TO DETERMINE THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ATTENDANCE
OF THE LATIN-AMERICAN CHILDREN IN WICHITA
FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to make a study of the attendance records of Latin American children in the Wichita Falls Public Schools to determine the extent of non-attendance and withdrawals; (2) to study factors causing this non-attendance and withdrawals; and (3) to plan some remedial measures to improve the educational opportunities and improve the attendance of these children.

Delimitations

The study is limited to an analysis of the attendance problem of Latin-American children in Wichita Falls. Background material is taken from the literature dealing with the problems of the Latin American people and covers a wide range of investigation.

Source of Data

Factual data in the study were taken from records of the Wichita Falls Public Schools, interviews with school officials, and permanent Latin American residents. The migratory workers and families that leave annually for the
beet fields and vegetable gardens were inaccessible, and the chief information regarding them had to be secured from school records. Library material was obtained from related studies, from current articles in magazines and papers, various bulletins from the State Department of Education, and both published and unpublished works on the Latin-American children by educators in Texas.

Definition of Terms

Latin American is used in this research to designate people whose lineage for the most part leads to countries in North America designated as "Latin Americans", and whose dominant language is Spanish. Many of these people have been born in the United States and are citizens. Some of them may be descendants of the early colonists of Texas. In Texas, however, a greater portion of the Spanish speaking children are of Mexican extraction and are usually referred to as Mexicans. Dorothy Swope comments on this practice:

Mentally we classify these children as "Mexicans", whereas, they, and frequently their parents, have been born in our state of Texas. On record cards teachers invariably write "Mexican". This is not only untrue, but indicates a lack of understanding of a feeling for the young Americans of Latin-American ancestry, who are dependent upon these same teachers for adequate mental and emotional stimulation and growth.¹

Need for Study

As a teacher in an elementary school attended by both Latin-Americans and Anglo-American pupils, the writer has experienced a real necessity for creating more interest in school attendance and feeling of need for the advantages of school on the part of the Latin American child.

If a school program is democratic, then it must recognize the individual worth of all people and make provision for equal opportunity for all children of the state. Article 7, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution states that the "general diffusion of knowledge" was essential to the preservation and rights of the people and that it was the duty of the state to provide for the education of all its children regardless of their economic status. Yet a large body of the young citizens of the state have not been provided even the most rudimentary education. Swope states:

One area where we have failed woefully in applying our democratic ideals is in our educational thinking and planning for our non-English speaking children. . . . We devote much time to professional theorizing about individual differences. In too few instances do we find administrators thinking in terms of the tremendous differences between Spanish-speaking and English speaking children or planning an educational program to care for them.²

The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide for 1947-48 summarizes the situation as follows:

The problem of the state's approximately 1,200,000 residents of Mexican descent, of whom 80 per cent are

²Ibid.
American citizens, are many and varied. The majority are in the lower economic bracket, due partly to the fact that some 600,000 are employed largely or exclusively in agriculture. Because of the low economic status of families, many children are unable to attend school. Due to the resulting poverty and ignorance, housing and sanitary conditions among them in both urban and rural areas are substandard and the mortality rate from such diseases as tuberculosis is extremely high. All of these conditions coupled with prejudice on the part of many Anglos, result in many inequalities.³

Spanish-speaking schoolastics are found in 238 of the 254 counties of Texas. The largest number are found in Bexar County, which in 1943 had 37,248 schoolastics or 53.24 per cent of the total white school population. The number of Latin American children of school age enumerated on the census roll for the 1942-43 term in Texas was 260,759 or 20.4 per cent of the total white children enumerated. This figure was derived by counting Spanish names since all white children are enumerated together, no distinction being made between the Latin Americans and the Anglo-Americans. From reports of school superintendents for the year 1942-43 it was revealed that only 139,000 Latin-American children, or approximately 53.0 per cent of schoolastic enumeration, were in the public schools of Texas for that year.⁴

Another fact revealed in this same report was that of the 136,000 Latin Americans enrolled in the public schools,


188,123 were enrolled in the first eight grades of school, boys and girls being about equally divided. Even if the Latin Americans who were enrolled in Catholic schools were counted in the percentage, there still would be the astonishing figure of 110,759 Latin American children of school age in Texas who were receiving no education whatever, as it would not be likely denominational schools other than Catholic would have these pupils enrolled. Thus 42.47 per cent of the Latin American children were not in attendance. Of these actually attending school, 37,000 of them were enrolled in the first grade, 19,000 in the second, and less than 6,000 in the eighth grade.\(^5\) These figures tell a graphic story of the failure of Latin American children to remain in school and complete a high school education.

In 1943-44 the State Department of Education made a follow-up study on this report by Wilson Little. From the data given, the attendance of Latin American children in different counties of Texas selected at random was found. Nueces County, with a scholastic enrollment of 7,898 children, had only 65.2 per cent enrolled in school and of these 68.0 per cent were making failing grades. Mitchell County had 34.0 per cent enrolled, of whom 3.9 per cent were in daily attendance, with 85.0 failing to advance. Hidalgo County had 64.0 per cent enrolled, 60.0 per cent of whom

\(^5\) Ibid., pp. 86-87.
were in daily attendance, and 79.0 per cent failing. 6

Records from the counties mentioned show that there is a definite problem before school administrators to get the Latin-American child to enroll in school, to attend regularly, and to do passing work. There is only one conclusion which can be made: "Something is drastically wrong with the Latin-American children, or with the tools and methods of instruction provided for them, or with the psychological factors and cultural factors involved in the situation." 7 There is indicated a need for study to determine the factors causing the situation and to propose remedial measures for alleviating the causes of the non-attendance and failure to progress.

Method of Procedure

The first step in the study was an analysis of factors thought to be causing non-attendance of Latin American children as revealed by recent writers in the field of education. These factors were summarized, and a study made then of conditions in the Wichita Falls public schools under these headings. The public school records were studied to find the age-grade distribution of Latin American pupils, and the number and percentages of enrollment. A comparison was made with a study made of the Latin American children in Wichita

6 Pauline Hibbe, Latin Americans in Texas, p. 87.

7 Ibid., p. 96.
Falls schools in 1938 to determine what progress, if any, had been made. The writer made a personal inspection tour of the Latin American area of the town to analyze the socio-economic factors and interviewed many of the parents of the students and other citizens of the area. Records of the school were studied to determine the occupation of the parents. Finally a remedial program was formulated that was intended to improve the educational opportunities of the Latin American child and increase attendance and progress in school.

Related Studies

Within recent years there have been a number of studies made dealing directly with the problems of the Latin-American people in Texas. One of the most outstanding of these is a recent book by Pauline Yibbe, *Latin Americans in Texas*. As Secretary of the Good Neighbor Commission of Texas, the author made a comprehensive analysis of the needs of the Latin Americans in Texas. Some of the most outstanding of the conclusions of Yibbe's investigation may be summarized as follows:

1. Unfair employment practices force a low economic status for the majority of Latin Americans.

2. The majority of Latin Americans have sub-standard

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8Ibid., pp. 1-295.
housing, lack sanitary facilities and services, suffer from improper diet and malnutrition, have an ignorance of personal hygiene, and a high incident of tuberculosis, diarrhea, and other communicable diseases.

3. Inequitable educational opportunities comprise arbitrary segregation in public schools, inability of working children to attend schools, lack of interest of school administrators in enrolling Latin-American children and encouraging their attendance, improperly trained teachers, inferior buildings and equipment, and inequitable method of apportioning State school funds.

4. Anglo-Americans lack knowledge and understanding of Latin Americans and hold erroneous ideas of superiority.

5. The Latin Americans in a large number of instances are indifferent to the value of educating their children, have a reluctance to speak English, lack initiative, and have little enthusiasm for co-operative or community work. 9

Remedial measures proposed for the improvement of these conditions may be summarized as:

1. Legislative change of school apportionment
2. Equal employment opportunities
3. Better housing conditions
4. Program of health education
5. Outlaw segregation in schools

9Ibid., pp. 271-273.
6. Equal educational opportunities
7. Stress value of Latin-American culture
8. Better trained teachers
9. Adult education
10. Enlightened leadership

In 1936 a study entitled "Education of Mexican Children in Wichita Falls" was written by Chrystine Gordon Johns as a thesis for a Master of Science degree at the North Texas State Teachers College. In this study she adequately portrayed the educational opportunities of the Latin-American child in Wichita Falls at that time, but she did not approach the problem from the perspective of factors determining school attendance. This report, made ten years ago, is used in the present study as a basis of comparison in measuring progress.

The major findings of this study were:

1. The home life of the Latin-American people is lacking in financial and social security.
2. The Latin Americans have become content with their standard of living, because they never had anything better.
3. The economic status of the Latin American is almost always low and unstable. The lack of training in a special field and the lack of education lessen his opportunity to secure employment.
4. They are dependent upon the schools to afford them an education that will prepare them to help themselves socially, economically, educationally, and environmentally.
5. The Latin-American children drop out of school at about the fourth or fifth grade because they are older

10Ibid., pp. 274-277.
and larger than the American children with whom they are interpersed upon completion of the third grade of the Latin-American school.

6. Racial prejudice is due to a lack of understanding.

7. The city and county school officials have not felt the same interest in and consideration of the Latin-American schools.

8. The low percentage of attendance is due to the necessity for the Latin-American men to go to another town or state in order to secure employment, and it is also due to the child's lack of interest in the opportunities that the school provides for him.

9. Room space in the school is inadequate to provide for an activity program.

10. Playground space and equipment is inadequate.

11. Teaching facilities are insufficient.

12. The teachers lack the proper attitude toward their position in the Latin American school.

13. The curriculum doesn't provide the child with an opportunity for understanding and participating in real social living.11

Erwin I. Brand, in 1940, made a study of the Latin-American children in the schools of Palfurrias, Texas. The purpose of this study was to discover the status of the children and their outstanding problems during the school year 1939-40.12 Attention was primarily directed to the Latin-American children in the first grade.

In 1941 a study entitled "Mexican Children in the Sonora Independent School" was made by Helen James.13 The


purpose of this study was to analyze health, social conditions and educational environment which affected the educational development of the Latin-American children in the Sonora Independent School. James's research dealt mainly with the health and nutrition of the children.

Emmett L. Howard, graduate student at North Texas State College in 1947, made an investigation of a segregated Latin-American school at Fort Stockton, Texas. Attention was directed to the problems of Latin American schools: attendance, age-grade distribution, socio-economic status of pupils, inability to speak the English language, lack of trained teachers, and the need for health education.

The major findings of Howard's study were:

1. Poor attendance records or even non-attendance of thousands of children was found.
2. Method of apportioning the available school funds of the state encourages discrimination against the Latin American who, basically, has little interest in attending school.
3. The socio-economic status of the average Latin American is very low. Economic needs require the services of all children old enough to work.
4. Health education is an imperative need of the Latin-American children, but, to be effective, it must be functional and must include improvement of living conditions of the Latin-American homes.
5. Teachers of Latin-American children need special training and qualifications; few now teaching are so qualified.
6. Present methods of teaching, in most instances, still follow traditional patterns of textbook instruction and adherence to recommended courses of study.

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7. The State has the legal duty to educate all the children of Texas. It also has the moral duty of educating them to be citizens of a democracy, which, it very decidedly, is not doing.  

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15 Ibid., pp. 71-72.
CHAPTER II

FACTORS AFFECTING THE ATTENDANCE OF LATIN-
AMERICAN CHILDREN IN THE PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to review some of the
chief factors thought to influence the attendance of Latin-
American children in the public schools as reported in re-
cent literature in the field of education. Attention will
be given to the following factors: health, socio-economic
conditions, school marks and progress, cultural differences
and school set-up.

Health Factors Influencing
Attendance

In a study of 1,158 absences in the Chicago schools,
Abbott and Breckenridge found that sickness ranked high in
both valid and invalid excuses, especially in immigrant neigh-
borhoods where there were crowded conditions of living, where
the families were very poor, and where it was a perpetual
struggle to give the children enough food and clothing. They
concluded:

Sickness occurs among the children that could be
avoided if better care were possible; sickness of others
in the home, and other family exigencies due to poverty impose a heavy burden of care upon the children, which is met by sacrificing school attendance.\textsuperscript{1}

Although 48.0 per cent of the 1,158 absences investigated were given as due to sickness, the investigators found that a great majority of the children absent on account of sickness seemed to have only very trivial indispositions, and very small numbers were found in bed. Carelessness or indifference on the part of the mother was the real cause in many cases, in the opinion of the investigator. Probably the child had overslept or the mother did not have clean clothes ready. Again the child was ill because his physical needs had not been properly met. The working or ignorant mother had neglected teeth, tonsils, or had overlooked preventive measures. Lack of proper clothing and undernourishment were also found to be contributing factors, and made the children susceptible to colds and other illnesses. Often contagious diseases and other afflictions were left untreated unless the uninformed or indifferent mother was encouraged vigorously, and she acquiesced only too readily in the child's non-attendance at school. In the majority of instances, the investigators found that the socio-economic conditions were the main factors contributing to absence from school on account of sickness.

\textsuperscript{1}Edith Abbott and Sophonisba F. Brockenridge, \textit{Truancy and Non-Attendance in the Chicago Schools}, p. 128.
This study was made in Chicago but its findings could be duplicated in the Latin-American areas in Texas. That the Latin-American children are handicapped from the standpoint of health is a known fact to anyone who has visited their communities in any part of the state. Because of the economic status of these people, and the failure of local communities to provide water, sewage, and other sanitary facilities in the Latin-American sections of the town, disease and ill health often abound. The responsibility for part of this situation must be placed upon the Latin Americans' lack of information on the rudimentary principles of sanitation, diet and nutrition, and personal hygiene. As a result of this, there is a high incidence of tuberculosis, diarrhea, and other communicable diseases among these people. Low enrollment in the schools is to be expected in such circumstances.

The substandard housing of the Latin-American people and their tendency to stay in groups of people speaking their language has set them apart from the community as a whole. Usually the settlements are known as the "Mexican colony" or "Little Mexico". One such colony called forth the following description:

Squalor is the lot of many of these who live in that area where almost 100 per cent of the houses are substandard and many in a condition hardly fit for

\[2\text{Ibid.}\]
housing livestock on a farm. Most of them have had no repairs for years; they are not worth the expense to the owners, but bring a rental income far beyond their value. Many of the places that people call home appear on the verge of collapse. Most have no plumbing. Water is obtained from outside community hydrants, frequently close beside a filthy, disease-breeding outside dry toilet. Unpaved streets are quagmires when it rains, and filth abounds despite the efforts and desires of many residents to try to put up a better front.  

In Hidalgo County the Children's Bureau reported the following housing conditions:

The usual dwelling was a small wooden house, unpainted, and of makeshift construction. Generally there was one sleeping and living room, with a still more crudely constructed "kitchen house", either built separately or attached to the main structure in the rear. Occasionally there was more than one sleeping room. On the other hand, some large families cooked and slept in the one room. . . .

In the rainy season the flimsy roofs and walls of the cruder dwellings were poor protection against the weather, and the houses often became flooded. Owing to the absence of any drainage system, water accumulated in the streets and roads and the people were sometimes narcosed.

For the large families in this study, which average 6.6 members, the one or two-room dwellings provided very little space. In nearly two-thirds of the 342 households visited there were three or more persons per room, and in almost one-tenth there were as many as seven or more persons per room. Even these figures do not fully indicate the degree of overcrowding, because one of the rooms, the kitchen, usually could not be used for sleeping purposes.  

Since the housing conditions are so congested and substandard, and the lack of sanitary facilities and services so predominant, it is not surprising to find that Latin-American death rate from tuberculosis was 209 per 100,000

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4 Kibbe, op. cit., p. 12.
in Texas for the year 1944 as reported in the statistics of the Texas State Department of Health.\textsuperscript{5} This is high compared to the rate of thirty-one per 100,000 population among Anglo-Americans, and ninety-five per 100,000 among Negroes and it is evident that the Latin-American death rate is about seven times that of the other whites.\textsuperscript{6} The Bexar County Tuberculosis Association in San Antonio reported a death rate of 143 per 100,000 among the Latin Americans as compared with 45.6 among Americans, and 88.0 among Negroes.\textsuperscript{7}

These statistics alone indicate the extent of tuberculosis among the Latin-American people.

The Children's Bureau of Hidalgo County in describing the living conditions among the agricultural workers in that county gave the following picture:

Not only were the children deprived of schooling and forced to assume economic responsibility at an early age, but also they were reared in many instances under conditions that threatened their health. Their homes generally had only one sleeping room and a separate kitchen, were too crudely constructed to be weathertight, and often had dirt floors. The youngest children usually slept on blankets or canvas on the floor. In the same small room the parents and older boys and girls slept in one or two double beds, with sometimes as many as five persons to a bed. Drinking water was often taken from an irrigation ditch or other contaminated source, and food consisted of beans, rice, potatoes, and tortillas, with seldom an appreciable amount of milk or green vegetables.

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., p. 126.

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid.
Diarrhea and other illnesses were frequent among the children owing to the use of contaminated water, the lack of sanitation, and the inadequate protection in their homes against the weather. Few children received any medical care since their families could seldom afford the service of a private physician and very little free medical care was available in Hidalgo County. In view of the lack of health services and adverse living conditions, the health of the school-age children was surprisingly good. The rate of infant and child mortality in their families, however, was exceedingly high—so high as to suggest that only the sturdiest children survived to school age.

The toilet facilities available to these households consisted of open-pit privies, usually shared by several families. In one area, for example, six privies served twenty-six families. In another settlement in one of the larger towns, instances were reported of one privy serving as many as thirteen large families. Usually the pits were very shallow, and they often overflowed during the rainy season.\(^8\)

The death rate from diarrhea in children under two years of age in Texas counties with Latin-American population of 20.0 per cent or more was given as 85.1 per 100,000 population in 1940 by the State Health Department.\(^9\) The causes of diarrhea are given as an abundant growth of bacteria from open sewage which has infected water, milk, and food of infants. Flies and careless personal habits are the two things that spread the infection.

The diet of the Latin-American children has been inadequate because of the economic status of the family and because of the lack of knowledge of nutrition on the part of the mother. Although some of the Latin-American people have

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 129.

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 132.
practically adopted the dietary habits of the Anglo-Americans, yet the poorest of these people tend to a diet consisting of beans, cereals, and lard with small amounts of meat, cheese, milk and eggs being used. The most popular vegetables in their diets are onions, potatoes, and tomatoes. Coffee is used in large quantities by most Latin Americans. Few sweets are included in the meals other than sugar used for coffee.

An excellent report on the diet of the Latin-American child has been given by Jet C. Winters, associate professor of home economics at the University of Texas, in a bulletin entitled A Report on the Health and Nutrition of the Mexicans Living in Texas. She made a study of the diet of sixty-five families of Latin-American descent and found that they were deficient in Vitamin A.10

This deficiency meant that the items that produce Vitamin A, such as milk, butter, eggs and leafy vegetables were used in insufficient quantities. Vitamin B too was lacking because of the increased use of milled cereals in place of whole grain corn. Small amount spent for milk in the budget would account for deficiency of calcium and Vitamin A. Even when vegetables were often available to the families working in packing sheds they did not use them because they did not

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like them. The Latin-American child's diet then is usually simple fare made up of pinto beans, potatoes, rice and tortillas. Hardly any milk is used after infancy except in coffee or tea. These facts are borne out by studies other than the Winters report.11

The effect that this diet has on the children is pictured by Kibbe:

From experiments conducted among Latin American children in New Mexico it was revealed that not only does the absence of foods containing calcium, proteins, and vitamins from the diet cause rickets and general physical debility, but that it also prevents the child from having sufficient mental energy to carry him through a day in school. It was found that children subsisting on grossly deficient diets were mentally alert and capable of learning for not longer than the first two hours of class work. After that time they are present in body only.12

In the light of this information, it is easy to understand why the Latin-American children who are enrolled in school fail to progress satisfactorily and that nutritional deficiencies plus unsanitary living conditions lead eventually to elimination from school.

Economic and Social Factors Influencing Attendance

According to Manuel, who made an extensive investigation of socio-economic conditions of the Latin-American population of Texas in 1930, the Latin-American children come from homes representing all degrees of economic and social status from the highest to the lowest. The prevailing picture,

however, is one of underprivilege, often extreme. Nearly half of the children in the schools have parents classified as unskilled laborers and among these wages are often pitiable low and employment very unsteady. An investigation of the status of Latin-American agricultural laborers was made in Hidalgo County by the United States Department of Labor in 1941. Three hundred and forty-two families were included in the survey of whom 329 were of Mexican stock and predominantly Spanish-speaking. An excerpt from the report is as follows:

In most households the father and mother and also several children were wage earners. Employment was, however, so irregular and rates of pay were so low that the combined earnings of all the workers from agricultural labor, supplemented to some extent by earnings from non-farm work, were too small to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter for the family group. During the year preceding the date of interview, the family had a median cash income from all sources of only $350.00 to provide for their large households, averaging 6.6 persons. This was considerable less than the minimum annual income of $480.00 estimated by the Texas Social Welfare Association to be necessary to maintain relief families, averaging only 4.2 members, at a level of health and decency. Yet very few of the families had received any assistance from public or private agencies during the year.13

Hidalgo County is one of the heavily Latin-American populated areas in Texas. Yet these low economic conditions have been found to be not peculiar to this area alone, not to

agricultural workers. A somewhat similar study made in 1934 of 153 Latin-American families chosen at random in three Central Texas counties revealed that . . .

. . . the employment situation follows no particular pattern. Types of jobs vary widely. Eighteen per cent of the fathers do farm work, with only 9 per cent of the mothers working outside the home. Seventy-four of the families have children who work. The total average monthly income for the families is $88.00, the lowest being $39.00. The average number of persons living in the home is 7.5 with an average of 3.5 rooms per house. One fourth of the people own their homes, the average rent is $9.20 per month. Inadequate toilet facilities and improper lighting are evident.14

The relationship of this low-socio-economic status to school attendance is twofold: the children, because of economic necessity have to remain out of school (1) to help earn a living, and (2) lack of clothes and other essentials keep many of them away. Kibbe cited a number of case studies to illustrate the practice of children working when they should have been in school.15 Perhaps one of the most tragic examples of this practice is illustrated by the following report made by W. A. Shailey of Starr County, field worker for the Texas State Department of Public Welfare, to a professional workshop on inter-American relations education in Austin on March 21, 1945:

On March 15, 1940, a truck carrying forty people to the vegetable fields in the Valley was hit by a train. Twenty-seven of the forty were killed, and among them were eight children of school age, eight children who should have been and would have been in

14 Kibbe, op. cit., p. 90. 15 Ibid.
school that morning, if the necessity for earning their daily bread had not forced them to join the crew of vegetable workers. I knew them all—knew their families, their living conditions, their economic circumstances.⁶

The children of migratory labor suffer perhaps the severest handicap in lack of educational opportunities. The migrants travel in family groups. The work season usually begins in the lower Rio Grande Valley in June or July during the vegetable harvest and lasts through the cotton picking season on the upper plains region in December or January. By the time the season is over the opportunity for half a year's schooling has already been lost. Although many of these children enroll in school for the spring term, they are, year after year, placed in the same grade, because of the time lost between enrollment periods.

The inability to dress like the other children is a direct outgrowth of the low economic status of the Latin-Americans. The low wages of the parents preclude clothes on a par with those of parents with a high standard of living. Shoes especially present a problem. Even in the cases where the children have adequate clothing and equipment, the attitude of racial superiority adopted by the Anglo-Americans serves to keep many children away from school. Manuel states that while many Mexicans are regarded with respect and consideration in their own communities, there is a tendency on the part of the other whites to treat them as

⁶Ibid., pp. 83-89.
socially inferior.\textsuperscript{17} The attitudes of the children toward this treatment varies from apparent acquiescence to bitter resentment.

In the findings of these different studies, there has been indicated a significant relationship between school attendance and the socio-economic status of the Latin Americans. The latter has operated to decrease school attendance or prevent it altogether.

School Marks and Progress as Attendance Factors

An age-grade distribution study of Latin-American scholastics enrolled in the public schools of Texas in 1942-43 showed:

1. That only about 55 per cent of those children, six to seventeen inclusive, enrolled in the public schools.
2. That 72 per cent of those enrolled were in the age-group six to twelve, inclusive.
3. That 86 per cent of the children, ages six to twelve, inclusive, enrolled in the public schools were in the first three grades.
4. That slightly more than 52 per cent of all Latin American pupils, ages six to seventeen, inclusive, enrolled in the public schools were in grades one, two, and three. That is to say, it appears that the greater portion of the 53 per cent who do enroll in the public schools never go beyond the third grade.
5. That over-ageness is a dominant characteristic of all grades.
6. That there is no significant difference in age-grade distribution among common schools and independent schools.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Manuel, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 20-21.

\textsuperscript{18} Little, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 64.
A further study of enrollment and average daily attendance by grades of Latin-American children in a representative number of school systems in Texas sheds more light on the statistics quoted. The percentage in average daily attendance in the first grade was found to be 63.8 per cent; in the second grade, 62.8 per cent; in the third grade, 61.0 per cent; in grade four, 60.1; and in the fifth and sixth grades, 58.6 and 58.4, respectively. At grade seven the percentage in average daily attendance rose to 59.8.19

From this point the attendance figure increased at a steady rate to reach a percentage in average daily attendance of 75.2 in grade twelve. Few Latin-American children, however, remain in school to reach the twelfth grade.

The relationship which poor attendance record of the Latin-American students bears to school progress and marks is illustrated by a review of studies on the subject. Ayres in his book Laggards in Our Schools states:

The questions why pupils leave school is one that is often asked and seldom answered. Of course, the great majority of them go to work, but this fact is far from being an explanation of their leaving school. In the case of the great numbers of children who leave before completing the elementary course, if the question asked were why they do not continue longer in school, the answer would be, as stated previously in other connections, that upon reaching the end of compulsory attendance period they find themselves in the fifth or sixth grade instead of in the eighth and, seeing that the prospect of graduation is remote, they leave and go to work. . . .

19Ibid., p. 65.
In reality it is probably that lack of success in school studies is the greatest single cause which impels pupils to drop out of school.\textsuperscript{20}

Ayres further stresses the necessity of a feeling of success for every human being. He states it this way:

Success is necessary for every human being. To live in an atmosphere of failure is tragedy to many. It is not a matter of intellectual attainment; not an intellectual matter at all but a moral matter. The boys and girls coming out of school clearheaded and with good bodies, will do more for themselves and the world than those who come out with far greater intellectual attainments, but who lack confidence, who have not established the habit of success but within whom the school has established the habit of failure.\textsuperscript{21}

Ziegler, who made a study of school attendance as a factor in school progress, states that poor attendance in itself cannot be said to be a cause for leaving school but it evidently is an indication in the majority of cases that the child will be one of those who will not remain very long under the influence of public education.\textsuperscript{22} Delayed progress is a direct cause of poor attendance. The cycle, according to Ziegler, was this: "Age-delay-poor attendance-elimination from school".\textsuperscript{23}

Ziegler, who based his opinions on a study of 307 pupils in the 7th grade of a junior high school in a Pennsylvania

\textsuperscript{20}Leonard P. Ayres, Laggards in Our Schools, p. 99.
\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 220.
\textsuperscript{22}Carl William Ziegler, School Attendance as a Factor in School Progress, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}
city of about 150,000 people, reached the conclusion that attendance of pupils in school had a very strong relationship to the marks assigned them on various types of tests. He summed up the findings of the study in this way:

The cumulative effect of all data thus far studied is to emphasize the close relationship between school progress and school attendance. An additional fact that is noticeable is the positive relationship between school marks and school attendance.24

The relationship between the attendance records of the Latin-American children in Texas and their progress in school is graphically illustrated in the following table taken from the follow-up study by the State Department of Education of Little's investigation. Sixteen counties, chosen at random, were studied.

According to the data in Table 1 the only two counties with less than 70.0 per cent of failures were those of El Paso and Bexar. These two counties had a higher average daily attendance than any of the other counties. The counties with the lowest average daily attendance were the ones with the highest per cent of failures. These figures indicate that the attendance records of the Latin-American children in Texas had a direct relationship to the percentage of failures, in relation to the attendance, the data show the high degree of failure by the Latin-American children as a whole.

24 Ibid., p. 48.
TABLE 1

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTENDANCE RECORDS OF LATIN-AMERICAN STUDENTS AND THEIR PROGRESS IN SCHOOL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of Latin-American Pupils Enrolled</th>
<th>Average Daily Attendance of Latin-American Pupils</th>
<th>Number of Failures to Make a Grade</th>
<th>Per Cent of Failures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarrant</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>13839</td>
<td>21784</td>
<td>14570</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudspeth</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Green</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>86.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLennan</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bexar</td>
<td>23759</td>
<td>21856</td>
<td>15641</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zavala</td>
<td>1293</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travis</td>
<td>2763</td>
<td>1778</td>
<td>2180</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazos</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee</td>
<td>1516</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>1147</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galveston</td>
<td>1137</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooks</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>14326</td>
<td>9396</td>
<td>11492</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nueces</td>
<td>7898</td>
<td>5241</td>
<td>6232</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cultural Factors Affecting Attendance of Latin-American Children in School

There are strong cultural differences between the Latin-American children and the Anglo-Americans in the schools. In the first place, there is the barrier of language. The reasons for justifying the segregated Latin-American school are based on the fact that the majority of these children speak no English when they come into the school room.

25Table quoted from Hibbe, op. cit., p. 87.
as previously reported the low-socio-economic status of many of the pupils prevents many of them from having clothes like the other children, and their standards of personal cleanliness, in many instances, causes them to be regarded with disfavor. There is also a tendency, according to Manuel, on the part of some of the Anglo-Americans to adopt an air of racial superiority towards the Latin Americans and to treat them as social inferiors.26

Mexico, basically, is the home of one of the oldest cultures. The contributions to civilization made by the Spaniards have been significant. Mexico City is one of the cosmopolitan cities of the world. It has a great university, and a highly cultured population. The peasants, poor and illiterate as many of them are, have an artistic sense and they fashion ornaments out of silver and weave tapestries that are noted for their color and design. During the recent war the country was a source of vital mineral supplies, and thousands of Latin-American boys were drafted into the armies.27 The number that were killed in conflict and the number of high decorations awarded the Latin-American soldiers bear mute evidence to their loyalty and devotion to the United States. The Mexican people have much to be admired for in their achievements and cultural contributions.

27 Kibbe, op. cit., pp. 24-25.
However, the majority of the Anglo-Americans have little knowledge or appreciation of the culture of the Latin American people. Kibbe explains why this is so:

This total unawareness is due to a diversity of causes.
To begin with, our educational system, from the elementary grades through college, has been at fault. Except for those who have done special research in the field, the present out-of-school population of Texas has had no instruction in the history, the geography, the literature, the peoples, the culture, the politics, or the social and economic structure of Latin America. Until the very recent past, the history of Texas was taught with a bias that could not fail to generate prejudices against Mexico and Mexicans. Because of the thousands of illiterate Mexican laborers that have flowed into the State during the last fifty years, as we have seen, furnishing through no fault of their own, a vast reservoir of cheap labor and thereby enabling a "colonial economy" to persist in Texas, unreasoning prejudices have been intensified.28

Regardless of the fact that this attitude cannot be held against the Anglo-American children (they know nothing else), the superior attitude that they adopt toward the Latin-American child has a tendency to keep him out of school. As Ziegler so aptly phrased it: "Success is necessary for every human being".29 The Latin-American children, socially ostracised, have a tendency to gather in groups and not to participate in the school activities. It is human nature to expect the children not to take too great an interest in the school nor desire to attend regularly.

29 Ziegler, op. cit., p. 45.
While there are no definite statistics to show that cultural differences have operated to decrease attendance of Latin American children in school, there is a common feeling among those who have taught in the schools that such is the case.

School Set-Up as a Factor in Influencing Attendance of Latin-American Children

The effects of the school set-up should be considered in a study of attendance. Factors in the set up are the personality and training of the teacher, the segregation of Latin-American children, and the place accorded the children in the activities of the school.

Little has this statement concerning the teachers:

Educators need to understand these people, their ways of thinking and living. Expert leadership is needed in all the teaching fields, particularly in the fields of language, of civic education, and of health; and the need for guidance—educational, vocational, personal and social—is one of the most pronounced of all needs which the schools can and should meet.30

Swope says:

These children must have teachers with special personality and professional qualifications. Those who are sympathetic and friendly, who have emotional stability, patience, tolerance, a sense of humor, as well as a true appreciation for and recognition of the Mexican culture. In regard to professional training, teachers should be thoroughly familiar with the racial and historical background of the children of Mexican heritage. Instructors need a thorough knowledge of the unique needs of these children and the ability to constantly adapt the school curriculum to these needs.31

These are the needs as set up for teachers. The actual reality is described by Kibbe:

Above and beyond all these reasons for the Spanish-speaking child's failure to make satisfactory progress in school is another consideration of paramount importance. With frequent outstanding exceptions, our elementary teachers have been lacking entirely in knowledge and understanding of Latin-American children; and until the very recent past, the teacher-training institutions in Texas were not actively aware of the fact that the successful instruction of Spanish-speaking children requires special teaching methods and classroom materials, in addition to a general and fairly comprehensive knowledge and understanding of their social characteristics and economic background. Add to this the fact that, in many Texas schools districts, teachers in segregated schools receive from $400.00 to $600.00 a year less salary than those in the other schools and it is readily understandable why, for the most part, the inferior academic qualifications of teachers of Latin-American children act as a deterrent to both attendance and progress.32

The effect that untrained and indifferent teachers have had upon the problems of non-attendance by Latin-American children can not be measured statistically. Kibbe's version of the situation, however, could be verified time and time again through administrators who have had a sincere desire to help but have seen their efforts come to naught at the hands of an indifferent teacher.

Segregated schools have been very common in the heavily populated Latin-American areas. The most common reason used to justify these schools has been the argument that the children could not speak English. A recent decision in a Federal District Court has made it mandatory that such schools

32 Kibbe, op. cit., pp. 102-103.
be discontinued after the present year. For this reason no further discussion will be given this factor in causing non-attendance of Latin-American children in school.

The extent to which the Latin-American students are allowed to participate in the normal activities of the school is also another attendance factor. Discrimination against students because of their race destroys the feeling of success or creative instinct mentioned by Ziegler as being a necessary factor in attendance. Hibbe cited three instances wherein Latin American students who had done creditable work in school were denied equal privileges with other students because of their race.33

Still another factor influencing school attendance is the extent to which the compulsory school attendance law is enforced.34 At the present time, the money for the school support is furnished on a per capita basis and the school gets the money for the scholastic whether he attends school or not. The extra trouble that the non-English speaking child causes, as well as the untidy personal appearance of some of them, repels the teacher. She exerts little pressure to keep the child in school. Superintendents, likewise, disregard the compulsory school law when its rigid enforcement would fill his already overcrowded schoolrooms and add an extra load to teachers already overburdened.

33 Ibid., p. 92. 34 Ibid., p. 93.
Kibbe says that "doubtless the manner in which the State school funds are apportioned to the districts has much to do with the failure to enforce the attendance law."35

Summary

The results of this study on factors which influence the attendance of the Latin-American children in the schools of Texas may be summarized as follows:

1. Health is a factor that plays an important part in school attendance. The health of the child in turn depends upon his care, his housing, his food and his socio-economic status.

   Sickness occurs among the children that could be avoided if better care were possible.36

   Lack of proper clothing and undernourishment made a child susceptible to colds and other illnesses.37

   Contagious diseases and other afflictions are left untreated for lack of funds.38

   Failure of local communities to provide water, sewage, and other sanitary facilities breed disease and ill health.39

35 Ibid.

36 Abbott and Brekenridge, op. cit., p. 128.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.
Latin American death rate from tuberculosis is high.\textsuperscript{40}

The death rate from diarrhea—caused by filth and insanitary living conditions—for children is very high in counties with Latin American population of twenty per cent or more.\textsuperscript{41}

The diet of the Latin-American people is deficient in Vitamin content.\textsuperscript{42}

2. The socio-economic status of the child is an influential factor in school attendance of Latin American children.

Nearly half of the children in the schools have parents classified as unskilled laborers receiving very low wages.\textsuperscript{43}

Latin-American children, because of economic necessity have to remain out of school to help earn a living.\textsuperscript{44}

3. School marks and progress are influential factors in the attendance of Latin American children in school.

Only about fifty-three per cent of those children (Latin American) six to seventeen inclusive, enrolled in the public schools in 1942-43 in Texas.\textsuperscript{45}

Average daily attendance of the Latin Americans who did attend was less than sixty-five per cent for all grades under the seventh.\textsuperscript{46}

The counties with the highest daily attendance had the highest per cent of promotions.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{40} Kibbe, op. cit., p. 126. \textsuperscript{44} Kibbe, op cit., p. 90.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 129. \textsuperscript{45} Little, op. cit., p. 64.

\textsuperscript{42} Winters, op. cit., p. 17. \textsuperscript{46} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{43} Warburton and others, op. cit., p. 4. \textsuperscript{47} Kibbe, op. cit., p. 87.
The counties with the lowest daily attendance had the greatest number of failures.\(^48\)

Lack of success in school studies is the greatest single cause which impels people to drop out of school.\(^49\)

Success is necessary to every human being.\(^50\)

There is a positive relationship between school marks and school attendance.\(^51\)

4. There are cultural differences between the Anglo-Americans and Latin Americans which adversely affect the attendance of the Latin-American children in school.

There is a tendency on the part of some Anglo-Americans to adopt an air of racial superiority.\(^52\)

The majority of the Americans have little knowledge or appreciation of the culture of the Latin American people.\(^53\)

Success is necessary for every human being.\(^54\)

There is a common feeling that lack of understanding has operated to decrease Latin-American children's school attendance.\(^55\)

5. The set up of the school system has a decided effect on the attendance of the Latin American children.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Ayres, op. cit., p. 99.

\(^{50}\) Ziegler, op. cit., p. 45.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 48.

\(^{52}\) Manuel, op cit., p. 21.

\(^{53}\) Kibbe, op cit., p. 214.

\(^{54}\) Ziegler, op. cit., p. 45.

\(^{55}\) Kibbe, op. cit., p. 215.
With . . . exceptions the elementary teachers have been lacking entirely in a knowledge and understanding of Latin-American children. 58

Educators need to understand these people. 57

These children must have teachers with special personality and professional qualifications. 58

Discrimination against students because of race in school activities destroys a feeling of success. 59

The extent to which the compulsory school law is enforced influences school attendance. 60

The manner in which the State school funds are apportioned to the districts has much to do with the failure to enforce the attendance law. 61

Conclusions

In the light of these findings the following conclusions have been reached from this review of the factors influencing the attendance of Latin American children in the Texas Schools:

1. Poor health conditions, caused by inadequate diet, unsanitary living conditions, substandard housing, low socioeconomic status, and lack of medical care prevent many Latin-American children from attending school.


58 Swope, op. cit., p. 22. 59 Ziegler, op. cit., p. 45.

60 Kibbe, op. cit., p. 93. 61 Ibid., p. 93.
2. The low socio-economic status caused by low wages and inequality of employment decrease the attendance of the children of both the rural laborer and of the city worker as well.

3. There is a close relationship between the non-attendance records of the Latin-American children and the grade progress and marks.

4. Cultural differences between the races are an important factor in the low attendance records of the Latin-American children.

5. The type of teachers in the school, the part that Latin-American children are allowed to take in the activities, and the manner in which the school funds are apportioned are all factors in the school attendance of these children.
CHAPTER III

SURVEY OF THE LATIN-AMERICAN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE
IN WICHITA FALLS FOR THE SCHOOL TERM
OF 1947-48

Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: (1) to survey the attendance records of the Latin-American school children in Wichita Falls, Texas for the 1947-48 school year; (2) to determine some of the factors influencing this attendance, and (3) to note the progress made within the last ten years in improving the attendance of the Latin-American children.

Number of Scholastics

Although Wichita County is on the northern boundary of the state and over four hundred miles distant from the Mexican border, it has its share of Latin-American scholastics, nearly all of whom reside in the city of Wichita Falls. The 1942-43 school census as reviewed by Little showed that Wichita County had 433 of these Spanish-speaking children to educate. The school census of 1928 listed only 143 Latin-American scholastics; the increase occurring between then

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1 Little, op. cit., p. 23.
2 Ibid., p. 31.
and 1942 was over 200.0 per cent. During the same period there was an increase of 43.0 per cent of Latin American scholastics in the state. The school census of the city of Wichita Falls for 1947-48 showed that there were 443 Latin-American scholastics. The increase in number of these school age children has not been as great in the past few years as earlier, but there has been a definite gain.

Wichita Falls' Obligation to These Children

Wichita Falls is obligated to educate these Spanish-speaking children to the same extent as it is obligated to educate all the other children in the city. The public schools are democratic institutions and provision is made for the minority groups as well as those in greater numbers. A provision in the State Constitution, Article VII, Section 7, reads as follows:

Separate schools shall be provided for the white and colored children, and impartial provisions shall be made for both.\(^3\)

Articles 2901 and 2902 of the School Laws of Texas make the following requirements respectively:

Every child in the State of schoolastic age shall be permitted to attend public free schools of the district or independent district in which it resides at the time it applies for admission, notwithstanding that it may have been enumerated elsewhere, or may have attended elsewhere part of the year.

\(^3\)The Constitution of the State of Texas, Article VII. Section 7.
All children without regard to color, over six years of age and under eighteen years of age at the beginning of any scholastic year, shall be included in the scholastic census and shall be entitled to the benefits of the public school fund for that year. . . .

No school district, however, can educate these children of Latin-American descent unless they are in school. The compulsory school law requires attendance of 120 school days of all children between the ages of seven and sixteen. Yet the enforcement of the attendance is left up to the local districts, and whether it is enforced or not depends upon the local attitudes toward the compulsory attendance and the many factors involved in each community.

Schools Attended by the Latin-American Children in Wichita Falls

The Latin-American children attend Benito Juarez School, a segregated school for Latin Americans only, through the first three grades. The school is in the immediate neighborhood of the Latin-American section of the city. After completion of the third grade, these Latin-American children are interspersed with the Anglo-American children in grade schools of their districts within the city. Of the eleven grade schools for white children, only three or four ever receive Latin American pupils as the majority of them attend Travis Elementary School which is only a few blocks

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4Public School Laws of the State of Texas, Article 2901 and 2902.
distant from Benito Juarez School and is adjacent to the Latin-American settlement. After completion of the seventh grade, the Latin-American children go to Reagan Junior High School as it is the closest of the two junior high schools in the city to their neighborhood. This junior high school is about one and one-half miles from the Latin-American settlement and is across the business section of town. After completion of junior high school, the Latin Americans go on to Wichita Falls High School which is attended by all white children in the city. This school is about three miles distant from the Latin-American community and necessitates travel by bus completely across the city.

Distribution of the Latin-American Scholastics in Wichita Falls by Ages Based on the 1947-48 Census

The distribution of the Latin-American children in Wichita Falls by ages based on the 1947-48 census is shown in Table 2. This table shows the number of children listed under each age, six to seventeen inclusive.

According to the data in Table 2, there were 443 Latin-American scholastics in Wichita Falls at the time the census was taken for 1947-48. The highest per cent of scholastics, 11.51, was found in the six-year age group and the next highest was the eleven-year group which had a per cent of 10.38. The lowest per cent, 6.38, was in the fifteen-year group. The different age groups vary in number from twenty-
eight to fifty-one, with the average number in each group being approximately thirty-seven.

**TABLE 2**

**DISTRIBUTION OF LATIN-AMERICAN SCHOLASTICS IN WICHITA FALLS BY AGES, AND PER CENT 1947-48**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>11.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>443</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scholastics Enumerated and Enrollment by Age in Wichita Falls for 1947-48

Of the 443 Latin-American children enumerated in the 1947-48 census, only 264 enrolled in school during the year 1947-48. Three over-age pupils enrolled which brought the number up to 267. One hundred and seventy-nine scholastics enumerated did not enroll in school at any time.

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51947-48 School Census, Wichita Falls, Texas.
Table 3 gives the enrollment by ages of the Latin-American children and compares it to the enumerated number in each age group.

**TABLE 3**

COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF SCHOLASTICS ENROLLED IN EACH GROUP WITH NUMBER ENUMERATED IN CENSUS, 1947-48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Age of Latin American Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 Over 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastics Enrolled</td>
<td>51 39 43 34 34 46 29 37 28 33 31 ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastics Enrolled</td>
<td>40 33 28 23 23 38 20 10 12 7 7 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastics Not Enrolled</td>
<td>11 6 15 11 11 13 8 9 27 16 26 24 ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures in Table 3 gives a graphic picture of the distribution of the non-enrolled pupils. Ninety-three of them, or 51.9 per cent, were over the compulsory school age. This shows that the non-attendance is higher as the older ages are reached and much of the elimination occurs in the later part of the grade school age and the beginning of junior high school age. The amount of non-enrollment, however, for the city was only 40.4 per cent, whereas that for

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the state for 1942-43 was 53.0.7

Table 4 shows the distribution of the 267 Latin-American children who did enroll in school in 1947-48 by ages through the twelve grades of public school in Wichita Falls.

**TABLE 4**

**AGE-GRADE DISTRIBUTION OF LATIN-AMERICAN PUPILS IN WICHITA FALLS, 1947-48**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Age of Latin American Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in Table 4, by far the highest per cent of enrollment is in the first grade. There is a decided decrease beginning with the sixth grade which extends through the higher grades until the twelfth is reached.

7Little, _op. cit._, p. 23.
8Records of Wichita Falls Public Schools, 1947-48.
At that level there were no students enrolled and consequently there were no 1948 Latin-American high school graduates.

There are two outstanding things evident from Table 4 about the Latin-American enrollment in the Wichita Falls public schools for 1947-48. The first is that there are very few pupils enrolled in the higher grades. The second is that there is a decided age-grade delay among those who are enrolled. For example, the number enrolled in the first grade was seventy-eight and there were forty of these who were six years old. If the children six years old prior to September first should be in the first grade, then all over six can in a sense be counted as over-age or age-delayed. Besides these forty children who were six years old in the first grade, there were twenty-three who were seven years old, one who was nine, and two who were ten years old.

In the second grade, ten were seven years of age, or the expected age for this grade, whereas thirty were over-age. In the third grade, five were eight years old, or normal for that grade, whereas thirty were over-age. This age-delay can be counted as a big factor in the eventual elimination from school as the children find themselves making poor progress and becoming over-age and they drop out in great numbers. Table 4 does not intend to show that the pupils were delayed because of failure for many have been "over-age" for the grade when they entered. In speaking of
this situation in his summary of conditions in Texas, Little says:

There are two reasons which may account for this high percentage of over-ageness; first, many of these children do not enter school until they are seven or eight or nine years of age; and second, many of them fall short of teachers' standards year after year, until finally, they become discouraged and drop out of school. It is to their everlasting credit, however, that a few of these children do go on to complete the eighth grade in spite of their over-ageness.\(^9\)

The actual percentage of failures by grades among the Latin-American pupils in the Wichita Falls schools for 1947-48 is shown by Table 5.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Failures</th>
<th>Percentage of Failures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 40.

\(^{10}\)Records of Wichita Falls Public Schools.
According to the data in Table 5, the highest percentage of failures was found in the first grade with thirty-six of the seventy-eight (46.1 per cent) failing. The next highest percentage of failures was in the second grade with fourteen (35.0 per cent) failing. This high percentage of failure in the first two grades can be attributed largely to language difficulties and the necessity of drastic environmental adjustments on starting to school. However, 25.0 per cent and 28.0 per cent are high percentages for failures in the ninth and tenth grades, respectively.

According to Ayres, this lack of success in school leads to dissatisfaction, and increased dissatisfaction into elimination from school. He says:

In reality it is probable that lack of success in school studies is the greatest single cause which impels pupils to drop out of school.\textsuperscript{11}

Average Daily Attendance of Latin-American Children in the Wichita Falls Schools in 1947-48

A study of school attendance is not complete without some understanding of average daily attendance and percentage in average attendance by grades. This information is presented in Table 6 for the Latin-American pupils in Wichita Falls during the 1947-48 school term.

\textsuperscript{11} Ayres, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 101.
### TABLE 6

**ENROLLMENT AND AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE BY GRADES OF LATIN-AMERICAN CHILDREN IN WICHITA FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, 1947-48**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Number Enrolled</th>
<th>Number in Average Daily Attendance</th>
<th>Percentage in Average Daily Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in Table 6 the Latin-American pupils in the sixth, ninth and eleventh grades had a daily average attendance of over 80.0 per cent, with the highest being 88.0 per cent in the ninth grade. This was a high average and compares favorably with approximate percent of 81.0 made by all the white children in the state in 1943-44. The lowest per cent of average daily attendance was 60.6 in the fifth grade, with the next low of 63.9 in the fourth grade. These figures are significant because they

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12 Records of Wichita Falls Public Schools.
13 Little, op. cit., p. 36.
mark the transition period of the Latin-American child after leaving the segregated school and the attendance drops noticeably. The high per cent of attendance above the fifth grade would seem to indicate a more serious attitude on the part of the pupils. Those who have been able to withstand the many factors operating to keep the children out of school, it is assumed, really have an interest in acquiring an education.

One of the biggest problems of attendance of the Latin-American children throughout the state is that they do not start to school at the beginning of the school year in November. Table 7 shows the attendance records of the Latin-American children in the Wichita Falls public schools for the year, 1947-48.

TABLE 7

ENROLLMENT BY MONTHS OF LATIN-AMERICAN PUPILS IN
WICHITA FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1947-48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 7 indicate that a large number of the Latin-American pupils did not start to school at the

---

beginning of the term. Only 140 pupils were enrolled in September, and there was a gradual monthly increase until the peak of enrollment, 261 pupils, was reached in February. After February there was a gradual decrease until May, but there were still sixty-five more pupils at the end of May than enrolled at the beginning of the term. In February there were 121 more on the roll than in September; this becomes a great problem to the school when the enrollment fluctuates so consistently with the seasons.

**Summary of Analysis of Attendance Records**

The results of the analysis of the attendance records of the Latin-American pupils in the Wichita Falls Public Schools for 1947-48 may be summarized as follows:

1. The number of scholastics in the county has increased greatly over a period of twenty years.

2. Wichita Falls has an obligation to educate these children the same as it does all other children.

3. A segregated school is maintained for the first three grades of Latin-American pupils in the Latin-American community; the grade school is not far removed from the neighborhood, but the junior high schools and the senior high school are across the city and must be reached by bus travel.

4. The highest per cent of scholastics is in the six-year age group, with the next highest per cent in the
twelve-year group; other percentages vary with the age-group from 6.56 at the thirteen year level to 9.75 at the eight-year level.

5. The highest number of scholastics not enrolled was found in the over-fourteen year age groups.

6. The majority of the pupils enrolled in the different grades were over-age, with the highest per cent being in the first-year group.

7. The highest per cent of failures occurred in the first three grades; the lowest per cent was 0.0 in the tenth grade.

8. The highest per cent of average daily attendance was found in the grades above the sixth.

9. A large per cent of the total pupil enrollment did not enter school the first of September at the beginning of the school term.

Factors Influencing the Attendance of Latin-American Children in Wichita Falls, Texas

Economic and Social: The survey of the economic and social conditions affecting the Latin-American children of the Wichita Falls public schools was made by the writer in a personal inspection tour of the area. All material included here was secured by personal observation and interviews, and from school records.

The environmental conditions of the Latin-Americans in Wichita Falls do not differ too greatly from those in any
section of the state. Their living conditions are definitely not what they should be, but considering the economic status of these people conditions could not be expected to be as desired.

The section of town in which the Latin-Americans live is to the east of the city and across the railroad tracks from the business section. In the better section of this settlement the Latin-Americans are interspersed with the Anglo-Americans but near the edge of town only Latin-Americans live. In this area are found two and three-room frame shacks which have no modern conveniences except electric lights. Very few houses have running water, bath tubs, and sewer connections. The homes in general are unpainted, run-down and unattractive, reflecting in a glance both inconvenience and discomfort. The streets in the section are unpaved and become "bogmires" in the rainy season and are dusty and dirty in the summer. The small homes are overcrowded as the families average about five people.

In the Latin-American section there are a few meager stores and a picture show. Many of these people attend some of the shows in the business district of the city nearest them along with the Anglo-Americans. A Community Center, a night club, one Baptist Church, and one Catholic Church are about the only places these people have to go.
The city has provided no park in the neighborhood especially for them, and their recreational opportunities are few.

The people of Wichita Falls do not appear to be antagonistic or prejudiced in any way toward these people. Their greatest fault might be said to be in their general indifference toward these Latin-Americans and their needs. Much could be done by social and civic leaders if once they were spurred into action. The Altrusa Club of the city has done some work in the Community House with the Latin-American children in play supervision and sponsoring the provision of shower facilities for those who wanted to bathe; but, as a whole, activities of this kind have been few and not too well organized.

The occupation of the Latin-American fathers was determined from the school records of 1947-48 of 167 children. This information is presented in Table 8.

Reference to Table 8 shows that the highest per cent of the occupations listed were in the labor category; no professional occupations were represented. There was one musician listed. The highest per cent, 24.0, was found in the less skilled occupations of cotton picking, beet pullers, and grubbers. Railroad workers and cooks and bakers each had a per cent of 12.0 in the way of occupations. A number of skilled laborers—plasterers, brick masons, carpenter, plumber, and boiler makers—were named by the children as the occupations of their parents. Day labor had a per cent of 15.0.
TABLE 7

OCCUPATIONS OF THE PARENTS OF 167 LATIN-AMERICAN CHILDREN ENUMERATED IN WICHITA FALLS FOR 1947-48 AND 172 IN 1938

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Per Cent of Parents Occupations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1948*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1938**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad worker</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat Cutter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dish washer</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooks and bakers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton pickers and beet pullers and grubbers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil field work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drycleaners</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day labor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store owner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling station attendant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City service</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick mason</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck driver</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler maker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>167</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistics from present study
**Statistics taken from Johns study, op. cit., p. 53.

These figures may seem to be pitifully low, but when they are compared with the data compiled by Johns in her investigation made in 1938, a marked improvement is seen. According
to her figures, shown in Column 3, Table 8, only 2.0 per cent of the parents of pupils were railroad workers and 69.25 per cent were cotton pickers, beet pullers, and grubbers in 1938. Twenty per cent were day laborers, and these were all working for the Works Progress Administration. Only a small per cent of the workers had anything like what could be called a permanent job.

In the personal investigation made of the living conditions in the homes of Latin-American pupils, those with permanent employment, as the railroad workers, appeared to have better education, better command of the English language, and better living conditions. The large number of migratory workers who move about picking cotton and traveling to the beet fields of Colorado and northern states indicate the problem the school meets in seeking better attendance on the part of the children. These children start to school when cotton picking is over and leave in the spring to pull beets; thus their education is received in short periods of school attendance when they are at home. Living conditions, too, are very bad for these children when they are on the road. It would be to the advantage of these workers if they could establish themselves in more permanent work, as the migratory worker makes a very poor living.

**Cultural Differences:**—The majority of the Latin-American families in Wichita Falls speak Spanish entirely in their homes. Even those who know and speak the English language
will revert to Spanish in their home life. In each family, as a usual rule, the mother speaks English less fluently than the father who works away from home and the children who attend school. The younger children, for this reason, know little English when they start to school. The high percentage of failures in the first and second grades, as shown in Table 5, indicate that the Latin-American families should realize the importance of speaking the language of the country in which they reside in their homes. The situation described makes it desirable to provide some means of pre-school instruction in language for the Latin-American children. Language factors can be listed as one of the big factors in delayed progress and eventual elimination from school of the Latin-American children.

There is a great deal of indifference on the part of the parents regarding the education of their children. The exhibit little ambition to surpass their present conditions. This feeling has developed through generations of illiteracy and underprivilege. The children who are being educated should be trained in leadership so that they in turn can help their own people.

The Wichita Falls schools, along with others in the state, have not paid a great deal of attention to these cultural differences. It is not so much a matter of neglect as of indifference. Texas has been growing up and the time and thought
of her people have, to a large extent, been devoted to building homes and establishing industry. Not too much attention has been paid to these poverty-stricken workers and in a great many instances even their presence in the schools has not been welcomed. These Latin-American children, however, for the most part are citizens of the state and of the United States; a new concept of citizenship training sees the need of education for all the children regardless of color or race. Within the past few years increasing attention has been given to the education of minority groups in Texas and schools everywhere are studying how their systems can more nearly meet the needs of all groups.

While there are no provisions made for teaching the appreciation of Latin-American culture in the Wichita Falls public schools, there has been more recognition given to the value of the Spanish language. Three classes are taught in the elementary grades in the ward schools of the town. The Latin-American children participate in these classes and the feeling of success that they achieve in their proficiency is indicative of the possibilities inherent in the children once their interest and enthusiasm is aroused. However, there are few teachers in the system of schools who have had special instruction in teaching Latin-American children; in fact few teacher-training institutions offer any instruction along this line. There is a definite need for instruction of this nature.
Cultural differences though are still marked to a wide degree, especially in the higher grades. Though the Latin-American children often start to junior high school they have a feeling of inferiority induced by the attitude of the Anglo-Americans. Not being able to make adjustments to the situation, they drop out of school and go to work. There is a need for a guidance program at this particular age, for more consideration on the part of administrators and teachers for these pupils, and for assistance in helping them make adjustment. It is believed that a changed attitude on the part of the children of both racial groups would make far better attendance and less elimination of the Latin-American students from school.

School Marks and Progress:—It has been shown in the analysis of attendance by age and grade that the Latin-American children in the Wichita Falls Schools do not make the progress that they should and that they are age-delayed because of the many unsatisfactory elements in their environment. This is a condition which needs to be studied more carefully and provision should be made to overcome every obstacle within the schools' power to eliminate. The Latin Americans themselves will have to awaken to their own needs, enroll their children in school before they are over-age and keep them there. The language difficulty will have to be overcome to prevent the high per cent of failures at the very beginning of the school life of the pupil.
Health:--The Wichita Falls public schools sponsor no special health program for the Latin-American children or their parents. A compulsory health program is required to be taught in the public schools and this, of course, is done. However, a periodic health clinic for the Latin-American children is held annually by the City Health Unit in the Latin American district and a nurse from this unit visits the school regularly. Hot lunches are available for all the pupils in the schools except at the segregated school.

Investigations of areas where housing projects have been developed for Latin-American residents show that the health of the people has improved greatly and the per cent of illnesses decreased where living conditions have been improved. El Paso and San Antonio have done noteworthy work along this line; in Table 1 it was indicated that these two areas had the largest school enrollment, the highest per cent of daily attendance, and the lowest per cent of failures of twenty counties studied.\textsuperscript{16} The consensus of opinion regarding the success of the housing projects is expressed in the statement made about Little Mexico in Dallas: "Better housing has made better neighbors, and better neighbors make better citizens."\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Page 45, Table 5.

\textsuperscript{17} Kibbe, op. cit., p. 149.
School Set Up:—The Benito Juarez school which the Latin-American children have been attending has not been ideal in some respects. It is located in an almost inaccessible situation in muddy weather and the two small buildings are frame and unattractive. The toilet and washing facilities have been meager, but the equipment is the same as for the other grade buildings, except that supplied by active Parent-Teacher organizations in the more fortunate districts. The elimination of this school, however, will have to be made shortly to conform with the recent decision by Federal Judge Rice, in cases in South Texas and Colorado City.

There has been no distinction made in assignment of teachers to the Latin-American school, and they have received the same salary according to their experience and qualifications. These teachers have been sympathetic and they have had the interests of the children at heart but they have been handicapped in many ways. Under the circumstances most of them have done the best they could. All courses and supervision have been the same throughout the school system. The attendance problem would be helped if the teachers in the various grades and junior high school would inform themselves of the scope of the problem and work toward that end in planning methods and materials.

There is a definite need for child accounting and child guidance in the schools to improve the attendance as well as
all phases of education of the Latin-American children. The Wichita Falls schools have no such guidance program.

The curriculum should be enriched to make up for the environmental deficiencies of these Latin-American pupils. There is a need in the elementary school for practical arts and shop work which will keep the children interested in school. More vocational courses need to be included in the junior high school courses. A well-organized program of physical education and sports would help to keep these children in attendance at school.

There has been an increase in the extent to which the Latin-American children have been allowed to participate in the school's activities and in the sports program. In 1947-48, seven of the ten players of the grade school championship softball team were Latin Americans and the captain of the team was one of these. Teachers who worked with these boys and watched them develop under the stimulus of success believe that they will continue in school, especially if they are permitted to take part in the sports of the school.

Progress made since 1938:—Fortunately some basis of comparison as the progress, if any, that the Latin-American people have made in Wichita Falls, Texas since 1938 is available. Johnson's study "Education of Mexican Children in Wichita Falls" covers many of the factors studied in this research. A summary table has been made showing a comparison of the different items studied in conditions affecting Latin
American school attendance of Latin-American children in
Wichita Falls in 1938 and those of the present study, 1948.

Table 8 presents the comparison of conditions affecting
attendance of Latin-American pupils in 1938 and 1948.

**Table 8**

**Comparison of Conditions Affecting Latin-American
Attendance in Wichita Falls Public
Schools, 1938 and 1948**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1938</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>1948</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many families left town to find seasonal work</td>
<td>More permanent work by many families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little financial security from seasonal jobs</td>
<td>More security from permanent jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.6 per cent of scholastics enumerated enrolled 1937-38</td>
<td>60.3 per cent of scholastics enumerated 1947-48 enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.2 per cent of enrollment attended regularly</td>
<td>68.2 per cent of enrollment attended regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No community meeting house for Latin Americans</td>
<td>A new brick community meeting house with modern conveniences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Parent-Teacher Associations</td>
<td>A very active Parent-Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relations between pupils, teachers, and school officials—no Latin American pupil took part in interschool activities.</td>
<td>Better relations exist between the two groups. This fact is brought out in that the past year 7 out of 10 players on championship softball team were Latin-Americans and the team was captained by one of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939*</td>
<td>1949**</td>
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| No medical aid was given the Latin-American people | A periodic health clinic for the Latin-American children is held by the City Health Unit in the Latin American districts |
| Very few Latin American children ate lunches in the school cafeteria. | A large per cent of the Latin Americans attending the non-segregate Anglo-Latin-American elementary school eat lunch in the school cafeteria |

*Information taken from John's thesis  
**Information developed in present study

This comparison made by comparing figures from the two investigations conducted ten years apart bear out the contention of those who are advocating better living and better socio-economic conditions as the most potent weapon in eliminating Latin-American illiteracy and non-attendance in schools. The figures conclusively show that the parents have more stable employment; this, in turn, makes possible better housing, more money for necessities and clothes for the children, and eliminates the migratory labor problem. The actual enrollment and attendance figures of these two periods show a wide increase in the enrollment, attendance, and in grade progress of the Latin-American children whose parents have
better opportunities to provide a living for them. The Latin-American children, as in El Paso and San Antonio, show that given a chance they will take advantage of educational opportunities.

Wichita Falls has a great deal to do yet to make the educational opportunities and occupational opportunities of the Latin-American children commensurate with those of the other white children in the city. The progress that has been made, however, is indicative that progress can be made, and an enlightened public opinion, both on the part of the Latin Americans and the Anglo-Americans, will go a long ways further in solving one of the most vexing problems confronting the public schools of Texas in many areas.

Summary

The factors affecting the school attendance of Latin-American children in the Wichita Falls public schools may be summarized as follows:

1. The socio-economic status of the Latin-American children in Wichita Falls is greatly improved over that of 1930, but it is still low compared with that of the average Anglo-American child.

2. The Latin-American settlement does not have adequate sanitary facilities and little provision is made for recreation.

3. Cultural differences operate to discourage attendance
of the Latin-American children in many respects. High daily average attendance of the students who do stay in school, however, was shown in the data.

4. School progress has been slow in many of the grades; the lack of feeling of success may be one of the influential factors in causing children to drop out of school.

5. There is no organized health program for the Latin-American settlement. A health clinic is conducted for the children and this is an improvement over the 1938 situation wherein nothing whatever was done.

6. There has been a significant improvement in the number of pupils enrolled in school and in the average daily attendance of the pupils over that of 1938. Teachers in the system who are familiar with the situation believe that one of the main factors in this improvement is the increase in permanent employment of the parents; this eliminates the migratory element, provides better housing, better food, more money for medical attention and better clothes for the children.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In making this study of the attendance records of Latin-American pupils in the Wichita Falls public schools and of factors thought to cause non-attendance and failure in grade progress, the following conclusions have been formed:

1. There is far too great a percentage of poor attendance and even non-attendance among the Latin-American school-age children in Wichita Falls public schools.

2. Over fifty per cent of the Latin-American children who enroll in school are in the first three grades and between the ages of six and twelve years.

3. The highest per cent of scholastics not enrolled are found in the over-fourteen age group.

4. The highest per cent of failures occurred in the first three grades, and the lowest per cent in the tenth grade.

5. There is far too great an amount of age-delay and failure to progress among those who do attend, a situation which leads to eventual elimination from school altogether.

6. There is a seasonal problem of attendance because of the shifting of the migratory workers.
7. The socio-economic status of the parents of the Latin-American school children in Wichita Falls is, on the average, much lower than that of the Anglo-American children.

8. The Latin-American settlement does not have adequate sanitary facilities.

9. Few recreational opportunities are available.

10. There is no organized health program for the Latin-American area other than regular clinics held by the City Health Unit and frequent visits by the nurse at the schools.

11. Language difficulty appears to be one of the main causes of failure in grade progress in the primary grades; this in turn, causes age-delay, a feeling of frustration or inferiority, with a consequent decrease in attendance or elimination from school altogether.

12. The lack of educational opportunities for the Latin-American children do not appear to be caused from antagonism between the races, but indifference to the importance of universal education for all citizens on the part of both the Anglo-Americans and the Latin-Americans.

13. No serious attempt has been made to teach an appreciation of Latin-American culture in the schools of Wichita Falls.

14. A comparison made of the findings of this study with one made ten years ago for the Wichita Falls areas reveals that there has been a decided improvement in the socio-economic
status of the Latin-American worker in the city, and that a much greater per cent is employed in permanent work.

15. A like comparison of the attendance records of the Latin-American children in school for the different periods shows a decided increase both in school enrollment and in average daily attendance. Previous figures developed indicate that an increase in these has brought about a subsequent increase in grade progress.

16. The children are participating in the school's activities, particularly the boys in sports.

17. The improvement that has been noted in enrollment, in average daily attendance, and in school progress indicate that the Latin-American child, when he is not too greatly handicapped by factors of poverty, bad housing, language handicaps, and indifference on the part of the parents, will attend school and do satisfactory work if he is given a chance.

18. The study furnishes encouragement for those who have been working to improve the attendance records of the Latin-American scholastics in the Wichita Falls public schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations made in the light of the information developed and the writer's personal experience in living and teaching in the city of Wichita Falls are offered:
1. Enforcement of compulsory school law:—The school officials should make a study of the problem of low enrollment, age-delay, failure in grade progress and eventual elimination of the Latin-American children and make an effort to account for each scholastic enrolled, provided adequate facilities for teaching this scholastic, and make a fair effort to see that he attends school the number of days required by law.

2. Better ways of learning:—There is no point in forcing the Latin-American child to go to school if the school does not make an all-out attempt to study this child and meet his particular needs.

3. A system of child accounting:—Before the school can adequately appraise a pupil's needs, it must have a knowledge of the child not only at the immediate present but a working knowledge that will comprise his accomplishments, reactions, and background over a period of time. For this reason a cumulative record should be kept of each child comprising test scores, ratings, personal information, the facts of social and physical background, the interests, and the significant achievements made. These records should be kept up to date and be available for the use of the teachers.

4. Guidance program:—A sympathetic and intelligent guidance program should be established in the schools on all school levels. This should include educational, vocations, personal, and social counseling. This would help especially
in the great amount of elimination of Latin-American pupils at the junior high school age.

5. In-Service training of teachers:—The success of any program to aid in improving the attendance and grade progress of the Latin-American children will ultimately depend on the attitude of the classroom teacher. To this end, an in-service training program for the teachers is recommended. The fundamental aim to be stressed in this program is the need for citizenship training of these children as a protection to the democratic way of life. Disaffection and communistic tendencies result from discontented, under-privileged, and ignorant minorities. The American schools have the obligation to build democratic citizenship, and these Latin Americans are first of all citizens of the state. The statistics of the school attendance records should be studied, the factors thought to hinder attendance should be appraised, and the entire situation viewed in the light of an honest desire to improve the educational opportunities of the Latin-American children. In other words, the administrator and the teachers should study the problem together. Remedial measures can be worked out in concert.

6. Remedial Measures:—(1) Some provision should be made for pre-school training for non-English speaking children. In the El Paso public schools and in some others pre-school training is offered for non-English speaking children from the age of three years on to primary grade school level.
(2) A trained social worker should be employed to act as a liaison agent between the school and the Latin-American area. The Latin-American mothers, especially, need to become interested in the school, and feel the need for helping the little children learn to speak English before they start to school. Problems of non-attendance can also be aided by the work of such trained personnel. Remedial work is much better than having to send a truant officer.

(3) The curriculum should be enriched in two ways: addition of work tending to build an appreciation of Latin-American culture at all grade levels, and more vocational courses for the junior high school grade level. Information and activities relating to the history, literature, culture, and social structure of Latin American should be incorporated into the curriculum at all grade levels. More vocational subjects should be added to the junior high school curriculum in order to attract more students and to increase their interest in the school work. A Latin-American boy with little inclination for books may be mechanically minded; a course in Industrial Arts might furnish the needed incentive to give him inspiration to continue in school when otherwise he would drop out. Elementary courses in homemaking for the girls and shop-work for the boys in the grade schools would aid in building and creating interest for more advanced work of the same type later.
(4) Arousing interest in the subject:—Creating and holding an interest in the subject of better attendance of Latin-American children in school is perhaps the most fundamental objective to be striven for. This can be achieved only through the practice of cooperative democratic practices on the part of the administrator, teachers, parents, civic organizations, and the regularly constituted authorities of the city. It is not the task of a day, a week, or even months. That improvements can be made has been shown by this study. It should point the way to further study and investigation on which to base remedial measures and practices. Intelligent knowledge, is after all, the only sane basis of any action; without it many activities become "busy-work" or useless waste of time.
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