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The Independiente "Mexican School": Pedagogies of Race, Place, and Citizenship in Riverside, Ca., 1918-1933

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
RIVERSIDE

The Independiente “Mexican School”: Race, Place, and Citizenship  
in Riverside, Ca., 1915-1933

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

by

Steven Moreno-Terrill

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2019

The Thesis of Steven Moreno-Terrill is approved:

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## **Introduction**

On March 10, 1933, the *Riverside Daily Press* thought it necessary to provide a brief history of the Independiente School in the Arlington section of town in order to distinguish it from the Casa Blanca School in a neighboring Mexican citrus labor community. The public had apparently been confusing the two schools, no doubt due to them both being commonly described as the “Mexican school” in Riverside. The article recounts the origin of the little-known segregated Independiente School for Mexicans which was created to relieve the congested conditions at the predominantly white Liberty School in the community of Arlington as well as to provide Mexican children with special attention suited to their needs. These needs were determined by the dominant white community without input by the Mexican parents. Ironically, the name “Independiente,” the Spanish word for independent or stand-alone, was reportedly coined by the parents of Arlington’s Mexican youth to connote a school that was specifically for their community.

When it opened in 1924, the Independiente School began with grades one through four. Fifth grade instruction was added in 1925, with kindergarten and sixth added in 1926. Replacing the initial two portables, a building from the Palm School was later moved to the site to accommodate the growing student population, which consisted of mostly Mexican children. Mae Stewart became principal in 1928 after the first principal,

Ms. Lou Jennings, was married. The school also featured a homemaking department for the Mexican girls under the direction of Mrs. R.E. Dyer.<sup>1</sup>

What the article fails to mention in its account of the school's creation is how the white parents of the Liberty School Parent Teacher Association petitioned the Riverside School Board to create a school near the Mexican community to effectively segregate them from their children. Though the segregation of Mexicans was illegal in California schools at the time, the justification of Americanization was deployed in the same way it had been for the existing segregated schools in the Casa Blanca and Eastside neighborhoods, which were primarily Mexican labor communities interspersed with some African American and Japanese families. In this way, segregating the Mexican children of Arlington in a separate school was seen as business as usual for the Anglo/European American population of Riverside. However, what made the case of Independiente unique was the fact that it was specifically created as an explicitly "Mexican school" to remove Mexican students from the Liberty School and enforce Riverside's racial boundaries by relegating Arlington's Mexican population to nonwhite spaces.

The following study will investigate the ways that race, place, and citizenship were articulated and intertwined in the case of the Independiente School in Riverside, California by examining the circumstances and processes involved in its formation as well as the system of knowledge and pedagogical practices that informed its function. The period of focus will span from 1918, when the Liberty School was built and

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<sup>1</sup> "Independiente School's History Sketched; Given Name by Mexicans." *Riverside Daily Press*, March 10, 1933.

Americanization efforts ramped up, to 1933 when these efforts waned amidst the Great Depression and the deployment of the repatriation campaign for Mexicans in the region.

The history of the Independiente School is a robust exemplar of the process of racialization of Mexicans and Mexican American in early twentieth century Riverside. The establishment of the school was ultimately part of the process of developing the city's white spatial imaginary as well as a reproducible low-wage labor force, primarily in the citrus industry.<sup>2</sup> Through various institutional and public practices associated with Americanization, an Anglo-centric racial order was spatialized in Riverside in order to secure the relationship between whiteness, place, and capital.

As was the case for other communities of color in the city's history such as Native Americans, Asian Americans (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean), and African Americans, Mexican Americans were economically relied upon for their labor in the citrus industry while simultaneously portrayed as a social problem. In order to address its growing Mexican population, Riverside, like cities throughout the Southwest, utilized education as an apparatus of containment and subtractive Americanization.<sup>3</sup> The "Mexican Problem," as the increasing presence of Mexicans and Mexican Americans was commonly referred to in the first 30 years of the twentieth century, especially during times of economic hardship, was a discursive framework which positioned this

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<sup>2</sup> Lipsitz, George. *How racism takes place*. Temple University Press, 2011.; Gonzalez, Gilbert G. *Labor and community: Mexican citrus worker villages in a Southern California county, 1900-1950*. Vol. 42. University of Illinois Press, 1994.

<sup>3</sup> Torres-Rouff, David. "Becoming Mexican: Segregated Schools and Social Scientists in Southern California, 1913—1946." *South Calif Quart* 94, no. 1 (2012): 91-127.; Miguel, Jr, Guadalupe San, and Richard Valencia. "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The educational plight and struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest." *Harvard Educational Review* 68, no. 3 (1998): 353-413. [Define "subtractive Americanization."]



population as inferior, criminal, hypersexual, lazy, violent, feeble-minded, and a myriad of other stereotypes aimed at racial othering. This deficit discourse deployed both biological and cultural rationales for marginalizing Mexican populations. It was a racist discourse that functioned to subordinate those of Mexican descent, exalt and mobilize Anglo/Euro Americans, and justify racist practices under the guise of benevolence. The solution most often implemented was physical segregation and Americanization carried out by schools, churches, and social service agencies. Americanization programs focused primarily on teaching English, hygiene, and American values so as to transform the so-called “backward Mexicans” into civilized people. However, they would never be seen fully as Americans regardless of how successful these assimilatory efforts were because they were not white.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Gonzalez, Gilbert G. "The "Mexican Problem": Empire, Public Policy, and the Education of Mexican Immigrants, 1880-1930." *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 26, no. 2 (2001): 199-207.; Torres-Rouff, David. "Becoming Mexican: Segregated Schools and Social Scientists in Southern California, 1913—1946." *South Calif Quart* 94, no. 1 (2012): 91-127.; Miguel, Jr, Guadalupe San, and Richard Valencia. "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The educational plight and struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest." *Harvard Educational Review* 68, no. 3 (1998): 353-413.

## Chapter 1

From 1900-1930, Riverside's communities of Mexican descent demonstrated the typical Southwest, *colonia*-style settlement patterns near agricultural production and processing plants as well as near railroad tracks in the city. Riverside's population of Mexican and Mexican Americans, like the rest of Southern California, and throughout the Southwest, started to grow during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), which sent many Mexicans fleeing for their lives and livelihoods in order to escape the violence and resulting economic depression.<sup>5</sup> During this period, Riverside's citrus industry was steadily growing, providing opportunities for work and a more secure, though segregated, existence for Mexican immigrants and the subsequent generations of Mexican Americans.

There were three distinct areas in the city where stable Mexican communities, comprised mostly of citrus laborers and their families, developed in Riverside. These consisted of Arlington, Eastside, Casa Blanca. They all had one thing in common: they were just east of the railroad tracks and west of the citrus groves. Spatially, they were peripheral to the city's center. The Eastside was the closest to downtown and the most diverse, with a considerable mix of Mexican American, Asian American, and African American households. Casa Blanca developed as a mostly Mexican American

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<sup>5</sup> Gonzalez, Gilbert G. *Labor and community: Mexican citrus worker villages in a Southern California county, 1900-1950*. Vol. 42. University of Illinois Press, 1994.; Hendrick, Irving G. "The Development of a School Integration Plan in Riverside, California: A History and Perspective." (1968).; Guerin-Gonzales, Camille. *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939*. Rutgers University Press, 1994.; Camarillo, Albert. *Chicanos in California: a history of Mexican Americans in California*. Boyd & Fraser Publishing Company, 1984.; Patterson, Tom, and Thomas W. Patterson. *A Colony for California: Riverside's First Hundred Years*. Press-Enterprise Company, 1971.

neighborhood with some African American and Asian American households. Arlington, with the smallest population of all three, was where the Mexican citrus workers of Arlington settled amidst a few Asian families. Anglo/Euro Americans, though present, were few and far between in these minoritized spaces.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the 1920s in California, school segregation for students of Mexican descent proliferated and became the norm. These separate and substandard facilities were referred to colloquially as “Mexican schools.” Segregated schooling was mainly practiced in the primary grades due to the view that young Mexicans and Mexican Americans would be successfully “Americanized” and mainstreamed into secondary schools. By 1928, 64 Southern California schools maintained 90 to 100 percent Mexican and Mexican American enrollment. The reality was that very few students of Mexican schools continued on to secondary school.<sup>7</sup> With a focus on hygiene, assimilation, manual arts, and language acquisition, “Mexican schools,” as they were known, were not designed to promote academic attainment or social mobility. Instead, they functioned mostly to contain Mexican Americans and reproduce a low-wage labor force.<sup>8</sup>

As was the case throughout the Southwest, segregated Mexican schools in Riverside were largely the product of local policies and practices rather than state or federally initiated sites on explicit the basis of race. After 1880, California law prohibited

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<sup>6</sup> Garcia, Matt. *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970*. UNC Press Books, 2010.; Patterson, Tom, and Thomas W. Patterson. *A Colony for California: Riverside's First Hundred Years*. Press-Enterprise Company, 1971.; Hendrick, Irving G. "The Development of a School Integration Plan in Riverside, California: A History and Perspective." (1968).

<sup>7</sup> Wollenberg, Charles. *All deliberate speed: Segregation and exclusion in California schools, 1855-1975*. Univ of California Press, 1978.

<sup>8</sup> Gonzalez, G. "Chicano education in the segregation era: 1915-1945." *Philadelphia: The Balch Institute* (1990).

racial segregation. Legally, according to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), Mexican Americans were considered white. This enabled segregation to be justified on the basis of special needs. These segregated schools were, as Torres-Rouff terms it, “rhizomatic” accomplishments initiated and secured by local actors such as white parents, school board members, administrators, scholars, and teachers. It is important to note that when Mexican schools were created, white schools were also secured as a spatial accomplishment.

Though advocates of segregation in Riverside rarely expressed overt racial animus or white supremacist intentions as the justification, a more mundane form of racism persisted.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the segregation of Mexican Americans was considered *de facto* in that racial/racist reasoning was not explicit, though some have argued otherwise presenting the case that Mexican schools were in fact products of *de jure* segregation. In fact, Donato and Hanson argue that

“when government action results in the segregation of students based on race – regardless of whether that policy is a law mandating segregation at the state level or a decision by local school officials that facilitates racial segregation....*de jure* segregation occurs whether or not the rationale is explicitly racial.”<sup>10</sup>

As such, the creation of neighborhood schools in areas such as those in Arlington, Casa Blanca, and Eastside, which were already racially segregated by way of exclusionary housing policies and segmented labor practices, constituted *de jure* segregation even

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<sup>9</sup> García, David, Tara Yosso, and Frank Barajas. ““A Few of the Brightest, Cleanest Mexican Children”: School Segregation as a Form of Mundane Racism in Oxnard, California, 1900–1940.” *Harvard Educational Review* 82, no. 1 (2012): 1-25.

<sup>10</sup> Donato, Rubén, and Jarrod Hanson. “Legally white, socially “Mexican”: The politics of *de jure* and *de facto* school segregation in the American Southwest.” *Harvard Educational Review* 82, no. 2 (2012): 202-225.

though the espoused basis for separate and substandard facilities, which was often the case, were linguistic or cultural reasons rather than biological.

According to Torres-Rouff, the outcome was racialization through education in that the separate schools signified racial inferiority, second-class citizenship, as well as a rationale for the very practice of segregation.<sup>11</sup> Even though Mexicans were legally white, which ironically enabled segregation, the schools functioned both as signifiers of race and as sites of racialization through separate and unequal facilities, pedagogies, and curriculum. Ultimately, all this functioned to secure the racial capital of whiteness located in the superior school facilities and the centrality of city spaces unofficially designated as white.<sup>12</sup> Access to and identification with these resources and spaces signified a type of citizenship centered around whiteness.

For each segregated school in Riverside, there was a corresponding white school. Irving's (Eastside) was the Lowell school, Casa Blanca's was Palm, and Liberty was Independiente's. Lowell was built less than two miles away in 1911 at the behest of white parents when Irving's population of African American and Mexican American pupils grew too numerous for their tastes. Near Casa Blanca, the Palm School was maintained white primarily through rigid district boundary lines. In Arlington, the Liberty School P.T.A. mothers requested segregation to supposedly relieve overcrowding resulting in the construction of the Independiente School, the only intentionally created Mexican school of the three. Irving and Casa Blanca had slightly mixed enrollment, though Mexican

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<sup>11</sup> Torres-Rouff, David. "Becoming Mexican: Segregated Schools and Social Scientists in Southern California, 1913—1946." *South Calif Quart* 94, no. 1 (2012): 91-127.

<sup>12</sup> Harris, Cheryl I. "Whiteness as property." *Harvard law review* (1993): 1707-1791.

Americans were the majority. In all cases, with the complicity of superintendent, Arthur Wheelock, district boundary lines were drawn and consistently adjusted to maintain segregation. This functioned to preserve superior educational spaces for whites while relegating the Mexican American population to marginal spaces with substandard resources.<sup>13</sup>

As early as 1921, the desire to segregate the Mexican students at Liberty was expressed by the white community of the Arlington area. That year, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce put forth a motion at their monthly meeting to petition the school board to segregate the Mexican students from the white children. Chamber member, Jesse Wells, proposed the motion for Mexican children to be segregated in the early grades. During that same meeting, Professor Paul of Polytechnic High School spoke of an “enlarged program” of education for the city.<sup>14</sup> While the expansion of education was being envisioned for the dominant population of the city, it was further being constrained for the Mexicans of Arlington.

The overall population of the city, and consequently the schools, was increasing during this time. The combination of the Mexican Revolution and continued instability in Mexico with the growing citrus industry in the city, as well as the region, produced a push-pull dynamic that led to increased Mexican immigration. In line with the dominant

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<sup>13</sup> Patterson, Tom, and Thomas W. Patterson. *A Colony for California: Riverside's First Hundred Years*. Press-Enterprise Company, 1971.; Hendrick, Irving G. "The Development of a School Integration Plan in Riverside, California: A History and Perspective." (1968).; Torres-Rouff, David. "Becoming Mexican: Segregated Schools and Social Scientists in Southern California, 1913—1946." *South Calif Quart* 94, no. 1 (2012): 91-127.

<sup>14</sup> “Education was Chamber Talk.” *Riverside Daily Press*, May 5, 1921.

racial ideologies and spatial imaginaries of the time, this influx was viewed as a problem by the Anglo/European majority, though it would not manifest in explicitly racist terms.

In 1922, a school bond statement released by the School Board for publication in the *Riverside Daily Press* took up the issue of the increasing population and majority enrollment of Mexican students at the Irving and Casa Blanca Schools as a problem pressing for a solution. The increase in enrollment at these schools outpaced the predominately white schools in the district growing from a total of 286 in 1914 to 669 in 1922. The Board further articulated its view of the situation:

“The problem of the relation of the foreigner to our form of government and institutions will be solved largely through the sort of education we give to the children of the foreigner. It can be effective education on only when the environment and conditions are favorable. Fifty children, many of whom have little, or no, knowledge of spoken English, in one room with one teacher is not a favorable condition. Twenty-five should be the maximum for one teacher and that is why the need for at least four additional rooms at Irving and the same number at Casa Blanca is imperative We have these foreign children with us. It is our duty not only to them but to the country to use every effort to develop these potential citizens into good citizens – good Americans.”<sup>15</sup>

This seemingly positive sentiment and concern for the Mexicans set the stage for the further expansion of the existing segregated Casa Blanca and Irving Schools, as well as laid the groundwork for establishing a new school specifically for the Mexican children of Arlington who were attending Liberty.

As the Mexican enrollment of the Liberty School continued to grow, swelling the school population to over 400, and making it among the elementary schools in the district with the highest number of students, the white parents and teachers became increasingly

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<sup>15</sup> “School Bond Statement.” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 21, 1922.

concerned. Moreover, many of the Mexican children did not speak English posing a curricular and pedagogical problem for the school. Among the many possible solutions such as adding to the existing facilities or building another school for all the students, the solution for the parents of the Liberty School P.T.A. was clear. In July of 1922, representatives of the P.T.A. submitted a petition to the school board “praying for the erection of a school building near the Mexican quarters to relieve the congested conditions of Liberty.”<sup>16</sup> Without much debate as to the appropriateness of the proposed solution, and given that segregation was already the norm for the Mexican communities of Casa Blanca and the Eastside, the board obliged the P.T.A. delegation from Liberty and began the process of securing an appropriate site.<sup>17</sup>

As per the request of the white parents, the school was to be built near the Mexican community of Arlington which was situated near the citrus groves and the railroad tracks in the periphery of the downtown core. This was the common residential pattern for communities of color in the city, especially for the Mexicans and Mexican Americans of Arlington who lived in labor camps and modest housing. The board secured the 3-acre site on Indiana Avenue and Gibson Street through the Arlington Realty Company, on what was formerly the J.A. Logan property. The existing dwelling was adapted and additional structures added to accommodate school instruction.<sup>18</sup> There is no mention in the school board minutes of any consultation with the Mexican parents of the students who were to be transferred to the new school. This was characteristic of

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<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the School Board of Education of the Riverside City School District, July 10, 1922.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., January 17, 1923.; February 12, 1923.

<sup>18</sup> “Obtain School For Mexican Children.” *Riverside Daily Press*, October 13, 1924.



what Garcia, Yosso, and Barajas describe through a similar case in Oxnard as “swift accommodation of white parents’ demands for segregation.”<sup>19</sup>

The “diligent” efforts of the Parent Teachers Association in securing a separate school for the Mexican students of Liberty were touted as a success. Their petition was described as being received with “great satisfaction” by the school board.<sup>20</sup> Segregation resulted in two rooms at Liberty becoming vacant which indicates that the Mexican students were already segregated within the school. The plan was for Superintendent Wheelock to hire new teachers for those now vacant rooms so that the white students could be placed in smaller classes. Thus, the displacement of Mexican students resecured optimal resources and conditions for the white students of Liberty.

Consequently, 75 Mexican students were transferred to the newly established Mexican school under the auspices of Superintendent, Arthur Wheelock on December 8, 1924. The yet to be named school began under the leadership of Principal Mrs. Lou Paxson Jennings with three rooms for the instruction of grades one through four. Two teachers were transferred from Liberty, Ruth Schroff and Mrs. Jennings. A Mrs. Jessie Morris was also hired to teach at the school.<sup>21</sup> The following year, the Liberty School registered a decline from 454 in 1925 to 375 in 1926 due to the transfer of Mexican students to Independiente.<sup>22</sup> Though viewed as a success for the white families of

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<sup>19</sup> García, David, Tara Yosso, and Frank Barajas. ““A Few of the Brightest, Cleanest Mexican Children”:  
School Segregation as a Form of Mundane Racism in Oxnard, California, 1900–1940.” *Harvard  
Educational Review* 82, no. 1 (2012): 1-25.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> “Arlington School is Given Relief.” *Riverside Daily Press*, December 9, 1924.

<sup>22</sup> Green, Earle Milton. 1932. *A survey of the elementary school building needs in the Riverside Elementary  
School District*. M.A. Thesis. University of Southern California.

Liberty, Wheelock was careful to state that: “The move is not made to segregate the Mexican children from the others, but it is made to relieve a badly congested condition in the Liberty school.”<sup>23</sup> After all, it was not legally permissible to segregate Mexican children on the basis of race in California. It was, nonetheless, an example of what Garcia and Yosso define as “mundane racism” in which the “systematic subordination of Mexicans, which occurred as a commonplace, ordinary way of conducting business within and beyond schools.”<sup>24</sup>

The district boundaries for school attendance zones had significant overlap in the areas of the city with significant populations of communities of color. This overlap, as indicated in a 1932 thesis by Earle Milton Green that surveyed the buildings of the Riverside School District, was justified due to widely accepted rationales for segregation on the basis of language and special instruction. Green specifies that Independiente had no official definitive boundaries and was primarily a school that was created within the Liberty School zone for the children of the Mexican citrus laborers in Arlington. He made note of the “violent fluctuations” in school attendance at the schools with primarily Mexican students as a justification. Of course, this stemmed from these families’ work and migration patterns due to seasonal harvest work in citrus and other agricultural

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<sup>23</sup> “May Occupy New School November 24.” *Riverside Daily Press*, November 18, 1924.

<sup>24</sup> Garcia, David G., and Tara J. Yosso. ““Strictly in the Capacity of Servant”: The Interconnection Between Residential and School Segregation in Oxnard, California, 1934–1954.” *History of Education Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2013): 64-89.

industries.<sup>25</sup> The attendance at the beginning of the school year would gradually increase. Enrollment numbers were usually larger at the end of the year.

Sufficed to say, the overlapping boundaries were demonstrative of what Chicana/o historians Martha Menchaca and Richard Valencia illustrate as the intensified segregation that results as a response by white communities to an increasing Mexican population. Through their historical case study of a similar citrus community in Santa Paula, California during the same period, they show the boundary work that the dominant Anglo/European community members engaged in through zoning practices and the construction of alternate school facilities to maintain white spaces and ethnoracial separation.<sup>26</sup> This was also the case in the neighboring San Bernardino region where educational leader and Americanization specialist, Grace Stanley, illuminates the sentiments behind this phenomenon in the 1920s: “One of the first demands made from a community in which there is a large Mexican population is for a separate school. The reasons advanced for this demand are generally from a selfish viewpoint of the English-speaking public and are based largely on the theory that the Mexican is a menace to the health and morals of the rest of the community.”<sup>27</sup>

The structural features of the school were aligned with the prevailing views of Mexicans at the time – that they were unsanitary. Independiente, as with Irving and Casa

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<sup>25</sup> Green, Earle Milton. 1932. *A survey of the elementary school building needs in the Riverside Elementary School District*. M.A. Thesis. University of Southern California.

<sup>26</sup> Menchaca, Martha, and Richard R. Valencia. "Anglo-Saxon Ideologies in the 1920s-1930s: Their Impact on the Segregation of Mexican Students in California." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (1990): 222-249.

<sup>27</sup> As cited in Wollenberg, Charles. "Mendez v. Westminster: Race, nationality and segregation in California schools." *California Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1974): 317-332.

Blanca, was unique in the district in that it possessed bathing facilities. No other schools featured this. Green notes that these facilities had a high frequency of use indicating that the children of these schools would regularly bath on site. Being that hygiene was a commonly stressed part of the curriculum for Mexican students, this is not surprising.<sup>28</sup> But it was also aligned with California Commission of Immigration and Housing (CCIH) agent, Leo Mott's, 1924 survey of the neighboring Casa Blanca community where he rated the majority of the 181 homes visited as "very bad" and disease-prone.<sup>29</sup> The emergence of the Independiente with its specialized facilities coincided with "community cleanups" being undertaken under the auspices of the CCIH and local service groups in the city.

Though the particular considerations for cleanliness were built into the school itself, this did not mitigate the overall substandard conditions of Independiente. Milton Green's research included the evaluation of district facilities with a particular focus on elementary schools. Through his comprehensive analysis, the bathroom facilities at Independiente as well as Irving were evaluated as being inadequate and difficult to keep sanitary due to their wooden floors and walls as well as insufficient lighting. These facilities were located outside of the school in a separate building in contrast to other schools in the district at the time. He stated that the size of the restroom was insufficient

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>29</sup> Garcia, Matt. *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970*. UNC Press Books, 2010.

as well. The windows of Independiente were also rated as the poorest in the district. This was due to the fact that the original structure was a converted house.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to substandard facilities, the absence of common school fixtures for the time was indicative of the way segregated schools in the district were designed and the level of investment the district was willing to make for these students and their families. Independiente was one of two schools in the district without an auditorium. Irving was the other. Casa Blanca's auditorium was rated as unsatisfactory by Green because it doubled as two classrooms via a room divider. None of these three schools possessed libraries. Green notes that the existing libraries at other school sites were often inadequate, however. Consistent again with the prevailing pedagogical views toward Mexican children, Independiente and Casa Blanca were the only schools with facilities for manual arts at the time illustrating how racialized curriculum manifest structurally.<sup>31</sup>

Ultimately, the conditions of the Independiente School were determined by Green to be altogether substandard and inadequate using a systematic method of analysis. He utilized the Strayer-Englehardt scorecard to evaluate the various features and facilities of schools in the district. Each school would receive a numerical score based on combined tallies of the various evaluative criteria within the schema. Not surprisingly, Independiente received a low score according to Green's evaluation utilizing this measure.<sup>32</sup> These conditions were consistent with the general findings regarding the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>31</sup> Green, Earle Milton. 1932. *A survey of the elementary school building needs in the Riverside Elementary School District*. M.A. Thesis. University of Southern California.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

quality of segregated schools articulated by historians of education, Guadalupe San Miguel and Richard Valencia: “In relation to Anglo schools, Mexican schools were older, their school equipment was generally less adequate, per pupil expenditures were generally lower, and the staff were less appropriately trained, qualified and experienced.”<sup>33</sup>

Justifications and careful framings of segregated schools once they were established were often deployed publicly. *The Daily Press* reprinted an editorial from the *Santa Ana Register* that took up the issue of the segregation of Mexican students. It extolled the benefits of segregating the students in terms of their development and denied the charges of unfairness. The editorial was in response to critique by Benito Garcia, head of the Friendly Center which conducted Americanization work in Santa Ana. Garcia promoted the integration of students as the ideal pedagogical strategy. A counterargument justifying segregation was presented highlighting the ways that it was best for Mexican and White students. The author asserted that integrated instruction held both groups back. The “backwardness” of Mexican students inhibited the progress of American children and they did not learn English efficiently. The segregated school allowed Mexican students “freedom of thought and action” through specially trained teachers where they could quickly learn English and then be mainstreamed with White students, as the editorial suggests.<sup>34</sup> Grace Stanley of San Bernardino went as far as to say in 1920 that

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<sup>33</sup> Miguel, Jr, Guadalupe San, and Richard Valencia. "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The educational plight and struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest." *Harvard Educational Review* 68, no. 3 (1998): 353-413.

<sup>34</sup> “Segregation Working Well.” *Riverside Daily Press*, November 8, 1926.

Mexican students found happiness in segregated facilities by “throwing off the repression that held them down when they were in school with the other children.”<sup>35</sup>

Policies surrounding the legality of segregating Mexicans were also topics for public concern. A ruling by the Attorney General prohibiting the segregation of Mexican students on the basis of race was the subject of an editorial by the *Daily Press* that rejoiced in the fact that local Mexican schools would not be affected. The rationale for these schools, as presented in the editorial, is that they exist due to them being located in primarily Mexican communities. This allows for the schools to deliver a specialized program of instruction deemed beneficial to Mexican children. It states that the Mexican parents do not take issue with these schools and in fact appreciate them. Charges of racial discrimination are denied and segregation is presented as a mere pedagogical strategy. It goes on to describe how Mexican pupils go on to high school where there is no discrimination. It also argues that integration with White students handicaps and discourages Mexican children. Finally, the editorial confuses the Casa Blanca School with the neighboring Independiente School in Arlington.<sup>36</sup> What is not accounted for in this view is that housing segregation through restrictive covenants and other discriminatory practices are often the prime factors.

Local officials made it a point to reaffirm that the Mexican school in Arlington was legally permissible. Citing the recent ruling of Attorney General Webb that boards of education cannot legally segregate Mexican students based on race, School Board

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<sup>35</sup> As cited in Wollenberg, Charles. "Mendez v. Westminster: Race, nationality and segregation in California schools." *California Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1974): 317-332.

<sup>36</sup> "Problem of Mexican Children." *Riverside Daily Press*, October 11, 1929.

President, A.S. Cooper, and City Superintendent, Ira Landis indicated that the Independiente school “was not established for Mexicans alone” and that school zoning determined where students went. It was asserted that any American (White) children who lived in the Independiente zone would have to attend that school.<sup>37</sup> Of course, they never did.

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<sup>37</sup> “No Mexican Schools in Riverside City.” *Riverside Daily Press*, October 8, 1929.



## Chapter 2

In terms of what transpired within the schools as well as through public pedagogies, professional training in, and knowledge of, Americanization methods became an integral component to the ways in which Riverside approached its Mexican population. Educators, members of service organizations, church officials, and others interested in efforts to Americanize Riverside's Mexicans would attend talks, conferences, and institutes geared toward addressing the perceived issues concerning the Mexican population. The events would be held at conference halls, club meetings, churches, and schools. The issues and prescriptions outlined in these proliferating informational activities were often consistent with the dominant "Mexican problem" discourse of the period that posed Mexicans as backward, illiterate, unhygienic, and more manually inclined. The virtues of (white) American culture would be presented as the solution to the perceived affliction of Mexicanness. Though this may have been implicit, softer approaches to the work were espoused in Riverside. There is evidence that pluralist approaches to Americanization were utilized at Independiente through the ways various actors promoted American values while making gestures to honor Mexican culture in the city.

For instance, at a Y.W.C.A. education conference held at the Mission Inn in 1918, among the many speakers, longtime settlement house worker from Chicago Mary McDowell suggested that Americanization work required more than language instruction. In the interest of preserving community morale, she proposed taking a humble approach and reminded the audience of over 500: "Do not forget that the little Jap and Mexican

baby born in this country of foreign parents is an American citizen.” Mindful of their role as agricultural laborers, McDowell also warned that deporting Mexicans would deal a severe blow to industry.<sup>38</sup>

Mexicans were recognized as not only vital to labor, but to patriotic causes as well. Consequently, Americanization efforts also aligned with the War effort during World War I. Governor of the time William Stephens, in a letter to war relief councils throughout the state, promoted an educational campaign for the Americanization of foreign populations. The Riverside war relief council recommended that the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) organization be charged with the task of organizing a speakers’ bureau to educate local Mexican communities about the virtues of American values and the war effort.<sup>39</sup>

What was being protected through the war effort was articulated by another state official, Ethel Richardson, Superintendent of Education within the Immigration Bureau, when she spoke to the City Home League about the most effective practices of Americanizing Mexicans. Richardson asserted: “Our task is to preserve the fine things and ideals for which democracy stands, and to give them to the foreigners.” The way to achieve this, according to Richardson, was through the schools. She indicated that Mexican children would communicate the lessons of Americanization to their parents who would then seek instruction through night school. Richardson also spoke of her successful outreach experience teaching English through sewing instruction to the

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<sup>38</sup> “Great Audience Thrills Over Stories of Y.W.C.A. War Work.” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 25, 1918.

<sup>39</sup> “Credentials Urged in War Relief Giving.” *Riverside Daily Press*, February 20, 1918.

Mexican women of the Los Angeles railroad camps. This mitigated their perceived resistance to direct English-language instruction.<sup>40</sup> She would give similar talks to different service groups throughout the region as well as conduct assessments of local Mexican communities.<sup>41</sup>

At the local level, school officials would also visit sites where model Americanization work was being conducted to observe and learn what were considered best practices. Riverside County Superintendent of Education, Raymond Cree, reported on the progress of Ada Huston, teacher in charge of “turning illiterate little Mexicans into bright and wide-awake young Americans” at the Prado School adjacent to Corona. State Commissioner of Education and former San Bernardino Superintendent of Schools Grace Stanley, along with Ida Collins, presiding San Bernardino Superintendent, observed the special curricular and pedagogical efforts of the Mexican schools in Riverside, Arlington, and Corona. Stanley and Collins reported pleasing results.<sup>42</sup>

Beyond those who worked implementing the curriculum and programs, meetings would also be conducted in Spanish for the Mexicans of Riverside extolling the importance of Americanization. A great number of residents from Casa Blanca attended a patriotic talk by Dr. J. Zeigner Uriburu hosted by the D.A.R. at Kato Hall and featuring Mexican music by Jose Arias as well as a visit by the Mexican Consul. A meeting was

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<sup>40</sup> “Americanization Is Theme of Address By Miss Ethel Richardson.” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 30, 1918.

<sup>41</sup> “District Club Notes – San Bernardino.” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 27, 1919.

<sup>42</sup> “Education Heads Visit in Riverside.” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 19, 1923.

also held at the Casa Blanca School by the D.A.R. in conjunction with the teachers to dedicate a service flag to honor soldiers from the community involved in the war effort.<sup>43</sup>

The work of social science scholars also filtered its way into the knowledge base of local service clubs involved in Americanization. Emory Bogardus's 1919 book, *Essentials of Americanization*, was suggested by the Federation of Women's Clubs for the women of Riverside as an important touchstone to be utilized in conjunction with Mrs. Frank Gibson's six-session series on working with immigrants.<sup>44</sup> Given the variety of approaches toward the work being implemented elsewhere, ranging in impact from ineffective to counterproductive, they argued/suggested that Bogardus's framework for Americanization was the most appropriate/effective. Bogardus's view emphasized liberty, self-reliance, cooperation, democracy, fairness, internationalism, and brotherhood. He provided a survey of the different ethnoracial groups, including Mexicans, and took a more additive approach toward assimilation that viewed the different groups as assets to the nation. In this view, Americanization was not something merely to be imposed upon Mexicans.<sup>45</sup>

These lessons were taken to heart by up and coming Americanization workers in the community. Local Riverside Junior College student and member of the graduating class of 1920 Nathalie Goethals delivered a commencement speech titled "Social Service Among Our Mexican Immigrants," in which she takes a sympathetic if not paternalistic

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<sup>43</sup> "Americanization Meetings Success." *Riverside Daily Press*, February 22, 1919.

<sup>44</sup> Bogardus, Emory S. 1919. *Essentials of americanization*. Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press.

<sup>45</sup> "Federated Club Women Are Urged to Read books on Americanization." *Riverside Daily Press*, August 10, 1919.

view toward Mexican immigrants, citing Mexico's rich natural resources and the adverse political and economic conditions wrought by the Mexican Revolution. Goethals notes: "It is our task to educate these ignorant and destitute peons... We should endeavor to instill into their minds American ideas and ideals, without destroying the roots which bind them to their native country." She goes on to identify second generation Mexican youth as the ideal subjects for Americanization work and praises the work of Riverside's Community Settlement House and local Women's Club in this regard.<sup>46</sup> She would later go on to teach at the Casa Blanca School that same year.<sup>47</sup>

Formal educational opportunities were also available to Americanization teachers and workers in the city. In 1920, the UCR Extension Division offered a series of lectures on community problems by former housing director of the California Commission of Immigration and Housing, Dr. Carol Aronovici. Dr. Aronovici travelled throughout the state providing this series of talks advertised to be of particular interest to community organizations such as women's and civics clubs, teachers institutes, chambers of commerce, and collegiate alumnae. The topics included in the series were housing, city planning, Americanization, and zoning. Beyond speaking services, he was also available to conduct sociological surveys of communities.<sup>48</sup> Aronovici overtly espoused the additive approach toward Americanization, especially in terms of English-language acquisition. As Zevi Gutfreund notes in a study on the history of language education in Los Angeles, Dr. Aronovici believed that tolerance led to loyalty and that he "would

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<sup>46</sup> "Nineteen Receive Diplomas From Local Junior College." *Riverside Daily Press*, June 18, 1920.

<sup>47</sup> "Assignment of Teachers Made." *Riverside Daily Press*, August 25, 1920.

<sup>48</sup> "Will Take Up Better Housing Conditions." *Riverside Daily Press*, September 21, 1920.

rather the immigrant would love America in German than hate America in English.” This particular view was evidently in conflict with the CCIH’s approach, according to Gutfreund.<sup>49</sup>

Local churches in Riverside also hosted talks regarding Americanization work. For instance, the Calvary Presbyterian Church in 1923 hosted Dr. Robert McLean, superintendent of Mexican services in the Southwest, to speak on the importance of Americanization work. He articulated that the church’s Americanization plan to establish outreach services to Mexican populations through bible schools and summer camps to inculcate American ideals and, of course, Christian values.<sup>50</sup> As a bilingual expert and author on the subject of Mexicans in the Southwest, McLean would speak to Mexican congregates of Casa Blanca about Americanization. His book, *That Mexican!*, was even held in the stacks of the Riverside Public Library. He would go on to speak at churches of various Christian denominations in Riverside throughout the decade and early into the next.<sup>51</sup>

Part of the development/training of Americanization workers in the city also included bringing in experts to discuss issues of health and hygiene related to Mexican communities. The Community Settlement House in 1926 invited Dr. W.B. Wells, city health officer, to speak about the health concerns surrounding Mexican immigrants. He indicated that Mexicans tended to be represented in higher proportion within government

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<sup>49</sup> Gutfreund, Zevi. "Language Education, Race, and the Remaking of American Citizenship in Los Angeles, 1900-1968." (2013).

<sup>50</sup> "Head of Spanish Work at Calvary." *Riverside Daily Press*, December 10, 1923.

<sup>51</sup> "What To Do With the Mexicans." *Riverside Daily Press*, March 18, 1930.

facilities due to many entering the country undocumented. Wells highlighted the improvement within the past decade regarding the sanitary conditions in the city's Mexican communities due in part to local Americanization efforts. Nevertheless, the doctor warned of the continuing work necessary due to the high infant mortality rate, where 20 of the 39 babies that died in the past year were of Mexican descent.<sup>52</sup> Other city groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.) and the Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) brought in speakers too and held special meetings concerning the topic of Americanization. These instances would often include reports of the progress being made at the local schools, churches, and community centers with the Mexicans of Riverside.<sup>53</sup>

One of the foremost experts on the Mexican population in the city was the principal of the Casa Blanca School, Mabra Madden. His long-standing tenure at the school, lasting from 1925-1964, positioned him as a key figure pursuing the Americanization of Mexican in Riverside. He implemented youth development programs through sports and the Boy Scouts, as well as advocated for improved facilities and resources at the school. In addition to his work in the Casa Blanca community, Madden would deliver talks offering guidance to other groups working with Mexican populations in the city. In 1931, he spoke at a D.A.R. meeting at Rubidoux where he outlined what were considered the perils of Mexican immigration and the progress being made with the

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<sup>52</sup> "Dr. Wells Talks on Health Topic." *Riverside Daily Press*, February 2, 1926.

<sup>53</sup> "P.T.A. Women Given Interesting Reports at the Monthly Session." *Riverside Daily Press*, February 4, 1926.; "Americanization Theme of Meeting." *Riverside Daily Press*, January 26, 1926.

Mexican community through the school.<sup>54</sup> Though he generally regarded the Mexican community positively, Madden also perpetuated the “Mexican problem” discourse as evidenced at a speaking engagement with the W.C.T.U. where he highlighted what was perceived to be a large population of Mexican youth at Casa Blanca and Independiente Schools. Madden suggested that Americanization workers should not be too hasty in promoting citizenship “as many aliens are not desirable as citizens.”<sup>55</sup> Education historian Irving Hendrick reveals that Madden’s paternalistic approach toward the community was not always viewed positively by the Mexicans of Casa Blanca.<sup>56</sup>

Conferences and institutes focusing on the “Mexican problem” and Americanization became a common part of the repertoire for professional development for those working with the Mexican population of Riverside. Various leaders of city departments and service organizations traveled to Long Beach in 1924 to attend the California Conference of Social Workers which focused on issues concerning Mexican populations. Among those in attendance from the city were County Superintendent of Schools, Arthur Wheelock; his wife, Mrs. Wheelock, representing the Community Settlement House; and officials from the probation and police departments as well as the Women’s Club.<sup>57</sup>

The Universalist Church of Riverside hosted the Social Agencies Convention in 1920, where issues of addressing delinquency were discussed. The focus was on “better

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<sup>54</sup> “M.B. Madden Talks To D.A.R. Chapter.” *Riverside Daily Press*, December 12, 1931.

<sup>55</sup> “M.B. Madden Tells W.C.T.U. of Americanization Work.” *Riverside Daily Press*, February 3, 1931.

<sup>56</sup> Hendrick, Irving G. “The development of a school integration plan in Riverside.” *California, a history and perspective* (1968).

<sup>57</sup> “Mexican Problems Discussed at Meet.” *Riverside Daily Press*, May 31, 1924.



breeding” and “better living conditions” as a means of preventing deviance.

Americanization work was a central feature through the various papers delivered concerning Mexican immigrants by professionals in educational, juvenile corrections, and social work.<sup>58</sup> The focus on better breeding reflects the growing presence of eugenic thought in reform work.<sup>59</sup> This would also be congruent with the rise of IQ testing during the twenties.<sup>60</sup> These biologically-oriented approaches to race relations and Americanization reflected the differing and competing views toward racial difference and citizenship.

The school district would host the City Teacher’s Institute which included lectures by experts on topics pertinent to Mexican pupils such as those in 1928 titled “Constructive Americanization” by Dr. Constantine Panuzio, and “The Mental and Emotional Traits of the Mexican Child” by Dr. Moises Saenz, the Federal Sub-secretary of the Department of Education of Mexico.<sup>61</sup> However, one of the largest and most significant conferences concerning the education of Mexicans in the region occurred during the decade of the 1920s and early on into the 1930s. The Friends of the Mexicans Conference was held annually at Pomona College for teachers, social workers, and those doing or interested in Americanization work. Showcasing leaders in the field from the region such as Superintendent Grace Stanley of the San Bernardino County Department

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<sup>58</sup> “Safeguarding Youth Today’s Big Problem.” *Riverside Daily Press*, May 6, 1920.

<sup>59</sup> Fox, Cybelle. 2012. *Three worlds of relief: race, immigration, and the American welfare state from the Progressive Era to the New Deal*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

<sup>60</sup> Blanton, Carlos Kevin. "From intellectual deficiency to cultural deficiency: Mexican Americans, testing, and public school policy in the American Southwest, 1920–1940." *Pacific Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (2003): 39-62.

<sup>61</sup> “Announce Speakers Teachers Institute.” *Riverside Daily Press*, October 25, 1928.

of Education, as well as the state such as Ethel Richardson, Superintendent of Americanization, this conference was regularly attended by Riverside's educators and other representatives of organizations that worked with the city's Mexican communities. Professors and other experts on the education of Mexican communities would also be featured. In his work on the citrus belt communities of Greater Los Angeles, Matt Garcia discusses features of the Friends of the Mexicans Conference as initially being aligned with the interests of pro-immigrant citrus growers and Americanization efforts, to addressing all relevant issues of Mexican communities, to eventually shifting toward alignment with the repatriation campaign of the early thirties. The conference shifted with the political and economic landscape of the time illustrating how reform efforts would eventually give way to nativism and changing governmental priorities during the Depression.<sup>62</sup>

These examples reflect the dynamic ecology of Americanization praxis that existed in Riverside during this period. Knowledge of Americanization views and practices circulated relationally throughout professional and public spheres in the city. Communities of practice would form and implement Americanization programs in multiple sites and modalities so that the work would never function on a single axis. In terms of segregation, this further solidified a cartography of oppression and exclusion as Americanization work would take place in specific sites where Mexicans were found with whites (usually doing the work). Churches, settlement houses, schools, and

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<sup>62</sup> Garcia, Matt. *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970*. UNC Press Books, 2010.

recreation areas were among these sites initialized as racializing spaces that would reproduce and contain unequal forms of second-class citizenship while propagating white spatial capital and imaginaries.

### Chapter 3

Segregated schools, such as Independiente, were sites created for the Americanization of Mexican children in the city through compulsory instruction. The available records related to the curriculum of Independiente are sparse. Garcia and Yosso note a similar invisibility in the institutional records of the Mexican schools in Oxnard that they investigated.<sup>63</sup> However, it is accurate to say that it maintained similar Americanization practices found at Casa Blanca, Irving, and other Mexican schools throughout the Inland Empire region (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties). The glimpses into the practices of Independiente in conjunction with other local and regional examples of Mexican school curriculum and instruction provide a more robust account of what this segregated school in Arlington imposed through its functioning during the period of investigation.

The curriculum at Independiente was similar to that of other Mexican schools at the time. As indicated by the literature on curriculum and instruction within Mexican schools in Southern California, there was a primary focus on English-language acquisition, as this was one of the main justifications for segregating the Mexican children from the white students.<sup>64</sup> In addition, common features of Americanization stressing hygiene, patriotism, and manual arts were also likely present. Principal Mae

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<sup>63</sup> Garcia, David G., and Tara J. Yosso. "“Strictly in the Capacity of Servant”: The Interconnection Between Residential and School Segregation in Oxnard, California, 1934–1954." *History of Education Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2013): 64-89.

<sup>64</sup> Gonzalez, Gilbert G. "Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation." (1990).; Wollenberg, Charles. *All deliberate speed: Segregation and exclusion in California schools, 1855-1975*. Univ of California Press, 1978.; Lewthwaite, Stephanie. *Race, Place, and Reform in Mexican Los Angeles: A Transnational Perspective, 1890-1940*. University of Arizona Press, 2009.

Stewart confirmed this in the following statement: “As all the pupils of the school are Mexicans, we try to emphasize the Americanization of ideals and habits as much as possible.”<sup>65</sup> Texts known to be used in the school at this time demonstrate this emphasis. For example, books written by local Montessori teacher Florence Pier Griffith, written in clear and short sentences on various topics such as patriotic history and nature, were being utilized by all the lower grades of the district and in the upper grades at Irving and Independiente.<sup>66</sup>

As previously indicated, the Independiente school was among the few elementary schools in the district with bathing and manual arts training facilities.<sup>67</sup> The vocational aspect of Americanization unfolded in the segregated schools within the district during the 1920s. In January of 1925, Principal Mabra Madden of the Casa Blanca School announced the incorporation of manual training into the curriculum overseen by the manual training supervisor for the district, J. C. Price. The manual arts curriculum was specifically intended to train the boys for a vocation. The girls of Independiente would eventually get their own room for domestic arts training under the supervision of Cora Burrows as the school grew throughout the remainder of the twenties. With an enrollment of 351 primarily Mexican students, vocational curriculum was seen as the most feasible option. The belief was that Mexican children would most likely not progress past the

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<sup>65</sup> “Independiente School.” *Riverside Daily Press*, April 21, 1931.

<sup>66</sup> “Mrs. Griffith Writes Children’s Stories.” *Riverside Daily Press*, January 19, 1929.

<sup>67</sup> Green, Earle Milton. 1932. *A survey of the elementary school building needs in the Riverside Elementary School District*. M.A. Thesis. University of Southern California.

primary grades. A program of domestic science led by Mrs. Malinda Woodworth from the school district was already underway for the girls and women of Casa Blanca.<sup>68</sup>

This program was consistent with Grace Stanley's view that they needed a special curriculum consistent with their "interest in action and emotion."<sup>69</sup> Stanley oversaw the Cucamonga School for Mexicans which was a central site in the region, among nine others throughout the Southland, where experimental methods would be tested and recommended to educators of Mexicans statewide.<sup>70</sup> Another influential figure/expert on Mexican education in the Inland Empire was Chaffey Union High School Superintendent, Merton E. Hill. His 1928 work, *The Development of an Americanization Program*, entailed an intensive survey and field study of Ontario's Mexican communities from which he then devised an Americanization program. Regarding the function of the schools, Hill states: "the peculiar attitudes of these good-natured and kindly people should be developed along the best possible lines and their capacities to perform different types of service should be set forth so that their employers may utilize them to their best interests."<sup>71</sup> This also reflects a consistent pattern within the Riverside district regarding the education of Mexican children as well as consistency with the broader pattern of these practices found within the region and beyond.

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<sup>68</sup> "Manual Training Will Be Taught at Casa Blanca." *Riverside Daily Press*, January 12, 1925.

<sup>69</sup> Wollenberg, Charles. "Mendez v. Westminster: Race, nationality and segregation in California schools." *California Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1974): 317-332.

<sup>70</sup> Gonzalez, Gilbert G. 1990. *Chicano education in the era of segregation*. Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press.

<sup>71</sup> Hill, Merton Earle. *The development of an Americanization program*. Board of Trustees of the Chaffey Union High School and the Chaffey Junior College, 1928.; Gonzalez, Gilbert G. 1990. *Chicano education in the era of segregation*. Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press.; Liang, Amanda Marie. "Inland Empire Schools and Mendez v. Westminster." MA Thesis, UCR. (2012).

Patriotism was promoted in Independiente's curricular and extracurricular practices through events and contests. These would serve the function of displaying the work of Americanization programs and teachers to the city's population. Though this patriotic sentiment was particularly high during the first World War, it persisted as a core feature of Americanization curriculum at these schools during the 1920s. For instance, during this period Casa Blanca children hosted a celebration of George Washington's birthday for the community which included a program of speeches and music. The D.A.R. assisted the teachers in producing this celebration and its performances. Mexican Consul Leander Garza Leal was also present to deliver a speech for the occasion.<sup>72</sup> Mexican students from the Irving School, as well as some of African American and Japanese descent, put on a similarly-spirited program at the Community Settlement House. They performed music, delivered speeches, and conducted a flag drill for over 60 audience members. Their musical numbers included Japanese and Spanish songs. However, the closing number was a patriotic one led by Mrs. Lorbeer where the children "with their round black eyes and childish trebles took up the last 'Red, White and Blue' with vigor and determination."<sup>73</sup>

Throughout the latter half of the twenties, the Independiente School would host an annual May Day program which involved a similar array of performances designed around a spring theme. Teachers Mae Stewart, Zenia Weatherill, Cora Burrows, and Dora Henderson would help organize the festivities which were heavily attended by Mexican

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<sup>72</sup> "Casa Blanca Gives Program." *Riverside Daily Press*. February 22, 1923.

<sup>73</sup> "Children Give Clever Program." *Riverside Daily Press*, June 3, 1925.

mothers.<sup>74</sup> Historian, Gilbert Gonzalez shows a similar phenomenon occurring in the citrus communities of neighboring Orange County throughout the 20s and 30s.<sup>75</sup>

These engagement activities mixed Mexican and American songs and symbols as a type of public pedagogy that demonstrated to both the Anglo and Mexican communities the successful disciplining effect of Americanization on Mexican students. They also modeled behaviors of ideal citizenship, those aligned with whiteness. Finally, it generated support for the programs and bolstered the white spatial capital of the city in that the civilizing mission of the schools was being carried out by expert knowledge and scientific practices. In this way, Independiente functioned as a site of containment and racialization, as well as a symbol of progress for whites.

The students would also bring their work to local events and sites. The Southern California Fair, which ran in the city from 1915 to 1935, was another venue where the city's schools would be showcased in special tents with exhibits of students' work. Schools from around the region would also be represented. The Americanization work done in the segregated schools would be displayed among the exhibits from other schools.<sup>76</sup> Awards would be given for outstanding exhibits. Independiente received the second-place prize for its category in 1926.<sup>77</sup> There were also contests in the city where Independiente participated, such as the Peter Pan Book Pageant, poster contests by the

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<sup>74</sup> "Independiente May Day Program." *Riverside Daily Press*, June 2, 1927.; "Independiente May Program." *Riverside Daily Press*, May 6, 1929.

<sup>75</sup> Gonzalez, Gilbert G. *Labor and community: Mexican citrus worker villages in a Southern California county, 1900-1950*. Vol. 42. University of Illinois Press, 1994.

<sup>76</sup> "Fair Educational Tents Show Interest Of Youth In Aviation." *Riverside Daily Press*. September 25, 1929.

<sup>77</sup> "Awards for Exhibits in Educational Tent Announced For Competing Schools." *Riverside Daily Press*, September 23, 1926.



W.C.T.U., and Junior Olympic events.<sup>78</sup> Independiente student Salud Mora won the silver cup for the best essay on Abraham Lincoln in a contest held by Norman Sprowl of the Fox Theater.<sup>79</sup> In 1931, Independiente won the pennant for the largest representation at the annual Memorial Day celebration. 79 percent of the student body showed up for the parade.<sup>80</sup>

As previously mentioned, the work of Americanization focused on familial systems and multiple generations. At the request of the immigrant community, the curriculum of the school was expanded to include adult instruction at night in 1928. Mostly Mexican orange pickers comprised the students in the English courses. Lessons in math and social studies were offered as well. The night school would run concurrent with the winter harvest schedule, as the pickers would tend to follow the seasonal crops for work.<sup>81</sup> In this way, Americanization work was not seen as solely a children's program. It was a comprehensive strategy by the dominant group to contain and assimilate foreign populations. In Riverside, that meant, primarily, Mexican families.

Events and activities like these were part of the Mexican students' curriculum geared toward inculcating the aims of Americanization while simultaneously demonstrating progress to the Anglo/European American community of Riverside. In this way, Mexican students were enacting a racialized form of citizenship that positioned

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<sup>78</sup> "Prizes Awarded By Arlington W.C.T.U." *Riverside Daily Press*, March 6, 1928.; "Junior Olympic Contests Today." *Riverside Daily Press*, April 25, 1928.; "Many Entries In Peter Pan Pageant." *Riverside Daily Press*, May 28, 1928.

<sup>79</sup> "Independiente Pupil Wins Cup." *Riverside Daily Press*, February 24, 1930.

<sup>80</sup> "Parade Prize Won By Independiente." *Riverside Daily Press*, June 3, 1931.

<sup>81</sup> "Large Enrollment In Night School." *Riverside Daily Press*, January 13, 1928.

them as beneficiaries of American society while reproducing the racial and class hierarchies in place in the city. Through their efforts, Americanization workers bolstered the white racial capital of the city as well as its spatial imaginary by facilitating programming seen as beneficial and benevolent. In this way, Americanization secured racial mappings onto the landscape of the city as well as reifying its value which was enmeshed in whiteness. Racialized Mexican spaces and citizenship were solidified in the landscape through segregation and Americanization while, at the same time Riverside's white spatial imaginary continued to maintain its hegemony. Because arrangements of power must constantly rearticulate and justify themselves, this hegemony would later utilize different practices as the Depression era unfolded throughout the thirties. The possibility of the "good Mexican," by way of Americanization, would soon be displaced by anti-Mexican nativism.

## Conclusion

As the decade of the 1920s neared its end, several factors shaped the local sentiment toward the Mexican population. Proposed immigration restrictions threatened to limit the vital labor supply that Mexicans provided for the citrus industry. A letter from a local resident published in the *Daily Press* begins by noting that in living near the Riverside County Jail, he “has been impressed with the fact that a great majority of the prisoners taken there, and of the families who go to visit prisoners are Mexicans.” He also raised the issue of how the Mexican population of the city “furnishes a large part of the families who are county charges...They come from Mexico to help in the harvest of seasonal crops; but they stay to add to our problems of relief and of crime.” The writer closes by lauding proposed immigration restrictions on Mexican laborers in favor of more desirable workers, possibly the Chinese or Japanese.<sup>82</sup> The irony of this suggestion belies an ignorance of the very immigration restrictions that were imposed upon these Asian groups that paved the path for Mexicans to rise as the primary labor source for the citrus industry.

Another letter to the editor from a “prominent Riversider” concerning the pending Mexican immigration restriction bill put forward by Congressman Phil Swing states that the Mexican problem is both a labor and a social issue. In response to anticipated resistance to such legislation by agricultural growers, the writer articulates the social and economic burdens that the Mexican population brings. Most notably, a critique of the expense and slow progress of Americanization work in the education of Mexican children

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<sup>82</sup> “Mexican Immigration Problem.” *Riverside Daily Press*, August 2, 1927.

is registered in the letter. Ultimately, the Mexican community is portrayed as an unsanitary, criminal, and financial burden on society in the writer's view.<sup>83</sup> This reflects a more overtly racist sentiment toward Mexicans, a shift from the paternalistic and mundane racism prevalent earlier in the decade.

Into the next decade where the Depression became fact of life, concerns about the size of the Mexican population grew. A resident wrote: "The Mexican population we have is a problem in the matter of employment, in education, in public health, and in law enforcement. And it is startling to be reminded that without any further immigration from south of the border, this group of foreigners is increasing at the rate of some 400 a year." The writer recommends repatriation back to Mexico as a possible solution.<sup>84</sup> Another letter written one month later by a different resident discusses the criminality of the Mexican population and how it is taxing the community. Again, repatriation is suggested as the solution.<sup>85</sup>

Eventually, this proposal would come to fruition as families would "willingly" take the Bureau of Labor's free train fare back to their native Mexico. In May of 1931, 100 families from Riverside were anticipated to leave south. This repatriation work was a partnership between the Bureau of Labor, the County Superintendent of Welfare and Relief, and the Mexican Consulate. Riverside County Superintendent, Jane Dodge, shares how this program and the severe cutting of aid to immigrants are some measures being taken during the economic downturn where demands for charity are increasingly coming

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<sup>83</sup> "Social Problem Serious One." *Riverside Daily Press*, February 13, 1929.

<sup>84</sup> "Startling Figures." *Riverside Daily Press*. May 6, 1931.

<sup>85</sup> "Significant Record." *Riverside Daily Press*. June 24, 1931.

from many different sectors in the region.<sup>86</sup> These efforts would eventually result in deportation of 2,641 Mexican people from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties between 1931 and 1932.<sup>87</sup>

This racial climate also impacted school enrollment. In his discussion on enrollment trends in the district, Green notes a decline in the enrollments at Irving, Casa Blanca, and Independiente during the later part of the 1920s. He links this pattern with immigration policy and unfavorable views toward the Mexican population. In 1931, the enrollment at Casa Blanca dropped from 468 in June to 383 in December. This loss exceeded the past gains in the previous five years. Independiente experienced a similar decrease during this time dropping from 131 students in June to 98 in December. He goes on to state:

“With the return of prosperity, there is probability that the attitude towards the Mexicans will soften and his services will be demanded for cheap labor. Since the factors involved are so variable, and the present enrollment of these schools so far below their possible maximum capacity, no prediction of possible growth is made. If the Mexican tide should turn and Mexicans return, it is certain that before the next decade is over, our present facilities would be overtaxed. On the other hand, present facilities are adequate for several years, if our present population is not enlarged by immigration. The same difficulty is confronted in predicting the growth of Independiente school. Its growth is dependent on the growth of Mexican population. (p. 67)”

Independiente would continue to be a strictly Mexican school until the passage of Mendez v. Westminster in 1947 which prohibited school segregation in California. In 1948, it became integrated and changed its name to Hawthorne. By 1933, there was a

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<sup>86</sup> “Mexicans Ready to Return Home.” *Riverside Daily Press*. May 25, 1931.

<sup>87</sup> Guerin-Gonzales, Camille. *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939*. New Brunswick, NJ.: Rutgers University Press, 1994.

notable shift in the way that the education of Mexicans and Mexican Americans was approached. The benevolent paternalism of Americanization faded in the years of the Depression as resources grew increasingly scarce and anti-Mexican racism became more overt. Nativism also grew in currency leading to a shift from assimilation to deportation and a new chapter in Independiente's role in the community.

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