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EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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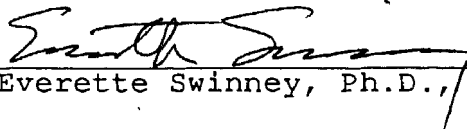
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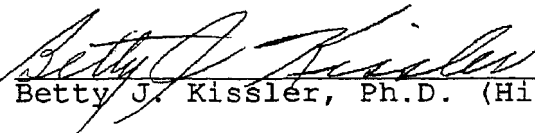
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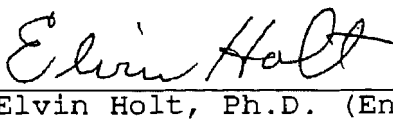
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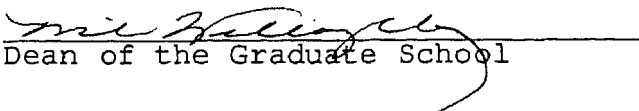
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A fascination with the motivation behind Lyndon Johnson's interest in education and civil rights led me to his experience as a student-teacher in a segregated school. I wanted to find out what he learned in college about teaching minorities. What follows is the result of that search.

PREFACE

The tour bus leaves the LBJ National Park via Texas Ranch Road 1, crosses a bridge, and stops in front of a small, tin covered building setting upon a knoll on the banks of the Pedernales River. The tape-recorded voice of Cactus Pryor, long-time Johnson family friend and Austin radio personality, tells the visitor that it was in this one-room school house that four-year old Lyndon Baines Johnson went to school. Johnson would return to the little school house in April, 1965, as the 36th President of the United States to sign the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). This act was only one of sixty pieces of legislation concerning education that LBJ signed into law, thus fulfilling his desire to be known as the "Education President."

Over 1.3 billion dollars was authorized to improve public school programs for school districts serving low-income children, providing for expanded libraries and textbooks, instructional material, mobile laboratories and libraries, research and developmental centers, bilingual education, drop-out prevention programs, handicapped services, and stronger state

departments of education. These bills not only increased significantly the number of Americans completing their high school education, but the legislation also raised the number of students pursuing education at the post-secondary level. Additionally, the Act expanded the role of the federal government in education, traditionally thought of as a local and state responsibility. This far-reaching bill, Johnson hoped, would "bridge the gap between helplessness and hope for more than 5 million educationally deprived children."¹

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 passed Congress virtually untouched despite friction from all corners because Johnson's masterful political maneuvering saw the bill through. Johnson worked harder on this legislation than any other because, for Johnson, the ESEA was more than a watershed in federal aid to education; it was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream that was fostered in early 1920s Texas.

Lyndon Johnson began his education in the one-room school near his boyhood home, and graduated high school from an unaccredited high school. Southwest Texas State Teachers College required him to attend sub-college courses before he could officially enroll.

¹Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965, vol. 1, (Washington D. C.: USGPO, 1966), 413.

These experiences formed within Johnson a desire to extend education and opportunity for the underprivileged. Yet, nothing influenced Johnson more than the year (1928-1929) that he spent as a student-teacher in the segregated South Texas town of Cotulla where he observed the second-class treatment of minorities.

The stories of Johnson's year at Cotulla are well known. He organized debate teams, enforced an English only policy on campus, coached sporting events, and, most famously, secured 200 toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste from his mother to give to the poor Mexican-American children. Like other historical figures, LBJ's experience in Cotulla has often been seen as proof of his paternalism, his forcefulness, and his ability to dominate those smaller than himself. However, there have never been any substantial investigations beyond Johnson's political future. These stories are used as evidence of the type of politician that LBJ would become rather than the type of teacher he was trained to be. Johnson's biographers have failed to place the young LBJ in the proper historical context, and they have overlooked the environment that shaped him.

Johnson's year at Cotulla reveals a Progressive educator. The early twentieth-century saw vast changes

in the social fabric of the nation. The rapid industrialization of America brought with it a host of social ills that reformers sought to cure. Education was a special concern. On a regional basis, the South sought to share in the prosperity of the Second Industrial Revolution. Southern Progressives saw the wealth that accompanied industry as a means of reforming the rural South and eliminating the problems that it had long endured; thus, they saw educational reform as the gateway out of poverty.

Texas was especially aware of the need for improved education, because in addition to textiles, the nascent oil industry boomed at the turn of the century. While primarily an agricultural state like other Southern states, Texas was unique in that much of its western territory was unsettled and that it shared a border with Mexico. Within a few years, the lure of the westward expansion of cotton and the ravages of the Mexican Revolution made Texas appear a land of opportunity for many Mexicans. This presented the problem of another minority group for Texas' segregated school system. As a result, a debate arose between educators, whether to segregate or assimilate.

This was the social and political atmosphere of Texas in the Progressive Era--a time of change, reform, and prosperity; a time of segregation and confusion.

It was in this environment that Lyndon Johnson would
come of age.

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CHAPTER 1

GOOD MANNERS, GOOD MORALS, GOOD CITIZENSHIP: PROGRESSIVES AND SOUTHERN EDUCATION

Historians have named the first two decades of the Twentieth Century the Progressive Era, and they have labeled the impulse for political and social reform the Progressive Movement. The Progressive epoch came in the wake of an economic upswing which followed the depression of 1893-7. So strong was the movement across the nation, that by 1910 Progressives, Republicans, and Democrats combined had taken control of the Legislative branch of government. Yet, the Progressive movement, unlike the earlier rural reform movements of the Farmers Alliances, the Grange, and the Populists, was not centralized in any part of the nation; it was just as prominent in the South as in the North and had similar goals in both regions.¹

The Progressive movement was not monolithic, but rather a wave of reform ideology that swept the basic institutions of American life and brought together a coalition of diverse interests. Progressivism combined reform aspects of Populism, Social Darwinism, and the

new social sciences together with a discontented middle-class which felt it had lost status during the second Industrial Revolution. Progressives sought "to insure the survival of democracy" by building a government strong enough to oppose what they saw as the growing power of private industry threatening "the nation's institutions and life" as a result of the rapid industrialization of the latter part of the nineteenth century.²

Progressives could also be divided into two camps, urban and rural. Although both were committed to reform of the economic disparity, social ills, and pro-big business government ideology which they saw as plaguing America, rural and urban Progressives adopted different methods. Rural Progressives feared big government as much as they feared big business. They longed for a return to the Jeffersonian ideals of locally controlled government, states' rights, and agrarian supremacy. Urban Progressives, on the other hand, could find more in common with the Hamiltonian concepts of centralized government, nationalism, and governmental regulations on businesses. Rural Progressives generally came from the areas that Populists had influenced, the Mid-West and South while Urban Progressives were found in the Northeast, and industrial centers.

Yet, these regional differences were often transcended by the influence of national professional organizations. If we are to take Lewis Gould's definition of a Progressive--"any American who advocated amelioration of the social order"--literally, then we must include educators in the vanguard of the reform movement.³ Educators, like reformers across the nation, wanted to use the burgeoning scientific methods promoted by the new social scientists and technological improvements developed in the Gilded Age to improve humanity.

Progressives welcomed change and innovation, especially in political, economic, and social reform.⁴ These reforms were to remedy the perceived ills inflicted upon society at large during the period of tremendous industrial growth following the Civil War. To the Progressives it seemed that the nation's industry was being developed without regard for its toll on humanity. The remedy, according to Progressives, was to pass legislation in "an attempt to develop the moral will, the intellectual insight, and the political and administrative agencies" which would allow Americans to explore possible solutions.⁵

Industrialization, urbanization, and the growth of the middle class heavily influenced Southern Progressivism. While all three phenomena were

interdependent upon the other, it was on industrialization that Progressives in the South hung their hopes.⁶ Like other Rural Progressives, they distrusted big business; still Progressives in the South believed the Southern economy would become diversified through industry, and the region would again prosper.⁷ The South had lacked productivity, and a "New South" of agriculture and industry would give the region the wealth that would enable it to live and grow. However, Progressives in the South advocated locally controlled industry which would influence the local economy, not large industrial trusts and conglomerates. The New South philosophy was a natural companion to the spirit of Progressivism at the turn of the century. Indeed, throughout the South, Progressive ideology blended with that of the New South mentality and Populism to form a unique blend of Rural Progressivism.⁸

Henry Grady coined the term "The New South" in 1866 to describe a brighter future for the former Confederate states. Grady described the New South as a "perfect democracy," with a "compact and closely knitted" social system based on "diversified industry." As "[t]he light of a grander day [fell] fair on her face," proponents of the New South were excited "with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity."⁹

Industry deserved credit for "all of our social gains in the South," one Southerner remembered.¹⁰ Sidney Lanier foresaw the impact industry would have on agriculture in the South years before. Industry would carry "with it all future Southern politics, and Southern relations, and Southern art," and would, he continued, be the "one substantial fact upon which any really New South can be predicated."¹¹ King Cotton, as a crop, was a "tyrant who pauperized his subjects," yet as an industry, cotton textile manufacturers meant "larger gains for the South."¹² Southern Progressives believed that proponents of New South ideology, which had developed during the turbulent era of Reconstruction, had long held the solution to the unique problems their region faced: economic development.

Southern Progressives, in general, while different in background and interests from their counterparts in other areas of the United States, shared the common Progressive goal of continuing "economic development and material progress," while at the same time developing a "more orderly and cohesive society."¹³ Southern Progressives were concerned not only with promoting stability in society, but they also possessed a genuine humanistic concern for those less fortunate than themselves. They saw the need to temper the

impact of industrialism with social services. They felt a sense of responsibility for the ordinary citizens of the South who did not share their middle-class, professional heritage.¹⁴

Edwin Mims, professor of English at the University of North Carolina, wrote in 1911 that the New South could be built on scientific advancement, not only by Southerners themselves, but also by Northerners who had adopted the South as their new home.¹⁵ This Progressive idea of industrialization and "social well being" was spreading to all people throughout the South, even immigrants. Mims believed that this was better than the old Southern aristocracy mentality which he saw as "exclusive in its spirit and reactionary in its policy."¹⁶

By the 1920s, the groundwork for a new civilization was in place. Mass consumerism, full employment, better wages in urban areas, and a belief in the power of progress fostered new technology and better means of production and communications which laid the foundation for the final emergence of the New South. Northern philanthropists' money spread throughout the South in an attempt to help cure the social ills which had plagued the region. These social ills were the same poverty, ignorance, disease, parasites, and racial problems which the Radical

Reconstructionists, Redeemers, and Populists sought to overcome.¹⁷

The Agrarians and Populists had called for economic, social, and educational reform in the late 1800s; however, it was not until the arrival of Progressivism that these reforms were given serious attention.¹⁸ The Southern Progressives had an advantage, however, over their predecessors. No longer were these issues seen only as regional, instead, they became part of a great national movement.¹⁹

Progressives across the nation welcomed "innovations and reforms" politically, economically, and socially.²⁰ They wanted intelligent discussions of social problems, and "skilled leadership" to overcome them.²¹

The apex of the Progressive movement came with the election of Woodrow Wilson in the 1912 elections, which also brought political gains for Southern Progressives, especially in Texas. Reform-minded Texans had clamored to follow Wilson as early as his victory in the gubernatorial race in New Jersey in 1910. Wilson's success in the state primary not only gave the sagging presidential campaign the boost it needed, it also brought about the failure of Texas's own political machine run by Governor Joseph W. Bailey.²² Another achievement for Southern Progressives in 1912 was evident in Congressional representation. The 63rd

Congress was the first Southern Democratically controlled Congress since before the Civil War. Representatives from the eleven former Confederate states controlled twenty-two committees, and the Texas delegation was the largest from the South.²³

The disillusionment over Wilson's failure to secure his Fourteen Points at Versailles and his inability to persuade Congress to accept membership in the League of Nations led to the decline of the national Progressive movement, for the coalition that supported Wilson in 1912 and re-elected him in 1916, fell apart in the wake of the First World War. However, the spirit of Progressivism continued throughout the 1920s in the diverse elements which formed the coalition, consisting of farmers, organized labor, urban Democratic organizations, public works developers, social workers, and other independent organizations.²⁴ The perpetuation of the Progressive impulse by these various interest groups is important to the study of Southern politics and reform in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Although it evolved because of changing attitudes, local and regional factors, the Progressive spirit remained.²⁵ This is especially true of interest in educational reform which steadily increased even after enthusiasm for other Progressive reform objectives had declined.²⁶

The growth of industry also meant an increasing need for education.²⁷ Throughout the South, except for Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama, over 70% of the states' budgets were for the development of good roads, the promotion of industry, and educational improvements.²⁸ This was a dramatic change in Southern attitude toward public education. The South once scoffed at academic pursuits, but "[t]he boll weevil . . . and the sudden awakening to the errors of the past" caused Southerners "to turn with almost pathetic yearning to men of authority."²⁹ While the call for better public education had been sounded at various times across the South, Progressives and professionals finally gave educational reform the support it needed.³⁰

The Southern Progressives sought educational reform for schools in the burgeoning towns and cities of New South. Many young people from the country were leaving the family farms for towns and cities since the increasing size of Southern urban areas held the promise of more opportunities. There was also a growing realization among Southern businessmen that "unintelligent, unskillful labor" was not only "unprofitable, but dangerous."³¹ Illiteracy was widespread among the labor force in the South. Despite traditional Southern education being white-male

oriented, twenty percent of the white males in the South were illiterate. The fifty percent illiteracy rate of the Negro population also reflected the poor educational opportunities afforded them as a result of racism.³² The role of public education in the Southern urban, industrial areas, therefore, was to train a better, more efficient, and productive labor force.³³ Educational reforms for Negroes were also prompted in part by advances from the nascent Negro middle-class. Negro leaders used self-help programs and Progressive ideology to seek out concessions from whites interested in helping hardworking, "New South" Blacks.³⁴

Progressives also saw the need for improved rural education as well. The siren song of the cities which lured many away from the family farm was a swan song for the rural South. Across the South, the rural communities suffered from urbanization. Rural ministers saw significant reductions in their salaries as their members migrated. Rural school enrollment fell, so districts increased their size to accommodate the remaining students, making transportation more difficult for those who stayed behind. This, in turn, led more families to look toward educating their children at the better schools in town.³⁵

A "Back to the Farm" movement spread across the nation. People believed that rural children should be

trained in agricultural skills so that they might remain in the rural community.³⁶ The president of the Texas Farmers' Congress, H. E. Singleton, mourned the erosion of rural population:

The country man is fast recognizing that the towns are drawing the best and strongest character from the country to the town. And the towns have noted an increase in their population of retired farmers. The country has lost much, and the towns gain but little by the change.³⁷

Teaching youngsters how to grow crops scientifically might slow the migration to the urban areas. Education was no longer a luxury; it was a necessity. "Every man who, without the aid of liberal education, has made what the world calls a 'practical success' out of farm operations," Singleton observed, "realizes how much an education would have helped."³⁸

Frederick T. Gates of the General Education Board promulgated the utopian vision of the Progressive rural school in an article printed in the Progressive magazine, World's Work.³⁹ The ideal rural school would train rural children "for a perfectly ideal life just where they are . . . under the skies and within the horizon, however narrow, where they first open[ed] their eyes." Gates advocated a country life "healthful, intelligent, efficient" whereby an education in a rural school would "fill it with thought

and purpose, and with a gracious social culture not without its joys."⁴⁰

"Every industry in the district" would be represented in the rural school:

Every kitchen, barn, dairy, shop, is a laboratory for our school. The growing crops, the orchards, the vineyards, the gardens, the forests, the streams, the domestic animals, nay, even the tools of every farm are part of our scientific equipment. The horizon forms the walls of our museum of natural history and the sky is its roof, and all the life within is material and specimen for our study.⁴¹

Proper hygiene and cleanliness were also to be taught, "all that is necessary to know about the sanitation of a home, from cellar to garret." Model kitchens would stress proper nutrition, table manners, and food preparation and presentation. Model homes would demonstrate how to maintain a warm, well-lit, and well-ventilated abode.⁴²

The "causes of ill health in the family and in the community, also in the plant and animal life" should be investigated. Students should learn about proper sanitation, "drainage, sewage, the disposal of waste, the water supply, infection, its sources and prevention." Rural schools would depend upon the resources of experts from agricultural colleges, forestry, and veterinarians. These experts would take on the "too difficult problems and they shall solve them."⁴³

Gates believed serious educational reforms in rural Southern schools were imperative:

We call to mind that, for a century past, one Titanic, at least, full of children, with some adults, has gone down every month in the South, for lack of knowledge of a few simple facts about the hygiene of rural homes and their surroundings, and for a lack of proper clothing for the feet of the children.⁴⁴

The proper rural school would no longer stifle the instincts of the child but, instead, would guide the children to their "natural aspirations." Nature study was important to the new country school curriculum, as were the "three R's," yet they were to be taught through practical use, not for an "abstract end." The learning problems children encountered were "of the teacher's making." Once the essentials were taught in practical form, the children would "learn to use them easily and naturally."⁴⁵

Gates believed, as did all other Progressives, that an important part of education was to teach children how to behave socially. He wanted to instill the virtues of "courtesy, helpfulness, gentleness, deference, truth, reverence, honor, [and] chivalry." Gates assured those who worried about the expense of the rural schools he advocated that the benefits the South would reap would more than pay for the cost of improving rural education. The schools would recruit their own teachers. From the common schools, some

would advance to high school. Select high school students would enter college, and, after graduation, a teacher would return to the common school to begin the process anew.⁴⁶

The "art" of recreation was to be stressed in rural schoolhouses, including music, art, and literature. The ultimate goal of the new rural education was to expand the horizons of country life to make it as desirable as city life. The school's duty would be done when the children learned to think and seek out culture and art for themselves. Thus, education would raise up from the rural area "the natural aristocracy of the nation."⁴⁷

Progressives and proponents of the New South sought to broaden education so that it would reach all children. Universal education was fundamental to the Progressive idea of expanding democracy, and New Southerners saw education as a means of improving the labor force and technology of the region. Progressives sought to apply social science to the curriculum to expand the scope of the school to influence family and community life through health instruction. With vocational education, the school would mold itself to meet the individual needs of the student. However, the ultimate objective was to extend culture to the masses.⁴⁸

Education across the South, and in Texas, thus became a catalyst for social reform on all levels. It attracted northern philanthropists, was seen as a "redemptive force" in the South, allowed for cooperation between North and South, and affected the lives of more Southerners than any other social reform.⁴⁹ This was especially true of rural areas, for the primary focus of educational reform in the South was rural schools.⁵⁰

NOTES TO
CHAPTER 1

¹James A. Tinsley, "The Progressive Movement in Texas," (Ph.D. diss.) University of Wisconsin, 1953, 10-11.

²Arthur S. Link, "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?" American Historical Review 64 (July 1959): 836.

³Lewis L. Gould, "The Progressive Era," in The Progressive Era, Lewis L. Gould, ed. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1974, 8.

⁴Arthur S. Link "The Progressive Movement in the South, 1870-1914," North Carolina Historical Review 23 (April 1946): 172.

⁵Richard Hofstadter, ed., The Progressive Movement (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1963), 1-3.

⁶Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., "The Contours of Sothern Progressivism," American Historical Review 86 (1981): 1036.

⁷Ibid, 1045.

⁸Dewey W. Grantham, Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 1.

⁹Henry W. Grady, "The New South," address before the New England Society in New York, 21 December 1886, in Literature of the South, rev. ed., Thomas Daniel Young, Floyd C. Watkins, and Richard Croom Beatty, eds. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1968), 482.

¹⁰Broadus Mitchell, "Growth of Manufactures in the South," Annals of the American Academy 153 (January 1931): 23-4.

¹¹Lanier, quoted in Edwin Mims, "The South Realizing Itself: Redeemers of the Soil," World's Work 23 (November 1911): 54.

¹²Mitchell, "Growth of Manufacturers," 22.

¹³Grantham, "Contours," 1044.

¹⁴Ibid, 1045.

¹⁵Edwin Mims, "The South Realizing Itself: Hartsville and Its Lessons," World's Work 22 (September 1911): 14987.

¹⁶Mims, "Redeemers of the Soil," 54.

¹⁷C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913, A History of the South, vol.9, Wendell Holmes Steveson and E. Merton Coulter, eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History at the University of Texas, Austin, 1951), 397.

¹⁸Link, "Progressive Movement", 178-179.

¹⁹Grantham, "Contours," 1050.

²⁰Link "Progressive Movement," 172.

²¹Tinsley, "Progressive Movement in Texas," 1.

²²Arthur Link, "The Wilson Movement in Texas, 1910-1912," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 48 (October 1944): 169-185.

²³Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., "Texas Congressional Leaders and the New Freedom, 1913-1917," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 53 (July 1949): 35.

²⁴Link, "What Happened," 838-9, 845.

²⁵George Brown Tindall, The Emergence of the New South, A History of the South vol. 10, Wendell Holmes Stevenson and E. Merton Coulter, eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas, Austin, 1967), 219.

²⁶Link, "What Happened," 849; Tinsley, "Progressive Movement," 180.

²⁷Edwin Mims, "The South Realizing Itself: Remakers of Industry," World's Work 23 (December 1911): 203.

²⁸Tindall, Emergence of the New South, 232.

²⁹Mims, "Redeemers of the Soil," 50.

³⁰Link, "Progressive Movement," 174-6; Grantham, "Contours," 1049-1050; Mims, "Remakers of Industry," 217. Mims tells of an industry president in Durham N.C. who began a night school to teach his employees to read and write because it was mandatory for employment. This progressive employer also forbade child employment for those under 14 years, employed a nurse for medical treatment of his employees, and instituted a profit sharing program.

³¹Mims, "Remakers of Industry," 216.

³²Woodward, Origins of the New South, 398.

³³Tindall, Emergence of the New South, 223-224; Grantham, "Contours," 1049-1050.

³⁴Grantham, "Contours," 1048. See also W. H. Heck, "The Educational Uplift in the South, World's Work 8 (1904): 5029, and John Spencer Bassett, "How Industrialism Builds Up Education," World's Work 8 (1904): 5031.

³⁵Holland Thompson, "Some Effects of Industrialism in an Agricultural State," South Atlantic Quarterly 4 (January 1905): 74.

³⁶For a thorough discussion of the "Back to the Farm" movement, see Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955; Vintage Books, 1960), chapter 1, "The Agrarian Myth and Commercial Realities." The effects of the various organizations which comprised the Agricultural Revolt of the late 1900s, the Farmers' Alliances, the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry, and the Populist Movement, had upon education are treated in Lawrence A. Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 41-50, 75-85.

³⁷H.E. Singleton, "Annual Address of the President," in Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Session of the Texas Farmers' Congress in College Station, Texas, August 2-4, 1915 (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1916), 12.

³⁸Ibid, 13.

³⁹Frederick T. Gates, "The Country School of To-Morrow," World's Work 24 (August 1912): 460-466. The next year Gates' book was published bearing the same title (New York: General Education Board, 1913).

⁴⁰Ibid, 461-2.

⁴¹Ibid, 462.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid, 462-3.

⁴⁵Ibid, 464.

⁴⁶Ibid, 465-6.

⁴⁷Ibid, 465.

⁴⁸Cremin, Transformation of the School, vii-ix.

⁴⁹Grantham, "Contours," 1047.

⁵⁰Frederick Eby, The Development of Education in Texas (New York: Macmillian, 1925), 216.

CHAPTER 2
THE ORIGINS OF TEXAS PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION,
1865-1920

Education in Texas was in a poor state of affairs at the turn of the century, and the long struggle to improve the state's school system took full bloom under the Progressive Era. Progressives faced a long battle against entrenched opposition to a strong school system--opposition which had its roots in the early history of the state. Although Texas Progressives had led in the improvement of schools in the urban areas, rural schools were still backward, undeveloped, and unstable. The problems of Texas' rural schools had their roots in the long struggle over the question of whether education was a parental or state responsibility. The battle reached its climax in the years of Reconstruction following the Civil War, and combined with a political conflict between Reconstructionists and Redeemers. Progressives, therefore, were faced with overcoming years of entrenched opposition to an effective state school system.

In the December, 1926 issue of the Texas State

Teachers' Association magazine, Texas Outlook, the regular "Rural School" section showed a poster distributed by the Research Division of the National Education Association with the caption, "Is Every Child Entitled to an Equal Educational Opportunity?" The poster showed two school boys. The boy on the left was attending a country school, the boy on the right a city school.

The country lad, dressed in bib-overalls and straw hat, stands before a one-room school house. The young man on the right, dressed in nickers, coat and tie, is shown in front of a multi-story, twenty-four-room, city school. Each boy lists his school's facilities and length of term, and his teacher's salary, education and experience. The rural child spoke of a seven-month term, a school library with 100 books, and a teacher with only a high school education, one year's experience, and an annual salary of \$755. The city child had the advantage of attending a school with a ten-month term, a library of 5,000 books, and teachers with college degrees, five years experience, and a salary of \$1,968 per year.¹

The pictures in the posters were obviously meant to show the stark contrast between the quality of education the average rural school child received compared to that of the average city school child.

Yet, H. H. Avants, the editor of the Rural School section felt that the attitude among Texas residents would hardly be affected by the conditions the poster described. Avants wrote two responses that he believed would represent the sentiment of the average Texan to the situations in the poster, entitled, "What's Wrong in This Picture?" Beneath the picture of the rural school boy, Avants wrote, "Anybody who knows his Texas would never thus convict himself of general ignorance[:]"

The proportion of one-room Texas schools with terms of seven months is only slightly higher than a teacher's salary when compared to the present cost of Pennsylvania primaries.

Likewise teachers of such schools who are paid the bloated salary of \$755 each and every 12 months are as numerous in Texas as monocles are in Fort Worth.²

Avants also responded to the other charges in similar fashion. One-room common schools only employed teachers with a high school education "if and when they [could] get them," but it was "Boloney" to believe they had an average of one year's experience. Avants also stated that there were "several thousand" one-room school houses "in the State of billion dollar crops and 12 figure natural resources." If the average rural school could boast a library of one hundred books, the rural child was an "educational plutocrat." "Why, in Texas," Avants continued, "you would have to spend a

fortune for traveling expenses to find 100 such schools that have any library at all." The libraries of those rural Texas schools that did hold any volumes were usually comprised of "free textbooks and what [was] left of a set of Britannica from one of the earliest, perhaps the first, editions."³

Avants believed his "wild or garden variety" Texan "taxpayer" would respond "with alarm" to the description the city child gave of his school. The Texan would reply to the child whose school term was ten months that the lad was "being ruined with luxury" from which "no good will come." Avants' hypothetical Texan would respond to the city schoolteacher's education, experience, and salary with equal disdain:

That overpaid teacher of yours right now is planning to spend more of her ill-gotten wealth in learning educational improvements to get the taxpayers' money.

College graduate, huh? What do schools need with teachers that know that much more than you kids?

Taught five years, has she? That's too much public money for one person. She ought to marry and make room for somebody else to get in on a good thing.

Finally, Avants' curmudgeon believed that a five-thousand book library was a waste of money because "folks read and know too much anyhow."⁴

Editor Avants' fiscally conservative respondent may have been a parody of the general public's attitude

toward education in Texas, but the fact is that at the turn of the century public education was believed to be a parental, not a state responsibility.⁵ The persistence of this attitude had stymied educational progress in Texas throughout the history of the state, although education had always been a primary concern among Texas' leaders.

Those who supported free public education were, and had been, a small minority since the founding of the Republic. Most Texans supported free public education only for orphan and indigent children. Despite this, the original state Constitution of 1845 commissioned the legislature to provide "for the support and maintenance of public education" as early as practical.⁶ Funding was to come from an ad valorem tax, and ten percent of the annual state revenue was to be set aside to establish a permanent fund to support the free school system.⁷

The Compromise of 1850 granted Texas ten million dollars to settle a land dispute with the New Mexico Territory.⁸ The Compromise amount was more than enough to pay the state debt incurred from the Texas Revolution, and the balance gave state leaders the opportunity to support much needed public improvements, especially in transportation and public education. Lawmakers saw a way to kill two birds with one stone by

setting up the public school fund and then making loans from the fund to support railroad construction within the state. The interest from these loans would go to support public education. This plan was considered and passed as the School Law of 1854.⁹

This law, thus, established a Permanent School Fund, and, in addition, provided that the state treasurer would serve as state superintendent, authorize county judges and commissioners to set up districts which would be maintained by three trustees, provided indigent and orphan children with free tuition, and authorized the conversion of private schools to public schools. Unfortunately, this School Law of 1854 accomplished little and established few schools.

These few schools closed when Texas joined her fellow Southern states in secession. The School Fund was depleted by the end of the Civil War because loans to railroads were defaulted, and the balance of the public school fund had been loaned out to support the Confederate military. A new school system was not initiated until almost a decade later.

The Radical Republican Constitution of 1869 established a centralized system of free public schools for the state. Features of the system provoked the ire of un-Reconstructed Texans.¹⁰ The school age for

children, six to eighteen years, was considered too long.¹¹ The office of State Superintendent was seen as an unwelcomed assertion of governmental power.¹² Compulsory attendance laws not only effected the agricultural labor force, but also undermined family authority.¹³ The sale of county lands controlled by the state, income from the permanent fund to be re-established from one quarter of the annual revenue, a poll tax of \$1, and an ad valorem tax would fund the system.¹⁴ Legislation to implement the 1869 constitution was not passed until the following year. The School Law of 1870 required that the provisions of the Constitution be enforced; however, the law was virtually ignored.¹⁵

In 1870 the National Bureau of Education reported that 17% of white Texans over ten years of age were illiterate. Illiteracy was 90% for Negroes. Worse yet, there were only one or two public schoolhouses in the state. In an attempt to solve this problem, the School Law of 1871 ordered a State Board of Education to promote public schools, examine and appoint school teachers, fix teachers' salaries, define the course of study in public schools, select textbooks, and perscribe the duties of school districts' boards of directors.¹⁶ Governor E. J. Davis appointed Jacob De

Grees as State Superintendent. De Grees served as Superintendent from May, 1871, until February, 1874.

There was opposition to the Radical school system almost from the outset. A Taxpayers' Convention was formed which declared the taxation provision of the School Law of 1871 illegal because it forced a person to pay for the education of someone else's children. Opposition was also voiced against compulsory attendance because it took children away from the fields during the heaviest work times. Texans also feared exposing their children to "Yankee" teachers, opposed what they considered extravagances of the system, and distrusted the autocratic powers of the Superintendent and State Board of Education. With Redemption, the Radical School System was abolished by the Constitution of 1875, although it had effectively ended in 1873. Despite the short reign of the Radical school system, there were some benefits. The Radical system established the first free public schools in the state and initiated Negro education.

In the Redemption Constitution of 1876 the office of State Superintendent, compulsory attendance laws, and local taxation were eliminated. The scholastic age was changed to eight to fourteen years, and while the Constitution set a maximum of one quarter of the general revenue to be used for schools, it did not

mandate this money to be set aside.¹⁷ The School Law of 1876 implemented the Constitution and established a State Board of Education with only minimal oversight.¹⁸

The community school system began under these laws. Parents in rural areas could petition the county judge to authorize a school which had to be renewed each year.¹⁹ There were serious drawbacks to the community school system. Most schools were in session for only a few months each year; no permanent buildings were erected; the requirement for continuous renewal caused local strife; the State's funding for education was spent on small, irregular schools; and, basically, there was no continuity.

It was not long, however, before Texans began to realize that the Redeemer's concepts of decentralized education were losing popularity. Texans were adopting new attitudes about education due to influences from within and without the state. In 1867, northern philanthropist George Peabody established a fund to help former Confederate states establish public school systems. A 1869 tour of Texas revealed discouraging information about the educational system, yet no Peabody work was begun.

But in 1877, the Peabody fund renewed its interest in the State. Dr. Barnas Sears of the Peabody Board of Directors addressed the legislature and visited several

cities advocating education. Sears' conservative ideas, such as separate schools for Negroes, appealed to Texans. Dr. Rufus Burleson, president of Baylor University, became the Texas Peabody Agent and traveled the state encouraging free public education.

These new contributions to the importance of free public education were challenged in 1879 when Governor O. M. Roberts vetoed the school appropriations bill for that year.²⁰ This resulted in legislation cutting the funding to only one-sixth of the general revenue and set a salary stipulation that teachers would only be paid based upon 75% attendance. The weaknesses of the Redeemer's system were exposed by these actions. It soon became apparent that better equipped teachers, more supervision from the State Board of Education, and permanent school districts were needed in Texas. It was also evident that the system favored city schools at the expense of rural schools.

In 1880, the Texas Journal of Education began publication under the direction of State Superintendent O. N. Hollingsworth. Its mission was to promote free public schools and other educational ideas. A constitutional amendment in 1883 established a district school system and local taxation.²¹ Finally, in 1884, a new school law was passed which re-established the office of State Superintendent to supervise the school

system; provided school districting (except in East Texas and the Rio Grande Valley where the old community school system was allowed to continue); and reinitiated local taxation, a state tax, and the School Fund to be invested in local school boards.²²

Therefore, at the dawning of the twentieth century Texas public school districts were categorized as either independent or common, and it was apparent to the general public that Texas education was in need of help. The independent schools were primarily town or urban, while common districts were located predominately in rural areas, especially in East and South Texas where Negro and Mexican populations were concentrated.

Southern historian C. Vann Woodward summed up the status of education throughout the South as "miserably supported, poorly attended, wretchedly taught, and wholly inadequate for the education of the people."²³ While the South suffered in comparison to the North in nearly all respects, Woodward continued, Southern education was the least developed of all institutions of the region. In Texas, education was no better than that in the rest of the South.

Across the nation in the first year of the twentieth century, the average amount spent per child in a public classroom was \$21.14. In the South,

because of the dual system mandated by segregation, the average per child was much less: \$4.92 for each white child and \$2.21 for every black. The exact amount varied from state to state; Alabama spent an average of \$3.10 per child, while North Carolina and South Carolina spent about \$4.50, and Texas spent almost \$6.60. The average per diem expenditure per child in the South varied from as little as four cents for each Alabama child to ten cents for Texas' children.²⁴

Yet, despite the fact that Texas spent more per child per day than its Southern neighbors, it still ranked thirty-eighth in the nation in number of children enrolled in school, thirty-seventh in per capita expenditures for education, and thirty-fifth in literacy.²⁵ This shocking state of affairs was made public, and the blame for the poor quality of education was laid at the feet of the constitutional limits on the state's education system.

Progressives blamed the restrictions that Redeemers had placed upon the state Constitution as a reaction to the Radical school program, especially the continuation of the common school program which Progressives felt was outdated.²⁶ The constitution limited the amount of assessed property tax. Urban areas could assess as much as fifty cents ad valorem taxation, while rural areas were limited to only twenty

cents. Moreover, rural schools could not issue building bonds, while independent districts in urban areas could.

School-year length, terms, also favored city schools which were allowed nine or more months per term; rural schools, however, had no mandatory term limits. In practice, in 1900 the average school term in city schools was 162 days, as compared to 98 days for rural schools. Other disparities between the rural common and urban independent districts were noted.²⁷ For example, urban school districts spent on average over eight dollars per pupil while rural schools spent only about five dollars, although the number of school age children enrolled in rural schools was more than three and one half times those entered in independent districts.

Teachers' salaries were another concern. In rural schools, teachers earned half that of their urban counterparts.²⁸ This could be explained by the fact that few professionally-trained teachers wanted to endure the indignities of the rural schools and tended to ply their trades in independent districts, leaving the rural districts with few, if any, trained teachers. Only about eight percent of rural schools (930 of 11,460) were large enough for the students to be ranked according to grades, the rest were "one-teacher,

ungraded schools." The valuation of school property in city schools also far exceeded the value for common schools.²⁹

Progressives and other educational-reform-minded groups believed Southern education was wholly inadequate. Texas reformers, caught up in the spirit of progress, not only wanted to better the state's education, but also to somehow eliminate the gaping chasm separating the quality of education for rural Texas children from those who lived in towns and cities. According to Progressives, this pattern of neglect dated from the Redeemer's reaction to the Radical Republican's school system in the 1870s.

In their attempt to eliminate every vestige of the Radical form of government, the Redeemers had destroyed a forward-looking school system that would have served Texas children well, in exchange for a problem-wrought, ineffective, and reactionary system. "Restrictions were consciously and intentionally imposed against the free development of rural education," Frederick Eby wrote in 1925. "It is well-nigh incredible," Eby complained, "that such gross inequalities" were allowed to exist in a democratic society. It was even "more astonishing" that these "discriminations" against rural school children "were not accidental", but "had their

foundations in the laws and constitutions of the state."³⁰

Another reason for the vast differences between city and rural schools lay in the migration from the country to the urban areas. Urban schools were more developed than their rural counterparts because Progressives were concentrated in the city; therefore, city schools were influenced earlier, even in the South. While urban schools progressed, the rural schools languished. It was nearly a quarter of a century before cities were prosperous enough for Progressives to turn their attention to the undeveloped parts of the countryside:

During this time, the rural districts were sadly neglected. The people followed their fathers in the routine of farming, with little desire to vary their products, to raise, on an adequate scale, stock and vegetables for home consumption, or, with many exceptions, to improve their material and intellectual status. Most of the school officials performed their duties perfunctorily, and the people naturally came to regard the district-school in its barnlike building, with its poorly prepared teacher and its three or four months' tasting of textbooks unrelated to the childrens' lives, as a thing of little public or personal interest.³¹

Progressives and educational reformers focused their attention on amending the Texas Constitution to bring the country schools into parity with the independent district schools of the incorporated towns. As evidence of the revival of interest in rural

education that swept the state in the 1910s, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate James E. Ferguson included in his platform a pledge to improve the conditions of the rural schools. Once elected governor, Ferguson advocated the "Million Dollar Appropriation for Country Schools." The legislature allocated this amount over a two year period, from September 1, 1915 to August 31, 1917. Over thirteen hundred schools in almost two hundred counties benefited from this allocation.³²

In February, 1907, a group of concerned educators, laymen, and state officials met in Austin to discuss solutions to reform the educational system. The conference met at the behest of Dr. William Seneca Sutton, professor of Education at the University of Texas, who, three years earlier, had published an article comparing Texas schools to those in other states. The meeting evolved into the formation of the Conference for Education in Texas, presided over by Clarence W. Ousley, editor of the Fort Worth Record, who also served as chair of the Conference's executive board. The Conference met yearly for only five years, yet within those few years it achieved a considerable amount of success in influencing the public of the need for improved schools in Texas.

In 1908, voters approved three amendments for which the Conference actively campaigned. One amendment allowed tax dollars to provide equipment for common schools instead of only the erection and maintenance of buildings.³³ A second amendment allowed a simple majority of property owners to pass a local tax; replacing the two-thirds majority required in the past.³⁴ The third amendment permitted the ceiling on property taxes in common school districts to be raised from twenty to fifty cents ad valorem.³⁵ The State Board of Medical Examiners, the Texas Farmers' Congress, the State Democratic Convention, the presidents of six leading denominational colleges, and the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs also joined the Conference for Education in Texas' campaign for the amendments.

Another amendment the next year allowed for the formation of school districts across county lines and forced the smaller community schools to follow the rules of districting.³⁶ Thus, the community school system, which had been in place since it was established by the School Law of 1876, was finally abolished.

Progressives also spearheaded other attempts to bring rural schools up to par with those in the cities. In 1907, the legislature mandated that all textbooks

had to be adopted for a minimum five years.³⁷ The legislature then allowed districts, if they so desired, to supply texts to students; in 1919, the state provided free textbooks.³⁸ Districts could adopt multiple lists of texts under a 1925 law to compensate for the problems the state had with some publishers' delays in delivery.³⁹ By 1929, the State Board of Education was given power to adopt textbooks.⁴⁰

Attendance among rural-school children was a continuously thorny issue for Texas educators. Since Texas was primarily an agricultural state, school-aged children in rural areas were required to assist the family in planting and harvesting crops. Education was still considered a luxury which occupied a distant second place to making a living. Therefore, it is not surprising that a compulsory attendance bill failed to pass the legislature in 1905.⁴¹ It was not until ten years later that it was mandated for children aged 8-14 to attend classes for at least sixty days each school year.⁴² This was lengthened to one hundred days in 1917, and increased to 156 days by 1929.⁴³

The most obvious Progressive-led reform attempt was the "Better Schools Campaign" of 1919-20.⁴⁴ Organized by Annie Webb Blanton, the first woman to become president of the Texas State Teacher's Association (1916) and hold state office as

Superintendent of Public Instruction (1919-1923), the campaign sought to persuade voters to approve an amendment which would repeal the fifty cents per \$100 ad valorm tax. This would allow local districts to increase taxation to maintain efficient schools. The economic problems which followed the First World War increased the difficulty the state had in financing the school system, as the state was providing most of the money. With the passage of this amendment, school funding could increase at the local level.

The Better Schools Campaign became a grass-roots movement with a massive distribution of literature, public speeches, songs, slogans, and press support. One flyer read:

TEXAS

First in Size.
First in Agricultural Products.
First in Production of Cotton.
Third in Production of Oil.
Seventh in Wealth.
Thirty-Ninth in Education.

Shall Texas keep this rank?

Work and vote for the Better Schools Amendment,
 November 2.⁴⁵

The amendment passed by a margin of almost two to one.⁴⁶

There were other significant Progressive changes in Texas education. In 1911, the Normal School Board of Regents was established to oversee teacher

training.⁴⁷ A Rural High School Law was passed the same year which created a county board of education which would classify rural schools and prescribe their curriculum, establish new rural high schools, consolidate common school districts, and ensure that rural high schools were teaching the same courses as city high schools.⁴⁸

The law also budgeted fifty-thousand dollars to provide a two-thousand dollar matching grant for any school district to establish agricultural, home economics, and vocational training classes.⁴⁹ The State Department of Education was established in 1917 to assume the duties of enforcing the Rural High School Law from the University of Texas.⁵⁰ The State Board of Education replaced the Department of Education in 1929.⁵¹ The Board's purpose was to oversee apportionment, distribution, and investment of the State public school funds and textbook selection.

Curriculum modernization also took place in the 1920's. Agricultural and vocational instruction, and the new social science courses were added. Boys learned business and industrial skills, while girls took home-economic and secretarial courses. All children were given a recess period in their class schedules, and schools employed nurses to provide health care for the students. Standardized testing

became a diagnostic tool for administrators, and teachers began using lesson plans and audio/visual aids. The University Inter-Scholastic League was formed to sponsor sport and debate competitions among schools.

Junior-high schools were also established in the Progressive Era. The junior schools were, said Walter D. Cocking, Director of Junior Education of San Antonio, to teach a little about all subjects so that by the time the child enters senior high school, he or she should "have learned enough about all fields in general to know what he wants to do and can do best." ⁵²

By the end of the Progressive Era education in Texas was well on its way to becoming the current system with which we are all familiar. Yet, Progressives faced tremendous opposition, deeply rooted in the attitudes and traditions of the people of Texas. Texans, Frederick Eby wrote, had been "flattered by the boasts of office-seeking politicians" that Texas had the best schools and the "largest school fund of all." Progressive educators had to persuade the voters that "these notions" of the supremacy of Texas schools made "by provincial politicians were wholly erroneous. . . ."

The people were living in complete ignorance of the deplorable backwardness of the state school system. The majority of the people had no knowledge whatever of genuine standards of educational achievement. Having attended only the

makeshift schools of the rural districts and never having seen any progressive methods, it was quite impossible for them to visualize the new spirit and technique of up-to-date instruction.⁵³

Finally, despite the fact that many rural schoolchildren included Blacks in East Texas and Hispanics in South and West Texas, Progressive educators made no distinction concerning race, beyond complying with the state mandated segregation laws. Progressives teachers, instead, believed in the concept of Americanization--that the foreign-born or racially-different could be assimilated into the mainstream of "American" civilization. Many Anglo children attended rural schools, as well. Education, at the turn of the century, was seen "as a redemptive force" in the betterment of the region for it would affect the lives of more Southerners than any other Progressive program.⁵⁴ It was the goal of the Progressives, therefore, to turn the tide and breathe new life into the state's dying educational system, not to the benefit of Anglo children alone, but minority children as well.⁵⁵

Cecil E. Evans, president of Southwest Texas State Teachers College (1911-1942), said, "These 'wops,' 'dagoes,' and 'greasers' have cast their lot with us. Let us cast our lot with them." Evans echoed the "Melting Pot" theory that a "cosmopolitan population

makes us a stronger nation." "They should have equal opportunities with all other Americans." 56

It was important that Texas educators at the turn of the century be responsive to the needs of foreigners, because just as Progressives were addressing traditional problems in the state's educational system, a new problem introduced itself. Thousands of Mexicans were fleeing the political and economic unrest of the Mexican Revolution and taking up residency for themselves and their families north of the Rio Grande. Texas Progressives were faced with the question of education for these new children with different values, morals, and language.

NOTES TO
CHAPTER 2

¹H. H. Avants, ed., "Among Texas Rural School People," Texas Outlook 10 (December, 1926): 32.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Although there are only two books on the history of education in Texas, Eby, Education in Texas and C. E. Evans, The Story of Texas Schools (Austin: Steck, 1955), there are three essay length articles in the Texas Outlook which briefly describe the history of Texas public schools and equalization problems since the Civil War. These are Debby Bay, "The Shaping of Texas Public Schools, Part I," Texas Outlook (March 1976): front and back inside covers, and "The Shaping of Texas Public Schools, Part II" Texas Outlook (April 1976): inside front and back cover; Alice McDermott, "The Mingled Yarn of the Past," Texas Outlook (May 1956): 16-19, 38; "100 Years of Progress," Texas Outlook (January 1954): 10-13, and "A Century of Progress," Texas Outlook (February 1954): 14-17. For specific research, see James H. Conrad, Texas Educational History; A Bibliography (Greenville, TX: Juris Press, 1979) This work is a good starting place for researchers; however, there are some cautions to be considered. Most of the unpublished manuscripts are limited to those done at the major universities. The editing is also poorly done. Those who use this work should take note and cross-reference titles and names if they cannot find the work cited. With 1086 entries the editorial errors are perhaps understandable, but not justified.

⁶Texas Constitution (1845), Art. X, sec. 1.

⁷Ibid., sec. 2.

⁸Texas-New Mexico Act, Statutes at Large and Treaties 9, 446 (1851).

⁹Laws of Texas, 5th Leg, 1853-54, Chap. 18, 1146.

¹⁰There are many works on the Radical Republican educational system in Texas. Some of the more comprehensive include Ann Patton Baenziger, "Bold Beginnings: The Radical Program in Texas, 1870-1873" (Master's thesis, Southwest Texas State University, 1970), Claude Elliott, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Texas," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 56 (July, 1952): 1-24; W. C. Nunn, Texas Under the Carpetbaggers (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), Carl H. Moneyhon, "Public Education and Texas Reconstruction," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 92 (January 1989); and James M. Smallwood, Time of Hope, Time of Despair; Black Texans During Reconstruction, Series in Ethnic Studies (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1981).

¹¹Texas Constitution (1869), Art. IX, sec. 1.

¹²Ibid., sec. 2, 3.

¹³Ibid., sec. 5.

¹⁴Ibid., sec. 6, 9.

¹⁵Laws of Texas 8 (15th Leg., 1871, C. S.), 113-118.

¹⁶Laws of Texas 8 (15th Leg., 1876, 1st. Sess.), 57-60.

¹⁷Texas Consttution, Art. VII, sec. 3.

¹⁸Laws of Texas 8 (15th Leg., 1876), 199-210.

¹⁹Ibid., sec. 29, 205.

²⁰O. M. Roberts, "Appropriations for Support of Free Schools and Payment of Public Debt," letter to Senate, 22 April 1879, in Report of the Secretary of State of the Staté of Texas from June 23, 1879 to January 1, 1881, Appendix, 120-125.

²¹Laws of Texas 9 (18th Leg., R.S., 1883), 134.

²²Laws of Texas 9 (18th Leg., S.S., 1884), 38-56.

²³Woodward, Origins of the New South, 398.

²⁴Ibid., 398-399.

²⁵Tinsley, "Progressive Movement in Texas," 175.

²⁶Eby, Education in Texas, 232-3.

²⁷Ibid., 216-7.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid. The total valuation of school property in independent districts across the state was valued at \$5,046,461 to rural school property of \$2,648,180 in 1900.

³⁰Ibid., 217.

³¹Heck, "Educational Uplift," 5027.

³²Texas Laws 15 (32nd Leg., R. S., 1911), sec. 3,
35.

³³Texas Laws 14 (31st Leg., R.S., 1909), sec. 154,
21.

³⁴Ibid., sec. 77, 20.

³⁵Ibid., sec. 57, 18.

³⁶Texas Laws 15 (32nd Leg., R.S., 1911), 200.

³⁷Texas Laws 13 (30th Leg., 1st C.S.), sec. 1,
231.

³⁸Texas Laws 19 (36th Leg., R.S., 1919), 41-47.

³⁹Texas Laws 22 (39th Leg., R.S., 1925), sec. 5,
420.

⁴⁰Texas Laws 26 (41st Leg., 1st C.S., 1929), sec.
5(e), 88.

⁴¹Eby, Education in Texas, 230-31.

⁴²Texas Laws 17 (34th Leg., R.S., 1915), sec. 1-2,
93.

⁴³Evans, Story of Texas Schools, 127.

⁴⁴A thorough history of the "Better Schools Campaign" or Annie Webb Blanton has yet to be written.

⁴⁵In Evans, Story of Texas Schools, 125.

⁴⁶Texas Laws 19 (36th Leg., R.S., 1919), sec. 1-2, 356-57.

⁴⁷Texas Laws 15 (32nd Leg., 1st C.S., 1911), 74-76.

⁴⁸Texas Laws 15 (32nd Leg., R.S., 1911), sec. 4-5, 35-6.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, sec. 3, 35.

⁵⁰Texas Laws 18 (35th Leg., R.S., 1917), sec. 4, 152-3.

⁵¹Texas Laws 26 (41st Leg., 1st C.S., 1929), 86-90.

⁵²Genevieve Smith, "The Junior Schools of San Antonio," Texas Outlook 8 (November 1924): 10.

⁵³Eby, Education in Texas, 218.

⁵⁴Grantham, "Contours," 1047.

⁵⁵Heck, "Educational Uplift," 5029. Heck admits that although Southern Progressive educational reform generally ignored Negro schools, the movement had sparked an interest in the progress of Negro education despite opposition. "The educational leaders are declaring for adequate opportunities for the race; county superintendents and county boards are showing more cooperative sympathy in the Negro's desire for school improvement . . . and the general enthusiasm for education is also having a great effect upon the Negro." Another article, by Bassett, "Industrialism Builds up Education," 5030-31, focused upon Durham, North Carolina, where illiteracy had been "practically obliterated." The article briefly describes the progress the schools had made, and despite the dual school system, described Negro schools at almost parity with white schools.

⁵⁶Cecil E. Evans, quoted in Tom W. Nichols, Rugged Summit (San Marcos, Texas: University Press, Southwest Texas State University, 1970), 469.

CHAPTER 3

"ONE SCHOOL FOR US AND ONE FOR THEM:" EDUCATION AND THE MEXICAN QUESTION, 1910-1930

From the 1920s to the 1960s, the so-called "New Immigrants" from Southern and Eastern Europe confronted a hostile reception from many Americans. Immigration quotas, prohibition, the Red Scares, the assault on political machines, and the re-birth of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s all worked to make the new immigrants tow the line in their new homeland. But these problems were primarily in the industrialized Northeastern region of the United States. Many miles away from the smokestacks and sweatshops of New York, in what was then called the Desert Southwest, farmers and ranchers in California and Texas were employing immigrants from Mexico, another strife-ridden country.

The unrest caused by the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) sent many Mexican nationals, almost one-tenth of the population, streaming across the border into the United States. While the majority of these sought economic and physical relief from the dangers of the Mexican Revolution, they found instead

discrimination and mistrust.¹ The majority of the histories concerning segregation in the early-twentieth-century Southern United States focus on Jim Crow segregation in the South. Segregation of non-Anglo population was, however, not limited to black Americans. The deep South truism that "separate was inherently un-equal" was also applicable in the Southwest.

The reported immigration into Texas from Mexico grew steadily beginning at the turn of the century. One survey estimated almost 730,000 crossed the border into the United States between 1910 and 1930, although the actual numbers were probably much higher.² The large number of Mexicans moving into Texas is demonstrated by looking at the demographics of the Southwestern states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. By 1920, the Mexican-Americans in these five Southwestern states constituted 5.3% of the total regional population and 4.3% in Texas. By 1930, the Mexican-American percentage in the Southwest grew to 9.6 and in Texas to 11.7%. In raw numbers, the Mexican-Americans numbered probably about 100,000 after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of 1848, and nearly three million by 1930. Immigrants from northern Mexico came to Texas primarily because of the expanding irrigated agriculture,³ accessible by the railroads

which wound north through Texas.⁴ They chose Texas because Oriental agricultural laborers blocked opportunities in California.⁵

In 1927, Texas Congressman John Box reported that the general debate on immigration policy had three sides: Should the current immigration laws would be enforced? Should those parts of the legislation restricting immigration be suspended or repealed? Should Latin American immigrants would be restricted as were other immigrants from Asia and Europe?⁶ He noted that Mexican immigration was of national concern, since Hispanics were traveling as far north as Cleveland and Pittsburg in search of work. Of course, the border states were the focal point of this immigration; therefore, the social problems caused by the Mexican presence in Colorado, California, and Texas should be carefully considered,⁷ because representatives from across the nation were in support of allowing immigration and relaxing restrictions to allow for "cheap and subservient labor."⁸

With the numbers of Mexicans increasing, many Anglos began seriously to consider the impact their new neighbors would have. While Californians had to deal with the growing numbers of Mexicans, blacks, Japanese, and Indians, Texas's main concern was the so-called Mexican Question. Immigration from South of the border

was of special interest to other migrants:

Anglo-American farmers from the Mid-West. Beef barons who had made their fortunes during the cattle drives of the late 1870s had taken advantage of the completed railroads in South Texas in 1904 to bring in Midwestern farmers interested in buying farm land in the temperate Rio Grande Valley. In a few years, these newcomers, eager to begin exercising political power in proportion to their growing numbers, sought to defeat the patron system controlled by the old South Texas ranchers. Farmers, therefore, encouraged laws directed against Mexican-American voters, whom farmers saw as the heart of the South Texas political parties.⁹

These new laws were directed not only against the native Tejanos, but also affected the steady stream of Mexican nationals. Unlike the natives, however, many of the migrants never intended to stay. Instead they planned to return with their earnings to the families left behind in Mexico once the Revolution calmed and the economy improved.¹⁰ Like the immigrants from Europe at the turn of the century, many of the Mexicans coming into the United States were not only impoverished, but they also saw their new home as temporary. It is not surprising, therefore, that they often found themselves living in squalor as did many Southern and Central Europeans who traveled to the

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great cities of New York and Chicago. Far from living in crowded tenements of an urban slum, Mexicans in Texas lived in a rural slum--crowded shacks similar to those of tenant farmers, both poor white and Negro, in the South.

These shacks, called jacales, often housed several families. They consisted of one or two rooms, no running water, dirt floors, empty door frames and windows without glass or screens. In the words of one observer, these abodes were "hardly fit to shelter goats."¹¹ In addition to the exorbitant rent charged by landlords, Mexicans were often indebted to the plantation commissary from which they were forced to buy because they lacked transportation to go elsewhere. While this generalization speaks primarily to the Mexican agricultural laborers, it applied as well to Mexicans and Mexican-Americans living in towns. Despite attempts to improve housing among rural and poor urban Hispanics, it continues to be sub-standard in many places. As late as World War II the living conditions were dismal for Latin-Americans in Texas:

The prevailing condition found in the homes of Spanish-speaking children is, as a rule, one of dire poverty. . . . The food is inferior; parents lack the knowledge of the proper elements of child behavior; poor sanitation and other evils peculiar to homes of this type exist.¹²

All these factors have significant effects on the life of the child, and very particularly in school achievement.

It was in public education that Mexican-American children often faced the most obstacles. The supposed language barrier provided an excellent rationale for segregating these children into "Mexican schools." The prevailing Anglo attitude was to group all Hispanics together, the bilingual native Tejanos with the Mexican immigrants. One former bilingual student whose family moved into a town with a segregated school remembered, "Then, because you were a Mexican, you did not go to the white school until you were in the fifth grade because they figured you didn't know how to talk English and you couldn't get along with the [Anglo] kids."¹³ Another man recalled that as a child, he knew nothing except segregation in schools:

They had one school for coloreds, they had one school for us, and one school for them. Now, if you graduated from ours [the Mexican-American school] you could not go to high school; they wouldn't let you go to high school. But then I didn't know why, and I didn't ask why, because there was nobody going to answer me anyway.¹⁴

Although the rationale for segregating the students was to give the Mexican children the opportunity to learn English, this goal was usually not achieved. A report, published in 1933, stated that many teachers and administrators believed that "the fourth

or fifth is the grade at which separate instruction for Mexican pupils should end." This was based upon the hope that by the fourth or fifth grade Mexican students would have been taught to speak "and understand English with considerable ease." Yet, in practice this was often not the case.¹⁵

For the most part Mexican-American students were ignored. Attendance policies were lax. "Teachers didn't care if the students learned or not, or if they attended," one man remembered. "Parents didn't encourage school because they didn't know any better, or if work came into conflict with school, work won out."¹⁶ Mexican-American schools were usually given little better attention than their black counterparts.¹⁷ Indeed, a report in 1925 stated that the compulsory attendance law at that time was unsatisfactory to most superintendents; therefore, they did not try to enforce the law. The report continued, "This was especially true in the communities in which there was a large Mexican element."¹⁸

Undoubtedly, teachers did not have to worry whether Spanish-speaking children failed or passed. One observer noted that in classes comprised of both Spanish- and English-speaking children, the teachers would spend most of their time working with the English-speaking children. They knew that if the Anglo

children failed, the parents would be outraged; the teacher would be blamed for spending too much time with the Spanish-speaking children. Teachers did not have to worry about the same response from Mexican parents when their children did not advance.¹⁹

The fact was that state leaders were not prepared to answer the "Mexican Question" in education for several reasons. First, the state public education system was relatively new, dating from the early Twentieth rather than the mid-Nineteenth century as one might suspect.²⁰ Second, since conventional political thought held that education was a local concern, and Mexican-American children were concentrated mainly in rural and a few urban areas, the problem was not considered to be statewide. Third, between 1915 and 1950, these students scored lower in intellectual and educational testing.

Some studies blamed environmental conditions, others heredity. In any case, if local school boards chose to segregate, it could be argued that the state had no right to interfere, for Mexicans, as a whole, were inferior to Anglos, culturally, socially, and educationally.²¹ The results of these tests significantly influenced the minds of many educators with regard to Mexican children.

In the spring and early summer of 1925, the monthly magazine of the Texas State Teachers Association, the Texas Outlook, ran a three-part series by E. E. Davis warning of the dangers of increased cotton production in the western part of the state. Davis stated that Blacks, poor Whites and Mexicans would flood the area and lower the standard of living.²² "The cotton plant, poverty and illiteracy thrive together," Davis wrote in the first article; "King Cotton Leads Mexicans into Texas." Just as Blacks were "inextricably associated" with the history of cotton in the Deep South, so, too, were Mexicans linked with Texas' cotton kingdom.

The article revealed that whites were being displaced by the waves of Mexican immigrants flooding Texas, especially in Caldwell County where there were more foreign born residents per square mile than in Hidalgo or Cameron Counties in furthestmost South Texas along the Rio Grande. The cotton kingdom's call for cheap labor drew peons from Mexico, and "where ever the foreign-born Mexican immigrant goes, the standards of home life and education are distinctly lowered." As whites left, the schools suffered from lower enrollment and disrepair, leaving only "crumbling monuments of vanishing white communities."²³

Davis distinguished native Mexican-Americans from foreign-born laborers, and said the latter increased nearly a hundred percent between 1910-1920. Below the Nueces River, where Tejanos and whites had lived together for many years, there is a common culture. However, in Central Texas the Mexican was the "newcomer" and the familiar call for segregation was raised:

It is seldom that a Mexican child is seen in the white school. The white children and white parents resent their presence. This calls for a duplication of school facilities, if the Mexicans are to have free-school privileges--separate schools for the Mexicans and the whites.²⁴

Davis reminded his readers that many Mexicans were opposed to segregation because they felt it would be harmful to all "Spanish Americans."

He believed the well-born "white" Mexicans should be treated as full Americans, and the "dirty 'greaser'" peon children should be segregated until they could "learn to 'clean up' and become eligible to better society." Compulsory attendance laws were ineffective because many of the Mexicans were distrustful of public education, but after the migrant farm workers settled into permanent households, they would become more accustomed to American institutions such as schools. Once this happened, then he believed Mexican children should be allowed a "fair chance at the free elementary

schools of our land," if Texans were to live up to "our democratic American ideals."²⁵

In the next two articles, "Cotton and Farm Tenancy in West Texas" and "Some Counties Annually Pay Less than They Receive from State Treasury," Davis continued his theme that the cotton crop would economically, socially, and culturally damage West Texas by focusing on the two other groups that followed the cotton plant, poor whites and blacks, respectively. In the second article, Davis questions the reader, "How does it happen that the cotton plant, the illiterate and poor tenant farmer with a large family of children so often gravitate into the same center?" His answer is simple, the cotton crop draws child labor because it offers a place for a poor man with a large family.²⁶

In the third essay, he repeats a "law of human population" found in many other articles concerning immigrants from depressed countries--"the lower the standards of living maintained the larger the families produced." Blacks were prime examples of this law, Davis stated, for they were "more prolific in the production of children" than in "bales of cotton and bushels of corn."²⁷ In this final article, while specifically addressing Blacks, Davis includes what he believed to be similarities between them and Mexicans. "All that has been said about the negro regarding his

low economic productivity, poor standards of living, and large family apply with equal validity to the Mexicans." Both were "lacking in thrift. They produce very little wealth. They pay very little in taxes." ²⁸

Social scientists were also warning of the increasing Mexican population. William Edward Garnett delivered an address in 1925 before the Sixth Annual Convention of the Southwestern Political and Social Science Association in Dallas entitled the "Immediate and Pressing Race Problems of Texas." Garnett believed that the increasing number of Mexicans coming into Texas needed further attention. Most people in the state held a "democratic ideal of social organization." "Social justice and equality of opportunity for all" could only be achieved when there was "homogeneity of the population, in race, wealth, education, social tradition, and religion." In other words, he advocated assimilation.²⁹ Garnett referred to the commonly held belief that Mexicans have large families which rose from the "swarms of little fellows commonly seen around Mexican shacks." He blamed the Catholic Church for giving license to large families and cited the "fact that the lower the standard of living the higher the birth rate always tends to be."³⁰

Garnett stated that the National Immigration Restriction Act of 1922 created a "vacuum of labor" in

the northern United States, because it restricted the foreign-born who had been supplying the cheap, unskilled industrial labor. This vacuum was filled by the migration northward of Southern Blacks and poor whites. In their stead, Mexicans filled the need for labor in Texas that blacks and whites had left behind.

As in the Davis article, Garnett pointed out that it was the expansion of cotton to West Texas which also lured many Mexicans, blacks, and poor whites westward as laborers. Despite the "fact that many West Texas counties appear to be determined to keep their population stock pure white," the migration westward "will soon break up the population homogeneity" and "lower the quality as well." He stated that West Texas cotton-producing community leaders would not welcome the cash crop if they could foresee the "Pandora's box they are storing up for their section."³¹

He also warned of the problems that would be encountered by Mexican and blacks marrying and producing offspring. Since Mexicans were legally considered "white," "intermingling of Negro and Mexican blood" would be illegal under the State's miscegenation law. But he opined that "there will probably be more of this kind of thing . . . as the two races spread together over the State," leading to the "danger of

building up in this State a large mongrel population."³²

Poor whites were also a threat to his vision of a "democratic social order." Poor whites who could not "climb the agricultural ladder" out of tenancy, while only "a degree less serious than the introduction of the Negroes and Mexicans," would contribute to social stratification.³³ Garnett wrote that since "every phase of community life and every community institution is affected by racial cleavages," in many localities it would not be possible to establish or maintain "satisfying or efficient community organizations, schools, churches, or recreational life," especially in rural areas where the population was scattered.

He pointed out that Negro schools and their teachers often received less than half the funds of their white counterparts. "Much the same situation . . . prevails where there are separate schools for the Mexicans."³⁴ Discussions concerning the education of minorities in Texas, Garnett concluded, should consider "the fact that their living conditions are closely related to the school work" and are just as important as "conditions prevailing in the schoolroom itself."³⁵

A 1925 Masters of Arts thesis by Eunice Elvirea Parr, a student at the University of Chicago, compared conditions between American and Mexican students in San

Antonio concluding that it benefited Mexican students to be segregated.³⁶ Mexican students tended to be physically older but mentally younger than other students at their grade level. They scored lower on I.Q. tests, failed to improve in language skills,³⁷ came from a lower socio-economic background, and did better work overall in a completely Mexican school than in an integrated, or "mixed" school.³⁸

She argued that both nationalities would benefit from segregated schools. In a separate school, each individual's needs could be met, while in "mixed" schools "what the American children need is beyond the grasp of Mexican children." Additionally, children in these mixed schools did not interact on the playground because "American parents tell their children not to play with the Mexicans because of danger of vermin." Mexican children on the other hand, chose to play with others who spoke Spanish.³⁹

As late as 1930, another writer in the Texas Outlook, William O. Sisk, concluded that the "Mexican child does cause a problem in the school system." He based his case upon "language, cultural levels, and the prevailing attitudes of other people toward the Mexicans." He described the low economic and social status, citing a survey which reported that almost half of the male respondents were common laborers. Forty

percent of these common laborers held irregular jobs. Over sixty percent of the men were foreign-born. Fifty-five percent of those surveyed were illiterate, with an average schooling of only four years. Housing was poor, and the average family size was 5.7 per household.⁴⁰ It was little wonder to many people in the state, therefore, that Mexican immigrant children were ill-prepared for public education in their new country.

Thus, public education for Spanish-speaking children in Texas in the twentieth century began poorly. Unable to understand English, ignored by their teachers, seen as culturally and socially inferior, and subject to the demands of the harvest season, these children were destined to a life of illiteracy and poverty. Yet, amid the confusion over what to do about Mexican children in the public schools, there were a few voices advocating that the answer to the Mexican Question could be found in the progressive educational impulse that was sweeping the nation.

NOTES TO
CHAPTER 3

¹Carey McWilliams, North from Mexico; The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1948), 163; Ernestine Alvarado, "Mexican Immigration to the United States," Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work in Chicago, 1920, 479-80, in Education in the United States, vol. 15, Sol Cohen, ed. (New York: Random House, 1974), 2929-2930.

²Some have estimated the actual immigration was well over a million. See McWilliams, North from Mexico, 163-164; Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., "Let All of Them Take Heed;" Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 14-17.

³This is especially true of the cotton crops. See the three-part series by E. E. Davis, "Cotton and Farm Tenancy in West Texas," Texas Outlook 9 (May 1925): 12-14, "King Cotton Leads Mexicans into Texas," Texas Outlook 9 (April 1925): 7-9, and "Some Counties Annually Pay Less Than They Receive From the State Treasury," Texas Outlook 9 (July 1925): 9-10, which will be treated later in this chapter.

⁴The St. Louis-Brownsville-Mexico railway line, connecting Corpus Christi to Brownsville was completed on July 4, 1904. This was the first railroad to successfully traverse the heretofore untamed Nueces Valley of South Texas.

⁵See Charles M. Wollenberg, All Deliberate Speed; Segregation and Exclusion in California Schools, 1855-1975 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), which not only traces the history of the efforts to desegregate public schools in the Golden State for blacks and Hispanics, it includes chapters on segregation faced by Native and Japanese Americans.

⁶John C. Box, "Peons from Mexico," Texas Outlook 11 (July 1927): 32.

⁷Ibid., 37.

⁸Ibid., 32-33.

⁹Evan Anders, Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 141.

¹⁰T. R. Fehrenbach, Lone Star; A History of Texas and the Texans (New York: Macmillian, 1968), 694.

¹¹William Edward Garnett, "Immediate and Pressing Race Problems of Texas," in Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Southwestern Political and Social Science Association, Dallas, Texas March 30-April 1, 1925, edited by Caleb Perry Patterson (Austin: Southwestern Political and Social Science Association, 1925), 40.

¹²Santos Torres Arredondo, "A Survey of Special Methods and Procedures for Teaching English to Spanish-Speaking Children" (M.A. thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, 1943), 9-10.

¹³Isabel Fuentez Preuss, interview by author, 23 June 1990, New Braunfels, Texas, cassette and transcript, Southwest Texas State University, 2.

¹⁴Albert Morales, "Reflections," interview by C. Herb Skoog (KGNB-AM, 25 August 1983), no. 330, Dittlinger Memorial Library, New Braunfels.

¹⁵Annie Reynolds, The Education of Spanish-Speaking Children in Five Southwestern States, U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin 1933, No. 11. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), 11.

¹⁶Morales interview.

¹⁷McWilliams, North from Mexico, 298-9.

¹⁸George A. Works, "Summary of the Texas School Survey Report," Texas Outlook 9 (August 1925): 25.

¹⁹Reynolds, Spanish-Speaking Children, 11.

²⁰For general histories of education in Texas see note 5, Chapter 2, p. 47, above.

²¹Gilbert G. Gonzalez, Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute

Press, 1990), 62; San Miguel, "Let Them take Heed," 18-19.

²²Davis' articles are listed above in note 4.

²³Davis, "King Cotton," 7-8.

²⁴Ibid., 8.

²⁵Ibid., 8-9.

²⁶Davis, "Farm Tenancy," 13-14.

²⁷Davis, "Some Counties," 9.

²⁸Ibid., 10.

²⁹Garnett, "Immediate and Pressing Race Problems," 31-2.

³⁰Ibid., 33.

³¹Ibid., 33-35.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., 36.

³⁴Ibid., 39.

³⁵Ibid., 40.

³⁶Eunice Elvira Parr, "A Comparative Study of Mexican and American Children in the Schools of San Antonio, Texas." (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1926; reprint, San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1971).

³⁷But, they improved in math and art, where language was not a problem.

³⁸Parr, "A Comparative Study," 44-45.

³⁹Ibid., 50-51.

⁴⁰William O. Sisk, "The Mexicans in Texas Schools." Texas Outlook 14 (December 1930): 10.

CHAPTER 4

"TRUE AND LOYAL CITIZENS": AMERICANIZATION IN PROGRESSIVE ERA TEXAS

There was another side to the argument over how to educate the increasing numbers of Mexicans in the Southwest. Not everyone thought that segregation was the only answer. Some Texas Progressive educators believed that Mexican immigrants could be Americanized in Texas much as Italian and Irish immigrants were in New York and Chicago. Thus, assimilation was a prominent element in Progressive thought, and the key to assimilation was education.¹ The ordeal of World War I demonstrated that there were a great number of "foreigners" living in the United States who were unfamiliar with the American concepts of justice, equality, and national loyalty.² What better way to speed along reform than to convert these unwashed to the Progressive ideals of American life?

Ellwood P. Cubberley of Stanford University believed that to "Americanize was to Anglicize."³ Cubberley wrote that the "New Immigrants" were "of a very different type from the north Europeans who preceded them."⁴ He described them as:

Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative, and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock, and to corrupt our civil life.⁵

This "great stream" of immigrants into the United States had also lowered the "proper housing and living, moral and sanitary conditions" of the areas in which they settled. Efforts at "honest and decent government, and proper education" have also been adversely influenced by these newcomers for they bring with them their "national manners, customs, and observances," Cubberley continued.⁶

It is easy to see how the concerned Progressive in Texas could apply these generalizations to the swelling Mexican population. Therefore, Texas reformers sought to incorporate Cubberley's advice in their educational program. "[A]ssimilate and amalgamate these people as a part of our American race," he concluded and "implant in their children . . . the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government" so that it would foster in the minds of young Mexicans "a reverence for our democratic institutions and for those things . . . we as a people hold to be of abiding worth."⁷

The nationalism inherent in Americanization was not limited to the United States alone. The Revolution in Mexico, which had sent so many of its citizens over

the border, also had its roots in Progressivism.⁸ Moises Saenz, the Assistant Secretary for Education in Mexico, told a gathering of educators in Dallas that American and Mexican teachers strove toward similar goals, "health, character, vocational training, citizenship, and so on."⁹ Saenz said that there were some in Mexico who had never seen a Mexican flag, so the government was, through the educational system, "integrating the people into a state of mind which works for patriotism"--into a "distinctive nationalistic spirit."¹⁰

This "distinctive nationalistic spirit" was to be cultivated in the United States through the "study of the industrial, social, and political history" of the nation.¹¹ In Texas schools, the study of history was "to bring the child, who is the potential citizen of our country, to a proper conception . . . of his place in society."¹² Children must "recognize" that they are each a "member of a community and not merely an individual with no social responsibility."¹³ History would develop a "wholesome and intelligent patriotism" within students by demonstrating how the nation, through its government, has provided for its citizens.¹⁴ The history of the State should also be taught in schools, for "no child can fully appreciate Texas without an acquaintance with Austin, Houston,

Travis, Bowie, Lamar, and the dozens of others who have helped to make the name of Texas great." ¹⁵

The State Legislature passed measures designed to "protect, preserve, and foster ideals of American democracy" during the Progressive Era. ¹⁶ Besides the mandatory teaching of Texas history, a law that required respect for the American flag and another which stated that "intelligent patriotism" be taught for at least ten minutes in each class was implemented. ¹⁷ Another law allowed only English language instruction in public schools. This fit in perfectly with the goals of Americanization--to replace Mexican customs and language with American "customs and the English language." ¹⁸

Perhaps there was no better spokesperson for Americanization in Texas public schools during the Progressive Era than Annie Webb Blanton. Blanton wrote several arguments in favor of Americanizing the Mexican population in the state while she served as Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1919-1923. She believed education and Americanization went hand-in-hand in the betterment of the nation, for "the ideals of the citizen of a state depend to a large extent upon their educational training." ¹⁹ Therefore, she believed that education was necessary to safeguard the nation from its enemies:

The history of Mexico, of Russia, and of every other uneducated, or poorly educated nation or state, gives evidence that a people without education, or with insufficient education, soon lose possession of their most valuable natural resource, to better educated or more skilled leaders from without.²⁰

This emphasis on education as the key to patriotism further underscored the need to teach the Mexican immigrant how to read and write English. Blanton suggested that the law that required English-only instruction in public schools be extended to private and parochial schools as well. "No school which educated future Texas citizens has a right to object to such requirements," Blanton asserted, "and the future safety of our democratic institutions demand that they be made."²¹

The First World War, especially because of the possible alliance between Mexico and Germany outlined in the Zimmerman telegram, showed many Texans "that a state cannot safely leave to chance the training in the duties of citizenship."²² Because of the large numbers of illiterates in the state, foreign and native, Blanton advocated mandatory citizenship instruction in public schools:

What is constantly impressed upon the child, becomes a part of the nature of the adult. Specific and regular teaching of the ideals and duties of citizenship should be carried on in every grade of the public schools, and such teaching should be made compulsory by law. Such a plan will accomplish results for the future.²³

Blanton further stressed the importance of Americanization to national security in 1923 when she advocated a commission on illiteracy for Texas. "A state may, with safety, admit as residents only those capable of being assimilated."²⁴ Texas had always welcomed "the honest emigrant" who would become a Texan "in fact as well as name."²⁵ But for those who came to Texas and refused "to adopt its standards of living, its language, and its ideals of citizenship and government" she had a different message.²⁶ "Texas children must learn the tongue which we speak." Both public and private schools should "teach the future citizens of Texas" only in English,²⁷ for the children of immigrants "must learn in Texas schools the lessons which we would teach to every future Texan."²⁸

Many historians, influenced by the increased cultural and ethnic awareness beginning in the late 1960s, have attacked Americanization, and other assimilation policies advocated by Blanton and other educational professionals, as racist and paternalistic.²⁹ However, such scholars fail to consider that in the 1920s, the only other alternative was to ignore educational opportunities for Mexican children altogether.

The staff of the Texas Educational Survey reported that while there was a "very good argument" for the

separation of Spanish-speaking children for the first few years of schooling (until they could learn enough English to interact successfully with the other students), they admitted that "this advice [was] offered with reluctance, as there [was] danger that it will be misunderstood by some."³⁰ In fact, they admonished those who would make early separation a license for segregation:

No community through selfishness or nationality prejudice should be permitted to make discriminations against the Mexican children, as is now being done in many communities of the State.³¹

In a letter sent to the Survey staff by a trustee of a county school board, after a description of the squalor in which many poor rural Mexican, Black, and white school children lived, the writer told the Survey staff to advise the Legislature to pass laws mandating landlords to "provide dwellings surrounded with the necessary conveniences to make home life and culture possible."³² The State passed and enforced laws against abusing livestock, the writer continued, "Are not children worth more than colts?"³³

Additionally, in the 1920s native Mexican-Americans began forming pro-American organizations to distinguish themselves from the migrant workers who crossed the borders. These organizations were chartered to promote assimilation into American

culture--to fight the Mexican influences brought in by Mexican nationals. Most of the native born Tejanos were at least bilingual, speaking both Spanish and English; Mexican nationals, on the other hand, spoke little, if any, English. These pro-American organizations were in direct response to the xenophobia held by many Americans following World War I, and to assert "first-class citizenship" for Mexican-Americans.³⁴

These groups sought citizenship for Mexican-Americans in much the same manner as the NAACP did for Black Americans. They fought discrimination in schools, public facilities, primary elections, housing, and jury trials. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), formed in early 1929, was the unification of three separate pro-Americanization groups based in Texas, the Sons of Texas, the Knights of America, and the League of Latin American Citizens.³⁵ LULAC saw education as the answer to the problems facing Mexican-Americans, and encouraged teaching Mexican-American children English so that they would be able to assimilate better into the public school system. The purpose was to "develop within the members of our race the best, purest and most perfect type of a true and loyal citizen of the United States."³⁶

During the Progressive Era, assimilation was not seen as racist or paternalistic. Rather it was a means of bringing together the many diverse elements emigrating from countries with different customs and easing their transition into American life. Assimilation and Americanization were advocated by social workers, second-generation Americans, native Americans, foreign representatives, and educators. Fueled by the spirit of isolationism which followed World War I, Americanization was the Progressive alternative to the xenophobia and jingoism of the 1920s, which was evident in the Red Scare and the re-birth of the Ku Klux Klan.

NOTES TO
CHAPTER 4

¹Cremin, Transformation of the School, 85.

²Frank V. Thompson, "The Americanization of the Immigrants: Compulsion or Persuasion? (1920)," in Education in the United States: A Documentary History, vol. 4, Sol Cohen, ed. (New York: Random House, 1974), 2371.

³Cremin, Transformation of the School, 67.

⁴Ellwood P. Cubberley, "An Educator on the New Immigrants (1909)," in Education in the United States: A Documentary History, vol. 4, Sol Cohen, ed. (New York: Random House, 1974), 2162.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸For further information about the progressive manifestations in the Mexican Revolution, see Charles Curtis Cumberland, Mexican Revolution; Genesis under Madero (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1952); Ronald Atkin, Revolution!; Mexico 1910-20 (New York: John Day, 1969); Francisco Bulnes, The Whole Truth About Mexico; President Wilson's Responsibility (New York: M. Bulnes Book Co., 1916); Anita Brenner and George R. Leighton, The Wind That Swept Mexico; The History of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1942 (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1971); Alan Knight, "The Mexican Revolution," History Today 30 (May 1980): 28-34; and Douglas W. Richmond, "Nationalism and Class Conflict in Mexico, 1910-1920," The Americas 43 (July 1986): 279-303.

⁹Moises Saenz, "Mexico Wants American Nations United in Educational Aims and Philosophy," Texas Outlook 10 (January, 1926): 12.

¹⁰Ibid., 13.

¹¹Frank Lawrence Glynn, "The Practical Public School," World's Work 22 (August, 1911): 14721.

¹²W. F. Doughty, Manual and Course of Study for the Public Schools of Texas, 1918, Bulletin 86 (Austin: Department of Education, 1918), 60.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 61.

¹⁶Thomas E. Simmons, "The Citizen Factories: The Americanization of Mexican Students in Texas Public Schools, 1920-1945," (Ph.D. diss., Texas A&M University, 1976), 68. Texas Laws 17 (34th Leg., Reg. Sess., 1915), Sec. 1-2, 93; Ibid., 18 (35th Leg., 4th C.S.), 67-8.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., 78.

¹⁹Annie Webb Blanton, Report on Education in Texas; and Recommendations Made to the Governor and the Thirty-Seventh Legislature (Austin: State Department of Education, 1921), 21.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 30.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Annie Webb Blanton, A Handbook of Information as to Education in Texas, 1918-1922, Bulletin 157 (Austin: State Department of Education, 1923), 22.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 23.

²⁸Ibid., 22.

²⁹For example, see Rodolfo Acuna Occupied America: The Chicano's Struggle Toward Liberation (San

Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972), 146-9; Wollengerg, All Deliberate Speed, 114, 181-2; Mario T. Garcia, Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981), 112-116; Manuel P. Servin, An Awakened Minority: The Mexican-Americans 2d ed. (Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1974); and San Miguel, "Let All of Them Take Heed".

³⁰George O. Works, Texas Educational Survey Report, vol. 8, General Report (Austin: Texas Educational Survey Commission, 1925), 213.

³¹Ibid.

³²George O. Works, Texas Educational Survey Report, vol. 1, Organization and Administration (Austin: Texas Educational Survey Commission, 1925), 244-5.

³³Ibid., 245.

³⁴Mario T. Garcia, Mexican-Americans; Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930-1960, Yale Western Americana Series, vol. 36, A. Hanna, Jr., H. R. Lamar, R. M. Utley, eds. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 46.

³⁵Ibid., 29-30.

³⁶LULAC constitution, quoted in Acuna, Occupied America, 189; and David Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 232.

CHAPTER 5

COTULLA REVISITED: LYNDON B. JOHNSON AS A TEACHER IN A SEGREGATED SCHOOL

The influence of educational reform in Texas spread beyond the borders of the state. Through Lyndon Baines Johnson's leadership, children across the nation would ultimately be affected by his administration's sixty education bills. Much of the content of this important legislation of the 1960s was inspired by LBJ's own experiences in the late 1920s as a student and teacher during the heyday of Progressive educational reform in Texas.

Lyndon Johnson was born, raised, and became an educator during the Progressive Era. Johnson spent a year as a teacher-principal at the Welhausen "Mexican Ward" elementary school in Cotulla, Texas. Although he taught for only a short time, his year among Mexican-American children has received considerable attention from biographers, historians, and educators.¹ The poverty and discrimination Johnson encountered in Cotulla also affected his later years in public office, as he would refer to his experiences among the Mexican children time and again in numerous speeches.

Despite the attention this aspect of Johnson's life has received, very little has been written on how it reflects upon the history of educational reform in Texas. Instead, his year in Cotulla is used as an indicator of Johnson's future wheeler-dealer, strong-armed tactics in national politics--the famous "Johnson treatment"--because of the stories of the tremendous energy and dedication that he demanded, not only from himself, but from the students and teachers as well; his requirement that the children speak only English on campus, or face corporal punishment; and the many after-school programs in which he insisted his students and their parents participate. Most modern biographers have ignored the times and circumstances of the Texas educational environment in late 1920s, and, in doing so, have misjudged the motivations and influences guiding a young Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1928, Johnson was not a president-in-the-making; he was a Progressive educator.

The story of Johnson's time in Cotulla clearly reflects the Progressive influence. Johnson left Southwest Texas State Teachers College in 1928 to accept the position at the Welhausen elementary because of financial reasons and because it was required for teacher certification. Ardis C. Hooper, a roommate and friend of LBJ's while at college remembered:

It was kind of tough and go all the time. You didn't have much money, but it didn't take much money either in those days to go to school. . . . If you could rake up room and board you kind of had it made. But it was customary at that time . . . at that point they'd go get a school [teaching position] and come back and graduate. A lot of people did that.² . . . You had to do it to get your degree anyway.

Lyndon secured the Cotulla position through the College's Teacher-Placement Bureau, which served as a clearing house on campus to help students find teaching positions. Johnson was just one of seventeen students who were helped by the Bureau that Fall. Four students, including LBJ, were placed as principals; one as a superintendent; two more were named music supervisor and band director; and the other ten were named as teachers or home demonstration agents.³ Cotulla's public school superintendent, W. T. Donaho, had met and become friends with Johnson when Donaho had attended college in San Marcos.⁴ Another factor influencing Johnson's decision to accept the position in Cotulla was the proximity to one of his first cousins, Margaret Johnson, who taught in the Los Angles, Texas school district.⁵

LBJ's duties at Welhausen placed him over five other teachers. His responsibilities also required him to teach sixth and seventh grade, assist in the maintenance of the school, and direct debate at the high school. Johnson accepted the position at a salary

of \$125 per month, which, for all his duties, was comparable with that of Cotulla's other teachers. Those under Johnson's supervision at Welhausen were paid between \$90-135 per month, and Superintendent Donaho's monthly salary was \$250.⁶

Johnson displayed the same energy and vitality as a teacher that he would later exhibit in public office. His devotion to improving the educational environment of his Cotulla students was consistent with the Progressive ideals of educational reform. He organized a parent-teacher association, organized and supervised after-school sports activities and a literary society, coached the debate team, and led the choir. He also encouraged and initiated a series of inter-school competitions between his students and those from neighboring schools, persuading parents with cars to assist in the transportation. Probably the most often repeated story of Johnson's involvement with his children is that of a letter he sent to his mother in mid-October 1928. "I want 200 pkg. of toothpaste," he wrote. "We soon will have over 250 in school. They are all rather small and I think they would appreciate it very much." He also asked his mother, Rebekah, to send along much needed debate material for his high school students, and "20 or 25 short selections" for an Armistice day program he was planning. "All of my

children are eager to learn the pieces but they are awfully hard for them," Johnson explained. "I don't want any very long--2 or 3 paragraphs are plenty." ⁷

It was the Progressive impulse to lift the poor from their poverty through education and skills training that influenced Johnson's involvement in Cotulla, for poverty was no stranger to the Mexican-American community in that small, South-Texas community. Walt Rostow wrote:

I remember [Lyndon] telling Averell Harriman this story. There was in Cotulla, Texas, a road stand where truck drivers stopped for breakfast. Behind it was a garbage heap. The Mexican children would go through the pile, shaking the coffee grounds from the grapefruit rinds and sucking the rinds for the juice that was left. ⁸

Johnson's community civics class at SWT, which he took in the Spring quarter of 1928, was designed for students who would teach at rural schools. ⁹ The teacher gave "special attention" to the "political and financial aspects" of what Texas Progressive educators considered "social betterment problems." Included in the class were the need for "good schools, good roads, and rural sanitation" in Texas communities. ¹⁰ Although Johnson had grown up in rural Central Texas, none of his experiences had prepared him for the poverty he saw in Cotulla. Years later, Rostow stated that the experience developed within Johnson a "sense of outrage at the unnecessary wastage" of those born without the

advantage of "all the food and medical services they needed, all the education they could absorb." ¹¹

The tremendous effect Cotulla had on Johnson is demonstrated by the numerous references he made throughout his political career to his teaching experience. These statements also reflect the Progressive ideology that social improvement was possible through educational opportunity. "'I was determined,' LBJ said later, to improve the lives of 'those poor little kids.'" He remembered:

I saw hunger in their eyes and pain in their bodies. Those little brown bodies had so little and needed so much. I was determined to spark something inside them, to fill their souls with ambition and interest and belief in the future. I was determined to give them what they needed to make it in this world, to help them finish their education. Then the rest would take care of itself. ¹²

He saw the "disappointment in their eyes" and the "quizzical expression on their faces" when his Mexican-American children came to school every morning, "most of them without any breakfast, most of them hungry." It seemed to him that the expressions on the children's faces asked, "Why don't people like me? Why do they hate me because I am brown?" ¹³ "They knew," he said, "even in their youth they knew--the pain of prejudice." ¹⁴ Johnson, therefore, resolved to "teach them the little that I did know, hoping that it might

help them against the hardships they would face" later in life.¹⁵

Lyndon Johnson's concern and efforts for his Mexican-American students made a lasting impression upon his young charges. Juanita G. Hernandez remembered Johnson as "a down-to-earth, friendly teacher" who was also firm. "If we hadn't done our homework, we had to stay after school that day."¹⁶ Amanda Garcia believed LBJ was "eager for all of us to learn." She described the social perception of the late 1920s and explained why Johnson had made such an impact upon the lives of his students. "We were all just Mexicans in those days and Mexicans didn't mean much. I believe he really loved us as human beings."¹⁷ Dan Garcia, who appeared as a former student of the President's on the television show "I've Got a Secret" in 1964, said Johnson "was like a blessing from the clear sky." He explained, "This may sound strange but a lot of us felt he was too good for us. We wanted to take advantage of his being here."¹⁸

Not all of LBJ's former students' recollections were ideal. "I'll say this for him, he could pinch ears harder than anybody I ever knew," Ed Gonzalez said.¹⁹ Another former student, Juan Rodriguez told of a spanking he received from LBJ:

One day a bunch of little girls were playing jacks and someone threw a piece of metal and hit one of the girls. All the boys ran but [Lyndon] caught me and spanked me good, I could hardly sit the rest of the day.²⁰

Johnson also angered his teachers because he wanted them to demonstrate the same energy and devotion that he did. When the other teachers threatened to go on strike, Johnson received the support of the school board to accept their resignations and hire new teachers from Southwest Texas Teachers College. The strike was called off.²¹

Historian Paul K. Conkin wrote that the story of LBJ's achievements in Cotulla "has become a valued part of his legend and one that has withstood all the onslaught of critics."²² Yet, Robert Caro said that Johnson possessed "a hunger for power." Power "not to improve the lives of others, but to manipulate and dominate them, to bend them to his will."²³ Caro wrote that Johnson "displayed scant respect" for the Mexican culture while in Cotulla; instead, he was "tireless in teaching them his culture."²⁴

Caro stated that it was Johnson's love of power and respect that caused him to excel in Cotulla. These "impoverished, almost illiterate Mexicans of Cotulla" would not challenge his authority because they were used to taking orders from whites. Since Johnson was a teacher, an authority figure who taught in a language

they could barely speak, "there was no question that in his relationship with them he was the superior, the 'somebody.'"²⁵

Caro was not the only biographer to accuse Lyndon Johnson of imposing American values upon his Mexican-American students. In 1968, Alfred Steinberg wrote that Johnson

spent much time presenting his own highly dramatic version of Texas' early history, apparently forgetting that his swarthy charges were related by blood to those on the losing side. Santa Anna may have been a man of treachery to Lyndon, but he was a patriot to Latinos.²⁶

Johnson believed, Doris Kearns wrote, that if these Mexican children did not learn English they would never be able to succeed in life. Therefore, Johnson "made a rule that no Spanish could be spoken on school property, including the playground." Kearns states this demonstrated that Johnson lacked the "awareness" that children's "own cultural traditions and language might constitute an independent source of strength and fulfillment."²⁷ Kearns did not doubt young LBJ's sincerity of compassion for these Mexican children, but felt that Johnson did not realize that paternalism is often more harmful because it "might destroy his recipient's capacity to grow and find expression on his own."²⁸

Kearns attempted to illustrate how paternalism could destroy its intended benefactor with Johnson's story of a Mexican-American playmate, Huisso. The two boys learned to ride horses together, but the "problem was that Huisso could barely keep up with me, and I always wanted to race," LBJ remembered. "His horse was thinner and weaker than mine; it hadn't received the kind of food or care that mine had." The two boys set out to fatten up Huisso's horse. Lyndon gave Huisso extra oats for his horse. Once Huisso's horse was fattened up they planned a big race. "Off we went, but almost immediately Huisso fell way behind, and I easily won." They tried again with the same result. Finally on the third try, Huisso's "horse seemed to be moving much faster, but in the middle of the race it simply slipped out from under him. It had collapsed." Johnson believed the horse died from "too much running, too much food, too much care." "It just didn't seem fair after all we had done," he said. "We cried and cried and cried until I thought we would never stop." ²⁹

Paul Conkin believed that this sense of paternalism motivated Johnson in Cotulla. According to Conkin, Johnson wanted to be a "big daddy" to these poor Mexican children because, although he was "threatened by people his equal, he always responded with sensitivity and compassion to lowly people." He

"wanted to help them, to uplift them." And these poor people were "so trusting and so grateful" that they satisfied some inner need for self-worth within Johnson.³⁰

Julie Leininger Pycior blamed the young teacher for romanticizing Texas history and having "never made a concerted effort to analyze the causes of South Texas discrimination and stratification."³¹ Moreover, she, too, criticized his paternalism and disregard for Mexican culture. Alonzo Hamby claimed that Johnson "treated his Latino charges as if they were little Anglos," even "subjecting them to lectures on the glories of Texas history and the perfidity of Santa Anna."³² Robert Dallek also wrote that LBJ "showed little regard" for the Mexican-American children he taught, and instead taught "the virtues of speaking English and the justification for a Texas independent of Mexico."³³

This repeated criticism for Johnson's paternalism represents what David Hackett Fischer has called the "fallacy of presentism."³⁴ They have judged LBJ against the values of the late twentieth century, instead of the placing this so-called paternalism in the context of the early 1900s. In 1928, Johnson's actions were considered radical and socially progressive. Moreover, while it is true that Johnson

wrote in an editorial for the college newspaper that he believed San Jacinto was a glorious battle where "the great Sam Houston and his dauntless little band made their valiant stand against the Mexican oppressors,"³⁵ it is presumptuous to accuse LBJ of ignoring Mexican culture by calling Santa Anna a villain. In fact, students of Mexican history know that the Texas Revolution was only one in a series of rebellions against the Santa Anna dictatorship, most of them led by other Mexicans who did not consider Santa Anna a "patriot."

Nor was the English-only rule a Johnson invention. As demonstrated above, the use of the English language in instruction was a law, not an option.³⁶ Juanita Ortiz, a pupil of LBJ's, said Johnson's enforcement of the law "was for our own good as it forced us to learn correct English. . . . This helped our self respect a lot."³⁷ "We didn't like it at the time," Manuel Sanchez said, "but now we are happy he did."³⁸

Additionally, Johnson did seek the support and advice from his students' parents:

I worked with Leonides V. Lopez, one of the leading Mexican-American merchants in town, to persuade the poor parents of my pupils to join a parent-teacher association. Such involvement was a new experience for them, but they started coming to meetings. When they came, I was able to encourage them to consider more productive ways for the students to spend their after school hours. I had expected to propose using after

school time to train the children for jobs. But the parents were more interested in providing them with recreations and hobbies. . . . So we organized a choir, a baseball team for the boys, and a volleyball team for the girls. The point is that those parents became actively involved in the life of their school, once they realized they had a voice in it.³⁹

Pycior allowed that Johnson may have not had the advantages at Southwest Texas Teachers College of instructors familiar with the abilities of Spanish-speaking students, although such professors were then teaching at the University of Texas only twenty-eight miles north of San Marcos.⁴⁰ This statement assumes San Marcos was in academic isolation in the late 1920s, and ignores the fact that many of SWT's teachers were trained at the George Peabody College for Teachers, Columbia University, Vanderbilt, the universities at Chicago, Missouri, California, Michigan, and the University of Texas.⁴¹

In the final assessment, then, Johnson reflected the attitudes and actions familiar to Progressive educators across Texas. His drive and determination were guided by the Progressive belief that "the boy mired in the slums, the child lashed by prejudice and bias, the youngster buried half alive in illiteracy" should all have the hope that "the door is never closed and the window is never barred."⁴² He was raised under the political atmosphere of the Progressive Movement,

"debating whether we were wet or dry, whether we were prohibitionists or anti-prohibitionists . . . whether we were Klan or anti-Klan," and all the while surrounded by the "fact that one teacher had seven grades to teach in a school that was falling down and a lady that was underpaid." ⁴³

Johnson took the legacies of the Progressive Era with him to the White House, Hubert Humphrey said, and sought to make up for his own educational deficiencies, and express his pride at having been a teacher:

He was going to make San Marcos important, and he was going to make teaching Mexican-Americans important, and he was going to make teaching in little schools important. ⁴⁴

He fought against the same problems which plagued the region as other Progressives before him had done, the "ancient curses" of "ignorance, illiteracy, ill health, and disease" ⁴⁵ and against the mentality that allowed children to be hauled off "in a truck to a beet patch or a cotton patch in the middle of the school year and give them only 2 or 3 months' schooling." ⁴⁶

NOTES TO
CHAPTER 5

¹See William C. Pool, Emmie Craddock, and David E. Conrad, Lyndon Baines Johnson; The Formative Years (San Marcos: Southwest Texas State College Press, 1965), 137-161; Alfred Steinberg, Sam Johnson's Boy: A Close-Up of the President from Texas (New York: Macmillian, 1968), 45-49; Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 65-6; Merle Miller, Lyndon: An Oral Biography (New York: Ballantine, 1980), 39-44; Robert A. Caro, The Years of Lyndon Johnson, vol. 1 The Path to Power (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 166-173; Paul K. Conkin, Big Daddy from the Pedernales (Boston: Twayne, 1986), 51-53; Julie Leininger Pycior, "Lyndon, La Raza, and the Paradox of Texas History," in Lyndon Baines Johnson and the Uses of Power, ed. Bernard J. Firestone and Robert C. Vogt (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988), 129-147; and Robert Dallek, Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 62-92. See also Claudia W. Anderson, "LBJ: 'El Professor'," Vista: The Magazine for all Hispanics 6 (3 August 1991): 21; and Carolyn Hinckley, "LBJ--Teacher Turned President," Texas Outlook 56 (March 1972): inside covers.

²Ardis C. Hopper, interview by Mike Gillette, 11/6/79, interview 1, Acc# 82-35, Oral History Project, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, Austin, Texas, 23-24.

³"Teacher-Placement Bureau Active in Behalf of Students," College Star, 16 May 1928, p. 1.

⁴Hopper interview, 24.

⁵Annette Martin Ludeman, La Salle County: South Texas Brush Country, 1856-1975, Texas History Series (Quanah, TX: Nortex Press, 1975), 124.

⁶"Annual Statement of School Funds to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction," Records Division of the Texas State Library.

⁷Lyndon B. Johnson, Cotulla, Texas, to Rebekah Johnson, Johnson City, 17 October 1928, "Johnson, Mrs. Sam E. (Rebekah) (Correspondence selected from her papers)", Box 1, Family Correspondence, LBJL.

⁸Walt W. Rostow, The Diffusion of Power: An Essay in Recent History (New York: Macmillian, 1972), 423.

⁹Southwest Texas State Teachers College Transcript, AC 76-35, "Southwest Texas State University File," Personal Papers 4A42, LBJL.

¹⁰Southwest Texas State Teachers College, Catalog for 1928-29: The Teachers College Bulletin 17 (July 1928): 103.

¹¹Rostow, Diffusion of Power, 423.

¹²Kearns, American Dream, 65-66.

¹³Papers of the Presidents (1968), 1138.

¹⁴Ibid., 1142.

¹⁵Ibid., 1142-43.

¹⁶"LBJ at Cotulla," Houston Post, 27 January 1964, 1.

¹⁷"Students: Lyndon Johnson's School Days," Time, 21 May 1965: 57.

¹⁸"LBJ at Cotulla," 7.

¹⁹Jim Srodes, "One Man's Evaluation of LBJ: Ear Pincher!," Durham (North Carolina) Morning Herald, 20 January 1964, sec. B, p. 1.

²⁰"One Man and a Boy," Pit and Pour 5 (April 1964): 2.

²¹Papers of the President (1965, vol. 1), 229.

²²Conkin, Big Daddy, 52.

²³Caro, Path to Power, xix.

²⁴Ibid., 168.

²⁵Ibid., 169-70.

- ²⁶Steinberg, Sam Johnson's Boy, 46-7.
- ²⁷Kearns, American Dream, 66.
- ²⁸Ibid., 66-7.
- ²⁹Ibid., 67.
- ³⁰Conkin, Big Daddy, 52.
- ³¹Pycior, "La Raza," 142.
- ³²Alonzo L. Hamby, Liberalism and its Challengers: FDR to Reagan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 235.
- ³³Dallek, Lone Star Rising, 80.
- ³⁴David Hackett Fischer, Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 135.
- ³⁵Lyndon B. Johnson, "The Twenty-First of April," College Star, 25 April 1928, 2.
- ³⁶Texas Laws, 35th Leg., 4th C. S., Chap. 80, Sec. 1, 2, p. 170.
- ³⁷"LBJ at Cotulla," 7.
- ³⁸"Lyndon Johnson's School Days," 57.
- ³⁹Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), 74-5.
- ⁴⁰Pycior, "La Raza," 137.
- ⁴¹Pool, et al., The Formative Years, 79-80.
- ⁴²Papers of the Presidents (1964), 309-10.
- ⁴³Papers of the Presidents (1965, vol. 1), 228.
- ⁴⁴Quoted in Charla Dean McCoy, "The Education President: Lyndon Baines Johnson's Public Statements on Instruction and the Teaching Profession" (Ph. D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1975), 51.
- ⁴⁵Papers of the Presidents (1965, vol. 1), 228.

⁴⁶Papers of the Presidents (1966, vol. 2), 1350.

CONCLUSION

One of the most difficult hurdles in any biography about a public official is reconciling the subject's public persona and private person. This is increasingly true in the biographies written about presidents in the twentieth century. Since the advent of mass electronic media, more and more is known about our presidents' public and private lives. Lyndon Baines Johnson was keenly aware of the power of the media through his more than forty years in public office. Johnson was also concerned with the place he would hold in history, and how he was perceived by reporters, the public, and historians.

However, with Johnson it seemed that his public personal and private person would overlap more so than other presidents before him. Thus, the stories that are told and re-told of Johnson's violent temper, his lack of tolerance for dissenters, his unpolished mannerisms and lack of social graces often conflict with the other stories of his charm, ability to form a consensus, kindness, and down-home affability. It is this conflict, combined with the approaching thirtieth anniversary of the Great Society, that has led to the

recent rash of biographies and interest in the Johnson mystique. Yet, in these biographies so much interest is paid to Lyndon Johnson's presidential antecedents that they ignore other forces that acted to shape his personality.

A prime example of this myopic focus is evident in the story of Johnson's nine-month term as principal of the Welhausen Ward Elementary School. No other part of the Johnson legend was more often told by Johnson himself than that of his year in Cotulla, Texas. It is repeated over and over in his speeches, and its influence is evident in his educational and civil rights reforms. Johnson wanted to be remembered as the Education President and the Civil Rights President.

However, Johnson's actions as a teacher do not reflect an aspiring politician. Instead, they reflect the growing Progressive movement that was spreading throughout the nation's educators. A movement that had taken shape in the Ivy League colleges of the Northeast and spread to the normal schools of the South. Although popularly thought of as a political movement, the roots of Progressivism ran deep throughout the nation in a divergent population in a host of occupations. While the political coalition called Progressivism died in 1919 in the wake of the First

World War, the legacies of the Progressives persevered in the professions.

The advent of professionalism began at the turn of the century and endured and built upon itself. Professionals sought to improve their skills by turning to the works of professionals in other fields. Thus, educators studied the results of the social scientists, doctors, and business managers to find ways of improving the quality of education in the nation's schools.

By 1927, when Lyndon Baines Johnson walked the corridors and halls of Southwest Texas State Teachers College the effects of the Progressive movement on teacher training were in full force. Johnson, the teacher, was a reflection of the ideas and idealism of the Progressive era in which he came of age.

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