioning? Fans?
5. Have you relatives living with you? Have you lived with relatives?
6. Do you prefer to live in Oakland where there are a number of American-Mexican?
7. Do you believe that real estate agents are discriminating when they show houses to rent or to buy?

Clothing

1. Do you buy the majority of your clothing? If not, who sews the clothing?
2. Do you have a sewing machine? Type?
3. How did you learn how to sew?

Sportswear

1. Do the women or girls wear slacks or shorts at home? Downtown?
2. Do the men or boys wear Bermuda shorts at home? Downtown?
3. Do the women or girls wear bathing suits? Bikini?
4. Do you have any specific rules for types of sportswear worn at home or on the street?

Health

1. Do you habitually take naps during the day?
2. How often do you visit a doctor?
3. Is your doctor a general practitioner or a specialist?
4. Do you object to injections or vaccinations?
5. Do you have any favorite household remedies? If so, what ones?
6. How often do you plan to visit a dentist? Only for a toothache or for regular check-up?

To Satisfy Personality Needs

1. Do you attend or participate in the Mexican Festival held each year at Guadalupe church?
2. What type of music do you prefer? Mexican? Other?
3. Do you or members of your family play a musical instrument or piano?
4. Do you attend motion pictures? Spanish motion pictures?
5. Do you have any hobbies? If so, which ones?
6. Do you belong to any social organizations? Charitable organizations?
7. Do you attend any informal gatherings, such as card clubs, bridge clubs?
8. What type of exercise do you enjoy?
9. What sports do you enjoy as a spectator? As a participant?

Adult Education

1. Have you ever attended night school? If so, which courses?
2. What type of books do you read? Fictional, science fiction, historical, religious, cowboy, humorous? Other?
3. Do you ever read any Spanish newspapers or magazines?
4. Have you a library card?

To Satisfy Spiritual Needs

1. Do you attend church regularly? If so which church?
2. Do you participate in any church sponsored clubs?

Transportation

1. Do you own a car?
2. How are repairs taken of?
3. Does the wife drive?

Politics

1. Do you favor one political party to another? Which?
2. Who votes in your family?
3. Do you believe that the Kansas legislature provides enough money for education?
4. Are you a citizen of the United States?

Family and Family Attitudes

1. Do you have relatives living in Topeka?
2. Do you visit them frequently or have meals with them?
3. Does the father or mother discipline the children? What type of discipline is frequently used?
4. Do your children have god-parents?
5. Does the father help in the house or in the yard or both?
6. Do you speak Spanish to your children? Often? Seldom?
7. Do your children speak to you in Spanish?
8. Can you think of any words used here in Topeka which actually is not Spanish, but a mixture of Spanish and English? Songa? Sockatines used instead of calcatines?
9. What folk tales do you tell your small children? Are they of Mexican origin?
10. Who assumes family authority? If it is the father, who assumes the authority in the father's absence?
11. Who plans family vacations or outings?
12. Who decides on the buying of major purchases? Refrigerator, stove?
13. Do you believe that your daughter should be educated or trained for the home rather than acquiring training for a career?
14. Do you encourage respect and obedience in your children's behavior toward parents and elders? How?
15. Where were your children born?
16. Where were your children baptized? Were there any special family gathering following their baptizing?
17. Are your children expected to provide their own personal income or do they receive an allowance?
18. What household duties are the girls responsible for?
19. What chores are the boys responsible for?

Courtship, Engagement, Marriage

1. At what age are the girls allowed to date? Are they allowed to date as a couple or must they go in mixed groups?
2. During the school year are their dates limited to certain days and hours?

3. Where are they allowed to go?
4. Are they chaperoned in any way?
5. Who makes the decision to marry? The boy, girl, or the parents?
6. Is there a specific amount of time customary between the engagement and the marriage ceremony?
7. Are bridal showers usually given to the girls?
8. Is there any special advice given to the couple either from the church or the parents?
9. Where is the ceremony usually held?
10. What are the wedding customs usually observed in your church?
11. What are the wedding customs usually observed in your family?
A breakfast, dinner, 13 dimes, dance?
12. Would you object to your children marrying a person of another race? Which races?
13. Do you try to keep alive Mexican customs while living here?

What is done on a Holiday?

1. How do you celebrate the following holidays? Do you eat Mexican food on any of these holidays?

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Christmas | Good Friday |
| Easter | Thanksgiving |
| Ascension Day | Other |

Death

1. Where are the funerals usually held? Funeral homes, church?
2. Is there any special observance after the death? Armband?
3. Does the family observe a period of mourning in any way?
4. Do you tell your children of any folklore or superstition concerning death? Such as a shooting star is the soul of the dead?

Educational Attitudes

1. Did you receive your education in Mexico or in the U.S.A.? How many years?
2. Have your children attended the catholic school? How many years?
3. Where do you believe that your children learn more, in school, in the home, or when they go to work?
4. Do you think that the Anglo-teachers understand your children's interests and problems?
5. Has any of the teachers encouraged your children to seek higher education?
6. Do you encourage your children to enroll in Spanish in school? If so, why do you believe that learning Spanish is important?

7. Has the guidance service or the counselors helped your student adjust to junior high school?
8. Do you think that being an American-Mexican will hamper their success in school?
9. In what ways could the school help your child as a student?
10. Have any of your family attended college? How many years?
11. Do you prefer that your children enter into skilled work or professional work? (teacher, doctor, minister)
12. Would you prefer to have an American-Mexican teacher or counselor?
13. If so, what do you believe would be the solution if qualified counselors or teachers cannot be found?
14. Do you as parents attend P.T.O. meetings at the school?
15. Have your younger children gone to the Head-Start school?
16. Do you believe that the Anglos are not aware of the Mexican's cultural and historical background?
17. Would you like for a course of Mexican history and folklore be taught in the junior high school? In the senior high school?
18. Do your children ever truly consider dropping out of school because of feeling ignored and discouraged?

Employment

1. Are you employed within the city?
2. How many hours per week do you work?
3. Do you consider your salary below average, average, or above average?
4. Are you happy in your work?
5. Is the housewife employed?
6. Do you think that there is discrimination against people of Latin-American ancestry when applying for jobs or for advancement in jobs?
7. Do you belong to any Civil Right's or Human Relation Organizations?
8. Do you have a retirement program planned?
9. Do you carry medical insurance?

Comments in general about life in the United States or about this questionnaire.

RECONCILIATION OF CHANGE FUND

AGENCY W.A. White Library

Change Fund No. 40

| | | Detail | Totals |
|------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <u>140</u> | pennies ----- | \$ <u>1.40</u> | |
| <u>166</u> | nickels ----- | \$ <u>8.30</u> | |
| <u>210</u> | dimes ----- | \$ <u>21.00</u> | |
| <u>96</u> | quarters ----- | \$ <u>24.00</u> | |
| <u>4</u> | half-dollars ----- | \$ <u>2.00</u> | |
| | dollars ----- | \$ | |
| | | \$ | \$ <u>56.70</u> |

Agency:

| | | | |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <u>12</u> | 1 dollar bills ----- | \$ <u>12.00</u> | |
| | 5 dollar bills ----- | \$ | |
| | 10 dollar bills ----- | \$ | |
| | 20 dollar bills ----- | \$ | |
| | 50 dollar bills ----- | \$ | |
| | 100 dollar bills ----- | \$ | |
| | | \$ | \$ <u>12.00</u> |

Checks and Other Cash Items:

| Description | Detail | Description | Total Forward (a) |
|------------------|--------|-------------|-------------------|
| | \$ | | |
| | | | |
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| | | | |
| Total Forward(a) | \$ | | |

| | | |
|---|-------|-----------------|
| AL | ----- | \$ <u>68.70</u> |
| \$s Authorized Amount of Fund | ----- | <u>60.00</u> |
| al "long" or "short" | ----- | <u>8.70</u> |
| \$s: Amount "long" or "short" last report | ----- | <u>9.15</u> |
| ng" or "short" today | ----- | <u>(.45)</u> |

4-1-8)
(M. report)

Cashier