Identity of Mexican-Americans

The article that I have found is from 1928 entitled as "A Study Causes of Retardation Among Mexican Children in a Small Public School System in Arizona" by O.K Garretson. This article compares the academic performances of White and Mexican students. It was a difficult task to find an article that was significant to the first three decades of the twentieth century. There were many black and white pictures from that time period, but I did not use them because the descriptions were not available. Finally, I came across this article by using the SJSU King Library Databases. Above the rest, this article was interesting because many of the sentiments and attitudes discussed in the article toward Mexican Americans still exist today due to society's lack of knowledge of their history.

Based on the test scores, author Garretson concluded that Mexican students were inferior to the White students, who scored higher. Poor attendance and broken English were used to justify the reasons behind the low scores of Mexican students. However, Garretson failed to inform the readers about the other social factors that may have had impact on the Mexican students' test scores. For example, one of the social factors include the limits government had placed on Mexicans' rights, such as voting and citizenship. Not having access to high wages becomes difficult to run a family. In addition, the Mexican population was not very educated and did not have access to the resources that the White parents had to educate their children. Furthermore, the White parents did not approve of sending their children to the same school as the Mexicans. Therefore, this biased article was published to show government that these two
groups just cannot learn together due to differences in mental growth. Basically, articles like these were published to promote segregation of schools that had not been segregated. Usually when we think of segregation, we think of African-Americans and Whites, but this article gives readers a broader view of who can be a part of segregation; Mexicans, along with other minorities, were segregated as well.

The stereotype that Mexicans are lazy and incapable of learning still exists today. The term "lazy" and "incapable" were used by the Spaniards toward Mexicans to gain control over them or to civilize them. In this case, these terms are used by the Americans to enhance public school segregation. Articles like "A Study Causes of Retardation Among Mexican Children in a Small Public School System in Arizona" prevent even bright students from thinking beyond the common works that their community does. For instance, my high school math teacher, Mr. Castillo, used to tell us that his parents would say that "Mexicans are only good at digging ditches, so you will get nothing with an education." Mr. Castillo's parents did not receive the opportunity to get an education because they had to work in the fields, so it was hard for them to break the role that the "Americans" created for them. Just how my teacher's parents discouraged him, there might have been many other Mexican students who lost the desire for learning after such harsh comments. Fortunately, Mr. Castillo earned his degree in Mathematics and now he has been teaching at Independence High School for nearly twenty-five years. If there are no social barriers, it becomes easier for an individual to reach his goals.

Finally, this article is an example of why we should care and learn about the history of certain groups before judging them. In 2013, it is important to have an education of Mexican history, so we would not make same mistakes that were made in 1928 about the Mexican
students. Before we judge a group's living condition, it is necessary to learn about the circumstances that lead to these critical conditions.
Works Cited
