Mosquito Hall: Ethnic Labels and Social Injustices Within the Public School System
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Oral History Description

- This was a class project where 10 interviews were conducted. I and my partner conducted this particular interview through digital audio recording and transcription.
- This project is an attempt to capture a small part of Latino life through the spoken word.
- An interview was conducted with a Latino Graduate student. The questions covered general background information to educational background.
- These questions were designed to engage the informant to dive deep into how they experienced race in their own life.
Informant

- Age 25
- Female
- 2nd Generation American
- Parents were migrant farm workers. After pursuing higher education they are now, regional director of makeup company and mortgage lender.
- Career Goals
  - Work in Medical Anthropology ex. CDC, NIH, non-profit organizations, refugee groups, or local hospitals
Labels

- Uses Mexican-American instead of Latina
- Problems with identity
  - Father’s side: “Apache” which meant “indio”
  - Mother’s side: From Vera Cruz, not considered “criollo” because they had African indigenous ancestry.
- “Too white to be brown and too brown to be white” equals…..OUTCAST!
  - Defending identity: no accent, spoke Spanish, no dark skin, but was Latina.
Social Injustices Creates Passion for Education

- Advocate for her peers during high school
- Low Scoring school, poor community equals no funding
- “Mosquito Hall”
- Believes that system can be changed
Conclusions and Implications

- Identity: Informant had multiple backgrounds with a preference towards Mexican – American
- Ethnic Labels suggest strong feeling of being an outcast
- Informant experienced extreme differences with the social injustices within the infrastructure of her school and school district
- All this generated a passion for education instead of a dispassion.
Further Research

- Social Injustices: Betterment of the school infrastructure
- How these differences occur within public school system and how schools get to the point where there structure cannot support its student population?
- What are students doing to change the educational system?