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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

LULAC: THE HISTORY OF A GRASS ROOTS
ORGANIZATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICIES
1929-1983

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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PREFACE

Choosing a topic for this dissertation was a very difficult decision. After researching a number of different areas that were of interest, this researcher decided to examine some aspect of Mexican Americans¹ and their education. There were several reasons for this decision, one was that the researcher is of Mexican descent and remembers some of the difficulties individuals of Mexican descent encountered growing up in a small town in the Texas Panhandle. Families instill in one a sense of pride in one's heritage, particularly if the parents are not born in the United States. People learn about themselves from not only their family history, but history itself. Education is a priority to people who are first generation American. As this fits the profile of the researcher this dissertation deals with education.

While conducting preliminary research the researcher discovered that the League of United Latin American Citizens

¹The term "Mexican American" is used to differentiate people of Mexican descent from other "Hispanic" or "Latin" peoples. At the time the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) was founded, the membership consisted of Mexican Americans, who were, (and continue to be), the primary minority population of the Southwest. Therefore, when the term Mexican American is used, it is to be taken literally.

(hereinafter known as LULAC), in addition to being one of the oldest Hispanic organizations in the country, had, in its early years, been a crusader for equal education for Mexican Americans. The researcher was familiar with LULAC and the LULAC National Educational Service Centers (hereinafter known as LNESEC), and therefore decided to do a historical study of this organization and how it influenced educational policies for Mexican Americans.

While this dissertation deals specifically with Mexican Americans and the history of one organization, it will make a contribution to the general field of education. One cannot pick up a newspaper or magazine without reading what a "global society" we are becoming. Walls are being torn down, countries are being united and boundaries are being obliterated.

In the United States, we hear in the news and read about the issue of cultural diversity in the workforce and in the schools, and how we should learn to appreciate and embrace differences, rather than be frightened by the unfamiliar. The United States is a mosaic made of people. Culture - language, color, religion, even the type of food we eat - is what makes each of us unique. We should not be fearful of those who are "different," but accept them for who they are, let them add more color and continue to give life to this painting of the world.

Corporations are conducting seminars that focus on

cultural differences so that white managers might be more sensitive to the needs and concerns of minorities; and universities are expanding their curriculum to include courses about African-American authors and culture. People, in general, are becoming more sensitive to the cultural diversity issue.

The minority population in the United States will continue to grow along with that of immigrants. It is estimated that more than one-half million immigrants will enter the United States every year until the year 2000. The majority of these immigrants will be from Latin America and Asia. These are the people who will encounter problems in the workplace and in the schools as they attempt to assimilate into American society.

In Thinking in Time, Neustadt and May write that we must learn from the past when we are confronted with problems in the present.² In Building a Global Civic Culture, Elise Boulding writes that we are a global society where we are all interdependent.³ While we, the people in this world, do have our differences, we have more in common with one another than we realize. We are all one species and have what Boulding calls a "species identity." Boulding also contends that we

²Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers (New York: Free Press, 1986).

³Elise Boulding, Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World (Teachers College, Columbia College, New York: Teachers College Press, 1988).

live in a time perspective that expands across 200 years, one hundred years into the past and one hundred years into the future. She calls this time span the "200 year present" because it is what links the past with the present and the future.

While this dissertation focuses on the history of the first major national Mexican American organization and its influence on educational policies for Mexican Americans, it can be useful in several different areas. One is that we might better understand the educational problems new immigrants face upon entering this country. Much like the Mexican Americans, new immigrants will face, amongst other things, culture shock while attempting to gain acceptance into American society. Also like the Mexican Americans, new immigrants will probably encounter the greatest barrier - language. It is this barrier that could hinder their educational opportunities.

Yet immigrant groups of the same nationality will form their own support groups and organizations so that they can better cope with their new environment. It will be these grass roots organizations that will not only fill the void of belonging to, and becoming part of, a community, but also assist them in the assimilation process. LULAC is an example of such an organization. According to Boulding, any type of change must begin at the grass roots level. New immigrant groups could use findings from this dissertation as a plan for

their own organizing efforts and to also foresee some of the problems they might encounter while they are attempting to integrate into American society.

Thus, by using Neustadt and May's and Boulding's theories, this dissertation can act as a blueprint to assist new immigrant groups in organizing support associations and in advancing education. Learning from the past is fundamental to both of these theories. Boulding carries it further by stating that we need to work together and understand each other in order to make changes in the world. Nevertheless, the information from this dissertation can be useful in ascertaining whether one organization developed the power to help transform education for Mexican Americans and subsequently for other non-English speaking groups.

Statement of the Problem

The LULAC, was the first major Mexican American organization to survive and become a major national Hispanic⁴ organization that still exists today. Organized in Corpus Christi, Texas in 1929, LULAC was the result of a merger between three Mexican American organizations: the Order

⁴"Hispanic" is the politically correct term currently used. "Hispanic" encompasses all persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central, and South American descent, as well as people from any other Spanish culture or origin. However, when the United States Bureau of Census began gathering census information in the early 1900s the term used was "Latin" which is synonymous with "Hispanic." While the organization has evolved to include people of any "Hispanic" origin, the term used in the Constitution of LULAC was people of "Latin" descent who were either naturalized citizens or those born in the United States who were of "Latin" origin.

Knights of America; the League of Latin American Citizens; and the Order Sons of America.

The purpose of this dissertation is to trace the roots of LULAC and examine its impact on education for Mexican Americans. This dissertation examines the background of the founders of LULAC and the events and issues that occurred in its early history to explain why Mexican Americans felt a need for such an organization.

LULAC's educational policies and programs from 1929-1983 also are examined, with a particular emphasis on LNES. Studying LNES's history provides information upon which to examine this organization's educational activities.

The questions addressed in this dissertation are:

1. What were the existing social, economic and educational conditions in 1929 that precipitated the founding of the organization?
2. Why did the organization survive when other Mexican American organizations failed during the 1930's and 1940's?
3. What is LULAC's educational philosophy and what types of programs has it developed?
4. How is the philosophy implemented?
5. What contributions has the organization made in the field of education?
6. Did LULAC/LNES influence state and national educational policies? If so, how?
7. How has LNES assisted students in their pursuit of a higher education? Were these students better able to complete college?

A study such as this will contribute to the field of education because it explains and clarifies some of the issues

and concerns surrounding bilingual education and the teaching of multi-culturalism⁵ in the schools.

Discussion of the Procedure

The primary research methodology used was the historical/documentary approach. The framework of this study includes four major areas: the historical development of LULAC and LNESL 1929-1983; correlation between LULAC's educational philosophy and strategies used; the outcomes of LNESL's programs; and what influence, if any, did LULAC/LNESL have on primary, secondary and higher education policies.

The historical treatment of LULAC and LNESL (1929-1983) encompasses the background of the founders of LULAC and LNESL and the factors which influenced the founding of these organizations. The major reason this study covers the years 1929-1983 is that LULAC was founded in 1929 and once LNESL was

⁵When the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was passed bilingual education was defined as: "a program of instruction which uses two languages for instruction, one of which is English. The program also pays particular attention to the heritage and cultural background of the students it serves." It was with the adaptation of this definition that "bilingual and bicultural" became synonymous. However, due to the controversy over bilingual education, the bicultural aspect of the act was ignored and the focus remained on the bilingual aspect of the Act. In the late 1970s the debate over cultural diversity and cultural pluralism was again rekindled when the United States began to experience an increase in immigration. In the 1980s the term "bicultural" was changed to "multicultural." (See for example Hernan LaFontaine, Barry Persky and Leonard Golubchick, Bilingual Education (Wayne, New Jersey: Avery Publishing Group, 1978); James Crawford, Bilingual Education: History, Politics, Theory and Practice (Trenton, New Jersey: Crane Publishing, 1989); Kenneth J. Meier and Joseph Stewart, Jr., The Politics of Hispanic Education (Albany: State University of New York, 1991).

founded in 1972, it became LULAC's educational platform.

Also included in the historical development is the determination of the purpose and philosophy of the organization. The characteristics of the membership are also discussed in the historical development.

The congruence between LULAC's educational philosophy and the strategies the organization used to implement that philosophy are identified via the types of educational programs and services the organization provided, along with the development of their educational policies. In order to determine if LULAC or LNESEC had any influence on other primary, secondary or higher educational institutions, the strategies used to create and maintain relationships with schools, colleges and universities are identified.

Various primary sources were used to document the course of historical events. One of these sources was the LULAC archives located at the Nettie Lee Benson Library of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas in Austin, to which the researcher traveled to collect some of the data. The archival documents included both primary and secondary sources. The researcher also traveled to Washington, D.C. to collect information at the Library of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education Research Library. While in Washington, D.C. the researcher was also provided access to the files at the LULAC National Educational Service Center's (LNESEC) national headquarters. Further information regarding

the history of LNEESC, and statistics on the numbers of students who were provided assistance, were gathered from the LNEESC offices in Chicago, Illinois and Houston, Texas.

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CHAPTER I

THE MEXICAN AMERICAN SITUATION PRIOR TO LULAC: 1900-1929

The present is always a present-of-the-past, the future a future-of-the-present.

John Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry

The history of the Mexican American is important if one is to gain a true perspective on their evolution. Most of their history lies in the Southwest, (Arizona, Texas, California, New Mexico) where the majority of the Mexican Americans live. The Mexican Americans are different from other minority groups, because, like the Native Americans, they did not immigrate to the United States territory; they were a conquered people. They were natives of the Southwest long before that portion of the country became part of the United States.

Early History

Even before Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, its major concern was the development of its northern most territories. It proposed to do this by increasing trade and population. After Mexico became a Republic, Stephen F. Austin of Connecticut, visited Mexico City and obtained a land grant to colonize Texas. Some fifteen other people later obtained similar grants, and thus began the trek of the white settler to the Southwest. The United States desired to annex

Texas. While Mexico believed that the United States' desire for annexation would be appeased by allowing the colonies to exist, the settlers saw it as an opportunity to possess their own land and make money.

Agreements such as the one with Stephen F. Austin soon brought white settlers to this new land, which was so far away from the central government of Mexico. Along with the settlers came slaves who were brought to work in the field. Soon the settlers outnumbered Mexicans. By 1830 some 20,000 to 30,000 white settlers lived in Texas. Mexico soon realized that it could not be effective in controlling the immigration. Hoping to win the white settlers over, they offered free land to those who would follow Mexican law and convert to Catholicism. After several years it became clear to Mexico that these were futile measures and it promptly prohibited all immigration from the United States. As Mexico's presence weakened the American colonists desire for independence grew.

The Texans felt they were being treated unfairly and were not satisfied with the Mexican government. The antislavery and immigration laws were too limiting. At the same time, the Mexicans were convinced the Texans had taken advantage of their hospitality. They had been entering the territory illegally, bringing in more slaves, not abiding Mexican authority and failing to accept Catholicism.

When Santa Anna came to power as President of Mexico in 1833 he formed a highly centralized government. It was then

that the white settlers realized there was no hope for peacefully seeking a separate statehood within Mexico. The conflict that ensued was inevitable. Desiring their independence from Mexico, they declared war. The Texas Revolution began in 1835 and in 1836 Texas proclaimed independence.

One year later the United States recognized Texas' independence and it was then that Texas offered itself to the United States for annexation. A campaign against annexation was begun by John Quincy Adams who claimed that Southern slaveholders had a plan to divide Texas into several states, thereby strengthening their representation in Congress. Adams further argued that Texas had revolted in 1836 because Mexico had been on the verge of abolishing slavery. Consequently, in 1839, the Texas senate approved the withdrawal of the annexation proposal.

The tension between Mexico and Texas continued to grow. For nine years there was sporadic warfare and raids between the two countries and the threat of Mexico trying to regain Texas became very real. The United States' interest in annexation was further rekindled when Texas gained recognition from several countries including Great Britain, Holland, France and Belgium. Great Britain and France had developed a close relationship with Mexico and both urged the Mexican

government to recognize Texas' independence.⁶ Furthermore, the United States believed that Great Britain had an ulterior motive, to take over Texas and ultimately extend its power to the western United States.⁷ A rumor had also begun that Texas, in order to gain protection from Mexico, was willing to become a British colony and would abolish slavery. The rumor was further fueled after an editorial, "Price of British Mediation," gave credence to a report that Captain Charles Elliot, the British representative to Texas, had been instructed to propose the abolition of slavery in lieu of British intervention, compelling Mexico to make peace with Texas.⁸ Thus Southerners began to fear that the future of slavery would be impeded if relations with Great Britain were to continue. The Mexican government continued to move slowly in granting recognition of Texas' independence, and it would not be until 1845 that Congress would approve annexation.

Mexico continued its fight to regain Texas, and in 1846 the United States entered the war. The U.S. - Mexican War lasted for two years and ended when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848. For ten million dollars Mexico ceded Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah and

⁶John S.D. Eisenhower, So Far From God: The U.S. War with Mexico 1846-1848 (New York: Random House, 1989), 24.

⁷Ibid., 23. For a similiar view also see Karl Jack Bauer, The Mexican War 1846-1848 (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 9; Llerena Friend, Sam Houston the Great Designer (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954), 121-125.

⁸Friend, Sam Houston The Great Designer, 125.

parts of Oklahoma, Kansas and Wyoming. Under the treaty the Mexican citizens were provided the opportunity to remain in the United States or return to Mexico. In addition to automatically becoming United States citizens, those who chose to remain were informed that they could retain their landholdings. A major point covered under the Treaty was that the people who chose to remain retained the right to use Spanish, continue their customs and traditions and maintain their Catholic faith. Some people decided to leave, but it is estimated that approximately 75,000 Mexicans decided to remain in the Southwest.⁹

After the treaty was signed chaos in the northern most territories continued to grow. Several "push" and "pull" factors induced the Mexican people to seek a better life elsewhere. The "push" factors would be the precariousness of the political and economic systems in Mexico and the population explosion it faced. As Mexico would have push factors the United States would have "pull" factors. Marilyn Davis wrote:

...this migration, like any major movement growing naturally from the conditions of life, has always had a purpose and momentum of its own. Conditions change from time to time and person to person, but invariably the underlying reason is to provide sustenance and stability for the migrants and their families. If they cannot find it on their own side, they will seek it

⁹Carey McWilliams, The Mexicans in America (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), 5.

on the other.¹⁰

Push and Pull Factors

Mexican political and economic instability prompted unrest among its people. Between 1837 and 1851, sixteen different individuals served twenty-two governments as President.¹¹ Many times during this period, two, sometimes three groups simultaneously claimed control of the government. Mexico ran the political gamut from being an empire, to a federal republic, to having a centralized government, to becoming a dictatorship.

These tumultuous times continued and in 1900 Mexico began to undergo what would be a ten year civil war. It was during these years that the country's land fell into the hands of a few wealthy owners, forcing the people to relinquish their land, and choose between debt, peonage or migration. It is estimated that nearly ten percent of Mexico's population emigrated between 1900 and 1910.¹²

Another development taking place between 1880 and 1910 was the construction of the railroad. The new rail system Mexico had constructed made possible the development of industries in the northern part of the country. These

¹⁰Marilyn P. Davis, Mexican Voices/American Dreams: An Oral History of Mexican Immigration to the United States (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), 406.

¹¹Charles A. Cumberland, Mexico: The Struggle for Modernity (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 141.

¹²Carey McWilliams, North From Mexico (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1949), 163.

industries developed to serve the new inhabitants brought by the railroads. Coal fields and copper mines expanded, employing unskilled labor and paying more than agriculture ever would.

Along with the political unrest, Mexico also had to deal with its growing population. Between 1877 and 1910 Mexico's population increased by almost six million people.¹³ Not surprisingly, Mexico was unable to deal with such growth. What followed was unemployment and low wages. Furthermore, the land that remained could not be cultivated. It was this state of affairs that prompted Mexicans to emigrate.

The "pull" factors had to do with the Southwest and it was here that most of the written history regarding Mexican Americans took place. The condition of the Mexican Americans in the United States has been influenced by the milieu of the Southwest and the changes it has undergone over time in the areas of: economic development, immigration, and work and settlement patterns.¹⁴ All of these factors have affected the assimilation of the Mexican American into American greater society.

Economic Development

The development of northern Mexico and the railroad,

¹³John Martinez, Mexican Emigration to the U.S. 1910-1930 (Saratoga: University of California R & E Research Assoc., 1971), 3.

¹⁴Leo Grebler, Joan W. Moore and Ralph Guzman, The Mexican American People: The Nation's Second Largest Minority (New York: Free Press, 1970), 36.

which connected the more populous areas of Mexico, opened the door of immigration to the United States. As people's lands were confiscated, they were forced into migratory labor, looking for jobs to survive. The United States also began constructing a railroad to connect the east with the west, thus making it easier for these emigrants to find work.

In the early 1900s Mexicans crossed the border not only because of the development of the railroad, but also due to the increase in mining and agriculture which required a large number of both skilled and unskilled laborers in the southwestern United States. The Southwest was so sparsely settled that it did not offer employers enough of a workforce, so they turned to Mexico as an alternative. This solution was a "safe" one for employers and the United States government, who viewed this immigrant as posing no threat to the Anglo-Saxon way of life. Mexicans seeking to escape the poverty in Mexico entered the Southwest in great numbers.

As the railroad construction grew, the trackmen and crews of the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads became almost entirely Mexican. Mining in New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Colorado also continued to grow while the production of sugar increased more rapidly than any other crop. By 1909 the sugar industry was centered in the Rocky Mountains and western Nebraska regions, which together accounted for over fifty percent of all sugar beet production.

In addition to the construction of the railroad and

agricultural technology the Reclamation Act of 1902 began to change the Southwest. During President Roosevelt's administration, conservation of the country's natural resources was seen as an area in need of reform. The land that had passed to corporate hands had been exploited; forests had been cut down and mineral resources had been depleted. The Reclamation Act of 1902 was passed and it put the federal government in the business of building dams and ditches for irrigation projects. Once reservoirs were built to irrigate, there was year round farming. Farmers discovered they could not maintain their land, thus prompting the need for cheap labor.

Irrigated land, which was mainly in the Southwest, grew such crops as cotton, grapes, melons, lettuce, and other vegetables. The Newlands Act of 1902 was another act passed in President Roosevelt's campaign to preserve the country's natural resources. Under the act the government sold public land to settlers. In turn, the government used this money to construct irrigation projects on the land. With new railroads and desert irrigation, cultivation of the land expanded along the border areas in California, Arizona, New Mexico and the lower Rio Grande Valley where citrus and cotton began to be cultivated. Crops were soon produced year round in the Southwest. Mining and agriculture also became labor intensive and seasonal, thus stimulating the need for migratory labor.

Immigration

In the 1860s Asians had been cheap sources of migratory labor, but the recession of 1871 found many people out of work and job competition intensified. Trade unions began a campaign to thwart Chinese immigration. People began seeing the Chinese as a danger to the United States and it was these anti-Chinese sentiments that led the United States to enact the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Employers then sought the Japanese as a source of cheap labor. The prejudices that had plagued the Chinese also plagued the Japanese. The outcome was the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907¹⁵ which restricted Japanese citizens from immigrating to the United States and prepared for the widespread use of "braceros"¹⁶ in the Southwest.

Even though Mexico is so close to the United States, Mexican immigration was not always considered to be a problem. Prior to 1900 it is estimated that the total Mexican born

¹⁵The Gentlemen's Agreement was negotiated between President Theodore Roosevelt and Japan. It was referred to as an understanding that the Japanese government would issue passports to certain individuals and wished to emigrate to the U.S. mainland. Passports would be issued only to laborers who were former residents of the U.S., or those who had close Japanese relatives already residing in the U.S. wishing to emigrate to the U.S. mainland. In return, the U.S. would deny entrance to Japanese immigrants not coming directly from Japan. Although the agreement also permitted the continuation of Japanese immigration into Hawaii, Japan voluntarily cut down on issuing passports to that state. Thomas A. Bailey, Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese American Crises (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1964) 166.

¹⁶Bracero is a person who works with his/her arms (brazos). The word comes from the Spanish equivalent of farm hand; day laborer.

population in the United States was 103,393. Of this number 71,061 lived in Texas; 14,172 in Arizona; 8,096 in California; and 6,696 in New Mexico.¹⁷

It was not until the 1900s that the first wave of Mexican immigration began and the pattern began to change. This influx of Mexicans was mainly confined to the states bordering Mexico - Texas, Arizona, California, and New Mexico. Because these states had been Mexican territory, they already possessed a Mexican population, thus a limited migration was to be expected. But, when it came to the matter of the need for workers in the Southwest, the United States government listened to the arguments of southwestern growers and other employers, as to the harmless nature of the Mexican, reflecting a pro-immigration outlook. The Dillingham Commission projected this attitude, allowing the development of local regional veto over national immigration laws.¹⁸ Thus, with no effective laws, Mexican immigration grew in the first decade of the twentieth century. The open-door policy

¹⁷U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1910 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), Table 26, 57.

¹⁸The Dillingham Commission was created in 1907 to investigate the problems immigration created. The President, House and Senate each appointed three members. The Presidential appointees were Charles P. Neill, the Commissioner of Labor; William Wheeler, a San Francisco businessman; and Jeremiah Jenks of Cornell University. The House appointed Benjamin Howell, William Bennett and John Burnett; and the Senate appointed Anselm McLaurin, Henry Cabot and William Dillingham, who chaired the Commission. Oscar Handlin, Race and Nationality in American Life (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957), 79-80.

of both governments made it difficult to keep track of how many braceros worked in the United and returned to Mexico, or stayed permanently in the United States. Neither country kept statistics on the labor situation until 1908 so the numbers of workers cannot be substantiated. Federal legislation during this period was designed to deal with people from Asia and certain sections of Europe. The long-term implications of Mexican immigration were not thought out and the decisions regarding it were left to those who knew the most about it, the southwestern employers.

As the United States entered World War I the working-class joined the military, leaving behind a demand for labor. War-related industries usually paid higher wages and continued drawing poor white and black people from the south and southwest into the cities for better paying jobs. This labor movement left a need for farm labor.

A growing number of employers, led by southwestern farmers, claimed that due to the wartime economy and their inability to pay high wages or offer year-round employment, they could not attract workers. They called for government assistance stressing the need for the uninterrupted production of food, which was essential to the war effort.¹⁹

The American farmers identified Mexican labor as a solution to fill the void. From the beginning they claimed

¹⁹Sylvia Pedraza-Bailey, Political and Economic Migrants in America: Cubans and Mexicans (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 60.

that expanding the flow of labor from Mexico, which had been in such a turmoil with the revolution, was what was needed. They saw the Mexican as needing work to keep from starving and that went well with their need for someone to plant and harvest the crops. Other arguments the farmers used were the proximity of Mexico to the United States, the proven suitability of Mexican nationals for stoop labor in agriculture and the already established reliance of the Southwest with Mexican labor.²⁰

The 1917 Immigration Law, which had been enacted by Congress before the United States entered the war, was a factor in creating this labor shortage.²¹ This law, the most restrictive immigration act in American history, was likely to make immigration from Mexico extremely difficult. In addition to levying a head tax on each immigrant, it also barred those who were over sixteen years of age and illiterate.

Prior to the passage of the 1917 act, various southwestern employers, fearing the Mexican worker might be a victim of the public's feelings against immigration, had pressured Congress to make an exception for aliens entering the country for temporary employment. The concession they won waived the restrictions and was inserted as the Ninth Proviso

²⁰George C. Kiser and Martha Woody Kiser, Mexican Workers in the United States (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 3.

²¹Congress, House, Immigration Act of 1917, 64th Cong., 2nd sess., H.R. 10384, United States Statutes at Large, vol. 39, part 1, 874.

to Section Three of the Immigration Act of 1917.²² The Ninth Proviso provided exclusively for temporary agricultural workers and restricted immigrant workers for all other types of industries. This became the legal foundation of the first bracero program which was instituted in June, 1917. Mexican immigrants flowed freely into the United States and, as the war continued, they became a permanent source of labor.

Work and Settlement Patterns

When the United States began constructing railroad lines to connect the east and the west, Mexican labor was cheap and plentiful. Thus, the first wave of immigration began. Mexican laborers came looking for work and found it.

While higher wages were drawing people into the United States, the railroad served to spread labor. American companies set up recruiting centers along the border to lure Mexicans to work. The railroad, while facilitating the crossing of the border, also served to fix the early settlement patterns of Mexican workers. The fact that Los Angeles, San Antonio, Chicago, and Kansas City, Kansas currently have large Mexican communities is mainly due to the employment of braceros during the early 1900s.

Railroad companies also served as temporary employers. Once rail lines in the state had been completed, coal mines in Oklahoma hired Mexican track construction workers. Many of the areas served by the companies did not have sufficient

²²Ibid., Ninth Proviso, Section 3, 875.

labor to tend the harvesting of crops; thus, railroad companies also encouraged the employment of Mexican migrants in agriculture. Rail corporations, at times, also allowed farmers to borrow or hire their Mexican workers permanently, thus increasing production and carrying trade in areas along their way.

The railway centers also served as a way station for those who could not find work. Many barrios date their beginnings from these railroad camps. Mexican labor in the Chicago and Calumet areas was first introduced by the railroads. Migrant laborers would go where other crops were being harvested or where other seasonal work existed. Soon, a pattern of Mexican migrant settlement developed.

World War I further increased the need for farm labor and industrial labor. It would be the continued needs of non-agricultural industries for labor that would finally bring about an extension of the 1917 Ninth Proviso in 1918 to include these fields of work. The Mexican laborer soon became employed in a variety of areas. In the railroad industry Mexicans substituted for the Italians, Greeks, Chinese and Japanese. They worked as trackmen, in construction, and loaded stock. Comprising seventy to ninety percent of the workforce they were concentrated in low status jobs. By the end of the war, Mexicans had migrated further north and east than ever before.

The Mexican immigrant became the ideal solution to

labor's cyclical needs. They were seen as being "different" from other groups. They did not have to cross any ocean to fill the employment needs in the United States and were never very far from home. They worked in fields or mines for a season and many returned to Mexico to spend their money. The Mexicans were "safe" workers who would not settle permanently anywhere. Their going to where there was work fit with the needs of southwestern agribusiness. Migrants cleaned the land, planted, and harvested, doing the work that others would not do. They were employed in the Arizona copper and smelting plants and in the coal mines of Colorado and New Mexico and in the coke and ore production areas of northern New Mexico. In Texas migrants worked as miners in the coal mines at Thurber and the soft coal and lignite mines of Laredo and Eagle Pass. Also due to the railroad, they found jobs in industrial cities in the Midwest, where they worked in tanneries, steel mills, foundries and packing plants.

Labor shortages continued in agriculture. Cotton and sugar beet farming, along with the fruit and vegetable production of Southern California, had expanded and become so profitable that there was not enough American labor to work the fields after the war. Sections of the economy had become completely or heavily dependent on migrant labor, particularly in the Southwest. Braceros constituted a majority of the unskilled laborers in agriculture. Not only Texas, but California, Oklahoma and other states were experiencing great

increases in their agricultural production, which could not have been done without Mexican labor. In order to attract and hold Mexican labor, some farmers in Texas and in the sugar beet growing areas of the Northwest developed the practice of tying the bracero to the land by providing them a place to live, a piece of land, and wages.

The railroad, farm work, Mexican Revolution and World War I were the impetuses for the increase in migration. Work in many areas was seasonal and ready employees were found in the Mexican laborer. Both the United States "pull" factors of this industrial and agricultural growth, and Mexico's "push" factors of economic and political instability served as an stimulus for immigration to the United States. These factors, coupled with the United States' need for cheap labor, were the catalysts for the emigration of one-half million Mexicans into the United States by 1917.²³ Immigration from Mexico reached its peak in the 1920s with close to 500,000 people reported as entering on permanent visas.²⁴

Restrictionists

The wave of Mexican immigration was opposed by many people. Mexicans came to be viewed as being illiterate, having a high crime rate, and delinquent children and receiving welfare dollars that could have been used elsewhere.

²³Martinez, Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1910-1930, 14.

²⁴Grebler, The Mexican-American People, The Nations' Second Largest Minority, 65.

By 1926 Mexican immigration had increased so much that Congress was urged to place restrictions on it. Between 1926 and 1930 this issue would be reopened and the focus would remain on immigration from Mexico. In 1926 John C. Box, a state Representative from Texas, sponsored H.R. 6741, an immigration bill whereby immigrants from the Western Hemisphere would be included in the United States quota system. While no action was taken, it became abundantly clear that many people were concerned with the issue of race.

There were numerous debates before Congress arguing the pros and cons of Mexican immigration. Many letters were written by private citizens to Texas Congressman Box expressing concern. One citizen wrote:

It seems to me some of our Congressmen are more interested in dividends and cheap labor than they are in the future citizenship of our country. If we want to preserve the Border states to the white race the Mex. [Mexican] should be shut out cold. They are all at heart American haters. I hope you keep up the fight, most of the voters are with you.²⁵

Another Texan wrote:

Here in Texas, we have to provide separate schools for Mexicans. And what is the attitude of the average South West Texas public school Trustee? I mean in regard to these Mexican schools? It is this: "Put the Mexican off with as little as the law will allow: for the less he knows, the easier he is to manage." What is the principles back of this attitude? This: "The Mexican is a good material to exploit." That is the only spirit that

²⁵R.L. Williams, Brownwood, TX, to [Hon. J.C. Box, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.], TLS, 6 January 1926, Oliver Weeeks file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

will clamor for a flood gate policy with regard to Mexican immigration.²⁶

Impressions and attitudes such as this were more prevalent in Texas.²⁷ In many ways this was not surprising. The raids that took place during the Mexican Revolution, both in Mexico and Texas, the Battle of the Alamo, and the Mexican-American war had left their scars on the American people. It is estimated that between 500 and 5,000 Mexican and American civilians were killed along the border between 1908 and 1925.²⁸ But in Texas it was excessive. In 1922 The Nation wrote about documented cases of Mexicans being assaulted and murdered in Texas.²⁹ The New York Times wrote "the killing of Mexicans without provocation is so common as to almost pass unnoticed."³⁰

People in Texas also blamed the Mexicans for what they

²⁶William A. McLeod and D.D. Pastor, Cuero, TX, to [Hon. J.C. Box, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.], 14 January 1926, TLS, Oliver Weeks File, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

²⁷For a more in depth description of the conflict between Mexicans and Anglos in Texas see Arnaldo De León, They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900 (Austin: University of Texas Free Press, 1983) and De León, The Tejano Community, 1836-1900 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982). McWilliams describes similar conflict in New Mexico, California and Arizona in Chapters VI and VII in, North From Mexico.

²⁸McWilliams, North from Mexico, 111.

²⁹"Mexican Rights for the People" and "Murders of Mexicans by Americans in Texas," The Nation, 12 July 1922, 51-53.

³⁰"Protecting Mexicans in the United States," New York Times, 18 November 1922, 14.

considered the deterioration of rural life. As Mexicans became the main supply of day laborers they settled often times in rural areas, displacing white tenants. One author wrote:

Before the incoming hosts of Mexicans, three rural institutions,--the home, the church, and the school,--fell like a trio of staggering tenpins at the end of a bowling race...The Mexican did not hit the interior cotton lands with the impact of a hurricane, but seeped in silently and undermined the rural social structures like termites eating out the sills of a wooden house.³¹

Trade unions were against Mexican immigration because Mexican workers worked for lower wages and were more difficult, if not impossible, to organize. There were also social and public health workers who opined that because workers were seasonal they had a higher crime and poverty rate and had greater health problems. Many educators also said that because the children were not being provided for already, an increase in number would only exacerbate the situation.

The State Commission of Immigration and Housing of California wrote a letter to U.S. Senators and Congressmen in support of the quota system. This letter summarized all of these opinions, stating the following:

1. They drain our charities
2. They or their children become a large portion of our jail population
3. They affect the health of our communities
4. They create a problem in our labor camps
5. They require special attention in

³¹McWilliams, North from Mexico, 171.

- our schools and are of low mentality
6. They diminish the percentage of our white population
 7. They remain foreign.³²

Another group of restrictionists who should not be overlooked were Mexican. It was their position that only by placing a restriction on immigration would they be able to form self-help organizations and to develop any type of cohesiveness among the people.

No action was taken to stop this influx because the Southwest agricultural growers again argued forcefully for the need of Mexican laborers. Yet the attitude of many people remained the same. There were those who felt threatened economically, fearing job loss, and others who found it difficult to understand these people who spoke Spanish and had different customs. Yet despite all of this, Mexican immigration continued to increase until the Great Depression of 1930s.

Mexicans were treated much like the African Americans in the south. People did not distinguish between Mexicans born in Mexico and those born in the United States. By 1930 the census listed by race, a total of 1,422,533 Mexicans.³³ Of this total 673,681 lived in Texas; 114,172 in Arizona; 59,340

³²State Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, Sacramento, CA to [United States Senators and Congressmen], 24 February 1926, Oliver Weeks file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

³³U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1940 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1941) Table 20, 19.

in New Mexico; and 57,676 in Colorado.³⁴

A Minority Unfolds

All of these forces discussed earlier gave shape to the Mexican American lifestyle after 1900, and would ultimately influence the future political, social and economic roles Mexican Americans would play. During the early years (1840s) Mexican Americans were apolitical. They were a conquered people who had experienced widespread violence. In addition, poverty impeded any participation in the governmental process. California and New Mexico were two exceptions to this apolitical pattern. Mexicans in these areas had retained a substantial portion of their land and thus had a small voice in politics.

It would not be until the 1920s that a somewhat more conventional political activity would begin. The time of adaptation and accommodation began and the assimilation process started to reflect the changing position of the Mexican Americans in the social structure of the Southwest.

As economic development continued a Mexican American middle class began to emerge. Seeing there was a profit to be made, the more creative Mexican Americans became entrepreneurs. Beginning as street vendors selling candy, bread and various foods, they soon had their own restaurants and bakeries. Often times, necessity was a motivating factor, not profit. Jim Crow laws left no alternative and Mexican

³⁴Ibid., Table 16, 13.

American businessmen were compelled to find ways to help serve their communities. Economically, the majority of Mexican Americans remained in the low paying jobs. In rural areas, they continued working as laborers in agriculture and in the urban areas they worked as manual laborers.

Segregation

By the late 1920s, de facto segregation patterns were well established. Towns were divided into separate sections: white, African American and Mexican American. "The division cut across all spheres of rural life; separation in domicile, separation in politics, and separation in education."³⁵

Segregation can be explained in a number of ways. One is that ethnocentrism provided the stimulus. As Mexicans and white settlers colonized Texas and the Southwest they formed their own neighborhoods, churches and schools. Another explanation is prejudice which has been passed down from generation to generation. It would be both of these factors that would serve as the foundation for segregation.

Yet segregation for Mexican Americans was de facto segregation, unlike the de jure segregation of African Americans in the southern states. While it was not based on law, it was reinforced by custom, economics, and residential patterns.

Summary

³⁵David Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Coming of Texas, 1836-1986 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 162.

The Mexican Americans who automatically became citizens after the Texas Revolution had no idea what their future held. With each generation, the need for working within the system became greater. By 1930 Mexican Americans had fought in World War I, and for the first time had experienced life outside of what had been a somewhat limited environment. Gradually beginning to improve their social and economic positions, they continued accommodating and adapting themselves.

The social and mutual aid organizations formed in the early years were to assist in the process. But throughout all of these changes the Mexican culture has continued to exist. The Mexican Americans are the one group that has continued to maintain its culture and ethnic ties and has had problems in assimilating into the mainstream of white society. There are many theories explaining this. One is that because they were a conquered people, their culture was indigenous, and it is difficult to change that which is intrinsic. The most popular explanation is the proximity of Mexico to the United States. This proximity has led to making it easier for the undocumented worker to continuously enter the United States and return to Mexico. Therefore, the ties to Mexico and its culture are ongoing. Other ethnic groups, such as the Irish and Slavs, are too far away from their homeland for original ties to be reinforced. Thereby, with each new generation of children, these ties are weakened until the ethnic group is totally assimilated.

Therefore, the Mexican Americans have continued to maintain a strong cultural identity. The customs, religion and the language remain a significant part of their lives. Their assimilation continues. Each generation of children will become more "Americanized," yet the immigration from Mexico will continue, therefore the cycle of assimilation will be ongoing. The fact that Mexico borders the United States plays a major role in this process. Mexicans and Mexican Americans alike will continue to travel between the two countries. Whether it be to return home to families that were left behind, or to make a journey to find one's roots, their past remains a part of their present, and continues to shape their future.

CHAPTER II

LULAC HISTORY

We have been roused from our slumbers, and may we never sink into repose until we have conveyed a clear and undisputed inheritance to posterity, to the end that a backward race, in this age of civilization may tread hand in hand in all various walks of life amongst the enlightened races of today.

LULAC Constitution, 1929

Mutual Aid Societies

Fraternal and social organizations evolved because there was a void in the lives of new immigrants. A new country, new customs, and a new culture were overwhelming enough but many immigrants, in addition to these obstacles, faced a language barrier. It would be the fraternal and social organizations they established that would assist them in bridging the gap between their native culture and a new country. These organizations had a number of purposes. Some were strictly of a social nature, giving people the opportunity to meet with others from the same country, making it easier to maintain old customs and traditions. 'Sociedades mutualistas' (mutual aid societies), also known as "mutualistas," were some of the earliest of fraternal organizations. They offered people monetary assistance, psychological support, and often limited

insurance and death benefits. For new immigrants the insurance and death benefits were important because they assured families that their loved ones would at least receive proper burials.

Mutual aid organizations were supported by membership dues. These dues were never an established amount, instead, members were required to pay whatever they could afford. Consequently, resources were very limited and mutualistas rarely were able to provide any long-term assistance. Such organizations were concerned about the whole family and would assist families before and after births, weddings and in times of death. Some mutualistas would sell insurance, or a group of people would form a funeral society so that people far from their own homes were guaranteed a Christian burial.

Mutual aid societies would bring the community together at weddings, funerals, and feast days, thus perpetuating the traditional customs and language. People interested in joining a mutual organization were required to swear allegiance to the society. For the most part, such organizations did not encourage assimilation. La Alianza Hispano Americana (Alliance of Hispanic Americans), founded in Tucson, Arizona in 1894, was one of the earliest associations. Other similar organizations were La Sociedad Mutualista Mexicana and La Camara de Comercial Mexicana.

In 1921 the Mexican Counsel in Los Angeles, Eduardo Ruiz, founded the Comisión Honorífica Mexicana. The purpose of this

organization was to assist immigrant Mexican nationals with the problems they faced in employment and with the law, until consular aid could be provided. Chapters of this organization grew to other cities which had large Mexican immigrant populations. The Comisión kept Mexico informed on how Mexican immigrants were being treated and became a spokesperson for the people in the United States.

Mutual aid societies were more local and regional in nature and evolved because of the social and labor needs of their communities. Mutualistas were successful in maintaining strong ties between their members and Mexico, particularly in communities that were somewhat isolated from the Anglo society. However, this began to change with the emergence of a Mexican American middle class. The main concern of this new middle class was to assimilate and to prove that they were true Americans.

Founding Organizations

Organizational activity grew in the 1920s, which corresponded with the first massive Mexican immigration. Along with this growth, came the realization by the Mexican American middle class that, if they were to survive, they would have to alleviate some of the social and economic pressures the immigrants caused. In order to realize this, they would have to achieve a means by which to accommodate and adapt themselves to the dominant society and to develop political power.

World War I proved to be a valuable learning experience for Mexican Americans. Returning veterans gained a perspective which they never had before. For many of them it was the first time they had ever been outside their home environment. It would also be the first time for many of these Mexican American soldiers to be in foreign countries. These experiences provided them with a more global perspective on life. They began to recognize that economics, politics and education were forces that could be used to improve their social and economic standing. This new perspective proved to be a motivating factor in their desire to educate other Mexican American people about civil and political rights.

La Orden Hijos de América

The Orden Hijos de América (Order Sons of America) founded in San Antonio, Texas in 1921 was one such organization.³⁶ One of the major differences between the Order Sons of America (OSA) and other mutualist organizations was that the Sons of America limited its membership "exclusively to citizens of the United States of Mexican or Spanish extraction, either native or naturalized."³⁷ In Section 1 of their "Declaración de Principios" (Declaration of

³⁶Mr. James Tafolla, an attorney who at the time was employed by the Bexar County Attorney's office, played a major role in its founding and became its first President.

³⁷Constitución y Leyes de la Orden Hijos de América, Article III, (San Antonio, Texas, 1927), LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

Principles) the organization identified the major purpose of the members:

. . . to use their influence in all fields of social, economic and political action in order to obtain the greatest enjoyment possible of all the rights and privileges and prerogatives extended by the American Constitution.

Peoples' needs began to change and so to did that of organizations. The mutual aid organizations moved from being able to provide benefits, which were more of a social and economic nature, to becoming involved in the political system. Limiting membership to American citizens was an indication that the founders realized that only citizens could influence the major social, political and economic institutions, in order for change to come about.

The individuals who founded the OSA were from the emerging middle class. They were American citizens, either by birth or naturalization. Among the founders of the OSA there were a printer, a professional boxer, a baker and an attorney.³⁸

Many of the members were returning World War I veterans who saw the need to educate Mexican Americans about their political rights. Yet the OSA knew it could not take a strong political stance. If they had, they would have run the risk of being perceived as a threatening and hostile group of people.

³⁸Moises Sandoval, Our Legacy: The First Fifty Years (Washington, D.C.: LULAC), 7.

There were major differences between the goals of the Order Sons of America and those of mutualist organizations. Some of these objectives involved attempting to place qualified Mexican Americans on juries; registering voters; getting people to pay their poll tax; providing education; investigating charges of discrimination both in the workplace and at school; and above all, endeavoring to achieve equality in the workplace, schools and government.³⁹

Yet the OSA still considered itself a social organization. As noncontroversial as possible, it remained, in many ways, similar to the mutualist organizations. The mutualist organizations acted as a support system for their members, with a continuing emphasis remaining on the Mexican culture. On the other hand, the OSA emphasized "America." In addition to its name, one of the principles was to adopt the conditions and way of life of the American public.⁴⁰ Some of the major activities of the OSA were to organize women and young people into councils nationwide; to assist each other in sickness when in need; and to assist in the burial of its members.

Continuing to show their loyalty to the United States, the OSA urged its members to learn English and assisted non-

³⁹Ibid., Sections 7-12.

⁴⁰Constitución y Leyes de la Orden Hijos de América, "Declaración de Principios," Section 6, (San Antonio, Texas, 1927), LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

members in becoming American citizens. The original council grew to seven councils throughout the state of Texas with the most active councils being in San Antonio and Corpus Christi.⁴¹ In addition to organizing regional local councils, the OSA also organized a council for younger members.

Order Knights of America

In 1927 dissension occurred, not only among the members of Council 1 of San Antonio, but also between Council 1 and Council 4 of Corpus Christi. One of the reasons for this discontent was that the more active members became unhappy with the less active members.⁴² Ultimately, members of Council 1 of San Antonio left the organization and founded the Knights of America. Manuel C. Gonzales, an attorney in San Antonio, became its President.

When this occurred, Benjamin Garza, a member of Council 4, viewed this not only as discord among the Councils, but among the Hispanic population as well. Garza became convinced that if the Hispanic population was ever to achieve any social, economic or political equality it would have to

⁴¹In addition, other Councils were established in Alice, Beeville, Corpus Christi, Kingsville, Pearsall and Somerset, Texas. James Tafolla, San Antonio, TX, to [Prof. O. Douglas Weeks, University of Texas, Austin, TX], TLS, 25 October 1929, Oliver Weeks file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

⁴²Chris F. Garcia, ed., Chicano Politics (New York: MSS Information Corporation, 1973), 72.

unite.⁴³ Garza was not alone. Other Mexican American leaders in the Rio Grande Valley were thinking along the same lines. The OSA membership believed that, because the OSA had become a successful organization, they could create one organization which could act as a representative of the Hispanic people.⁴⁴

League of Latin American Citizens

While these events were unfolding, Corpus Christi Council 4 attempted to reunite the Knights of America with the Order Sons of America. It was at this time that Alonso S. Perales, Felipe Herrera and Luz Saenz, members of the Knights of America, invited Mexican leaders and the OSA to a meeting in Harlingen, Texas. The meeting occurred on August 24, 1927 with the belief that one organization could be formed, however this was not to be the case. Once the meeting was called to order it was announced that the new organization would be for American citizens of Latin descent only. Furor erupted among the attendees, many of whom were Mexican citizens. The OSA members were further enraged because they believed their organization was not being accepted on equal terms. Over half the people walked out. The few that remained formed another organization and called it the League of Latin American Citizens and elected Alonso S. Perales, an attorney, as

⁴³"A History of Lulac," LULAC News, June 1974, 12.

⁴⁴Oliver Douglas Weeks, "The League of United Latin-American Citizens: A Texas-Mexican Civic Organization," The Southwestern Political Quarterly X (December 1929): 263.

President.⁴⁵

The League of Latin American Citizens appointed an eight member committee which adopted a Constitution similar to that of the Order Sons of America. Its philosophy also became that of integrating their membership into the mainstream. Some of their Aims and Objectives were as follows:

1. To define with clarity, and absolute and unequivocal precision our indisputable loyalty to the ideals, principles, and citizenship of the United States.
2. To assume complete responsibility of educating our children in the knowledge of all their duties and rights, language and customs of this country as far as there is good in them.⁴⁶

The League formed councils in the Rio Grande Valley, but the desire to form one united organization remained with all three groups.⁴⁷ In 1928 Alonso S. Perales wrote a letter to Ben Garza of Corpus Christi, President of Council 4 of the Sons of America, continuing to encourage him to agree to a consolidation. This letter also demonstrated how convinced he was that a unification should occur. He wrote:

⁴⁵In 1927 Alonso S. Perales was an attorney in Brownsville. In 1928 he became employed by the Department of State in Washington, D.C. and served on the Commission to Latin America. He was appointed by President Coolidge to go to Nicaragua to oversee their election.

⁴⁶"Objetos y Fines de la Latin American Citizens League," Manual for Use by the League of Latin American Citizens, n.d., LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

⁴⁷Councils were formed in Brownsville, Encino, Harlingen, La Grulla, Laredo and McAllen, Texas.

Confidentially, friend Garza, I will tell you that I find Managua very hot, dusty, filthy and backward. However, I will not criticize these people, for I feel that I have no right to. Although I am an American citizen and the United States is the leading country in the world, I belong to the Mexican-American component element of our nation, and as a racial entity we Mexican-Americans have accomplished nothing that we can point to with pride. Were I to criticize Nicaraguans for their filthy and backward towns and cities, they would in all probability retort: "How about your Mexican villages (otherwise known as Mejiquitos) in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas and other Texas cities and towns? I believe I would have to agree with them that our Mexican districts in the United States are just as filthy and backward as Managua. Now, then, the question is: What are we Mexican-Americans going to do about the matter? Are we going to continue in our backward state of the past, or are we going to get out of the rut, forge ahead and keep abreast of the harddriving Anglo-Saxon? There is the big problem before us, my friend, and one that we Mexican-Americans must solve if we have any sense of pride at all. Hence the need for a strong, powerful organization composed of and led by intelligent, energetic, progressive, honest and unselfish Mexican-Americans."⁴⁸

Despite the encouragement and support from a number of people, it was not until early in 1929 that another attempt would be made to merge the three organizations. Council 4 of the Order Sons of America in Corpus Christi took the initiative and invited members of Council 1 of the OSA in San Antonio, the League of Latin American Citizens and the Order Knights of America to meet in Corpus Christi on February 17, 1929 and discuss the possibility of a union. Members of

⁴⁸Alonso S. Perales, Managua, Nicaragua, to [Ben Garza, c/o Metropolitan Café, Corpus Christi, Texas], TLS, 22 June 1928, Andres de Luna file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

Council 1 declined the invitation.

Council 4 continued to urge Council 1 to make a final decision regarding the merger. On December 2, 1928 a committee of Council 4 members traveled to San Antonio and gave Council 1 an ultimatum: if a decision was not made within thirty days, Council 4 would break its ties with the Sons of America. Council 1 remained steadfast. They did not like the idea of their organization joining another and starting anew, particularly since they had already been in existence more than ten years. James Tafolla, President of Council 1 wrote:

. . . and why should we allow them to come in through the back door of a proposed convention, where they would have as many or more privileges than we have, and tear down what we have already built. We feel this way about it: if they want to work and labor in the pursuit of the same ideals with us, let them join our Order.⁴⁹

Unification and the Birth of LULAC

Ben Garza of Council 4 was determined that a unification should take place and it would be his Council that would take the initiative and call a convention for that sole purpose. Invitations to a meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas were extended to all Councils of the Order Sons of America, League of Latin American Citizens, Knights of America, Hispanic leaders and Hispanic organizations. There were still members

⁴⁹James Tafolla, San Antonio, TX to [C.E. Castañeda, University of Texas, Austin, Texas], TLS, 7 February 1929, Oliver D. Weeks file, Box 1 Folder 6, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

of Council 1 of San Antonio who resented the fact that Council 4 had continued the push for a merger. They remained uncertain and doubtful as to what the ultimate goals of the League of Latin American Citizens were and therefore remained noncommittal. Be that as it may, the other organizations had an entirely different perspective. They perceived this merger as one where all the groups would come together on equal terms. A new organization would be born with a new name and a new Constitution that would reflect the goals of the collective group.

The meeting was held at Obreros Hall in Corpus Christi, on February 17, 1929. About 150 people were present, twenty-five of whom were delegates representing the three organizations. Ben Garza called the meeting to order and opened the floor for discussion as to whether or not to unite the three organizations.

Remarks were made by several individuals. Alonso Perales, of the League of Latin American Citizens, began the discussion. Strongly in favor of a union he stated, "Never as now will we have a better opportunity of uniting ourselves and in a harmonious union of force and patriotism to claim our rights and our prerogatives which will be the only things that we will bequeath our children."⁵⁰ Several people followed Perales, each one stronger in their conviction that a united

⁵⁰"In the Convention Held Last Sunday was Created the United Latin American Citizen," El Paladin, 22 February 1929, 5.

organization be formed.

Manual Gonzales, President of the Order Knights of America, also agreed a unification was necessary. He ended his speech with the following words:

. . . in my deep preoccupations, in my moments of painful meditation, I have fondled the idea that only a general union well understood can save us from the complete shipwreck of our citizenship, and now that opportunity presents itself to carry that out, I suggest the appropriateness of doing it. Perhaps this union will serve to give a country to our children, who otherwise each time they thought of us would say: They lived pariahs, and they left us this sad inheritance.⁵¹

The delegates voted unanimously on the unification and proceeded to elect interim officers. Ben Garza of Council 4 was elected President and M.C. Gonzales of Order Knights Of America of San Antonio was elected Secretary.

A committee was formed with representatives of the three groups which was to develop a tentative proposal that would serve as a guide for the organization until a Constitution was in place.⁵² One of the first major tasks of the committee

⁵¹Ibid., 12.

⁵²Members of this committee were: E.N. Marin and Andres de Luna of the old Order Sons of America, Council 4 of Corpus Christi; Juan Solis and Mauro Machado of the Knights of America; Alonso S. Perales and J.T. Canales of the Latin American League; and Fortunio Treviño of Alice, Texas. See letter from committee regarding the organization dated February 21, 1929 which includes, "Report of Committee on Organization," a complete report of the proposal. M.C. Gonzales, Secretary, San Antonio, Texas to [Ben Garza, Corpus Christi, Texas; M. Landin, Brownsville, Texas; E.V. Longoria, Encino, Texas; Prof. J. Luz Saenz, Penitas, Texas; Tristan Longoria, Grulla, Texas; and Dr. O.D. Weeks, Austin, TX], TLS, 21 February 1929, in Oliver D. Weeks file, Box 1, Folder 6, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American

was to create a name for the new organization. Perales proposed the name Latin American Citizens League. Discord arose because some members pointed out the similarity between the League of Latin American Citizens. The word United was then proposed to be part of the official title, thus differentiating it between the League of Latin American Citizens. Upon further discussion the committee agreed upon the name, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).⁵³

On that same day the interim guidelines were also adopted. The guidelines consisted of seven major points: (1) the name of the new organization would be the "League of United Latin American Citizens"; (2) membership would be limited to American citizens of Latin descent; (3) all councils which were represented at the convention would be recognized as new councils of the new organization; (4) a convention would be held on May 19, 1929 to adopt a formal Constitution; (5) English would be adopted as the official language; and (6) they would formulate twenty-five fundamental principles which would provide the foundation for the new

Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

⁵³Originally there was a hyphen between the words Latin and American. The hyphen was officially dropped after a resolution was made at the 1936 convention held on June 6 in Laredo, TX. The issue became that "Latin-American" described the word 'citizen.' LULAC membership wanted to make it clear they did see themselves as Americans first, thereby dropping the hyphen and having 'Latin' as an adjective describing "American Citizen." "On the Question of the Hyphen," Official Resolution, 6 June 1936, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

organization and would also act as a guide in helping them achieve their goals; (7) to call a Constitutional convention on May 18 and 19, 1929 which would meet in Corpus Christi, Texas.⁵⁴

In addition to the guidelines stated above, the committee presented what was to become the LULAC Code. It read as follows:

Respect your citizenship, conserve it; honor your country, maintain its traditions in the minds of your children, incorporate yourself in its culture and civilization;

Love the men of your race, take pride in your origin and keep it immaculate; respect your glorious past and help to vindicate your people;

Learn to fulfill your duties before claiming your rights; make yourself worthy, educate yourself, raise yourself up by your works, be always loyal and brave;

Full of optimism be sociable, honest, and above all sober in habits, cautious in work, and moderate in speech;

Study the past of your people, of the country to which you owe your citizenship, learn to handle with purity the two most essential languages, English and Spanish;

Be always worthy and proud, accustom yourself to depend upon yourself, on your own aptitudes and your own recourses;

Believe in God, love Humanity, trust in the work of human progress, slow and sure, unmistakable and firm;

In war serve your country, in peace your convictions; discern, meditate, investigate, and think, study, be always honorable and generous;

May your firmest purpose be to aid that each new generation of our people be more apt in youth, let your children be understood.⁵⁵

Upon the adoption of the Code and the seven objectives,

⁵⁴"Report of Committee on Organization," 2.

⁵⁵El Paladin, 22 February 1929, 13-14.

the convention was adjourned and two members of each council were appointed to write the Constitution.⁵⁶ In addition, an interim executive committee was formed consisting of Ben Garza as Chairman, Manual C. Gonzales as Secretary, J.T. Canales and Professor J. Luz Saenz. El Paladin was declared the official newspaper which would publish any information regarding the new organization. Oliver Douglas Weeks⁵⁷ wrote of the importance of this unification: "it represents the first general attempt on the part of Mexican-Americans to organize themselves for the purpose of giving voice to their aspirations and needs as citizens of the United States."⁵⁸

Philosophy and Purpose of the New Organization

The first convention was called to order on May 18, 1929 at Allende Hall in Corpus Christi and one of the first items on the agenda was the election of officers. Ben Garza was elected President General, M.C. Gonzales of San Antonio as Vice-President General, Andres de Luna of Corpus Christi as Secretary General and Louis Wilmot of Corpus Christi as

⁵⁶The committee was composed of: Juan Solis and Mauro Machado, from the Knights of America; Alonzo S. Perales and J.T. Canales of the Latin American Citizens League; and E.H. Marin and Andres de Luna from Council 4 of the Sons of America.

⁵⁷Oliver Douglas Weeks was a professor at the University of Texas and was invited to attend the convention as an observer and advisor. "Minutes of the Convention," May 18 and 19, 1929, Oliver D. Weeks file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

⁵⁸Weeks, "The League of United Latin American Citizens," 267.

Treasurer General. The Code, which had been presented in February, was formally adopted as was the official motto, "All for one and one for all."⁵⁹ The American flag was adopted as the official flag; "America" was adopted as the official hymn; and Washington's Prayer as the prayer with which all meetings were to be started. Another objective which had been discussed at the February meeting and which was officially adopted was that English would become the official language of the new organization.

The new organization would be governed by the Supreme Council which would consist of two elected delegates and two alternates from each Local Council. These delegates would meet once a year, on the first Sunday in May, to elect a President General, Vice President General and other officers the Supreme Council might see a need for. The President General was empowered to call a special convention on his own or at the request of two or more local councils. The Secretary and Treasurer of the local councils where the President General resided were the Ex Officio Secretary General and Treasurer General. The Supreme Council was given the highest authority regarding legislation and policy. The President General was given the authority to create committees he, or the Supreme Council, deemed necessary.⁶⁰

Article V of the Constitution covered the organization of

⁵⁹LULAC Constitution, Article VII, Section 1.

⁶⁰Ibid., Article IV.

local councils. They were to be organized either by, or under the direction of, the Supreme Council. They were given the authority to make their own by-laws as long as they were not in conflict with the Constitution. The local councils were to be self-governing bodies with their own officers and committees. All members were invited to attend the annual convention, but only the delegates would have the right to vote and participate in the election of officers.

The League of United Latin American Citizens was born. The "Foreword" of the Constitution of the new organization would be the same as the "Foreword" in the Order Knights of America Constitution. It read:

Truth loves an appeal to the common sense of mankind.

Some can discern objects distant and remote, but can not perceive those within their grasp.

Feeling that a race has been a slave to the influence of public opinion early acquired and deeply rooted and distinctions generally received, we should pity and not despise those who are yet in darkness.

To the eye of reason what can be more clear than that all men are created equal and have an equal right to happiness. For Nature made no other distinction than that of higher and lower degrees of power of mind and body.

We believe that in the Judgement of heaven there is no other superiority among men than a superiority in wisdom and virtue.

We have been roused from our slumbers and may we never sink into repose until we have conveyed a clear and undisputed inheritance to posterity, to the end that a backward race, in this age of civilization may tread hand in hand in all the various walks of life amongst the enlightened races

of today.⁶¹

The time had come for Mexican Americans to tell the world they were American citizens. The milieu in which LULAC was created made it imperative to these Mexican Americans that they prove their allegiance was to the United States. Everything about the organization clearly reflected their willingness and desire to be regarded as "Americans." The fact that they called themselves 'Latin American Citizens' as opposed to 'Mexican Americans' stresses their approach of attempting to present themselves in a more tasteful light. Article II stated the twenty-five aims and objectives of the new organization further substantiate this (see Appendix 1). The first nine aims and objectives were as follows:

1. To develop within the members of our race the best, purest and most perfect type of a true and loyal citizen of the United States of America.
2. To eradicate from our body politic all intents and tendencies to establish discriminations among our fellow-citizens on account of race, religion or social position as being contrary to the true spirit of Democracy, our Constitution and Laws.
3. To use all the legal means at our command to the end that all citizens in our country may enjoy equal rights, the equal protection of the laws of the land and equal opportunities and privileges.
4. The acquisition of the English language, which is the official language of our country being necessary for the enjoyment of our rights and

⁶¹Constitution of the League of United Latin American Citizens, "Foreword" (Corpus Christi, Texas: El Paladin, 1929).

privileges, we declare it to be the official language of this Organization, and we pledge the official language of this Organization, and we pledge ourselves to learn, and speak and teach same to our children.

5. To define with absolute and unmistakable clearness our questionable loyalty to the ideals, principles and citizenship of the United States of America.
6. To assume complete responsibility for the education of our children as to their rights and duties and the language and customs of this country: the latter, in so far as they may be good customs.
7. We solemnly declare once for all to maintain a sincere and respectful reverence for our racial origin of which we are proud.
8. Secretly and openly, by all lawful means at our command, we shall assist in the education and guidance of Latin-Americans and we shall protect and defend their lives and interest whenever necessary.
9. We shall destroy any attempt to create racial prejudices against our people, and any infamous stigma which may be cast upon them, and we shall demand for them the respect and prerogatives which the Constitution grants to us all.⁶²

LULAC moved from being a mutualist type of self-help organization that primarily provided social services, to one whose primary focus became the integration of the Mexican American people into the dominant society. Assimilation and adaptation became the fundamental principles which LULAC began to convey. Membership, similar to the three original organizations, was limited to "native born or naturalized

⁶²Ibid., Article II.

citizens eighteen years of age of Latin extraction."⁶³ A provision was made for "honorary membership," also known as the "passive members." These would be persons of distinction or individuals who had rendered a service above and beyond the call of duty. There were also two categories of members. The "active members" could hold office and vote and the "passive members" were those who were disqualified to vote, or those individuals who held public office.⁶⁴

As noted in the first of the twenty-five aims and objectives, phrases such as developing their members to become the "best, purest and most perfect type of a true loyal citizen" and adopting English as the official language further substantiates the organization's desire to fully assimilate into the dominant society. Section five, which addresses the memberships' "unquestionable loyalty to the ideals and principles and citizenship" to the United States leaves no doubt that the major purpose of the new organization was to fit into the mainstream and change the "greaser" and "wet back" image which so many people held. The Constitution also left no doubt where the Organizations' loyalty lay. It was clear LULAC pledged total allegiance to the United States.

Fourteen of LULAC's twenty-five Aims and Purposes deal with the issues of pursuing equal rights and eradicating

⁶³Ibid., Article III, Section 1.

⁶⁴Ibid., Section 2, 3, 4, 5.

discrimination.⁶⁵ Mexican Americans desired equality in every sense of the word. The organization became committed to improving the position of the Mexican American community and to integrate it into the economic, political and social institutions of American life.

While LULAC was nonpartisan it did want to educate people as to their duties as citizens. This included educating people in their civil and political rights. Exercising the right to vote in itself could be a powerful tool with which to institute change. Thus, one manner in which education was emphasized was in the context of good citizenship.

Criticisms and the Emphasis on Education

After the unification there were people who questioned the need for such an organization and disapproved of it. While LULAC did not consider itself political, the Constitution provided for participation in politics and exercising the right to vote. There were individuals of the dominant race who felt threatened by this provision, because they had been able to influence the Mexican American voters in the past. One political leader wrote a letter to "My Mexican-Texan Friends:"

. . . I have been and still consider myself your Leader or Superior Chief...I have always sheltered in my soul the most pure tenderness for the Mexican-Texan race and have watched over your interests to the best of my ability and knowledge...Therefore I disapprove the political activity of groups which have no other object than

⁶⁵See Article II, Sections 1-4, 6, 9, 11-13, 16, 21-24.

to organize Mexican-Texan voters into political groups for guidance by other leaders.⁶⁶

Another criticism was that LULAC did not demand cultural pluralism. Critics opined that LULAC excluded Mexican nationals by limiting its membership to individuals who were "native and naturalized citizens." This too was a major difference between LULAC and mutualist organizations.

One argument for exclusion was that conflict would arise if membership consisted of both Mexican Americans and Mexican citizens. It was believed that the Mexican citizen would have even closer ties to Mexico and would take a dim view of assimilation, which is what LULAC was proposing. Another argument was that Mexicans would hinder the new organization because many were uneducated and could not speak English. LULAC would not have the time, people, or funds to assist in educating them in the American way of life. In addition, it was believed that the dominant society might look upon LULAC as an organization that was refusing to become part of the country to which the Mexican American belonged.⁶⁷ The leaders believed that by remaining a small concentrated group LULAC would be "unified in purpose and better fitted to fight the battles of the less fortunate."⁶⁸

⁶⁶Weeks, "The League of United Latin-American Citizens," The Southwestern Political & Science Quarterly, 275 quoted in Hidalgo County Independent, Edinburg, Texas, March 8, 1929.

⁶⁷Ibid., 271.

⁶⁸Ibid., 272.

Still others asserted that the verbiage used in the Constitution made it clear, that by emphasizing assimilation, LULAC was turning its backs on its culture. Yet, LULAC was not turning its back on its culture or people. Section 7 of Article II addressed this issue, stating that the Mexican culture was not to be obliterated, but that the members would "maintain a sincere and respectful reverence for our racial origin of which we are proud." In addition, the LULAC Code also stated that one should be proud of one's past and honor their heritage.

LULAC stood firm in their unification. A response to such critics was written in El Paladin.

. . . we ask that public opinion without prejudices and dispassionately look into our work and study the origin of our struggle, remembering that from the sacrifices made up to the present and from those which we will continue making in the future we do not ourselves expect to gather the fruits, but we desire them for our children.

We received an inheritance in ruins, and because we began late on the difficult and arduous task of making it anew is no reason why we should allow ourselves to lose the gains made up to the present. In short time, perhaps tomorrow, we will be able to surely and safely begin in concrete form the reconquest of our own rights and those of all our people.⁶⁹

While the Constitution and the Aims and Objectives were emphatic about Mexican American assimilation into the dominant society, they did not ignore, nor intend to achieve, total assimilation at the expense of their culture. The

⁶⁹"Unification First," Alonso S. Perales, El Paladin, 28 June 1929, 5.

Constitution did address the issue of educating the children in the "language and customs of this country" but it also stated that only the "good customs" would be taught.⁷⁰

Yet, the remedy to all the problems remained education, which became another fundamental principal. Without it nothing could be accomplished. With education would come better jobs and a higher standard of living. Only then would the Mexican Americans' social status be elevated. One individual stated, "If we, the Mexican American and Mexican citizens raised in the United States, are to occupy the honorable place that we merit, it is indispensable to educate ourselves."⁷¹

LULAC Membership Characteristics

Alonso Perales, one of the founders, stated that the only way the socioeconomic problems of the Mexican American would be solved would be if they, themselves, solved them as citizens. In an article he wrote:

The day the Mexican American betters his own conditions and finds himself in a position to make full use of his rights of citizenship, that day he will be able to aid the Mexican citizen in securing what is due him and to help him assure himself of his own welfare and happiness.⁷²

This was a new generation of people. People who were

⁷⁰LULAC Constitution, Article II, Section 6.

⁷¹Guadalupe San Miguel Jr., Let All of Them Take Heed: Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas 1910-1981 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 74.

⁷²Perales, "Unification," 8.

first generation Mexican American. This meant that they were raised in families that still had strong cultural ties to Mexico, yet at the same time lived in a world that was quickly becoming modernized. With industrialization came the need for more education. If one wanted to make change, there would have to be more participation in the social, economic and political institutions.

As mentioned previously, World War I contributed a great deal to the way Mexican Americans began to view themselves. A returning veteran stated:

The World War taught us a lesson. We had thought that we were Mexicans. The war opened our eyes . . . We have American ways and think like Americans. We have not been able to convince some people that there is a difference between us [and the Mexicans from Mexico]. To the average American, we are just Mexicans.⁷³

This emerging middle class wanted to change this view of the Mexican American. The only means would be to integrate themselves and others of their race into the American mainstream, but it would have to be a united effort, if it were to be successful.

The LULAC founders and its membership represented this emerging middle class. Ben Garza, the first President, came from a poor family and had to quit school to help support his family after his father died. He went on to become a

⁷³Paul Taylor, An American-Mexican Frontier: Nueces County, Texas (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 245.

restaurant owner and prominent businessman and civic leader.⁷⁴

Manual C. Gonzales, who had been the President of the Order Knights of America became the Vice-President General of LULAC, was born in 1899 in Hidalgo, Texas. He too became an orphan at an early age. He attended the University of Texas and became an attorney. Shortly after passing the bar in 1924, he became the legal advisor to the general counsel of Mexico in San Antonio. In 1928 he went to Ardmore, Oklahoma to be special prosecutor in a case involving two students who were charged with the murder of two nephews of Pascual Ortiz Rubio, then President of Mexico. In 1936 he became Advisor of International Claims between the United States and Mexico and in 1943 he was made counsel of Guatemala.⁷⁵

Alonso S. Perales also played a major role in the founding of LULAC and was its President from 1930-1931. Perales was born in Alice, Texas in 1898. There he attended public school and also attended the Washington Preparatory School in Washington, D.C. He later attended the School of Arts and Sciences at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. and graduated from National University Law School in Washington, D.C. in 1927 with an LL.B. He served in the army in World War I and went on to serve in the Diplomatic

⁷⁴San Miguel Jr., Let All of Them Take Heed, 69.

⁷⁵San Antonio Light, Friday, August 20, 1943 newspaper clipping, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

Service in various capacities. Some of the positions he held were: Assistant to Sumner Welles in the Dominican Republic in 1922; Assistant to the United States Delegation Conference on Central American Affairs, in Washington D.C. in 1922 and 1923; Special Assistant to the American Delegation to the Sixth Pan-American Conference in Havana, Cuba, in 1928; Legal Advisor to the United States Electoral Mission in Nicaragua in 1928; and in 1929 he was Special Legal Assistant to the Commission of Inquiry and Conciliation to Bolivia and Paraguay.⁷⁶

These are profiles of but a few of the founders. The membership consisted of many attorneys, several judges, police officers, teachers, newspaper publishers, and business owners. Such was the profile of LULAC members. Several of the individuals had dropped out of school and then returned and graduated from college. They saw the value of an education and considered it the key to a better future. With an education, one could fight discrimination.

Summary

As times changed, so did peoples' needs. LULAC evolved because mutualist organizations could no longer provide for the needs of the new emerging middle class. People were becoming more educated, and with that came higher aspirations. Their hopes and dreams for the future could be realized if

⁷⁶Oliver Weeks Folder, Box 1, Folder 13, LULAC Archives, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin. Also see LULAC News, "Alonso S. Perales, Past President General and Inspector General of LULAC," Vol. 4. No. 3, El Paso & Houston, TX, June 1937.

they worked together.

LULAC membership began to grow. By December, 1929 there were a total of eighteen councils.⁷⁷ LULAC began to expand to other states and by 1930 there were councils in Arizona, New Mexico, California and Colorado.⁷⁸ With this expansion came a country-wide network. The problems that people experienced in small Texas towns and cities were now heightened nationwide. The problems experienced by people in Texas were also being experienced by Mexican Americans across the nation. With the expansion of LULAC councils these concerns were addressed by a united front. LULAC was soon fighting for educational rights across the United States.

With the merger, three organizations that began at the grass roots level, Order Sons of America, Order Knights of America and League of Latin American Citizens, went on to become the League of United Latin American Citizens, a national organization. They fought for self-identity and to attain their full rights as American citizens. LULAC's motives in organizing were to gain equality in the areas of

⁷⁷Alice, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Crystal City, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Edinburg, Encino, Falfurrias, Floresville, La Grulla, Laredo, McAllen, Robstown, San Antonio, San Diego, Sugarland and Uvalde, Texas. Weeks, "The League of United Latin American Citizens," 264-267. Also see report made by the Committee on Organization dated February 21, 1929, page 1 in Oliver Weeks Box 1, Folder 6, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

⁷⁸Matt Meier, The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), 241.

education, civil rights and employment. Their struggle, for equal educational facilities and a better education for their children, would continue in the 1930s.

CHAPTER III

THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY: 1930-1970

Education is the birthright of every child. An infant comes into the world through no act of his own. During the period of childhood he is subject to his elders and dependent on them for support and guidance. The chance to grow and develop is his inalienable right. Without education his latent powers must be unrealized, he must live on a plane below his possibilities, and he is handicapped for life. Who can measure the depth of the darkness of illiteracy, the distress occasioned by fears which education has never had the opportunity to remove, the mental poverty of one whose eyes and ears have never been attuned to the beautiful in life, the handicap of having never been taught to think, the curse of being unacquainted with the world in which one is to live, and the lack of the purposes and ideals which characterize a cultivated spirit? Arrest of development is always tragic even when it is caused by circumstances beyond our power, but deliberately to deny a child the opportunity to develop is criminal. Woe be to the individual or the society which is unmindful of its obligation to childhood.

Herschel T. Manual, Third LULAC Convention

The 1930s was a period during which LULAC continued its quest for better lives for Mexican Americans. Its motto "In unity there is strength" became a driving force to increase membership. LULAC continued its campaign for better education and fighting for peoples' rights.

LULAC membership continued to multiply, with councils being organized across Texas and the southwest. Part of this

increase can be attributed to the efforts of the "Flying Squadron." Organized during the early 1930s, the "Flying Squadron" consisted of a group of LULAC members who traveled throughout the state organizing councils, giving speeches on the organization and instilling in people a sense of unity.⁷⁹

By 1933 LULAC had established councils throughout the southwest. Women played an equally major role in LULAC's growth. While the men were organizing councils, women were organizing women's auxiliaries. The first Women's Council were organized in 1934 in El Paso, Texas, but it would not be until 1937 that LULAC would officially recognize them and give them the same privileges as the men in their organization.⁸⁰ They were considered "separate but equal," with a similar organizational structure and their own president. In 1939 the first Junior LULAC Council was organized in San Antonio, Texas, and was placed under the sponsorship of the adult councils. The LULAC structure now incorporated the entire family.

De facto Segregation

As LULAC councils were organized in Arizona, California,

⁷⁹The researcher was unable to identify the exact year the "Flying Squadron" was organized, but did find the first mention of it in the an article entitled, "With a LULAC Flying Squadron," by Paul C. Jones, LULAC News, February 1932, 6.

⁸⁰The OSA organized their first "Ladies Auxiliary Council" on October 12, 1927, thus when LULAC was founded there were women who had experience in organizing other women. Minutes of meeting held on October 12, 1927, Andres de Luna file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

Colorado, and New Mexico, their crusade for educational equality intensified. While there was never any constitutional or statutory law for segregation of Mexican Americans, de facto segregation continued in the 1930s and was not an uncommon practice in the state of Texas.⁸¹ Incidents of discrimination occurred everywhere. There was segregated seating in movies, churches, restaurants, and segregation in housing and schools.⁸² By 1930, ninety percent of South Texas schools were segregated.⁸³ In 1931 the state of California conducted a school survey and found that nine out of ten school districts practiced segregation in some form or another. Eighty-five percent of these schools segregated Mexican students either in separate classrooms or in separate

⁸¹In the latter part of the 1920s the OSA had periodically formed committees to investigate cases of discrimination. For examples of some of these cases see: meeting minutes of May 14, 1926 where a committee was formed to investigate a school in Robstown, Texas where twelve children had been turned away from school; meeting minutes of September 7, 1927, where discussion took place regarding discrimination on a beach; minutes for February 22 and 29, 1928, where the issue of discrimination in the schools was addressed. Andres de Luna file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin. Also see, Taylor, An American-Mexican Frontier and Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas.

⁸²For a more indepth view of the segregation of Mexican Americans see Douglas E. Foley, From Peones to Politicos: Class and Ethnicity in a South Texas Town, 1900-1987 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977); McWilliams, North from Mexico; John H. Burma, Spanish Speaking Groups in the United States (Durham: Duke University Press, 1954.)

⁸³Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 160.

schools.⁸⁴

School districts provided pedagogical reasons for segregation. The language barrier was one argument used for continuing de facto segregation. By not learning English, Mexican students would hold other students back. Another reason given was that the number of Mexican students fluctuated throughout the year.⁸⁵ When this occurred Mexican students would be behind in schoolwork, again, holding other students back.

In addition to pedagogical reasons, school districts provided a host of other reasons. One was that Mexicans and Mexican Americans lived in certain parts of towns: it was easier therefore, to establish schools in those areas. Another rationale was the need for acculturation. "Americanization classes" could be more specialized in segregated schools and better adapted for students who did not know how to act and talk around their peers. Americanization could be achieved only if the students learned English. Separate schools gave children the opportunity to learn English and overcome the deficiencies. Whether the rationale was that it would be more beneficial to the Mexican children and was what Mexican parents wanted, or whether it was simply

⁸⁴Richard R. Valencia, ed., Chicano Failure and Success: Research and Policy Agendas for the 1990s (London: Falmer Press, 1991), 35.

⁸⁵The Mexican student population would change due to the seasonal work parents followed.

because it was easier to maintain separate schools, de facto segregation occurred throughout the state.

There were other issues involving the administrative actions of school districts that did not seem to support the pedagogical reasons. Many of the "Mexican schools" were inferior. Some had no toilet facilities, classrooms were overcrowded and some teachers were poorly qualified. While students were counted in the school census, there was no effort to enforce attendance. The state funding formula was based on the school census, enhancing school districts efforts to receive greater state and federal financial support. In addition, all children with Spanish surnames were placed in "Mexican schools", with no consideration given to the children who spoke English. In some instances, African American children were arbitrarily assigned to these schools.⁸⁶ Whatever the reasons given, de facto segregation did occur.

Litigation

LULAC realized that permanent change would have to be effected through the courts. In 1930 LULAC spearheaded an effort to change the educational system in Texas. At this time, the Del Rio Independent School District consisted of one high school, an athletic field, and three elementary schools, one of which was designated as the "Mexican" or "West End" school. The "Mexican school" consisted of two rooms and

⁸⁶Thomas P. Carter, Mexican Americans in School: A History of Educational Neglect (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1970), 68.

was used exclusively for housing and teaching children of Mexican or Spanish descent in elementary grades, specifically grades 1-3. On January 7, 1930, the school district voted for and adopted, a program which, in addition to providing for the construction of a new high school, would also have provided for the addition of five rooms to the "West End" school.

The district superintendent and the principal explained that the reason for the segregation was that more than half of the students in the Mexican school left town at the beginning of the school year with their parents, who would relocate to find work. When these children returned later in the year, they would be behind in their school work. Consequently, the school authorities said, this not only placed the students at a disadvantage of not knowing the schoolwork, but it also affected the students' morale.

The superintendent also stated that classes were organized according to size. Later in the year, class sizes increased and became unmanageable. With children of Spanish and Mexican descent, there was a difference in ages in addition to the language problem. The superintendent defended the schools' actions by stating the reason for segregation was to provide better instruction for all children and to develop a curriculum which addressed the needs peculiar to the children of Spanish and Mexican descent.

LULAC brought a class action suit alleging that the school district was denying children of Mexican and Spanish

descent equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, by placing them in segregated facilities.⁸⁷ This was the first time the courts were asked to determine the constitutionality of the actions of a local school district with respect to the education of Mexican Americans.

The trial court granted an injunction prohibiting segregation. The injunction also restrained the district from constructing an addition to the two room building, which when completed, would have been used "for the purpose of segregating the children of plaintiff's . . . from children of Anglo-Saxon parentage of like ages and educational attainments within the school district."⁸⁸

The Texas Court of Civil Appeals reversed the trial courts' decision, however, and dissolved the injunction. While agreeing philosophically with the trial court, the appellate court said the Del Rio school authorities did not have the power to "arbitrarily segregate Mexican children . . . merely because they are Mexicans."⁸⁹

The appellate court proceeded to state that school

⁸⁷Independent School District. v. Salvatierra, 33 S.W.2d 790 (Tex. Civ. App., 4th Dt. 1930), cert. denied, 284 U.S. 580 (1931). The attorneys for Salvatierra were John L. Dodson, of Del Rio, M.C. Gonzales, of San Antonio and J.T. Canales of Brownsville. Gonzales and Canales were both founders of LULAC.

⁸⁸Ibid., 793-794.

⁸⁹Ibid., 795.

authorities do have administrative powers and that the courts would only be interfering if they went beyond those powers. In this case, the school authorities segregated the children for educational reasons, (the language deficiency,) and not because of race, as the parents had argued. The court further asserted that school boards had administrative functions which were inherent to their needs and it was not up to the courts to impart a set of rules to deal with administrative functions such as grading or assigning the pupils to grade levels. This should be left to the school authorities to decide because they were best equipped to make these decisions.⁹⁰ The courts would not interfere as long as there was no abuse of power.

LULAC appealed the case, but the Supreme Court denied a hearing, thus segregation continued. There was no record of integration suits having been filed on behalf of Mexican Americans between 1930-1948. One theory holds that during this time period there were no funds available for litigation.⁹¹ One individual opined: "Failure to appeal this case further may likely have been attributed to the severe economic stress affecting the entire community,

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹ Jorge C. Rangel and Carlos M. Alcala, "Project Report: De Jure Segregation of Chicanos in Texas Schools," Harvard Civil Rights Civil Liberties Law Review (March, 1972): 355.

especially the Mexican American Community."⁹²

Alternatives to Litigation

LULAC searched for alternative avenues to litigation. Becoming acquainted with teachers and school officials was one way to do this. LULAC was of the opinion that it was crucial to have parents involved in caring for their children's education. In 1930 it organized the Latin Parent Teachers' Association in a move to get parents more involved in their children's education.⁹³ Getting the parents' involvement was consequential, because they would be the ones to send, and keep, the children in school. The parents' support was vital. They needed to be educated as well and it was essential they learn how important it was for their children to receive an education, and gaining their commitment was one means to that end. Getting people involved in such a manner was a better alternative to demonstrations.

In 1931 LULAC established a Committee on Education designed to work with all educational agencies and disseminate information to the Mexican American communities. Another of

⁹²Address given at the 2nd Annual Conference on Civil Rights on 'The Problems of Schools in Transition from the Educators Viewpoint'," P.A. Tanksley, Superintendent, "A History of Desegregation in the Del Rio Public Schools," n.d. Jake Rodriguez file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

⁹³For further examples of the parents' involvement see "LULAC Organizes Latin Parent Teachers Association," LULAC News, 30 April 1932, 5; "Sidney Lanier Schools Organize Parents Advisory Council," November 1932, 13; "Parent-Teachers Associations," December 1932, 9.

its functions was to work with local councils and coordinate their work in education. The committee began a scholarship program and awarded its first scholarship in 1932. At LULAC's General National Convention in 1933 a resolution was made and passed which formally made the Committee on Education a permanent committee.⁹⁴ The Committee continued to promote education and to help end discrimination in the schools.⁹⁵

The peaceful approach LULAC adopted worked well in a situation in Seguin, Texas on September 7, 1932. At the beginning of the school year, the Mexican school was the only school that had not yet opened. LULAC formed a committee to ascertain the reason the school board chose to keep the school closed. The committee was informed that the school board did not open the school because the parents did not send their children to school until after the cotton picking season ended. The committee and school officials discussed the issue and reached an agreement whereby the officials would open the school if LULAC would guarantee that children would enroll. LULAC agreed and within several days ninety students

⁹⁴"Minutes of the LULAC General National Convention," 1933, Andrew Bañales file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

⁹⁵To ascertain how important education was to LULAC members see the following issues of LULAC News: "Educating Our Latin-American Children," October 1937, 10; "Why an Education?", February 1937, 3; "Education for Leadership," December 1938, 5; "Education, the Only Means to Unity," April 1940, 13; "Education is the Answer," June 1942, 9; "Our Public Schools," March 1947, 13.

enrolled.⁹⁶

LULAC wanted to demonstrate the inadequacy of school facilities and the need for more schools. In 1934 it organized a committee to conduct a survey of the public schools in the San Antonio area where 56.5 percent of the total school population was Mexican American:

At the outset, let it be understood that we are striving for justice, equal rights and fairness not only for Latin-American school children but for all the children of this district, regardless of race, color or creed, to the end that these children may grow up to become an asset to our community, and that we may properly safeguard the governmental institutions for which our forefathers fought and bled.⁹⁷

There were thirty-nine elementary schools involved in the survey, eleven of which were on the west side of town and considered "Mexican schools." The schools on the west side had a total of 286 rooms with an average of forty-eight students per room. The remaining schools had a total of 368 rooms with an average of thirty-three students per room. The committee argued that the classrooms had a capacity of thirty-five students per room, thus there was an excess of 3,269 students in the western schools. In addition there were fifty-three fewer teachers. There was also a concern that the

⁹⁶"An Appeal [for Education]", LULAC News, November 1932, 5.

⁹⁷ "Survey Made by the Committee on Public School Building and Recreational Facilities of the League of United Latin American Citizens," (San Antonio, TX: LULAC, September 27, 1934), 1. Carlos Castañeda files, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

schools were inadequate, unsafe and not provide an environment conducive to learning. The committee further stated:

Under these conditions all school children are deprived of receiving a proper education from a moral, physical, social and intellectual standpoint. So long as these conditions are permitted to continue and so long as the San Antonio Board of Education continues to neglect to remedy the situation, just so long will the advancement of all school children of the said eleven western elementary schools be retarded.⁹⁸

The Board argued it had no money to build new schools or to improve what was there, yet they did continue to spend money on the other schools. LULAC forged ahead, but the meetings and presentations made to the school board were in vain. LULAC, however, was successful in persuading L.A. Woods, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, to attend one of their meetings to discuss the situation. Woods later wrote LULAC a letter stating that the board and school superintendent were aware of the situation and were working toward resolving it. If the board did nothing, then Woods said, LULAC should seek legal redress.

LULAC conducted a letter writing campaign informing people of the situation and seeking their support. This proved to be successful. LULAC felt that this backing and the positive response received from Woods, would force the board to listen. LULAC was refused a meeting with the board and this attempt to improve the schools proved unsuccessful when the board refused to meet with LULAC. Yet, the campaign was

⁹⁸Ibid., 5.

successful in another way. Receiving so much support from the community prompted LULAC to call a meeting with other organizations in the city. The outcome was the formation of a coalition to promote the issue of improving schools. The Liga Defensa Escolar (The League of the Defense of Our Schools) was formed to work with the community to attempt to institute change in the educational facilities and to urge students to stay in schools.

LULAC continued its efforts to correct the unfair treatment of Mexican American students and to improve the conditions of the schools.⁹⁹ In 1939 Ezequiel Salinas, President of LULAC, went to Superintendent Woods and informed him of the discriminatory treatment Mexican American students were receiving in the Ozona School District. He encouraged Woods to take action. Woods, concerned with the situation, informed the school district that, if they did not end segregation, they would no longer receive state aid.¹⁰⁰ During his term, Salinas also brought attention to segregation

⁹⁹LULAC publicized such events of unfair treatment in "Around the LULAC Shield," LULAC News, October 1939, 32. The San Antonio Council had continued to complain about the quality of the schools and no action had yet been taken to improve their condition. They brought their concerns to LULAC and the organization sent a committee consisting of James Tafolla, M.C. Gonzalez and Jake Rodriguez to Autsin, Texas to address their concerns. Also in "Around the LULAC Shield," LULAC News, December 1939, 26, LULAC members were informed LULAC was going to investigate discriminatory incidents which occurred against the San Felipe High School Band in Del Rio, Texas.

¹⁰⁰Sandoval, Our Legacy, 34.

and overcrowding in the Hondo school district and worked on a construction project to help solve these conditions.¹⁰¹

Post World War II Years

With the advent of World War II, LULAC activities and membership growth virtually ceased. Between 1941 and 1945 many of the LULAC councils became inactive due to lack of members. LULAC held a convention in 1945 in Corpus Christi, Texas to discuss plans for a national convention. Arnulfo Zamora of Laredo was elected President General and given the job of rebuilding LULAC. One year was not sufficient time to accomplish his goal. LULAC, therefore, re-elected him to a second one-year term. This marked the first time an individual would hold office for two terms.

During Zamora's term, LULAC regained momentum and by 1954, councils in Washington, D.C., on the East Coast and in Chicago were reactivated, and councils in North and South Dakota and Montana were established.¹⁰²

World War II veterans returned expecting a country that would welcome them with open arms. After all, all of the races had fought side by side for democracy. War knew no color or race. They had died as equals and had become heroes as equals. Therefore, why should they not be treated equally in all aspects of life?

¹⁰¹Editorial, LULAC News, January 1940, 10.

¹⁰²George J. Garza, "Founding History of LULAC," LULAC News, January 1954, 25.

World War II brought the Mexican American to a higher plane of self-awareness. Politically, socially and economically they began to expect more from the system for which they had wanted acceptance. Other factors also helped stimulate Mexican American consciousness. The war had brought an increase in industrialization and a migration from rural to urban centers. During the war, Mexican Americans entered into semiskilled and skilled positions. Their socioeconomic status improved as did their expectations of being fully accepted into American society. Another factor was the G.I. Bill, which many Mexican American veterans took advantage of and received degrees from institutions of higher learning.

All of these elements cultivated a more aggressive group of individuals who became concerned with advancing their causes. In addition, the migration from rural to urban areas that occupied them during the war years made it conducive for Mexican Americans to meet and form groups. Rather than one voice there were many. This helped to focus more attention on their causes.

The war years also brought about a worsening relationship between Texas and Mexico, which affected the Mexican American situation in the United States. By 1943 the situation with Mexico and Mexican Americans had not improved. The treatment of the Mexicans by Texas led Mexico to exclude Texas from the Bracero Agreement. This prompted Texas Governor Coke Stevenson to establish the Good Neighbor Commission. While

the times were changing, discrimination continued.

In 1945 a conference regarding education in the Southwest was held at the University of Texas. The report, the "First Regional Conference on the Education of Spanish-Speaking People in the Southwest," was published following the conference, and addressed some educational issues confronting the Spanish speaking people of the Southwest. One of the issues of greatest concern was segregated schools. The report stated:

The problem of segregated schools, that is schools attended exclusively by the Spanish-speaking children, is one of great concern. In many cases these schools are out-and-out segregated schools. . . . In few instances are these segregated schools maintained on the same standards of physical building and equipment and teacher efficiency. These schools represent discriminatory practice. School segregation is pedagogically unsound, socially dangerous and unquestionably un-American. This matter of segregation is a crucial education issue and should be attacked.¹⁰³

The Use of Adjudication Continues

Litigation was further pursued in 1946 when LULAC assisted Mexican American parents in their campaign to desegregate elementary schools in a southern California school

¹⁰³George I. Sanchez, "Inter-American Education Occasional Papers, 1, First Regional Conference on Education of Spanish-Speaking People in the Southwest," held at the University of Texas on December 13-15, 1945, LULAC News, February 1946, 15. Also reprinted in: Carlos, E. Cortes, ed., Aspects of the Mexican-American Experience (New York, New York Times Company, 1976).

district.¹⁰⁴ The case was Mendez v. Westminster School District.¹⁰⁵

The Mendez children were denied admittance to the Westminster elementary school on the grounds of language deficiency, yet the school district allowed admittance to their cousins, who had lighter skin and a different last name (Vidaurri). The family, angry at what had transpired, withdrew the cousins and organized parents to petition the school to desegregate the entire school district. The superintendent said he could make an exception and enroll the Mendez children, but the parents rejected the idea. No compromise could be reached, thus the Mendez family filed suit on behalf of their children and some 5,000 other children of "Mexican or Latin descent."

The suit claimed that segregation violated the children's rights under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.¹⁰⁶ At the time, California had a state education

¹⁰⁴See "Calling All LULACS," LULAC News, December 1946, 9-15, where an appeal was made to the membership for contributions to assist paying for expenses; and "Message from the President General," LULAC News, March 1947, 9 and George Garza, "Our Public Schools," 13, reiterating the importance of the case and the continuing need for LULAC support. Also see, Gilbert G. Gonzalez, Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute Press, 1990), 155.

¹⁰⁵64 F.Supp. 544 (S.D. Cal. 1946), aff'd. 161 F.2d 774 (9th Cir. 1947).

¹⁰⁶For further information regarding this suit see "A Violation of 'Equal Protection of the Laws'," Yale Law Journal 56 (June 1947): 1059-1067.

code which allowed for school segregation of "nonwhite" Indian races. The nonwhite races included Indian, except Native American Indians, Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian. Mexicans were classified as Caucasian; therefore there was no legal racial status that would lend itself to segregate Mexican American children.¹⁰⁷

The Westminster School District argued that the federal courts had no jurisdiction over a state matter. In addition, the school district argued, it did not segregate the children because of race or nationality, but "that non-English speaking children . . . be required to attend schools designated by the boards separate and apart from English-speaking pupils."¹⁰⁸ The school district further argued that under the Plessy Doctrine, segregation was constitutional as long as the schools had equal facilities.¹⁰⁹ In fact, the school district stated, the facilities, teachers, and curricula were "identical and in some respects superior to those in the other schools in the respective district."¹¹⁰

Judge McCormick, who heard the case, addressed the issue of the federal courts' jurisdiction by stating that the

¹⁰⁷For information on other states that had laws on segregation see, "State Laws on Segregation in Educational Institutions," Milton R. Konvitz, Common Ground (Winter 1947): 102-104.

¹⁰⁸64 F.Supp. 546.

¹⁰⁹Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896), established the basis for the "separate but equal" doctrine.

¹¹⁰64 F.Supp. 546.

federal court could intervene if the state was violating rights or privileges protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. By not providing the children of Latin and Mexican descent equal opportunity to acquire knowledge, the state was in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, therefore justifying intervention by the federal court.¹¹¹

Judge McCormick then addressed the issue of segregation by stating that children of Mexican ancestry were being singled out as a class for segregation, which was contrary to state law, and that such distinctions "by their very nature are odious to a free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality" and were "utterly inconsistent with American tradition and ideals."¹¹² While acknowledging that the school facilities and curricula were equal to the other public schools, the judge went one step further and differentiated between equal facilities and social equality:

"The equal protection of the laws" pertaining to the public school system in California is not provided by furnishing separate schools, the same technical facilities, textbooks, courses of instruction, to children of Mexican ancestry that are available to the other public school children regardless of their ancestry. A paramount requisite in the American system of public education is social equality. It must be open to all children by unified school associations regardless of lineage.¹¹³

In this instance, the separate but equal doctrine of Plessy v.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid., 548.

¹¹³Ibid., 549.

Ferguson, was found unconstitutional because it fostered social inequality.

For the first time, social scientists were called in as witnesses to address the effects of segregation on children. In his opinion, the judge dealt with the issues these social scientists had raised and also dealt with the matter of language deficiency. He agreed that segregation based on language could be justified, to a certain degree, in the early stages of a child's school career, i.e. elementary school, but that segregation through grades one through six, and in some instances, through the eighth grade, could not be justified.

The evidence clearly shows that Spanish-speaking children are retarded in learning English by lack of exposure to its use because of segregation, and that commingling of the entire student body instills and develops a common cultural attitude among the school children which is imperative for the perpetuation of the American institutions and ideals.¹¹⁴

Judge McCormick issued an injunction prohibiting segregation of Mexican children. The Westminster School District appealed the decision.¹¹⁵ The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the American Jewish Congress, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Lawyers Guild and the Japanese American Citizens

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Aff'd. Westminster School District of Orange County v. Mendez, 161 F.2d. 774 (9th Cir. 1947).

League all filed amicus curiae briefs on behalf of Mendez.¹¹⁶ The decision was upheld by the appellate court, which did not address some of the issues raised in the amicus curiae briefs. In response to questions about the constitutionality of the "separate but equal" doctrine, Judge Stevens wrote:

Of course, judges, as well as all others must keep abreast of the times, but the judges must ever be on their guard lest they rationalize outright legislation under the too free use of the power to interpret. We are not tempted by the siren who calls to us that the sometimes slow and tedious ways of democratic legislation is no longer respected in a progressive society.¹¹⁷

The judge continued that in this case, segregation was being conducted without California's legislative support, further reiterating the reason the "separate but equal" doctrine would not be addressed, at least by this court.¹¹⁸ While the judge did not address the constitutionality of segregated schools, there were many who believed that if this did not cause the Supreme Court to reappraise segregation based on race or national origin, it would at least be closely watched as a

¹¹⁶Thurgood Marshall, Robert L. Carter and Loren Miller, attorneys for the NAACP and Julien Cornell, Arthur Garfield Hays and Osmond K. Frankel and A.L. Wirin and Fred Okrand for the ACLU. Both the NAACP and ACLU briefs asked the court to strike down the "separate but equal" doctrine.

¹¹⁷161 F.2d 780.

¹¹⁸For an analysis of this court case see, "Segregation of Children of Mexican Descent by School Officials Without Legislative Authority Held Unconstitutional," Harvard Law Review 60 (September, 1947): 1156-1158.

guinea pig case.¹¹⁹

At this time Mexican Americans were considered "white" and had not yet been identified as an ethnic group by the court, therefore this case was in fact significant because the Fourteenth Amendment was used to repeal segregation, rather than support it, as in the past. Mendez ended de jure segregation in the state of California. In addition, Judge McCormick, had addressed the issues of social equality and educational theories which would again be raised in Brown v. Board of Education. Mendez would be a precursor to Brown.¹²⁰

LULAC brought the desegregation campaign to Texas in 1948 in Delgado vs. Bastrop Independent School District.¹²¹ Days before the appellate court upheld the federal court's decision in Mendez, Price Daniel, the Texas Attorney General, issued an order prohibiting segregation of children of Mexican descent based on race. The order, however, upheld a school district's

¹¹⁹Articles appeared confirming this case would be watched, see Lawrence E. Davies, "Segregation of Mexicans Stirs School Court Fight," New York Times, Sunday, 22 December 1946, 6E; Harry N. Rosenfield, "Is Segregation Constitutional?" The Nation's Schools (February 1947): 22-23; Carey McWilliams, "Is Your Name Gonzales?" The Nation, 15 March 1947, 302-304; and "Segregation of Races in Public Schools and Its Relation to the Fourteenth Amendment," Illinois Law Review 42 (September/October 1947): 545-549.

¹²⁰For similar viewpoints also see, W. Henry Cooke, "The Segregation of Mexican American School Children in Southern California," School and Society 67 (June 5, 1948): 417-421 and Charles Wollenberg, "Mendez v. Westminister: Race, Nationality and Segregation in California Schools," California Historical Quarterly 53 (1974): 317-332.

¹²¹Civil Action No. 388, U.S. District Court, 1948 (W.D. Tex., June 15, 1948).

right to segregate based on language deficiencies through the first three grades. Gus Garcia, an attorney and LULAC member, sought clarification of the order, inquiring whether it prohibited discrimination based on race and whether the use of pedagogical reasons not applied in good faith, would be permitted. The attorney general's response was positive, but it did not provide the school districts' guidelines for carrying out this order.

Virgil E. Strickland, an Associate Professor of Education from Florida State University, and George I. Sanchez, a Professor of Latin American Education at the University of Texas and a past president of LULAC, conducted a random study of ten schools.¹²² The study found no uniformity in segregation practices. For example, one school segregated through the third grade, one through the fourth, two through the fifth, two through the sixth, one through the seventh, one through the eighth and one through the twelfth grade. In addition, students were segregated in teachers' roll books, student offices, and student activities. Strickland and Sanchez stated:

Segregation is carried out on a purely arbitrary basis, determined solely by custom, tradition and prejudice. Furthermore, where segregation is practiced, it is based on the Spanish name of the children and it is extended beyond academic activity in varying ways and to varying degrees by the several systems. This extension is obviously

¹²²Virgil E. Strickland and George I. Sanchez, "Spanish Name Spells Discrimination," The Nation's Schools (January 1948): 22-24.

arbitrary and capricious.¹²³

The study further found that facilities in segregated schools were inferior and that teachers and administrative staff were poorly trained and paid. There were no pedagogical reasons for segregation.

Segregation, instead of being designed for furthering the education of Spanish name children was discriminatory and prejudicial to their educational development. The practices disclosed were in no way conducive to their Americanization, better health and social habits, better language development or better school attendance.¹²⁴

With LULAC's assistance, Minerva Delgado and twenty other parents filed a suit against several school districts in Central Texas. The suit alleged that the school officials' segregation practices were arbitrary and discriminatory and violated the students rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. The district court judge agreed and enjoined the districts from segregating pupils. The decision did, however, make some provisions for segregation. Schools were permitted to segregate only in the first grade, as long as the class was housed on the same campus as the main school. Segregation furthermore, was to be used solely for educational purposes determined by scientific, standardized tests. The court gave September, 1949, as the deadline for compliance.

Delgado clarified some constitutional issues that were not addressed in Mendez. Delgado found, for example, that a

¹²³Ibid., 24.

¹²⁴Ibid.

policy of segregation was illegal when it was the result of past customs and practices. Also, Delgado established guidelines for segregated facilities that were more specific than they had been in the past. Most importantly, Delgado held school officials responsible for condoning or aiding in segregation.

To help school districts to comply with the Delgado decision the superintendent issued guidelines regarding the illegality of segregation practices. The guidelines stated that segregation based on national origin was unconstitutional and that separate classes could only be formed in the first grade, and only for children with language deficiencies. Yet, even with these guidelines, noncompliance remained a problem. LULAC continued its crusade, attempting to have school officials take stronger measures. It made endless presentations before the State Board of Education and appealed numerous cases to the Commissioner of Education. The battle continued.

Brown & Post-Brown Years

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was heard before the Supreme Court in 1954.¹²⁵ This marked the first time the Supreme Court heard a segregation case that challenged the "separate but equal" doctrine in the public school system. Brown went on to become the leading landmark school desegregation case. In the years immediately after Brown

¹²⁵347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Mexican American attorneys continued to use the "other white" theory. It would not be until the early 1970s that Mexican Americans would change their strategy and identify themselves as a distinct minority group so they could avail themselves of remedies under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Hernandez v. Texas¹²⁶ was the reason attorneys did not change their strategy. The only Mexican American discrimination case ever heard before the Supreme Court, Hernandez v. Texas did not involve the issue of education, but its outcome did affect the manner in which attorneys argued their cases on behalf of Mexican Americans.

The main issue in Hernandez was Mexican American representation on juries. In this case Hernandez had been convicted of murder by an all white jury and sentenced to life imprisonment. The defense argued that juries were not impartial because they failed to represent communities. The Texas courts argued that nationality and race were not identical under the Fourteenth Amendment. Furthermore, the Constitution forbade only racial discrimination, and because Mexican Americans were "white" they did not fall under the umbrella of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Texas courts only recognized two classes: whites and African Americans. Due to the fact that Mexican Americans were legally considered "white" the equal protection clause did not apply. The Supreme Court however, did not agree and held that "the

¹²⁶Hernandez v. Texas, 347 U.S. 475 (1954).

exclusion of otherwise eligible [Mexican Americans] from jury service solely because of their ancestry or national origin is discrimination prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment."¹²⁷

The Supreme Court limited itself to facts and statistics. Because the court did not take judicial notice, civil rights attorneys continued to follow their "other white" strategy. Because these precedent-setting cases did not require proof of a separate class, civil rights attorneys would continue to use the "other white" strategy for nearly another twenty years.

In 1955 LULAC filed a suit against the Driscoll School District.¹²⁸ Driscoll was a small rural community with an average school attendance of 288 students in all grades. Approximately seventy percent of the students were of Mexican extraction and from migratory workers families that spoke little or no English. Prior to the filing of the law suit, the school district kept the Mexican American children in segregated classrooms in the first two grades for four years before entering them into the regular third grade. This practice was followed irrespective of a student's individual progress or abilities. When threatened with a law suit in 1955, the school district changed the policy and reduced the time from four to three years. No testing was conducted at

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Hernandez v. Driscoll Consolidated Independent School District, 2 Race Relations Law Reporter 329 (S.D. Tex. 1957).

any point to determine a student's progress.

The suit claimed that the school district's practices were discriminatory and deprived the children of their constitutional rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. The school officials argued that separate classrooms were not based on race or ancestry, but on language deficiency. They pointed out that the children did not speak English when they enrolled in school and therefore could not be placed in a regular classroom. Furthermore, using separate classrooms was "the result of a decision made in good faith, by the school authorities in solving a difficult pedagogical problem, with which decision the courts cannot interfere."¹²⁹

On January 11, 1957 the U.S. District Court for the Southern District declared that the school district's practice was discriminatory because it was applied to Mexican Americans as a class. The court further stated that the district's testing system was insufficient because the capabilities of each child were not individually tested. Judge Allred ordered that any further grouping was to be based solely on an individual's ability to speak English and that these abilities had to be derived via scientific testing. In addition, an injunction was issued prohibiting the grouping of Mexican American children because of ancestry.¹³⁰

Even with the federal district court's ruling, state

¹²⁹Ibid., 329.

¹³⁰Ibid., 333.

school officials still hesitated to intervene in local district's practices. LULAC and other leaders continued to complain of segregation but would not seek further relief through litigation for nearly another twenty years.

Little School of 400

To Felix Tijerina, LULAC President in 1956, education was a more personal issue. Tijerina's parents had been born in Mexico and immigrated to Sugar Land, Texas in the early 1900s. At the ripe age of nine, he became the head of the family when his father died. He, his mother and four sisters eked out a living toiling in the cotton fields. When he turned thirteen, Tijerina went to Houston hoping to find a better way to make a living. The only job he could find was that of a busboy. He wanted to become a waiter but he was not fluent in the English language. He began learning the language on his own and took a night course at a high school in Houston. He also purchased some textbooks and taught himself the fundamentals of English spelling, grammar and composition. He became proficient in the English language and became a self-made man, owning several Mexican restaurants. Yet he never forgot the difficulty he had had because he did not have at least a working knowledge of the English language when he was a boy.

Tijerina saw education as a way for people to improve their socio-economic conditions. It became therefore, one of his primary goals. The high school dropout rate and low academic achievement for Mexican Americans was nothing new.

Much had been written on the subject.¹³¹ Being placed in Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR) classes was quite common. Public concern for the educational problems of Spanish speaking children grew. Of particular concern were children of migrants and seasonal workers and special efforts to develop new instructional material for teachers were developed by such states as California and New Mexico.¹³² It was generally agreed, however, that language was the greatest barrier.

Tijerina met with educators and state officials to see what measures could be taken to help alleviate the language problem, yet no concrete plan was developed. Tijerina originally envisioned a radio program that would be aired over thirteen radio stations. The radio program would consist of daily one-half hour lessons in Spanish. The objective of these radio lessons was to teach pre-school children four hundred basic words needed for entering school.¹³³ The vocabulary was to be illustrated in textbooks which would be made available to the public.

Tijerina presented his program to state officials. They

¹³¹Carter, Mexican Americans in School and Wilson Little, Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1944).

¹³²Herschel T. Manuel, The Spanish Speaking Children of the Southwest: Their Education and the Public Welfare (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965).

¹³³"LULACS to Teach English to Pre-School Children." Texas Outlook 41 (March 1957): 43

were impressed with the work he had put into the project but could not offer any monetary support. LULAC endorsed the project wholeheartedly but it too had no funds.

Isabel Verver, a seventeen year old high school sophomore, read about the program and contacted Tijerina. Verver, had similar experiences as Tijerina in school and also had suffered frustration over the language problem. She met with Tijerina and related her experiences. She wanted to be involved in the project and was willing to help in any way. Her enthusiasm and support prompted Tijerina to postpone the radio program and take another approach. Tijerina and Verver reached an agreement. Tijerina would personally pay Verver twenty-five dollars a week, in return Verver would organize a class for preschool children. The chosen site was Ganado, Texas.¹³⁴ The program's goal was to teach the children enough English for them to be able to understand their teachers when they began school in the fall.

Verver's first task was to locate a room where the class could be held. After several meetings with her high school principal, he gave her access to one of the classrooms. While Verver was accomplishing her mission, a friend had put Tijerina in contact with Elizabeth Burrus, a former elementary

¹³⁴Marjorie Jean Fuquay, "The LULAC and Education, 1970" TMs [photocopy] 11, in Edward Morga file, Box 2, LULAC Archives, Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin; also see, Jake Rodriguez Collection, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin.

school teacher. Burrus had experience in teaching non-English speaking children and was convinced that, if they had a minimum vocabulary, they would be successful in the first grade.¹³⁵

While Burrus worked on the vocabulary list, Verver walked around her neighborhood talking to mothers about the program. While many were interested in the new free school, some said they needed the younger children to stay home and help around the house. There were others who would not send their children because they had no appropriate clothing.

Burrus compiled a list of four hundred English words and believed that if the children mastered the list they would be better able to cope in the first grade. The school opened its doors for the first time on May 6, 1957 - the class consisted of three children. The size of the class and the vocabulary list of four hundred words provided the name - the Little

¹³⁵Burrus' idea was not a novel one. Numerous lists of what a Spanish speaking child's minimum vocabulary should be by the time he or she entered the first grade had been developed by a number of educators. Such lists were to serve four purposes: (1) they were to act as an instrument for a child so that he or she could better communicate in English; (2) to inspire the child to master the English language; (3) to develop a child's proficiency; and (4) to assist others that were interested in compiling their own lists. Such lists had been compiled in Texas, California and New Mexico. The words on such lists dealt with areas such as hygiene, school environment, safety, pets, play and the home. One "master" list had been developed for the southwestern states. Esther Brown, "Some Aspects of Teaching Languages in Grades in the Southwest," Texas Outlook 28 (May 1944): 28-29 and Carlos I. Calderon, "The Fewest Words to Open the Widest Doors," Texas Outlook 40 (July 1956): 14-16.

School of 400.

Verver taught her students five new words each day and began each class with a review of the previous day. At the end of the first week she invited mothers in the community for a demonstration. She proved her point and by the end of the second week she had forty-five children, some as young as four and the oldest ten years of age.

Tijerina kept in constant contact with Verver and visited the school every several weeks. He began meeting with the parents, encouraging them to support the summer program and become active in school activities. Tijerina began thinking of expanding the school to other cities, but he wanted to make certain that the program was in fact helping the students.

When school began in the fall the teachers of Ganado Elementary School contended that Verver's pupils were doing much better than those who had not attended the Little School of 400. In addition, many of the children who might have otherwise been kept at home by the parents, were staying in school.¹³⁶

This was all Tijerina needed to hear. He broached LULAC and the organization officially adopted the project. In 1958 LULAC would formally establish the LULAC Educational Fund at its annual convention. The Fund would support the Little School and also provide scholarships to students needing

¹³⁶Louis Alexander, "Texas Helps Her Little Latins," The Saturday Evening Post, 5 August 1961.

financial assistance with their college education.¹³⁷ Not all LULAC members endorsed the program however, and a rift occurred within the organization. There were those who opined that LULAC's ideology was grounded in integration. These people claimed that the concept of the Little School was accepting, to a certain degree, some separation in education.¹³⁸ Judge Albert Armendáriz, a past LULAC president, had strong feelings about this matter, stating that stressing separate education would do more harm: "Integration is what they will not give us. They'll give us three million dollars for special education, but they will not integrate the schools."¹³⁹ Despite the dissension, the program moved forward.

In the summer of 1958, Tijerina met with LULAC members and community leaders to have them publicize the school. If a community could guarantee fifteen students, a bilingual teacher would be hired for the summer. Nine communities were interested in the summer school. Because the LULAC organization still did not have funds, Tijerina paid the teachers twenty-five dollars a week from his own funds. By

¹³⁷LULAC Minutes, July 1958 in Jake Rodriguez file, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin. Also see, Carmen Cortez, "The LULAC Educational Fund," LULAC News, August 1958, 10.

¹³⁸Mario T. Garcia, Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930-1960 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 60.

¹³⁹Ibid.

now, the project had been endorsed by the Texas State Education Agency. It was not difficult, therefore, to find classrooms. That summer 402 children attended the Little Schools. The following year more than 800 children completed the summer program.

Tijerina had approached the Ford Foundation for funding. The foundation agreed to contribute \$100,000 if Tijerina could raise \$50,000. While Tijerina was not successful, Dr. A.J. Stoddard, consultant to the Ford Foundation, encouraged him to seek state support. Stoddard's argument was, "Look at all the money Texas saves by not having to teach those first-grade children a second year!"¹⁴⁰

Tijerina arranged for a meeting with Governor Price Daniel. The governor proved to be enthusiastic about the proposal and appointed Tijerina to the Hale-Aikin Commission that was preparing recommendations for revising the state education laws. During that legislative session Tijerina spoke with every state representative and produced records as to the success of the Little School of 400. He was recommending that the state have a preschool program in English. The Texas Legislature agreed to a voluntary program and budgeted money to pay first-grade teachers to teach summer sessions. The classes would be for all non-English speaking children eligible for the first or second grade in the fall of the coming year. In addition, classes were to be established

¹⁴⁰Alexander, "Texas Helps Her Little Latins," 55.

anywhere fifteen children were enrolled. The teachers eligible for the program would be those with experience in teaching non-English speaking children. The program was to be known as the "Preschool Instructional Classes for Non-English Speaking Children."¹⁴¹

Even though the bill was enacted, no funds were provided to publicize it. This, coupled with the fact that the program was voluntary, meant that it would be the school districts' responsibility to implement the program if they so chose. LULAC had pushed for the program, therefore they saw this as their responsibility to inform the parents as to the importance of registering their children for the summer classes. The organization mounted an aggressive publicity campaign throughout the state. Leaflets were printed and passed out by members around the state.¹⁴² In the summer of 1960 more than 614 public school teachers were hired for the summer program and more than 15,805 children attended the classes in 130 school districts.¹⁴³ The Little School of 400

¹⁴¹Texas House Bill 51, 56th Legislative Session, General and Special Laws, 1959, 1053-1054.

¹⁴²"The Texas Education Agency Pre-School Instructional Program for Non-English Speaking Children," LULAC News, April 1960, 3; also see Jake Rodriguez Collection, LULAC Archives, Nettie Lee Benson Library, Latin American Collection, University of Texas, Austin, for samples of flyers that were printed and distributed. This collection includes numerous letters to, and from, LULAC members regarding activities during this time.

¹⁴³Felix Tijerina, "What Price Education? A Report of the Little School of 400," Houston: LULAC Educational Fund, 6. Also see, Jake Rodriguez, "The Little School of the 400:

was no longer needed.¹⁴⁴

There was no doubt the Little School of 400 was successful, yet the debate as to the program's merits and deficiencies continued. Clyde Blackman, a principal in the Houston Independent School District, drew most of his students from low-income families that lived in the Houston projects. He opposed the classes on the premise that the real problem was not language, but rather environment.¹⁴⁵

Dr. George Sanchez, Past President of LULAC and a prominent educator, also attacked the program. He challenged the presumption that the summer instruction could provide sufficient schooling for the children to not have to repeat grades. He stated:

There must be something radically wrong with the regular first grade operation if the schools can do in eight weeks (summer) plus nine months (regular year) what otherwise, takes eighteen or more months of regular school instruction! Why not do the equivalent of the eight-week summer program at the beginning of the regular year? Then, even at worst, one could expect logically that at the end of the first grade the children would be no less than eight weeks short of competence for second grade work--and, of course, hardly proper subjects for the repetition (one, two, or more times) of the

Human Values Unlimited," LULAC News, April 1965, 4 and General Waggoner Carr, "School of 400: The Pre-School Program," LULAC News, June 1963, n.p.

¹⁴⁴Theresa Carrell and Traxel Stevens, "Leaping the Language Barrier," Texas Outlook 45 (September 1961): 19-20.

¹⁴⁵Alexander, "Texas Helps Her Little Latins," 55.

entire first grade work.¹⁴⁶

Whether the approach was right or wrong, the Little School of 400 received attention and received praise for LULAC and its initiative in founding the system of pre-school instruction for non-English speaking children. The Little School of 400 would prove to be the model for Project Head Start, a federal program for pre-school children, which would become available to school districts throughout the United States.¹⁴⁷

Civil Rights Movement and the Continuing Struggle for Educational Equality: 1960-1970

The 1960s became known as Civil Rights era. If asking someone who grew up during that period what they remembered most he or she would likely mention the race riots, Vietnam War, the 1968 Democratic Convention or the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy. The sixties was an era when people were becoming more aggressive in expressing themselves and in demanding their Constitutional rights. While LULAC's by-laws stated the organization was not "a political club" it did assert that "as citizens we shall participate in all local, state and national

¹⁴⁶George I. Sanchez, "History, Culture, and Education," in La Raza: Forgotten Americans, Julian Samora, ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 17.

¹⁴⁷Benjamin Marquez, "The League of United Latin American Citizens and the Politics of Ethnicity," in Latino Empowerment: Progress, Problems and Prospects, Roberto E. Villarreal, Norma G. Hernandez and Howard D. Neighbor, eds. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988), 23.

political contests.¹⁴⁸ The organization became active in voter registration and urged its members to become more involved in the political process.

Mexican Americans, like African Americans, were becoming impatient with the government and its lack of sensitivity. Students and student organizations began protesting and demanding programs that would complement their cultural and academic needs. They, along with organizations such as LULAC, continued to become more vocal in their educational demands.

The issues of language and culture aroused a strong passion in people. One's ethnicity became something to be proud of and speaking Spanish was nothing to be ashamed of. Language in the schools would become a key issue for LULAC. The experience LULAC had with the Little School of 400 reinforced the organization's concern for the effect the lack of the English language had on children and their progress in school. Bilingual education became a way of ensuring equal educational opportunity for Mexican American children.

In response to the increasing civil rights activism, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, and national origin. Title VI of the Act extended this protection to educational institutions. Title VI states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be

¹⁴⁸LULAC Constitution, Article II, Section 12.

subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.¹⁴⁹

In 1968 Congress proceeded to pass Title VII, the Bilingual Education Act. The purpose of this act was to address the educational needs of children with limited English skills. Grants to develop bilingual-bicultural programs were made available to educational institutions.

In Texas, LULAC and Mexican American educators began pressuring government officials to support bilingual education. In 1969 Texas passed House Bill 103, its first bilingual education bill. The bill did not require anything from school districts, educational agencies or state school officials, nor did it provide for state funding. What it did do was allow school districts to introduce bilingual instruction if they desired, but more importantly, it repealed a 1918 law which had made teaching in any language other than English a criminal offense. While the bill was not by any means forceful or demanding, it represented a first step towards bilingual education.

Litigation Continues

In the midst of the development of bilingual education legislation, litigation continued in the ongoing struggle for desegregation. Federal laws articulating bilingual education policy heightened the awareness of the needs of Mexican Americans. LULAC, as many other Hispanic organizations, did

¹⁴⁹42 U.S.C. § 2000d.

not believe the push for bilingual education meant separate schools and classes for non-English speaking students, but the integration of students and establishment and the inclusion of bilingual programs.

Cisneros v. Corpus Christi Independent School District¹⁵⁰ was another school desegregation case brought about by parents whose efforts LULAC supported.¹⁵¹ In Cisneros, the court was asked to address several questions, some of which were: (1) Did Brown apply to Mexican Americans in the Corpus Christi area?; (2) If Brown applied to Mexican Americans, were these students segregated or in a dual school system?; (3) If there was segregation and it affected Mexican Americans, were they being denied their Constitutional rights under the Fourteenth Amendment?¹⁵²

In answering these questions Judge Seals stated that Mexican Americans were an "identifiable ethnic-minority" due to their physical characteristics, language, culture, religion and Spanish surnames.¹⁵³ Once this issue was addressed, the court found that segregation existed at all levels of the school system and ordered an immediate plan to achieve a unitary school system.

¹⁵⁰324 F. Supp. 599 (S.D. Tex. 1970).

¹⁵¹Hal Brown, "Improving Education A Foremost Goal," Corpus Christi Caller, 11 February 1979, 9C.

¹⁵²324 F. Supp. 604.

¹⁵³Ibid., 608.

For the first time, a court identified Mexican Americans as a separate class that had been segregated and discriminated against in the schools. Because of this discrimination they had been denied equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment. As a class, Mexican Americans could now benefit from the remedies provided for under Brown.

The Cisneros case was decided at the federal district court level and was important for winning for Mexican Americans, judicial recognition as an identifiable minority group. It would not be until 1973, however, that they would be recognized as a minority group by the Supreme Court and gain judicial acceptance.¹⁵⁴

Summary

LULAC continued to flourish and with this prosperity the organization continued to develop a stronger voice. Its peaceful approach of working one-on-one with school districts was replaced by litigation in the court room. After World War II LULAC Mexican Americans' self-awareness was far greater than it had ever been. People became hungrier and more willing to fight for their rights.

Many of the cases brought before the courts were won and litigation proved to be successful in desegregating some of the schools. The Little School of 400 brought the issue of language to the forefront. Texas became more responsive to

¹⁵⁴Keyes v. School District No. 1, Denver Colorado, 413 U.S. 189 (1973).

the needs of non-English speaking children and eventually the federal government recognized the importance of developing programs to address their needs. While opponents argued that bilingual education went against LULAC's philosophy, the fight for desegregation continued and light was shed on what the school systems were lacking.

It is important to remember that all of these activities were started at the grass roots level. Litigation began in small towns, but the outcome affected what was going on throughout the country. In some cases Supreme Court decisions affecting the law of the land were issued. These outcomes were due to the involvement of people in small towns and this involvement spread across the United States. Any changes that came about were due to the commitment of small groups of people who urged others to get involved and make changes that would affect the future of education for years to come.

CHAPTER IV

The 1970s and Beyond

Education is the foundation of culture, progress, liberty, equality and fraternity, which in turn form the basis for peace, security and happiness, -- the goal of our people, our country, our world.

Dr. George J. Garza,
LULAC National President, 1950-1952

The civil rights movement and the desegregation issue still had momentum in the early 1970s. Bilingual education was still an issue in San Francisco. A case originating in San Francisco would finally give bilingual education legal sanction. On May 26, 1970 a suit was filed in San Francisco by Chinese parents, the Lau family, that would give bilingual education the impetus it needed.¹⁵⁵ When the suit was filed, the San Francisco public school system enrolled 2,856 students who did not speak English, only 1,000 of whom were receiving supplemental instruction courses in the English language. The parents argued that the San Francisco school districts failed to meet the needs of all students thereby denying them equal educational opportunities. The case reached the U.S. Supreme Court in 1974. The Court held that students who did not

¹⁵⁵Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974), 483 F.2d 791 (C.A. No. 9, 1973). The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, on behalf of LULAC, G.I. Forum and others, filed a brief of amici curiae.

understand the English language and were not being provided with special instruction were precluded from any meaningful education. The Court, however, did not use the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection argument as the basis for its decision, but rather said that such practice was prohibited under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI barred discrimination under federally assisted programs on the grounds of "race, color or national origin."¹⁵⁶ The guidelines which had been issued by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare stated:

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effectively participating in the educational program offered by the school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to the students.¹⁵⁷

The school district had failed to abide by these guidelines, the Court found, and was to take action to rectify the situation. The Court stated:

Basic skills are the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶§ 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d.

¹⁵⁷Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 35 Federal Register 11595.

¹⁵⁸414 U.S. 566.

The Court took no position as to what educational techniques should be applied to the situation, but rather left it open for the school district to best decide what those techniques would be. Even though this court case dealt with the issues of Chinese students, Hispanics in general, would be the minority group that would become the greatest potential beneficiaries.

While parents in San Francisco were attempting to institute changes in their educational system, the state of Texas began undergoing a desegregation case. On August 7, 1970 a suit was filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit against the Texas Education Agency and the Austin Independent School District in which LULAC acted as an intervenor.¹⁵⁹ The complaint charged that the school district was discriminating against Mexican American students by assigning them to schools "that are identifiable as Mexican American schools and schools that are attended most exclusively by Mexican American and Negro students."¹⁶⁰ LULAC and the other intervenors asked the school district to stop this discrimination against African Americans and Mexican Americans and to dismantle the dual school system.

The court agreed and ordered the school system to submit a desegregation plan. The court found several areas in which

¹⁵⁹United States v. Texas Education Association, 532 F.2d 380 (5th Cir. 1976) remanded sub nom, 467 F.2d 848 (5th Cir. 1972) (en banc), aff'd after remand.

¹⁶⁰467 F.2d 853.

the school district perpetuated the segregation of Mexican Americans. De facto segregation had been established when new schools were built in areas that were predominately white. In addition, the school zoning and transfer policies which had been established, resulted in minority students receiving inferior education. The court ordered that the school district provide bilingual instruction, but made it clear that this could not be substituted for desegregation.¹⁶¹

Another case would produce spinoff cases in which LULAC would again act as an intervenor. The original desegregation case began on March 6, 1970 when a complaint was filed against the state of Texas, charging that the state and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) had created and maintained nine all black school districts throughout the state.¹⁶² By doing so, the state had failed to provide equal educational opportunities without regard to race. The complaint further alleged that the state, via TEA, had failed to oversee and supervise the school districts to ensure that such a situation as this would not occur. The Fifth Circuit court agreed, ordered that remedies be taken and proceeded to outline the specific course the state and the TEA were to follow. Section G of the remedies dealt with "Curriculum and Compensatory Education." TEA was ordered to conduct a study of educational

¹⁶¹467 F.2d 873.

¹⁶²United States v. Texas, 447 F.2d 441 (5th Cir. 1971); modified, 330 F. Supp 235 (E.D. Tex. 1971); 321 F. Supp. 1043 (E.D. Tex. 1971).

needs of minority students and to develop some specific recommendations regarding the curriculum to insure equal educational opportunities for all children, regardless of race, color or national origin. The court further stated:

These curricular offerings and programs shall include specific educational programs designed to compensate minority group children for unequal educational opportunities resulting from past or present racial and ethnic isolation, as well as programs and curriculum designed to meet the special educational needs of students whose primary language is other than English.¹⁶³

On July 19, 1972 LULAC, along with the G.I. Forum and the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, filed a motion to intervene on behalf of all persons of Mexican American descent to have Section G enforced.¹⁶⁴ As part of their relief the intervenors sought to have the TEA implement a plan that would provide for bilingual instruction to all students with limited English and also to have compensatory programs to overcome the effects the unavailability of bilingual instruction had caused in the past.

Judge Justice found that Mexican Americans had been treated as a separate and inferior class. He identified three forms of discrimination the school districts had engaged in: (1) students were segregated and placed in "Mexican Schools";

¹⁶³447 F.2d 448 (5th Cir. 1971).

¹⁶⁴United States, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, LULAC and G.I. Forum v. State of Texas, 506 F. Supp. 405 (E.D. Tex. 1981). This decision was appealed and overturned in 1982, United States and Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, LULAC and G.I. Forum v. State of Texas, 680 F.2d 356 (5th Cir. 1982).

(2) the facilities, educational programs and resources were inferior compared to the non-minority schools; (3) the school districts denied the students the use of Spanish.¹⁶⁵ Due to these activities the students had been denied an adequate education and were therefore being restricted to less challenging jobs in the future. This, in turn, meant that they would be placed at a lower socio-economic scale level, thereby affecting not only their future, but the future of their children. Judge Justice stated:

The crippling educational deficiencies afflicting the main body of Mexican-Americans in Texas presents an ongoing ethnic tragedy, catastrophic in degree and disturbing in it's latency for civil unrest and economic dislocation...Unless the state succeeds in overcoming the vestiges of past discrimination and educates these children effectively, some one million members of this group will soon grow to maturity unable to participate fully in or contribute meaningfully to this nation's society.¹⁶⁶

The state maintained that it had a policy regarding districts with a large percentage of Spanish speaking students to have bilingual instruction for kindergarten through the third grade. It further stated that, due to budget restrictions and the limited availability of bilingual staff, it was doing as much as possible. When feasible, school districts provided English as Second Language classes. The state contended that one of the reasons for this was the lack of qualified bilingual teachers.

¹⁶⁵506 F. Supp. 414.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 416.

In his decision Judge Justice claimed the state needed to be more aggressive in its actions. The state admitted its efforts to train administrators in bilingual education had been inadequate, thus this shortage of administrators was partly its own doing.

It should also be noted that one major reason for the present shortage of bilingual teachers is the defendants' discriminatory failure to hire Mexican-American faculty members in the past. Many school districts with large numbers of Mexican-American students refused until recently to hire any teachers with that ethnic background.¹⁶⁷

The court ordered that bilingual instruction be provided to all Mexican American students with limited English skills. Such instruction was to be provided for all subjects, with the exception of "art, music, physical education and other subjects where language proficiency is not essential to effective participation".¹⁶⁸ Judge Justice stressed that no schools were to be specifically set aside solely for the purpose of providing bilingual instruction. He continued by stating that, to the extent possible, Mexican American students receiving bilingual instruction were to participate with other students in all subjects where bilingual instruction was not necessary. The state of Texas wanted to withdraw some of the stipulations from the decision and also

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 437, Ft.N. 16.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 405.

wanted to vacate what had been ordered.¹⁶⁹ The Circuit court denied its request leaving the previous orders to stand.

Another suit brought under the umbrella of the original desegregation case dealt specifically with the San Felipe Del Rio Consolidated Independent School District.¹⁷⁰ The San Felipe Del Rio had a history of de jure segregation and by virtue of this had denied to the students equal educational opportunities. At the time of the suit the state of Texas had financially supported over ninety percent of the district's operating expenditures. The court surmised the state should have been aware of the segregation being practiced in an educational system that was being operated largely at the state's expense.

In his opinion District Judge Justice stated his goal was true integration, as opposed to mere desegregation.¹⁷¹ He issued a comprehensive plan for the school district which gave special educational consideration to Mexican American students. The plan included nine components, one of which was "Curriculum Design and Content and Instructional Methodology." This component represented a small victory for bilingual education in the state of Texas because it included bilingual

¹⁶⁹Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, LULAC and G.I. Forum v. State of Texas, 523 F. Supp. 703 (E.D. Tex. 1981).

¹⁷⁰United States v. State of Texas et al., San Felipe-Del Rio Consolidated Independent School District, 466 F.2d 518 (5th Cir. 1972), 342 F.Supp. 24 (E.D. Tex. 1971).

¹⁷¹342 F.Supp. 28 (E.D. Tex. 1971).

and bicultural programs .¹⁷²

LULAC National Educational Service Centers and Higher Education

The 1960s had brought some changes to college campuses. Many institutions of higher education had established ethnic programs and began to actively recruit minority students. Full-time Mexican American enrollment at college campuses, however, was well below that of other groups. While progress in education had been made at the elementary level, the drop out number rate for Mexican Americans was high. In 1970 the median average number of school years completed by Mexican Americans twenty-five years of age or older was 10.3¹⁷³ Of all high school graduates 32.1 percent were of Spanish origin, and 24.5 percent were Mexican American.¹⁷⁴ For that same year, students with Spanish surnames comprised 3.4 percent of all U.S. graduates and undergraduates enrolled full-time in

¹⁷²A study was conducted in 1981 to assess the relationship between the Mexican power structure in Texas and federal funding provided for bilingual education. LULAC was one of three organizations examined. The study found that the counties where LULAC was well established and considered to be influential, did more in seeking and receiving federal funds for bilingual funds. "Assessing the Relationship Between Mexican American Power Structure and Federal Funding of Bilingual Education in Texas," Barbara Sulzemeier, (Dallas, Texas: Southwest Educational Research Association, January 30, 1981). ED 204074.

¹⁷³U.S. Bureau of the Census, Characteristics of the Population 1970, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973) 1-613.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

public and private institutions of higher learning.¹⁷⁵

Statistics such as these demonstrated the reality of the situation. While definite progress had been made in the field of education, Mexican American students were not adequately represented on college campuses. The students who did remain in high school had little chance of going on to college. Whether it was because they were not being adequately counseled or whether it was due to the quality of education, the fact remained they were not being prepared for higher education.

The barriers Mexican Americans had encountered throughout the years proved difficult to overcome. Culture, language and low income were all factors that had to be contended with if the gap for Mexican Americans in higher education was to diminish. The national poverty rate for Hispanics was 21.2 percent and 10.7 percent for the whole population in 1970.¹⁷⁶ For many parents this meant they could not afford to send their children to school. In turn, statistics such as this were reflected throughout the different levels of education.

It was during the early 1970s that the members of LULAC Council 2008 in San Francisco decided to take matters into

¹⁷⁵Ronald W. Lopez, Chicanos in Higher Education: Status and Issues, (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Center, 1976) 74. This author based his information from data obtained from the Office of Civil Rights who did not have information on specific Hispanic groups.

¹⁷⁶U.S. Bureau of the Census, Conditions of Hispanics in America Today (Washington, D.C.: GPO) n.d., 14.

their own hands. Postsecondary schools in the San Francisco area had developed special ethnic studies and admissions programs, but did not include provisions for Hispanics.¹⁷⁷ David Florence, a high school teacher, realized that if Mexican Americans were ever to improve their social and economic status they would have to further their education. Florence, with the help of Manuel Larez and John Rodelo, began meeting with admissions counselors in colleges in the San Francisco area to see if they would include Hispanics in their special programs. The responses they received were positive.

Florence, Larez and Rodelo encouraged Council 2008 to do more. The following year Council 2008 rented a storefront in San Francisco's Mission District and started a volunteer counseling program. At this time Florence became Associate Director of Educational Opportunity Programs at the University of California at Berkeley. It was in this position that he was able to obtain outreach support for the LULAC Counseling Office. With the assistance from the University of

¹⁷⁷During 1968 and 1969 San Francisco State University and the University of California at Berkeley had experienced student strikes. Asian-American students insisted that ethnic studies programs be created. San Francisco State University established the School of Ethnic Studies and within that structure established the Asian-American Studies Program, as did the University of California at Berkeley. Also, due to the civil rights movement Asian-Americans were among the groups that benefitted the most from affirmative action programs. Philip G. Altbach and Kofi Lomotey, eds., The Racial Crises in American Higher Education, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991) and Robert L. Bailey and Anne L. Hafner, Minority Admissions, (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1978).

California, the counseling program began to grow and gain recognition from high schools and from other colleges and universities in the metropolitan area. Soon, the U.S. Department of Labor began to provide some funding for counseling. Florence, Rodelo, Larez and Shone Martinez began working with the San Francisco community colleges to offer courses for credit in the Mission District. Another item on the agenda was to survey the students as to the types of services they needed. By 1971, the LULAC El Colegio de la Misión offered about twenty courses.

Pete Villa was elected National President of LULAC in 1971. He considered education a priority and had heard of the work Florence was doing. After meeting with Florence, Villa appointed him Chair of the National Education Committee. The San Francisco project had proved so successful that Florence believed this idea could be extended on a national level. It had become clear from the San Francisco experience that students aspiring to go to college needed information about the programs being offered by universities. There was also a need for more information on graduate and professional school opportunities around the country and the need to make that knowledge available to all students, be they in California, Texas or Illinois. Galaz, Larez, Martinez and members of Council 2008 were recruited to promote the concept of a network of educational counseling field sites .

The National Committee on Education approached Villa and

the LULAC Supreme Council with the idea that this become a national project.¹⁷⁸ Florence and his friends had been talking about such a project to the LULAC membership and lobbying them for support. Receiving permission from the LULAC Supreme Council, Florence proceeded to write a proposal to the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) and to send a copy to the Department of Health Education and Welfare in the hopes of receiving additional funding.

The proposal contained three major components. The first component was to provide counseling for students entering college for the first time. This counseling entailed assistance in such areas as financial aid and college entrance examinations. The second component dealt with career counseling. It had been the experience in San Francisco that students were not sufficiently counseled at the high school level as to the types of classes they would need if they planned to go to college. The students who did make it to college therefore, had no idea how to go about developing a career plan and the needed courses. The third component dealt with counseling students as to the graduate

¹⁷⁸Initially, the program was viewed as one that would be for Mexican Americans, but the Committee and the membership realized that such a program was needed not only for Mexican Americans, but also for all Hispanics and any student that was educationally disadvantaged. It was decided that any services provided by LNEESC would be open to anyone seeking assistance, yet there would be an emphasis on targeting the Hispanic student population. Pete Villa, Past LULAC National President, Telephone interview by researcher, Chicago, IL 19 July 1994.

opportunities open to them. In 1972 it was estimated that Hispanics made up only 1.4 percent of all graduate students enrolled in institutions of higher education.¹⁷⁹ Although this was a 0.2 percent increase over the previous year, concern about their underrepresentation was warranted and became an important part of the proposal.

While funds were being sought, the Supreme Council conducted a series of meetings to discuss the proposal, select sites and promote the idea to councils throughout the country. The following criteria were established to identify the locations of the centers:

1. Each center was to be placed where there was an identifiable need for educational resources. The city was also to have various educational institutions so that a link could be formed between the center and those institutions.
2. A center would not be located in an area where a comparable, viable program, useful to the Hispanic community, already existed.
3. It was important the local leadership be committed to the idea and be able to mobilize resources and personnel to get what was needed.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹Frank Brown and Madelon D. Stent, Minorities in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (New York: Praeger, 1977), 83.

¹⁸⁰Pete Villa, Past-LULAC National President, telephone interview by researcher, Chicago, Illinois, 19 July 1994; also see LNEsc Board Backet, February 6, 1980, LNEsc files, Washington, D.C.

LNESC Structure¹⁸¹

The LULAC Supreme Council adopted by-laws which were to govern LNESC at its board meeting held on November 24, 1973. LNESC was to have a Board of Directors, which would consist of LULAC members in good standing. The Board would then appoint an Executive Director to be the chief administrative officer who would have responsibility for day-to-day management and provide general direction for LNESC.¹⁸² The Executive Director would appoint a Director of Field Operations who would monitor the activities of the eleven centers. Each center would then have its own Field Center Director who would direct and implement the program at the local level. The responsibility of the Field Center Directors would be to hire and train staff, oversee budget, work with the community to insure its support, secure additional resources to supplement the program and to act as an agent of the National

¹⁸¹All information regarding LNESC, its programs and statistics and the LULAC National Scholarship Fund was gathered from the LNESC files in offices in Chicago, Illinois; Houston, Texas; and Washington, D.C.

¹⁸²The composition of the Board of Directors would change over the years. The Articles of Incorporation listed three people which would serve on the Board: Pete Villa, Sal Rivera and Alfred Vasquez would serve one year. Thereafter, the By-Laws provided there be thirteen LULAC members whose names would be submitted by the Regional Vice-Presidents, National Vice-President for youth, National President and the LULAC National Supreme Council. The number of the Board and the number of LULAC representatives would change again over the years to include individuals outside of the LULAC organization. In 1994 there were fifteen members with each member serving a two year term. Eight are LULAC members and the remaining are representatives from business and education.

Headquarters to implement national projects.

There was no precedent for the organizational design, every activity, or structure, therefore evolved through managerial analysis and experimentation. It was also realized at the start-up phase that some management tool would have to be designed to insure a record of the program's accomplishments and weaknesses. The result was the implementation of a management by objective system. Throughout the initial phase the national office in Washington, D.C. served as the primary decision maker.

The LNEsc structure would be decentralized. Each field center would have fiscal and program autonomy. The funds would be allocated quarterly to each center and the field directors would turn in monthly reports of expenditures and operation activities.

LNEsc Opens Its Doors

The first proposal called for thirteen centers, plus the headquarters in Washington, D.C. In late 1972 the Office for Economic Opportunity granted LULAC \$2 million for a two year period.¹⁸³ The grant was to fund the national headquarters in addition to eleven of the thirteen centers. The cities selected were: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Boston, Massachusetts; Chicago, Illinois; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Corpus Christi, Texas; Houston, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona;

¹⁸³Tony Bonilla, "A Decade of Success," Latino Magazine, Marzo 1983, 4.

Pomona, California; San Francisco, California; Seattle, Washington; and Topeka, Kansas.

The LULAC National Educational Service Centers (LNESEC) became incorporated in Washington, D.C. in January, 1973. The Articles of Incorporation LNESEC listed the following to be the purposes of the Corporation:

1. To become engaged in all activities pertaining and relating to fostering interest in educational programs for the Spanish speaking communities of the United States of America; and
2. To create interest on behalf of the Spanish speaking population in the United States in educational projects and programs; and
3. To promote educational endeavors that will benefit the Spanish speaking population of the United States; and
4. To grant scholarships and other aid to deserving Spanish speaking students in their pursuit of higher education; and
5. To render services, advise and guidance to the Spanish speaking population of the United States in matters relating to educational opportunities.¹⁸⁴

The first payment of the grant was made in early 1973 and the board of directors decided the first center to open would be in Corpus Christi, Texas, the birthplace of LULAC. During the next six months the remaining field centers would open with the last center opening in Boston in October, 1973.

The first year the centers began developing relationships

¹⁸⁴LNESEC Articles of Incorporation, 31 January 1973, LNESEC Files, Washington, D.C.

with the high schools and agencies in their respective areas. Their publicity campaign emphasized the new, free service they would offer to the youth in the area. During that first year some attention was given to the career and graduate counseling components. Yet, from the beginning, it was obvious to the staff that there was such a great need and such limited resources, that the bulk of their work would have to be devoted to gaining access to colleges and universities for first time students. The other objectives would have to wait, at least until additional funding could be secured.

After the first year it became apparent there were areas that needed improving. The decentralized structure proved to be cumbersome, with no program uniformity from one center to the next. While all of the centers provided counseling services there was a need for more direction from the national office. In order to realize LNEsc's objectives and to ensure its future, changes would have to be made. To improve the monitoring system, the Center's fiscal activities became centralized in Washington, D.C., falling under the auspices of the fiscal director. This proved to be more effective, not only for monetary purposes, but also for programming purposes. Centers would now be providing uniform programs, yet individualized strategies could be developed to deal with the ethnic, geographic and social characteristics specific to that part of the country. The use of management by objectives would also prove effective in evaluating the centers'

performance. It also became clear that LNEESC's objectives would be to:

1. increase the number of educationally disadvantaged and poverty-level persons attending America's colleges and universities, with special emphasis on Hispanic students;
2. increase the retention of educationally disadvantaged students in America's colleges and universities, with special emphasis on Hispanic students;
3. increase the awareness of the educational problems of the Hispanic population among institutions of higher education, foundations, corporations and federal agencies with the intent of bringing to bear an increased concentration of resources on the problem.¹⁸⁵

Another area of concern was funding. LNEESC's original grant was for eighteen months. Looking ahead, another twelve month proposal was submitted in 1974 to what was now the Community Services Administration (CSA). The CSA, however, chose to provide interim funding, sometimes in only thirty day segments, throughout the year. This short-term allocation of grants continued until 1977 when the CSA again awarded LNEESC one year grant. The centers were also encouraged to seek other sources of funding. Thus, in 1974, the Corpus Christi and Topeka centers submitted proposals under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) and were granted \$4,800 and

¹⁸⁵"Program Accomplishments," LNEESC files, Chicago, Illinois office, n.d. Also see, Catherine McIntyre and Sally Jackson, "Higher Education for Hispanics: An Evaluation of the LULAC National Education Service Centers," (Seattle, Washington: Washington State Board for Community College Education Research Planning Office, 10 November 1977) 7.

\$3,500 to provide for career exploration and outreach counseling. By 1981 all but two of the centers had CETA contracts. The CETA contracts helped extend the range and variety of services and to also provide on-the-job training and upward mobility for Hispanics. These were yet other areas in which LNEESC became involved in.

In order to train and develop its managers, LNEESC held its first field center directors' conference in Denver, Colorado in 1974. Over the years this staff training evolved to become a five day seminar covering: personnel, fundraising, community relations and achieving program goals. The training LNEESC provides its employees has assisted them in moving into mainstream positions in business, education and government. While not one of its original goals, LNEESC proved to be a fertile training ground for mid-level managers. By the end of the 1974 school year, LNEESC had counseled 16,446 students and channeled \$4,867,700 in financial aid to 5,423 students enrolled in postsecondary institutions.¹⁸⁶ LNEESC began acquiring a reputation throughout the United States. Hispanic groups, educational associations and institutions, professional associations and governmental bodies learned of LNEESC and its activities. Between 1973 and 1974 LNEESC developed numerous relationships with such groups as: Department of Defense; Council on Graduate Education; National

¹⁸⁶"Eight Years of Service," LNEESC Field Center Informer, (Washington, D.C.: LNEESC Field Operations, April 1981) 1, LNEESC files, Washington, D.C.

Alliance of Businessmen; Yale Law School; Harvard Business School; National Academy of Engineers; Association of American School Administrators and the National Educational Association.

LULAC National Scholarship Fund (LNSF)

Once LNEESC was firmly ensconced, both it and LULAC began thinking of other avenues it could take to better serve students. It had become obvious from the counseling program that financial aid was not always enough, and that some other direct form of monetary assistance was needed. Money to not only help offset college costs, but also as a way to recognize students' achievements was needed. Students needed to be acknowledged and recognized for the work they were doing. For many students scholarships were the added motivator for them to continue their education. Having a LULAC National Scholarship Fund seemed like the next logical step. Granting scholarships was not a new phenomenon. One of the first scholarships was presented in 1932. It was in the amount of fifty dollars and went to a student named Noe Jimenez. This student came to represent the quality of future scholarship winners. Mr. Jimenez wrote a letter thanking LULAC:

I have failed to find words enough to express the gratitude I owe to you, and what I do owe you will be impossible for me to repay except by praise. By your efforts you have made it possible for me to get started on the road to higher learning.

I do not praise the L.U.L.A.C. in just because it has helped me but in the name of all worthy Latin Americans, I praise it for its undying efforts to help the bearers of its blood. It is my

hope that the League will continue to cultivate and propagate clean morals and sincere characters. May the organization continue to grow with each succeeding day, and may its roots be watered with the toils of its sponsors and every individual member.¹⁸⁷

Councils across the nation had been providing scholarships for many years. They had conducted their own fundraising activities and established their own selection committees. The time seemed to have come to organize the councils and develop a national program so that more students could be reached. In 1975 the LNESc Board of Directors, in cooperation with LULAC, approved the LULAC National Scholarship Fund (LNSF) as a program activity of LNESc. The LNESc national office spent the first year of the LNSF soliciting funds. A total of \$16,900 was raised from six corporations and awards were presented to forty-four students who had been selected by the Washington office.¹⁸⁸ At the same time, LNESc counselors worked with 15,935 students and assisted 5,280 in enrolling in institutions for higher learning, funneling \$4,559,500 in financial aid.¹⁸⁹

In 1976 the LULAC councils were incorporated into the

¹⁸⁷Noe Jimenez, College of Arts & Industries, Kingsville, Texas, to [Mr. F. Valencia, 211 S. Laredo St., San Antonio, Texas], TLS, 7 October 1932, LULAC Archives, Benson Library for Latin American Studies, Austin, Texas. Also printed in LULAC News, October, 1932, 6.

¹⁸⁸LNESC Board Packet, 6 February 1980, 6, LNESc files, Washington, D.C.

¹⁸⁹"Eight Years of Service," LNESC Field Center Informer, April 1981, 1.

Funds structure via the "sharing concept." The sharing concept was based on the amount of money each council raised. This money was pooled, along with money the national office raised, and then distributed according to the percent each council contributed to the pool. Guidelines for the LNSF were established by LNESEC and mailed to over 300 LULAC councils. The first year of the sharing concept thirty-four councils participated, generating a total of \$53,688 which was awarded to 211 students around the country.¹⁹⁰

The LNSF proved to be a huge success, such a success that people who lived in areas with no LULAC councils, began inquiring as to the possibility of participating in the scholarship program. In 1977 LNSF added the Expansion Incentive Program (EIP) which was designed to meet the needs of special groups such as this one. EIP money was set aside from contributions collected by the LNESEC National Office. The LNESEC Board of Directors, with the prerequisite that any site selected was to begin establishing a LULAC council, allocated money over a three year period to interested community organizations. The organization then acted as a scholarship committee and worked to organize a LULAC council. Every year for three years LNESEC would contribute a small amount with the idea that, at the end of three years, a LULAC

¹⁹⁰Narcisso Cano, LNESEC Executive Director, "Report on the 1976 Effort for the LULAC National Scholarship Fund for Americans of Spanish Origin," 20 October 1976, LNESEC files, Washington, D.C.

council would be established and sufficiently organized. Once a LULAC council was organized, it could then participate on an equal basis with the other councils. If at the end of three years a LULAC council was not organized, the EIP site would cease to function. The EIP proved to be a way to not only increase the numbers of LULAC councils, but also to give more scholarships and to expand to areas where students might not have otherwise been included. In 1977 New York City and Boston were selected as EIP sites.¹⁹¹ That year LNSF awarded \$176,115 to 443 deserving students.¹⁹² In addition to the scholarships awarded, LNEsc staff counseled 11,669 students and assisted 6,144 students in enrolling in college.¹⁹³ These students received \$5,401,800 in financial aid.¹⁹⁴

Period of Stability and Continued Growth

LNEsc continued to flourish. In 1978 the organization applied to transfer its funding source to Talent Search, a component of the U.S. Office of Education. In its first five years of funding by the Community Services Administration LNEsc had received \$6,571,829, yet the programs LNEsc had instituted clearly meant the organization belonged under the Office of Education (OE). It was important that funding

¹⁹¹"Expansion Incentive Program," LULAC National Scholarship Fund, n.d., 2, LNEsc files, Washington, D.C.

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³"Eight Years of Service," 1.

¹⁹⁴Ibid.

become more stabilized. OE agreed, and on July 1, 1978 awarded LNEsc \$1,000,000 as the first part of a two year grant.

Also in 1978, LNEsc submitted a proposal to OE to fund new centers in Boston, Philadelphia and Phoenix. However, OE did not approve funding for the Boston and Phoenix centers because there were existing Talent Search offices to meet the needs in those cities, but it did approve Philadelphia as a site, bringing the total number of centers to twelve. In November, 1978 LNEsc submitted another proposal to open new field centers in Bronx, New York; Miami, Florida; and Gary-East Chicago, Indiana. Miami was the only site approved and that center opened its doors in 1979. Progress also continued in the EIP sites. By 1979 Miami, Philadelphia, New Haven, Connecticut, and Lodi, New Jersey were added, and in addition 466 students received \$215,350 in scholarship money.¹⁹⁵

Another feature was added to the LNSF in 1979 when it presented the LULAC Young Leaders Scholarships. The purpose of these scholarships was to recognize young people who had volunteered their time to their cities. The LNEsc Board of Directors awarded the \$1,000 scholarships on the basis of academic achievement, financial need and involvement in community activities. The Young Leaders Scholarships program granted thirteen scholarships over the program's three year period. By 1982, however, the program was discontinued after

¹⁹⁵"Expansion Incentive Program," 1.

the LNESB Board of Directors was satisfied that the average LNSF scholarship award had reached an adequate amount.

LNSF's goals came to fruition. The EIP and Young Leaders Scholarships increased the number of councils participating in the scholarship program and garnered more corporate support. This sharing relationship brought together local and national participants who mutually benefitted from the entire process. Students equally benefitted by receiving scholarships and financial aid and by having access to information on career opportunities.

After the transfer to Talent Search, LNESB continued to diversify its programs. By 1979 the Hispanic population was growing so fast it came to be viewed as becoming increasingly influential in areas such as business and government.¹⁹⁶ Corporations began looking for ways to court Hispanic college students, but were finding it difficult because of their underrepresentation in areas such as business, science and technical fields.¹⁹⁷ With a donation and guidance from Kraft, Inc., Project Follow-Up was initiated to bring Hispanic

¹⁹⁶"Hispanic Americans: Soon the Biggest Minority," Time, 16 October 1978.

¹⁹⁷For further information regarding the underrepresentation of Hispanics in professional occupations see Michael A. Olivas, The Dilemma of Access: Minorities in Two Year Colleges (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1979); Alexander W. Astin, Helen S. Astin, Kenneth C. Green, Laura Kent, Patricia McNamara, and Melanie Reeves Williams, Minorities in American Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982); Frank Brown and Madelon D. Stent, Minorities in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (New York: Praeger, 1977).

college students and corporate representatives together for career awareness seminars. In these seminars students were taught about corporate structure, job opportunities and requirements, along with techniques in resume writing and interviewing. Students would have the opportunity to meet with corporate representatives in small groups to talk about corporate opportunities. Through projects such as this, LNEESC hoped to encourage students to consider entering these fields of study. The two main goals of Project Follow-up were to encourage students to enter fields where Hispanics were highly underrepresented, and more importantly, to show the students they would have good job opportunities when they finished their education. By achieving these goals, Project Follow-Up would encourage students to complete their college education. The program was duplicated throughout the centers. One reason why it and proved to be successful was because corporations and the students began to see this as a way to nurture relationships, thereby encouraging corporations to institute internship programs.

In 1979 LNEESC added a research component which was funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). Dr. Michael Olivas was appointed Director of Research. Under Dr. Olivas, LNEESC conducted a two-year study of financial aid packaging for Hispanic students. The study was to examine the effect of financial aid upon Hispanic attrition and college choice. Dr. Olivas helped LNEESC enhance

its visibility and credibility in the area of Hispanic education. While at LNESEC, Dr. Olivas co-authored the Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans and participated in numerous workshops and seminars on Hispanic educational issues.¹⁹⁸ The research he conducted via LNESEC provided valuable information on the status of minorities in postsecondary education.

That same year, LNESEC assisted the Presidential Classroom for Young Americans by helping identify Hispanic participants for the program which brought high school juniors and seniors to Washington, D.C. for a week long seminar. During the week, students would meet with elected and appointed officials, and visit federal agencies and different branches of the government.

LNESEC continued to prosper. New programs were added each year. By 1980 it had a combined budget from a variety of sources in the federal and non-federal sectors totaling well over \$2 million annually. From March 1973 to 1980 LNESEC had counseled 95,195 clients and channeled \$30,883,426 to the 32,451 students it enrolled in postsecondary educational programs.¹⁹⁹ Those enrolled comprised an estimated seven

¹⁹⁸Michael Olivas, The Condition of Education for Hispanic Americans, Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics, 1980.

¹⁹⁹"Report to LULAC National Executive Board," 17 October 1981, 13, Washington, D.C., LNESEC files, Washington, D.C.

percent of all entering Hispanic freshmen annually.²⁰⁰ In 1980 LNEESC worked with 306 secondary and 369 postsecondary institutions along with 346 community organizations.²⁰¹ The LNEESC network continued to expand.

In 1982 LNEESC opened its thirteenth center in New Haven, Connecticut and had satellite centers in Pueblo, Colorado, East Los Angeles and Kansas City, Kansas.²⁰² It became a founding member of the Hispanic Higher Education Coalition which was established to ensure Hispanic participation in government policy and to raise the awareness of Hispanic educational problems. As part of the Coalition LNEESC participated in numerous advocacy projects including the delivery of testimony before Congressional Committees.²⁰³

LNEESC's commitment to bring educational opportunities within the reach of the Hispanic community became a reality. By 1983 the LULAC National Scholarship Fund had been in existence for nine years. During that time \$2,107,156 in

²⁰⁰"LNEESC Background," n.d., 1, LNEESC files Washington, D.C.

²⁰¹LNEESC Board Member Packet, February 6, 1980, 7, LNEESC files, Washington, D.C.

²⁰²"A Cooperative Effort - The Twelfth LNEESC," LNEESC Informer, September/October 1982 (LNEESC: Washington, D.C.), 1.

²⁰³"Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education," Presented by Dr. Michael A. Olivas, Director of Research and Chair, Hispanic Higher Education Coalition, February 4, 1982, LNEESC files, Washington, D.C.

scholarship money had been awarded to 4,778 students.²⁰⁴ LNESc turned ten years old in 1983. During those ten years it had assisted approximately ten percent of the 1.1 million Hispanic students who enrolled in college.²⁰⁵ It continued to design programs that targeted the needs of a changing society. The New Haven Center was established in a predominantly Puerto Rican community with a high drop out rate. It also worked with middle school students and concentrated on increasing parental involvement, and providing leadership development programs and fundamental academic preparation. One of the programs designed specifically for this center was the Business, Engineering and Science Technology (BEST) Project, which provided students with personal, college and career counseling. The goal of the project was to eventually increase Hispanic representation in the technical fields by improving academic performance and involving parents in their children's education.

The weekly tutoring provided with the sessions concentrated on mathematics, general science and communication skills. Field trips and workshops were organized to provide students with the opportunity to learn about different professions. The BEST model, while beginning with one center, would eventually be implemented throughout the country.

²⁰⁴"LNSF Track Record," n.d., n.p., LNESc Files, Washington, D.C.

²⁰⁵LULAC National Educational Service Centers, Inc.: 1982-83 Progress Report, Washington, D.C.: LNESc, 2.

LNESC also extended its services to include young adults interested in pursuing vocational training after completing their secondary education by referring and preparing them to participate in the Job Corps Program. With the Job Search Program it went one step further by providing individuals with job seeking techniques and skills. In addition to the LNSF, education and career counseling services, and helping students prepare financial aid packages, LNESC also began the Kellogg/LNESC Intern Program. This program with the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, provided students with the opportunity for a year-long internship in Washington, D.C. The Intern Program provided students the opportunity to develop their skills in such areas as finance, resource development, research and operations. Such managerial, administrative and leadership skills would strengthen the students' professional development while providing them with the opportunity to visit with national leaders in government, education and business and see national policy being shaped.

LNESC continued in its effort to provide services to students who might not have otherwise gone on to obtain a postsecondary education. It did in fact open the doors to an opportunity for education for many Hispanic students. While the original plan was that LNESC would provide services for Mexican Americans, the centers would address the needs and provide services specific to their areas, to anyone seeking assistance. The Philadelphia and New Haven centers addressed

the needs of the Puerto Rican community, while the Miami Center addressed the needs of the Cuban community; in Chicago it would be a mixture and in places like Texas, New Mexico and California the clientele would be predominantly Mexican American.

The vision the founders had in 1929 to see more Mexican Americans in higher education, became a reality with the success of LNESc. LNESc alumni have gone on to become doctors, teachers and attorneys. There can be no doubt that LNESc has helped raise the educational level of many Hispanics. More education has meant more earning power, breaking the cycle of poverty. As a national organization LNESc continues its fight to narrow the gap in Hispanic representation in colleges and universities.

Summary

LULAC continued to promote education and change within the Hispanic community. Once inroads were made with elementary and bilingual education, LULAC moved on to secondary and higher education. Progress continued. LNESc was founded by a few people in one city wanting to make a difference. Their commitment in their work grew to include a community and eventually the entire United States. A national scholarship fund was established, again beginning at the grassroots level. The projects and programs that grew out of LNESc and the LNSF went on to assist many Hispanic students to realize their dreams of a higher education. LULAC's goal of

seeing LNEESC increase the access to educational opportunities for Hispanics, as well as others' educationally disadvantaged, was realized.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We are responsible for our present only in part, but we are wholly responsible for the future. We inherit conditions from the past, but we are makers of tomorrow. Our children do not need to go through what we have lived. We must leave them a better world than we received.

Star Castillo, LULAC Editor, 1945

It is estimated that by the year 2000 thirty percent of the U.S. population will be minorities. The new immigrants will come from countries such as China, Mexico, Cuba, Vietnam and Haiti. Marilyn Davis writes about Mexican immigration and migrants:

They begin the process of creating, building, achieving that stability, that provision. In doing so, they pass something, a stake in what they have built on to the next generation. That is what this great trek has always been about.²⁰⁶

While Davis writes about Mexicans in particular, this quote is descriptive of any immigrant group. People come to the United States from all over the world searching for a better way of life, one that they can pass on. If any parent were to be asked what they want most for their children this would undoubtedly be the most common answer.

²⁰⁶Davis, Mexican Voices/American Dreams, 406.

While some Mexicans became American citizens when the U.S. annexed Texas, many still experienced discrimination in housing, jury selection and education. LULAC was founded because of the prejudices that existed in the state of Texas. Initially there were three grass roots organizations: Order Sons of America, Order Knights of America and the League of Latin American Citizens. These organizations were originally founded to combat discrimination in a few towns. The grass roots movement grew to encompass the entire state of Texas and this was when LULAC was born. LULAC would continue to grow throughout the southwest and the United States. Today there are more than 150,000 LULAC members located in every state and reaching as far as Puerto Rico, Mexico, Germany and Okinawa.²⁰⁷

Early in this dissertation, the researcher described Elise Boulding's philosophy of expanding our sense of time and history to understand the present and build for the future. This is not a revolutionary idea. As early as 1917, Dr. Herbert E. Bolton, a historian, was writing about viewing American history, not merely as the history of the thirteen English colonies and the United States, but to cut across national boundaries and take a more global perspective when teaching history.²⁰⁸ Bolton writes that the United States

²⁰⁷"LULAC Profile," LULAC News, March/April, 1994, 5.

²⁰⁸For a sample of some of the essays Dr. Bolton wrote incorporating the idea of expanding our perspective of how to view American history see, Herbert E. Bolton, Wider Horizons

has been shaped and affected by the countries that have touched it throughout its history. If one were to expand this perspective on how one teaches American history, and write more about the contributions countries such as France, Spain, Mexico have made, one would see how much we Americans have in common. The manner in which history is taught is such that it teaches more about the confrontations and differences which have taken place. Yet, the United States and its people are connected with numerous cultures. If history taught us more about how we are alike and emphasized the similarities, rather than the differences, people would feel less threatened by that which is unfamiliar.

In examining the situation of Mexican Americans from this broadened perspective, the new wave of immigrants could benefit from this history. The insights gained from this research on the development of Mexican American migration, settlement and educational patterns, especially the problem areas, can be transferred to other minority groups.

Immigrants will continue to come with their hopes and dreams. They will identify towns and cities where others like themselves have settled and form their own communities, support groups and organizations. Yet, because they will be considered "different" they might still experience discrimination in many facets of life, including education.

When LULAC was founded its major goal was to have Mexican Americans assimilate into the American culture. Mexican Americans yearned to be recognized and accepted. They were considered 'foreigners' and needed to overcome this prejudice. But, because the founders were first generation, they were also raised to value their own culture and language. This became a criticism of the organization. While 'assimilation' and 'maintaining one's culture' were contradictory, assimilation was stressed because it was an important factor if Mexican Americans were to become fully participating citizens in American social, political, economic and educational institutions. Yet there were those who believed that people should not be forced to relinquish their culture and language. Such people view that embracing that which is different enriches and enhances their lives. Carlos Castañeda was such a man. Castañeda was influenced by Bolton's work, and also believed there could be "diversity within unity." He once said that understanding our differences could be achieved through the study of different languages. His use of imagery provides a visual concept of his philosophy: "The man who speaks but one language is like a man that lives in a large house with but one window."²⁰⁹ People who are ethnocentric view bilingual, multicultural/multiethnic programs, as a threat. If we are to prepare for the twenty-first century and beyond, we should see

²⁰⁹Garcia, Mexican Americans, 245.

beyond the differences and realize that we already are a global society.

Educational policy is being formed today and we should not forget that it will have an impact on the future. In 1929, the founders of LULAC realized their actions would affect their children. They recognized this in the LULAC Code: "May your firmest purpose be to aid that each new generation of our people be more apt in youth, let your children be understood." Committees were formed to investigate charges of discrimination and parents were encouraged to participate in PTA activities and their children's schooling. Committees would begin with one council and gradually spread to other councils, again supporting Boulding's view that changes must begin at the grass roots level.

Language became a major educational barrier for Mexican Americans. LULAC fought to end the discrimination, taking school districts to court in Texas and California. As noted earlier, Mexican Americans were not the only group that had problems with the language. In San Francisco, the Chinese population experienced similar problems. As Boulding and Bolton state, we are more alike than we are different. Learning from the past should prepare us for the future experiences new immigrants might encounter, because they too will have similar problems. If we are to learn from history, we can make sure de facto segregation does not occur and that

children are not placed in EMR classes because they do not understand the English language.

People generally viewed Hispanics as being the major beneficiaries of such laws as Title VI and the Bilingual Education Act, yet this too has changed. Some urban school districts have a student population that speak fifty languages. This will raise other dilemmas, similar to what Mexican Americans experienced. Some of the problems that occurred in the past had to do with sufficient funding for bilingual programs. In many instances school districts did not receive the funds needed to institute bilingual programs. Another problem that occurred in the past, and could occur again, is deciding what types of programs will be most beneficial. Historically, the issue was whether to teach some classes in Spanish and others in English; to teach bilingual classes only in kindergarten or through the third grade; or to revise history books to include Mexicans who made a contribution in the U.S.; or to teach about Mexican culture. Today, the issues remain the same, it is only the languages and cultures that have changed.

LULAC proved that changes could be made, if people united and worked for a common cause. When LULAC chose education as a battle to fight, often times it won and in fact made a difference. Yes, some cases were lost, and still others never made it to the courts; and funding for school programs might not have always been received; but an awareness of what

Mexican Americans were experiencing was raised and support was gathered from other organizations, such as the NAACP and government officials. The first year the Little School of 400 opened its doors there were but a few students, but this too grew and eventually Project Head Start became a national program, which still exists today. The Bilingual Education Act was also passed with organizations such as LULAC providing the necessary support. As of 1993 the LULAC National Scholarship Fund has awarded over \$8 million in scholarships to over 12,000 students. LULAC did influence educational programs and educational policies and since the LULAC National Educational Service Centers first opened its doors it has assisted over 140,000 students to realize their dream of a higher education.

LULAC continues to fight battles not only in education, but also in such areas as immigration and health care. Yet now, it seems that LULAC and its membership are not as united or committed as they were in the past. The membership encompasses all Hispanic groups, which has led to dissention within the organization. Rather than uniting there is a constant struggle for power and fragmentation among the councils has occurred.

The founders had foresight and a vision for the organization and most importantly, were deeply committed to the organization and what it stood for. Today, LULAC has moved from assimilation to maintaining its identity. LULAC,

while becoming a powerful voice for the Hispanic community, faces internal problems. The Constitution calls for a Presidential election every year. This means that every year there are a number of people running for office, and more time is spent in politics and trying to get elected or re-elected, than on the issues. The LULAC president is a highly visible figure and, as the years have gone by, LULAC presidents, have tended to view the presidency as an office more for personal gain or a stepping stone for furthering their political careers, rather than as an office from which to take on the causes that need to be fought. One president was impeached for allegedly embezzling funds. Another is currently under indictment by the National Immigration Service.

LNESC has become LULAC's educational platform. Over the years LNESC has gained national recognition and has become its own entity. It is viewed as a major national Hispanic educational organization, but any time anything happens to LULAC, it also happens to LNESC. One LULAC member said that LULAC would always exist because there were dedicated people and as long as there was that brotherhood LULAC would stand.²¹⁰ While this might be so, if LNESC is to maintain its reputation LULAC leaders will have to remember the commitment the original founders made to education, which they say they will carry on.

²¹⁰Margaret Lujan, Interview by researcher, August 22, 1994, Chicago, IL.

Yet, times and people do change and one must not lose sight of what has been accomplished. Acceptance and becoming an equal participant in the social, economic and political structures of the U.S. were major goals for the organization. The early years were a time when Mexican Americans needed to find a way to overcome being viewed as 'foreigners.' Many issues that continue in the present, particularly in the area of education, were there in the past and will continue to be there in the future. History cannot be changed, but we can learn from the past. History has made us what we are today. It is up to us to keep that history alive so that we can make the future a better place for our children. Education will always be the key to a better life. We live in a world filled with diversity - cultural, religious, sexual, political, and the list goes on. But, as Boulding says, we are all one species - humankind. In 1945 there was one LULAC member who had a similar view. Star Castillo wrote:

We belong to mankind. We come and go, but mankind remains. The general trend of progress goes from multiplicity to unity; from plurality of selfish conflicting personal interests to a unity of purpose for the welfare of the collectivity; a unity in which, far from losing his originality, the individual person or nation finds a new source of enrichment.²¹¹

Further Possibility of Research Needs in This Area

While Mexican Americans and Hispanics have made strides in the area of education, several problems still remain that

²¹¹Star Castillo, "Editorial," LULAC News, September 1945, 5.

warrant the need for further research. The issues which remain the most critical are: (1) language and bilingual education; (2) the increasingly high percentage dropout rate for Mexican Americans and Hispanics in general; (3) increasing the representation and retention rate for Hispanics on college campuses; and (4) more recently, how to address the issue of racial conflict on college campuses.

All of these areas of concern are linked, causing a domino effect. Numerous studies have been conducted on how a non-English speaker's native language affects his/her educational attainment. Yet further studies need to be conducted as to what programs work the best and why. One thing remains clear in this area, and that is the success of such programs depends on support from the administration, parents and the quality of teachers.

The experiences children have in elementary school carry on to secondary education, and possibly affecting the drop out rate. The drop out rate in turn affects the numbers of Mexican Americans and Hispanics on college campuses. A high percentage of Mexican Americans that continue their education go on to two year colleges and never receive a bachelors degree. Of those accepted into institutions of higher learning, many do not complete their degrees. While LNECS counsels students and assists them in receiving financial aid, they conduct no studies on the students who drop out of college. The organization gathers its statistics from those

who complete their education and the other students fall through the cracks. This is a critical problem which LNEESC could begin addressing.

After all of these years the issue of racial conflict persists. The question remains on how to deal with the problem. Would beginning to teaching multicultural education in primary school and making it a component of our educational system alleviate the problem? Further studies in this area could assist in answering the question.

While the researcher remains focused on Mexican Americans, all immigrant groups and minorities face similar concerns. Therefore, further research in these areas is warranted, not only for Mexican Americans and Hispanics, but for anyone who is at a disadvantage in receiving a quality education.

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1

ARTICLE II, LULAC CONSTITUTION

1. To develop within the members of our race the best, purest and most perfect type of a true and loyal citizen of the United States of America.
2. To eradicate from our body politic all intents and tendencies to establish discriminations among our fellow-citizens on account of race, religion or social position as being contrary to the true spirit of Democracy, our Constitution and Laws.
3. To use all the legal means at our command to the end that all citizens in our country may enjoy equal rights, the equal protection of the laws of the land and equal opportunities and privileges.
4. The acquisition of the English language, which is the official language of our country being necessary for the enjoyment of our rights and privileges, we declare it to be the official language of this Organization, and we pledge the official language of this Organization, and we pledge ourselves to learn, and speak and teach same to our children.
5. To define with absolute and unmistakable clearness our questionable loyalty to the ideals, principles and citizenship of the United States of America.
6. To assume complete responsibility for the education of our children as to their rights and duties and the language and customs of this country: the latter, in so far as they may be good customs.
7. We solemnly declare once for all to maintain a sincere and respectful reverence for our racial origin of which we are proud.
8. Secretly and openly, by all lawful means at our command, we shall assist in the education and guidance of Latin-Americans and we shall protect and defend their lives and interest whenever necessary.

9. We shall destroy any attempt to create racial prejudices against our people, and any infamous stigma which may be cast upon them, and we shall demand for them the respect and prerogatives which the Constitution grants to us all.
10. Each of us considers himself with equal responsibilities in our organization to which we voluntarily swear subordination and obedience.
11. We shall create a fund for our mutual protection, for the defense of those of us who may be unjustly persecuted and for the education and culture of our people.
12. This Organization is not a political club, but as citizens we shall participate in all local, state and national political contests. However, in doing so we shall ever bear in mind the general welfare of our people, and we disregard and abjure once for all any personal obligation which is not in harmony with these principles.
13. With our vote and influence we shall endeavor to place in public office men who show by their deeds, respect and consideration for our people.
14. We shall select as our leaders those among us who demonstrate, by their integrity and culture, that they are capable of guiding and directing us properly.
15. We shall maintain publicity means for the diffusion of these principles and for the expansion and consolidation of this organization.
16. We shall pay our poll tax as well as that of members of our families in order that we may enjoy our rights fully.
17. We shall diffuse our ideals by means of the press, lectures and pamphlets.
18. We shall oppose any radical and violent demonstration which may tend to create conflicts and disturb the peace and tranquility of our country.
19. We shall have mutual respect for our religions views and we shall never refer to them in our Institutions.
20. We shall encourage the creation of education institutions for Latin-Americans and we shall lend our support to those already in existence.
21. We shall endeavor to secure equal representation for our people in juries and in the administration of

Governmental affairs.

22. We shall denounce every act of peonage and mistreatment as well as the employment of our minor children, of scholastic age.
23. We shall resist and attach energetically all machinations tending to prevent our social and political unification.
24. We shall oppose any tendency to separate our children in the schools of this country.
25. We shall maintain statistics which will guide our people with respect to working and living conditions and agricultural and commercial activities in the various parts of our country.

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2

A SPECIAL NOTE ON SOURCES

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Benites, Joseph

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De Luna, Andres

Garza, Ben

Gonzales, Manuel C.

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