

maintain that there is enough work for these people but that they refuse to work, preferring to live on charity. On the contrary, it is widely felt by the Mexicans that there are more men than there are jobs. . . . The precariousness of the job in the face of so much competition has brought home to the Mexican time and again his absolute weakness as a bargainer for employment. . . .

He has also something to say as to the wage scale. . . . The Mexican . . . recognizes his absolute inability to force his wage upward and by dint of necessity he shuffles along with a standard of living which the American worker regards with contempt and alarm. . . .

The distribution of the labor supply is felt by the Mexican to be inadequate. At present he has to rely mainly on hearsay or on the information of unscrupulous contractors who overcharge him for transportation. . . .

To these three aspects of the question—unemployment, wage scales, and seasonal migration in search of work—should be added . . . the persistence of race prejudice. . . .

. . . The Mexican immigrant still feels the burden of old prejudices. Only when there are threats to limit immigration from Mexico is it that a few in America sing the praises of the peon. . . . At other times the sentiments which seem to be deeply rooted in the American mind are that he is unclean, improvident, indolent, and innately dull. Add to this the suspicion that he constitutes a peril to the American worker's wage scale and you have a situation with which no average Mexican can cope.

I have tried to suggest some of the things which the Mexican would say if he were articulate. If his native reticence could be pierced, I believe these are his opinions on unemployment, wage scales, standard of living, seasonal migrations, and racial prejudices. . . .

First, some order should be brought out of the chaos of the seasonal labor supply, preferably by state initiative. As long as the present haphazard arrangement continues, surplus of laborers will be needed to compensate for the lack of correlation between the supply and the demand for farm workers. Control by private organizations of this phase of the question is subject to too many abuses to be recommended.

Second, a bilateral accord with the Mexican government should be sought to iron out the immigration question. . . .

Third, whenever feasible social service agencies working with Mexican groups should use workers of Mexican extraction to make the firsthand contacts.

Fourth, there should be more real understanding of the adjustment which the Mexican is making to his American environment. . . . Something more should be known also about how the Mexican lives and why before the stigma of a low standard of living is fastened on him.

Last, I would ask for recognition of the Mexican's contribution to the agricultural and industrial expansion of western United States. . . . From Denver to Los Angeles and from the Imperial Valley to Portland, it is said, an empire has been created largely by the brawn of the humble Mexican, who laid the rails and topped the beets and poured the cubic miles of cement. . . . If it is true that the Mexican has brought to you arms that have fastened a civilization on the Pacific slope, then give him his due. If you give him his earned wage and he proves improvident, teach him otherwise; if he is tuberculous, cure him; if he falls into indigence, raise him. He has built you an empire!

5. Merton E. Hill Outlines a Program for Americanizing the Mexicans, 1931

The Problem

One of the most momentous problems confronting the great Southwest today, is the assimilation of the Spanish-speaking peoples that are coming in ever increasing numbers into that land formerly owned by Mexico and since 1848 owned by the United States. The problem of developing, setting up, and carrying out an educational program that will lead ultimately to the "Americanization" of all aliens coming into a typical union high school district [Chaffey Union High School District in San Bernardino County, California], is the subject of this thesis.

Definition

. . . Americanization is hereby defined as the securing through instruction such reactions on the part of non-Americans that they will accept and practice those ideals, customs, methods of living, skills and knowledge that have come to be accepted as representative of the best in American life. . . .

The Program

The program to be presented . . . sets up those activities that will bring about the acceptance by aliens of American ideals, customs, methods of living, skills, and knowledge that will make them Americans in fact. . . .

Historical Beginnings

. . . The problem of Americanization involves not only the adults, but their children; . . . any program neglecting a full consideration of the educational needs of the foreign children is destined to fall short of complete success. . . . These and other problems can be wholly or partially solved; special classrooms adapted to the needs of the foreign element must be provided in the high school plant, in the elementary school buildings, in Mexican camps, and in central buildings within certain camps; a travelling school room on a bus chassis has been provided; teachers must be trained for Americanization work; lessons must be prepared to meet the needs of both children and adults; budgetary provisions must secure sufficient amounts of money; . . . the public must be aroused to a realization of the great and immediate need of making provision for educational, vocational, and sanitation programs that will result in . . . promoting the use of the English language, the right American customs, and the best possible standards of American life. . . .

Merton E. Hill, "The Development of an Americanization Program," *The Survey* 66, no. 3 (May 1931). In Carlos E. Cortes, ed., *Aspects of the Mexican-American Experience* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), pp. 10, 102-111. Reprinted by permission.

Lesson Plans

The educators who are concerned with an Americanization program must set up clearly defined objectives as to what ought to be taught the Mexican. . . . The latter will be required to use the English language. To meet this need language lessons should be developed by teachers and by boards of education to be adaptable to children, to adolescents, and to adults. . . . As the average Mexican adult has had no training in the "home-owning virtues," it will be necessary to develop lessons regarding thrift, saving, and the value of keeping the money in the banks. As the Mexicans show considerable aptitude for hand work of any kind, courses should be developed that will aid them in becoming skilled workers with their hands. Girls should be trained to become domestic servants, and to do various kinds of hand-work for which they can be paid adequately after they leave school.

Teaching Procedures

Such illustrative teaching procedures as the following have been determined by experience and through study of the problem:

1. Teach to all only the fundamental processes in arithmetic. . . .
2. Make use of intensive drill in penmanship. . . . Teach thrift through successive copying of Poor Richard's sayings; teach both men and women to spend less than they earn.
3. Teach reading. Include such things as road signs, railroad signs, and advertisements; the buying and selling language of the stores; our best patriotic utterances. Teach the use of the newspaper, the magazine, and the Americanization text-books.
4. Teach every mother during the pre-natal period the care of babies; the preparation and use of clothing; the selection and preparation of wholesome food. . . .
5. Teach every boy how to make inexpensive furniture for the home. Plans should be drawn for cheap but strong chairs, tables, shelves and cabinets. . . .
6. Girls should be trained to become neat and efficient house servants.
7. The outstanding students, boys and girls alike, should be trained in leadership. . . . All will be trained in voting.
8. Teach boys and girls, men and women how to enjoy wholesome amusements; provide an extensive physical education program that will include health education; train the adolescents of both sexes in self-control. Above all, set up a program such that every Mexican boy and girl . . . and every Mexican adult shall be organized into classes, arranged by groups according to their abilities and needs, and . . . taught and re-taught until they show the required proficiency to meet the ordinary needs of community life.

Organization

In order to secure the objectives enumerated above it will be necessary to organize with the object of putting across the Americanization program. The city board of education and the union high school board, and the county school department should co-operate to develop the program. Under them, the superintendent and the principal should develop a group charged with the duty of putting across the pro-

gram. This should be a department of Americanization with a head, assistant teachers, clerical aid, and an attendance officer. Committees of teachers, elementary, junior high and senior high should be set to work on courses. Community contacts should be made, so that . . . welfare organizations, employers, companies employing large numbers of contract laborers, churches, women's clubs, D.A.R. [Daughters of the American Revolution], and other patriotic organizations, [and] chambers of commerce . . . will be co-operating to insure the success of the Americanization program. . . .

Importance of Co-Operation with the Board of Supervisors

There is a great Americanization work that can be done by the Board of Supervisors. By ordinance they can clean up all the rural Mexican camps; by ordinance they can limit in the camps the number of persons living in single rooms; they can by ordinance require sanitary conditions that will insure a pure water supply and adequate sewage disposal; finally, the Board of Supervisors can establish a Bureau of Placement and Labor Investigation that will perform under the Supervisors' direction the following service:

1. Study labor conditions within the county.
2. Study the labor supply and demand.
3. Maintain monthly correspondence with the supervisors of other counties.
4. Publish monthly statements showing labor needs.
5. Advise restrictions of further influx of laborers when not needed.
6. Establish the closest possible co-operation with the County Department of Education in a continued study of the problems arising from the presence of so large a Mexican population.

A County Supervisor of Mexican Education

There should be established under the direction of the County Superintendent of Schools an assistant County Superintendent of Schools charged with the duty of studying the problems of the education of Mexicans and the supervision of teachers of Mexican children. . . . The Mexican children are not progressing satisfactorily through the schools of the county. To meet this situation a new course of study should be developed for the Mexican pupils. . . . The new course of study should consider only the academic fundamentals of the English language, reading, and the fundamental processes in arithmetic and citizenship. Greater emphasis in the new course of study should be put upon . . . various forms of hand work. . . . Finally, the investigations . . . show the rating of Mexican pupils in eight traits or qualities that make for general success. There should be added thrift to these qualities for it is a well-known fact . . . that the Mexican laborers are not possessed of thrift. . . .

A Program of Adult Education

Finally, there should be established in the county . . . an intensive program of adult education. Funds should be provided . . . to teach every Mexican the English language, to teach every mother the care of infants, cleanliness, house sanitation, and

economical house management including lessons in sewing, cooking, and thrift. The men should be trained in thrift, in gardening, and in the principles of the American government. In order to bring all the Mexican groups up to a higher level, parents and other adults must be taught as well as their children. . . . Class instruction . . . must exist for everyone; none should be allowed to escape the educational campaign.

Equipment

. . . There has been established [in the school district] a new department to be known as the Department of Mexican Education. . . . The purpose of this department is to make a scientific study of the Mexican. This study should trace the ethnological evolution of the modern Mexican; it should involve a study of the history of the Mexican people. . . . The Department of Mexican Education should make a further study of the temperament of the race for this should be thoroughly understood in dealing with the people. There should be studied most carefully those qualities and abilities that are recognized as peculiar to the Mexican people. . . . Their capacities to perform different types of service should be set forth that their employers may utilize them to the best interests of both employer and employed. . . .

. . . Learning needful lessons by the Mexican learner is the goal.

In communities where there is sufficient Mexican population . . . there should be developed industrial high schools for Mexican pupils and for Mexican adults. . . .

This school will mark the culmination of educational effort for Mexican advancement in the Chaffey district. The school will be located on a ten-acre campus. . . . There will be home-making and citizenship rooms provided for adults of the Mexican race. These rooms will be comfortably but simply equipped for social as well as instructional use, the ideal being the evolution eventuating in the Americanization Mexican.

6. Elisa Silva Describes Mexican Immigrant Life in Los Angeles, 1920s

My father died. Then my mother, my two sisters and I decided to come to the United States. As we had been told that there were good opportunities for earning money in Los Angeles, working as extras in the movies and in other ways, we sold our belongings and with the little which our father had left us we came to this place. . . . From the time we entered I noticed a change in everything, in customs, and so forth. . . . When we got to Los Angeles we rented a furnished apartment. . . . My sisters and I decided to look for work at once. One of my sisters

"Elisa Silva," in Manuel Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant*, 1971, pp. 159-161. Reprinted by permission of Dover Publications, Inc.

. . . found work at once in the house of a Mexican woman doing sewing. My mother then decided . . . that I should also work in order to help out with the household expenses. . . . I found it hard to find work, much as I looked. As we had to earn something, a girl friend of mine, . . . from Sonora, [Mexico,] advised me to go to a dance-hall. After consulting with my mother and my sisters I decided to come and work here every night dancing. My work consists of dancing as much as I can with everyone who comes. At the beginning I didn't like this work because I had to dance with anyone, but I have finally gotten used to it and now I don't care, because I do it in order to earn my living. Generally I manage to make from \$20.00 to \$30.00 a week, for we get half of what is charged for each dance. Each dance is worth ten cents so that if I dance, for example, fifty dances in a night I earn \$2.50. Since the dances are short, ten cents being charged for just going around the ball-room, one can dance as many as a hundred. It all depends on how many men come who want to dance. Besides there are some who will give you a present of a dollar or two. This work is what suits me best for I don't need to know any English here. . . . At times I get a desire to look for another job, because I get very tired. One has to come at 7.30 in the evening and one goes at 12.30, and sometimes at 1 in the morning. One leaves almost dead on Saturdays because many Mexican people come from the nearby towns and they dance and dance with one all night. In Mexico this work might perhaps not be considered respectable, but I don't lose anything here by doing it. It is true that some men at times make propositions to me which are insulting, but everything is fixed by just telling them no. If they insist one can have them taken out of the hall by the police.

ESSAYS

The demand for labor during and after World War I, combined with the passage of immigration laws that stopped the flow of European labor and favored the Mexicans, facilitated Mexican migration to the Midwest. This was a process based on family and kinship networks. Zaragoza Vargas, an associate professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, writes in the first essay that the expanding production of beet sugar in the Great Lakes region would extend Mexican migratory work patterns to the north. Repair and maintenance work for eastern railroads, along with jobs in meatpacking houses, steel mills, and automobile companies, brought thousands of Mexicans to the industrial heartland of the Midwest during the 1920s.

During this period, urbanization had a great impact on Mexican immigrants, who assimilated to American culture in varying degrees. Material acculturation among young Mexican American women, who were particularly influenced by the material culture that surrounded them, is the subject of the essay by Vicki L. Ruiz, professor of history at Arizona State University, Tempe. She notes that not only was this aspect of Americanization never fully achieved, but Mexican identity was never completely undermined by the material acculturation that did occur because the Mexican values of the immigrants remained dominant. Pageants, festivals, and music that dramatized their Mexican heritage further reinforced the immigrants' culture.