• 4 •

Schooling Village Children

By the time the villages had formed, the socialization process of the United States had long since shifted away from traditional sources—the community, church, family, and apprenticeship training—to a bureaucratic state institution, the public schools providing mass compulsory education. In an emerging industrial society composed of culturally diverse and unequal social and economic actors, public schools were charged with inculcating a common normative value system aimed at creating the conditions for harmonious social relations. To achieve these ends, educators, armed with latest sociological theories, fashioned a schooling process stressing, first, a cultural homogeneity for achieving a politically unified and stable population; and, second, an education incorporating occupational skill training but which would be imparted differentially and hierarchically according to measured learning potentials of students.[1]

The cultural aspect of education in village schools manifested itself through an emphasis upon English instruction. Skill training, on the other hand, emphasized a nonacademic vocational, or industrial, education. Both combined to form the core of the curriculum to be imparted in schools constructed exclusively for Mexican children. Segregated schooling assumed a pedagogical norm that was to endure into the fifties and parallels in remarkable ways the segregation of African Americans across the United States. Indeed industrial, or vocational, education was generally applied to both minority communities and for many of the same reasons, that is, an alleged inability to learn equal to that of the majority population.

Late in the 1919 academic year the La Habra school trustees announced plans for the construction of a school "for the Spanish [*sic*] children in the south part of town." Initially the school intended to enroll only "small Mexican children," building expansion was expected to occur "as the demand grows."[2] At the beginning of the 1920 school year, the *La Habra Star* proudly announced the opening of the West Side School, where "all the Mexican children can be brought in the one building."[3] The school featured

an assembly room and shower baths and intended to provide a "community center for the Mexicans of the town."[4]

In town after town, the formation of a Mexican community brought with it the development of separate public schooling facilities similar to La Habra's. School boards throughout the county, in step with the wave of Mexican school construction across the southwest, established what they considered a necessary technique for the effective education of Mexican children. It was thought that linguistic, cultural, and in the opinion of many, genetic deficiencies in comparison to Anglo children, mandated separate schooling systems. By the mid-1920s, the segregated schooling process in the county expanded, matured and solidified, was manifested in fifteen exclusively Mexican schools, together enrolling nearly four thousand pupils. All the Mexican schools except one were located in citrus growing areas of the county.[5]

Theorizing Socioeconomic Distinctions

When elaborating theoretical justifications for separate schools, educators mirrored popular opinion as well as the economic divisions in society. Their thinking, a mixture of class consciousness and national consciousness, engendered a simplistic theory of both potential and supposedly already realized inferiority. Educators argued that Mexicans displayed few scholarly skills, lacked ambition for education, and, in the opinion of one La Habra Mexican school principal, preferred leisure to work (among their other deficiencies).[6] Another authority, active in the La Jolla School, wrote that "Mexicans do not see that the conventional schooling is valuable and they attend as little as possible."[7] Other negative qualities were thrown in for good measure, including lack of thrift, propensity to alcoholic consumption, gambling, promiscuity, and acquiescence to "things as they are." On the other hand, nearly all educators agreed that Mexicans were poetic in nature, philosophical, artistic, and more adept at handwork than at academic work. In searching for a plausible explanation for the ascribed positive and negative characteristics of Mexicans, some educators claimed that genetics was the reason, but during the 1930s the majority held culture as the contributing factor. In either case, bilingualism was considered an overriding handicap, and whether the child was shorted by nature or by culture, the potential for learning could only be unleashed by acquiring English and eliminating the use of Spanish. Moreover, bilingualism was commonly perceived as a political problem for society as well. Junius Meriam, professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, and an authority on language learning and the Mexican child, contended that bilingualism "usually cloaks, if it does not openly express, a conflict of rac-

es."[8] Consequently, language transition emerged as the first order of education, and for this reason the first two years of segregated instruction were devoted to learning English. Theoretically, once English proficiency had been achieved the ultimate objective, inducing children "to develop tastes, standards, and habits of living readily approved in American life," was imminent.[9]

A variety of methods were employed to arouse in Mexican children an interest in speaking English. Most schools utilized various forms of punishment—spanking, ridicule, and standing in the corner were not uncommon—to stamp out Spanish. "They didn't want us to speak Spanish," recalled a former La Jolla School student, "Teachers warned us, 'I don't want to catch you speaking Spanish.'" Unfortunately, he added, "we couldn't help it. That's all we knew at home. They'd tell us "we're going to send you back to Mexico" because they wanted to scare us that way. . . . That's about all we used to hear. . . . I forced myself to learn English."[10]

Some schools applied a positive approach. The Placentia Baker Street School gave a party each Friday "to every boy and girl who didn't talk Spanish on the school ground" during the previous ten weeks.[11] The Richfield School held an annual "Speak English Campaign." "Americanization" a weekly column, written by Mexican pupils, in the *Placentia Courier,* described the "Campaign": "English should be spoken not only on the school grounds but when in the presence of those who don't understand Spanish. We need to use the English language for business transactions. We live in an English-speaking community and are American citizens. We are trying to be able to learn the English language almost as well as English-speaking boys and girls."[12]

Posters drawn by sixth and seventh graders and placed about the school reminded students to speak (as well as to think) in English. The nearby La Jolla School at all times stressed the "fundamentals with a great deal of emphasis on English and the American way of doing things."[13]

Education for Physical Labor

Beyond learning English, educators perceived a narrow range of educational possibilities for Mexican children. They were not given to abstract theoretical work, or "book learning," but, on the other hand, were highly capable of artistic, artisanal, or other forms of manual work. In emphasizing higher-than-average handwork ability, schooling added another dimension to the curriculum for Mexican children. In so doing, Mexican schools not only emphasized language transition but industrial and vocational subjects as well, training children for menial, physically demanding, and low-paying work. Few educators strayed from the prevalent approach to teaching

Mexican children, yet some differentiation within the ranks surfaced. Sympathetic educators emphasized the Mexican pupils' real or ascribed positive characteristics—usually considered to be an artistic flair, but sometimes the potential, of the supposedly rare Mexican child, to perform as well as the average Anglo-American child. Nevertheless, the majority of educators continued to maintain that the Mexican child held little potential for school achievement beyond vocational subjects. They generally looked upon Mexican culture as a burden eliminating the need for schooling opportunity equal to that of the Anglo child.

The emphasis on industrial education did not escape the public eye, and townspeople overwhelmingly supported it. The *Placentia Courier* editor's weekly column contained bits of news from around the town, and on occasion a piece on the Mexican community appeared in it. The May 23, 1930, column praised and highlighted the thinking of teachers in Mexican schools, and the emphasis of their curriculum, both of which accented "the inherent talent of Mexican children for art work, anything done with the hands."[14] The near-universal conviction that Mexicans had only the outstanding ability to manipulate inanimate objects into works of art led administrators to emphasize basic English, and rudimentary reading, writing, and mathematics, combined with large doses of shop or industrial arts for boys, and home economics for girls.

The La Jolla Mexican school curriculum in many respects exemplified those of the county's schools in general. Although the school operated for several years as a University of California, Los Angeles, experiment in "activity education," its curriculum remained on course with those of other districts. The federally funded experiment, which was initiated by Dr. Junius Meriam in 1930 and directed by him, until it was terminated in 1937, underscored the notion that learning proceeded from practical activity rather than being acquired through drill. Thus mathematics was learned through an activity requiring counting, leading to knowledge of numbers. According to Meriam, the old routines, based on "formality, drill, routine, suppression, [were to be] discarded for freedom, expression and self-activity. . . . The new school organizes itself around the child's intentions and desires to learn."[15] Although the townspeople welcomed the experiment, Mexican villagers were unaware of the nature of the experiment, yet generally receptive to the school as the other villagers in the region were to theirs.

Shortly after the launching of the experiment, Placentia school superintendent Glenn Riddlebarger "outlined plans for the enlarged La Jolla School [and] a course of study particularly designed and suited to Mexican pupils. Every effort would be made to include as much manual training, domestic science, and art work as possible along with music and the required subjects."[16] Within the year teachers throughout southern California became familiar with the La Jolla experiment and many considered it

a model school. Theoretically, the Mexican child learned the basics through applied manual shop classes, so that three hours of each day, some 60 percent of instruction time, were devoted to such activities as weaving, basketry, drawing, woodcarving, sewing, cooking, and the like.[17] John Cornelius, a teacher at La Jolla for several years, summarized the La Jolla experiment in a 1941 thesis. The Mexican child, he wrote, was considered ill-adapted to academic learning "of the type common to the American public school."[18]

Termination of the experiment in 1937 brought little change in curricula, although the grades were extended to include the junior high school years. The Board's intent for the new junior high school, constructed exclusively for the children of the Placentia, Atwood, and La Jolla villages, was "to give the boys and girls an opportunity that they have not had heretofore," a "practical training." Course work emphasized shop, agriculture, arts and crafts, vocal and instrumental music, and home economics. The shop courses, aimed at boys, included furniture making, "construction of small buildings, painting, plumbing, electric wiring, sheet metal, automobile repair, and other practical work."[19] Agricultural education covered "planting and caring for a garden or other crops . . . [raising] pigs, chickens, pigeons, rabbits and cattle."[20] Every boy was required to have a project involving "either building and repair of farm structures, poultry, citrus or ordinary motor car repairs [*sic*]."

Homemaking for girls stressed "dress making, cooking, serving of meals, and other training that can be utilized by students when they enter life." Girls could if they wish choose training "to prepare them for work as maids," or other types of training that accorded to the demands of employers.[21] So general was the instruction that no special training was needed to prepare the teacher of Mexican girls. An Independencia village teacher argued, "any lady teacher who has been reared in a well-ordered family with house work to be done can teach the girls much about the improvement of the Mexican homes."[22] An editorial in the *Placentia Courier* assured readers that the girls "enjoy this type of instruction . . . useful to them after they leave school."[23] The underlying educational theory, continued the editor, is that Mexican children seldom "use formal education to attend college." This being the case it was much more practical to "help them obtain and hold jobs."[24]

Quantity and Quality Distinguishing Anglo-American from Mexican Schools

Distinctions between Mexican and Anglo schools included differences in their physical quality. Mexican schools were considerably inferior, some

resembled barns and one was comparable to a chicken coop.[25] The better Mexican schools were of wood-frame construction while the Anglo schools were of brick or block masonry.[26] There was wide variation of land and building values between the La Habra Mexican and Anglo schools. In 1924 the Mexican West Side School enrolled 189 pupils, covered 1.44 acres, and had buildings valued at $28,000. The Anglo Lincoln School enrolled 190, covered 4 acres, and had buildings valued at $80,000.[27] The marked variation was a fact of life, symbolizing the economic and social relations of society in the citrus region.

However, the La Jolla School was an exception to the general run-down condition of village Mexican schools. When first constructed it was, in some respects, as modern, well constructed, and roomy as the Anglo schools of most districts. The school even had an assembly room capable of being converted into a gym, an asset few schools of the region could claim. On the surface, this anomaly is puzzling. Why would a district devote significant funding to a group expected to drop out of school between the eighth and the tenth grade? Mexican students were certainly expected to finish their formal education at the end of junior high school. A former teacher at La Jolla School, Bert Valadez, offered his assessment. The decision to build a school above the average for Mexican schools was partly political on the part of the school board. The strictly segregationist board contended that the Mexican villagers would accept a segregated school more readily if instruction was imparted in a competent plant that had sufficient equipment and grounds.[28] That political ploy was not consistently applied. The La Jolla ex-principal Chester Whitten recalled that as the school population grew

> they moved in all old buildings, all the old wooden shacks that they could move in and although we did get a few of the portable bungalows . . . some of the other schools had them too, but not to the extent that we [the La Jolla School] had them. And if they got rid of the furniture it was shipped down to us. After it didn't look good in the Anglo school, they would ship it down and we had no other say than to take what we were given. I was never glad to have it but we had to use it anyway.[29]

Not all of the villagers accepted the schools; some reacted with dismay and anger. According to the former principal, "many times . . . our youngsters would say to me 'The reason they do it is because we're Mexicans.' The parents felt that way too."[30] Nevertheless, the La Jolla curriculum placed great stress on industrial education, paralleling that of the fourteen Mexican schools of the county. Furthermore, it applied a general policy ending the education of Mexican children at the end of junior high school level.[31]

Not only the physical plant of the schools, but the quality of teachers, their pay level, and their status in the district differed in Mexican and in Anglo schools. Teachers at Mexican schools were usually novices waiting for a promotion to an Anglo school. At La Habra Lincoln and Washington schools, teachers earned an average of $1544 annually, slightly above the Mexican Wilson schoolteachers' salary of $1450 annually.[32] Moreover, within districts professional esteem divided along school lines; teachers at Mexican schools were accorded significantly less respect from their colleagues. Ex-principal Chester Whitten of the La Jolla School remembered that a spirit of inferiority surrounded the Mexican school. District teachers in general considered the Mexican school an anomaly, and although that attitude did not exist within the La Jolla faculty, teachers in Anglo schools thought that Mexican schoolteachers were inferior and that to be assigned to a Mexican school meant a demotion.[33]

It was easier to construct separate schools than to mold a pedagogy to the specifics of the alleged Mexican abilities and intellectual qualities. In pursuit of a separate pedagogy, schoolteachers and administrators shared information, experiences, successes, and proposed and debated measures for the effective resolution of the "Mexican educational problem" in local and countywide meetings. Schoolteachers from Mexican schools bonded into a subgroup, eventually meeting professionally on a regular basis to discuss the education of their pupils.[34] The La Habra Wilson schoolteachers originated "the idea of a Mexican Teaching Group" and upon their initiative the group expanded to include teachers from districts throughout the county. Over sixty teachers from fifteen schools, gathering at La Habra in 1932 for the first intermeetings, listened to educators from across the county. Americanization teacher Druzilla Mackey discussed the purported cultural progress within the villages that she felt had resulted from Americanization. She noted that Mexican homes had become more sanitary and physically appealing, and, she concluded, "They have learned to serve dainty, well-appointed luncheons."[35]

Mrs. Edith Ritter of the Santa Ana schools offered glimpses of her experiences in the Santa Ana Americanization program and from them drew lessons for effective instruction. According to a news reporter present at the proceedings, she described "how she has tried to cultivate a taste for American foods by serving them at lunches. The whole Mexican family never sat down together at a meal, she said . . . so the lunches were good social training. The school savings have formed thrift habits."[36]

Following the presentations, there were discussions among the delegates, concluding with a list of key objectives for the teachers of Mexican children, among them "cleanliness in thought and body," "love for the fine arts," and "train [for] tastes for music, art, shop, dramatics, science."[37] The El Modena district selected to serve as the host for the next meeting. By the

mid-1930s, administrators and teachers were meeting regularly to improve technique "especially adapted to the personality of the Mexican child," as the principal of the El Modena Mexican school stated.[38]

The Placentia School District hosted the 1939 conference, which brought more than forty teachers and administrators to the three village schools. Participants observed the organization of schools, curriculum, methods, and actual classroom instruction in the morning. After lunch at the La Jolla cafeteria, three groups formed to discuss issues relevant to their work; a final general conference with the assistant county superintendent recapitulated long-standing thinking on the education of Mexican children.[39]

Not only was the curriculum limited to vocational subjects, junior high was considered the terminal schooling for the vast majority of Mexican children. A general rule, administrators, teachers, and counselors maintained that only an exceptional Mexican was high school material, and for boys exceptional meant proficiency at football and/or vocational subjects, for girls outstanding performance in home economics and for both, English proficiency. Only a handful attended the Anglo high school during the 1920s and 1930s.[40]

Most districts followed a strict segregationist policy, but some sympathetic educators felt that deserving Mexican children merited enrollment in an Anglo school. Principal Treff of Wilson School surveyed the policy of the Mexican school administrators and found that "in some districts . . . only the brighter pupils are permitted to enroll in American schools."[41] In spite of some variation, seldom did a teacher "encourage any Mexican to attend the Anglo school, and they did everything to discourage us," as Placentia's first Mexican American educator explained in reference to the possibility of enrollment of a Mexican student in an Anglo school.[42] Thus, when a handful of Campo Colorado/Corona Mexican children attended the Anglo Lincoln School, authorities monitored the situation "rather carefully," noting in particular, Mexican pupils "home conditions and background before . . . [they were] allowed the privilege of attending Lincoln School."[43] The general attendance rule in every district administering a Mexican school mandated that enrollment in an Anglo school required board approval. Some districts, such as La Habra, Anaheim, and Westminster were flexible (with the conditions noted above), while others, such as Stanton, Magnolia, and Placentia, leaned toward separatism. However, in all other respects, especially regarding their conception of the learning abilities of Mexican children, and in their curricula, uniformity rather than diversity characterized the village schools.

More than conventional instruction took place in the segregated schools, as shower stalls were a common feature in the village school. For the children, the teacher's regular morning inspection often resulted in a shower bath. At Wilson School at Campo Colorado the first activity of the day was

the listing on the blackboard of those needing a shower—to the embarrassment of the child. If their clothes were judged too dirty, an emergency loan from the clothing cupboard replaced the offending dress or overalls.

Teachers were not unanimously opposed to all academic instruction, but only little evidence indicates that much beyond vocational course work was given. Schools somewhat differed in their involvement in extracurricular activities, which often were of a community welfare nature. Chester Whitten, principal of the La Jolla School, regularly drove an ill child, with her or his parents, to the county hospital. He formulated a school program that functioned as a community center, so that when formal adult Americanization instruction terminated in 1936, the school provided space for village groups to meet, plan and sponsor fund-raisers. In the evenings, the school offered courses for adults. The course work emphasized, as it had in the past, Americanization and English instruction, and also included shop classes and music courses.[44] On the other hand, the Atwood school appears to have been little interested in community adult education.[45]

Until the Placentia Board of Education took a most unusual step and hired Bert Valadez in 1937, no Mexican American had taught in the county. Because of the lobbying of a YMCA administrator, the board changed hiring policy—signaling a partial shift in attitude—toward the Mexican community. Consequently, the La Jolla School hired Bert Valadez, and, a year or so later, Mary Ann González. The two were indeed privileged and rarities. They were considered by the dominant community to be examples of the "different" Mexican, not to be confused with the uncultured laborer, his family, and neighbors. Valadez recalls that at the time Mexicans were considered to be, and treated as, ignorant,and that most districts recoiled at the thought of hiring a Mexican American teacher.[46] Through back room maneuverings the local YMCA, which was at the time involved in youth work among Mexicans, engineered the hiring. Ms. González attracted townspeople's attention because of her supposed ability "to understand her own people and [her deep] interest in their problems."[47] Mr. Valadez and Ms. González were touted in the local newspaper as role models, as providing a "fine example and an 'inspiration,'" to the pupils of La Jolla School. Evidently their presence assured the board greater success in the realization of the district's objectives vis-a-vis Mexican children. Little of the school's curriculum was changed by their presence. In fact, La Jolla School remained an exclusively Mexican industrial school well into the 1950s.

Extracurricular Emphases

Apart from the marked emphasis on language transition, vocational training, and bathing and clothing inspections, schools performed the regular

functions of the Anglo schools. Parent-teacher associations organized athletics, "Public Schools Week," Christmas parties, and parents' nights, plays—all rounded out the schools activities. At the Wilson School, the PTA boasted 100 percent enrollment in the 1930s, but whether or not all mothers participated, most Mexican schools had an active PTA, parents joining (some probably ambivalently) with faculty and administrators in traditional PTA functions.

For one event, the Wilson PTA participated in the first countywide Mexican schoolteachers' meeting in 1932 by cooking and serving "a Spanish dinner" [*sic*]. A handful of "high school girls from the Mexican camp" served the meal. One of the preparers, Mrs. Pablo Gusman, would, six years later, feel the wrath of the school board when her husband, a school janitor, was fired by the district for supporting the picker strike (see chapter 7). PTAs raised funds for school and community use through a variety of functions such as bazaars and dinners.[48] They funded organizational activities such as Christmas programs, or hosted dinners to raise funds for the needy. From time to time, the organization served as a link between school and parents. On the occasion of a community assembly for discussing school issues, the PTA easily brought the villagers to the community hall or meeting room. Often PTA meetings were opportunities for school principals to address parents on school matters, or to invite guest speakers who generally spoke on themes relating to an aspect of segregated schools, for example, the need for mutual understanding between Anglo and Mexican or the benefits of industrial education.[49] Generally PTA functions were very well attended, dinners for two to three hundred persons were not uncommon and indicates the importance villages placed upon what they considered "their" schools.[50]

Curriculum and extracurricular activities utilized aspects of the national culture of the children. On Mexican patriotic days and during Christmas and Easter, schools incorporated Mexican songs, dances, skits, and oratory that to some degree reflected the culture of the villagers. Quite often the affairs were a chaotic mixture of American, Americanized-Mexican, and Mexican forms. The program of 1937, the Cinco de Mayo celebration at Wilson School, included "Danish Dance of Greeting," "Did You Ever See Lassie," a "Hansel and Gretel Fandango," the Mexican songs *"La Golondrina," "La Paloma,"* and *"Jesucita"* and ended with a Maypole dance. At the Anaheim La Palma Mexican school, a group of county Americanization teachers was entertained by the schools' students. A pastiche of Christmas carols, Mexican traditional songs, and poems in English was capped by a chorus singing "America." There was also an exhibition of pupil art, sewing, and woodwork. The program and exhibition provided teachers with an interesting, if incongruous, testimony to the accomplishments of both students and teachers.[51]

On parents' nights or evenings capping a "School's Week," a school program presented each class's proficiencies. A patriotic exercise traditionally opened the event, followed by examples of the students' expertise in English through skits, poems, and songs. Exhibits of work done in shop, art, and domestic science classes attested further to the peculiar abilities of Mexican children. The 1930 end-of-the-year celebration at the three Placentia Mexican schools corresponded with the region's method of organizing and expressing the school's work. The local paper praised the programs for "splendid art exhibits," dances and plays (some in Mexican costume). A "Spanish playlet" at the Richfield School displayed tumbling acts and a "Toreador" reflected the odd choice of a Spanish theme intended as a Mexican play. At the Placentia Baker Street School, an "exhibit of art work [provided] all . . . an opportunity to see the unusually good work of the Mexican children in the first six grades." The exhibit included posters, block prints, wooden models, and studies in line and technique."[52] The 1931 fete exhibited an "unusually attractive" handwork display featuring articles made in art, home economics, and manual training. Baskets, candy, cookies, towels, pillow cases, aprons, braided rugs, and dresses complimented the usual song, dance, and dramatic presentations on American, Mexican and, by way of mistake, Spanish themes.[53] Similarly, festivals such as May Day were opportunities to display the accomplishments of the teachers as well as the students. The first priority in learning English skills, appears to have dominated the programs. The 1924 Wilson School May Day illustrates: songs, recitations, drills, and processionals all displayed the use of English followed by the usual exhibits of shop and domestic science work.[54]

Educators and popular opinion held the musical and artistic abilities of Mexicans in such high esteem that school children often entertained at civic club meetings. As an example, Wilson School pupils entertained the La Habra Women's Club twice in 1925. Kindergartners sang, danced, and whistled tunes, a "young lad" gave a harmonica solo, and two others danced in costume. A recitation taken from the play Los Pastores by "a lad in costume" was notable for being "very funny"; a chorus sang "The Swallow" followed by two singers accompanied by a guitar.[55]

Achievement

Enrollment reached the 95 percent range—on the whole very satisfactory—but attendance was something different. Families migrated seasonally to different areas, some for local walnut picking, others for Navel harvest to the North, and the remainder for fruit and vegetable picking in the central valleys. Schools recognized and accepted the migration, scheduled

the opening and closing of the school year to the seasonal cycle, and in several cases, adjusted the length of the school day during the walnut harvest. The La Habra and Santa Ana school districts, for example, opened their Mexican schools at 7:30 A.M., closing at 12:30 P.M. to allow children to accompany their parents to the groves. The Placentia District Board of Education attendance policy placed employers' labor needs equal with the child's right to an education. Accordingly, in an effort "to cooperate with the walnut growers" the three Mexican schools in the district operated on half-day sessions during the walnut harvest.[56]

The many children arriving for school in October and leaving in May were, according to state law, "student-farmers" and therefore eligible to "privileges" such as "special class hours." In a disingenuous interpretation of the law, State Attorney General U. S. Webb (who advised that segregation of Mexican children was legal and educationally sound) allowed county school superintendents a legal basis for establishing a schedule for individual Mexican students, as well as for a Mexican school as a whole.[57]

Girls not only harvested but also cared for their younger siblings. The size of the family especially affected girls, and in large families they attended school very irregularly. The educational experience of Teresa Vásquez of La Jolla exemplifies the limited schooling of many girls. Each winter her family migrated to Lindsay for the Navel harvest—her father and brothers picked and her mother provided board for pickers. She recalls a difficult youth, "It was hard for me, so many children to help my mother with that I missed a lot of school because I was the oldest."[58] She never graduated from the eighth grade and married as a teenager. "In those days," she recounted, "girls got married young."

Lack of normal school progress considerably handicapped Mexican children, as evidenced by the substantial number of children who repeated grades at La Habra's Wilson School. In the 1930 school year, 41 of 86 district pupils repeating grades were from the Mexican school. The 41 represented nearly a quarter of the Wilson School's enrollment. On the other hand, at the two Anglo schools, less than 6 percent repeated grades.[59] The retention rate dropped to 15 percent in the first six grades in 1932, so that the La Habra district's 1932 official report indicated "there are more Mexicans completing the eighth grade (or intermediate school) than ever before."[60] Yet of 245 pupils enrolled in first through sixth grades, only 13 were in the sixth year compared to 39 in the first. Two years later only 16 pupils attended the sixth grade, while 85 enrolled in the first. The figures remained constant throughout the 1930s, indicating an extremely high dropout rate in the elementary years.

Enrollment figures for both integrated and segregated junior high schools indicate that in junior high school, Mexican students were winnowed from continuing to high school. In 1934, 4,037 Spanish-surnamed students en-

rolled in the county elementary schools, but only 187 were eighth graders and only 165 attended high school. Of the 165 high school students, 77 were freshman, 48 tenth graders, 25 were eleventh graders, and 15 were seniors.[61] Similarly, less than 1 percent of the La Habra area Mexican children, about 250, enrolled in high school in 1934, and, of the total La Habra Mexican population of about 1500, only 32 completed the eighth grade.[62] Although Mexican children composed over 57 percent of the Placentia district's enrollment in 1936, only 6 out of a class of 48 (14 percent) graduated from the district's high school four years later. In 1940, out of a total 530 enrolled in all grades, a mere 13 graduated from the La Jolla Junior High.[63] Thus, not only were tenth graders a distinct minority among students, but so were elementary school graduates.

The former principal of the La Jolla School, Chester Whitten, offered an explanation for the low number of high school graduates:

> [the junior high] was more of a terminal in those days. It was a school, I feel sure, to keep the youngsters out of high school because there were many people in the community, especially the wealthy class, who didn't want this mixing of the races or of the nationalities. I think they created this especially for this purpose and then they bussed children out of Placentia, out of Atwood to our school that could have gone to Valencia High School just as well . . . the leading citizens of our community were among the very people who wanted to maintain this thing.[64]

No wonder, then, that the high school graduate was singled out by the townspeople as the "exceptional" Mexican, and celebrated by editors, Americanizers, and civic groups. When Isabel Martínez graduated from Fullerton High School in 1931, the *Placentia Courier* headlined "the first student of Mexican parentage who has graduated from the high school."[65] Nevertheless, in spite of the excitement, little progress occurred. Six years later the numbers of Placentia students graduating numbered but six, less than 2 percent of Mexican students enrolled in all grades.

Graduation for the few assumed a serious mien for students, parents, and especially the school administrators. But in the same fashion that schooling segmented the curriculum according to nationality, so did administrators differentiate between a Mexican school graduation and an Anglo school graduation. The Placentia School District combined the graduation ceremonies of their three Mexican schools into one large affair, while the Anglo schools had their individual ceremonies. The Anglo schools invited only Anglo commencement speakers, while Mexican schools generally, but not always, had a Mexican American speaker.[66] The program for the Mexican schools underscored the content of instruction exemplified in the 1936 Richfield School program featuring students speaking on homemaking,

thrift, culture, citizenship and character—main themes in the education of Mexicans.

Some attempts to encourage Mexican children to continue to high school did appear from time to time, but seldom was this the work of the school district. As exception, the La Habra schools, underscored the value of continuing education by touring Wilson eighth graders through the local high school. On other occasions Anglo high school students were invited to speak to the Wilson School pupils. Americanization supervisor for the Fullerton-La Habra-Placentia area Druzilla Mackey encouraged secondary schooling. At one event observing the 1932 "School Week" in La Habra, Mackey "gave an inspirational talk urging Mexican eighth graders to enter Fullerton High School."[67] Selected role models who appeared on the same program included Isabel Martínez, the first Mexican graduate of Fullerton High; her sister, a Fullerton High student; and a Mexican-American nurse at the Orange County Hospital. Each discussed the advantages gained through the high school diploma.

In keeping with that strategy for change, two other speakers shared the podium during observance of La Habra's Schools Week, one spoke on the necessity for thrift and cleanliness, the other stressed law observance and "complimented the Mexican residents on the low percentage of offenders from the La Habra colony in comparison to other Mexican groups in Orange County."[68] At every turn, even in the snippets of encouragement of education, the Mexican community was reminded of its inadequacies. Such encouragement strongly suggested a dose of medicinal education to overcome those deficiencies. Many educators felt that for Mexicans to be accepted in the Anglo world, they must be raised to the Anglo's cultural level. The cultural divide between the two communities could be closed; but the difference was to be overcome by a cultural change within the Mexican community, a change based ultimately upon a design drafted by the dominant community.

Across the board, Mexican children achieved comparatively poorly in schools. And even when a student was fortunate enough to receive a high school diploma there was no guarantee of employment beyond those occupations limited to the Mexican community. Many a resident of the village remembers the restrictions placed on a graduation certificate if one was a Mexican. In not a few cases, high school graduates picked oranges alongside their lesser educated companions.[69]

In the educator's mind, high school for Mexican children did not imply a freedom to branch into course work beyond vocational arts. "The high school," counseled Wilson School Principal Warren Mendenhall, "can take care of the [Mexican] children who have the ability and are interested in the professional aspects of these vocational courses."[70] In the final analysis, vocational education followed the Mexican student, from kindergar-

ten through, if fortunate, the twelfth grade, maintaining, rather than changing, the social and economic distinction between communities.

Community-sponsored education was offered from time to time in many of the villages; the most prominent case occurred at La Habra's Campo Colorado. Juan Figueroa, a high school student, held classes for elementary school-age children on a voluntary basis in the 1930s. A letter published in the *La Habra Star,* written by a village resident in rebuttal of the local Mexican school principal's allegations of Mexican cultural inferiority, included a description of the enterprise: "Right here in camp, during the summer months, we have a sort of 'summer school' conducted for the benefit of all children, to teach them the fundamentals of the Spanish language. It may be surprising to note that the teacher's services are free. Surely, one that is unselfish enough to do this for nothing must be rewarded for his efforts by knowing that his pupils are learning."[71]

Perhaps the more prevalent form of village education, apart from the cultural activities that had a significant impact on the shared information of the village, were parental attempts to instruct their children. Numerous accounts tell of a childhood learning the rudiments of the Spanish language, Mexican history, or religious doctrine in the home.[72] As noble as these attempts were, they probably left a lesser impression than the education received in the segregated public schools.

Isabel Ruiz, reared in the Manzanillo village in Garden Grove, vividly remembers her father's lessons. Ruiz's father enjoyed the evening hours listening to classical music, reciting poetry or Shakespeare to his children. He emphasized pride in their ancestral past, "the magnificent civilization the Aztecs had. He would tell us that they had engineers, that they had accountants," but then, she recalls, "I would go to a segregated school in the morning."[73]