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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the education that Spanish American students received from the Scottsbluff High School, Scottsbluff, Nebraska. Information was collected from 50 former students from the years 1965 and 1968 on their education, present status and suggested school improvements. Data were collected by direct and indirect interviews in: post-school occupations, drop-out ratio, educational progress, and spouse occupation. The investigation revealed that there is a definite trend toward the improvement of the Spanish American's position in the North Platte Valley. It was found that the Spanish Americans were finding more attractive positions in industrial, semi-professional or professional occupations; that there was a tendency for the largest percentage of dropouts to occur in grade 7 and diminish through grade 12; and that there is a definite relationship between the amount of education acquired and participation in community activities. (PS)

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF SPANISH-AMERICAN STUDENTS
FROM THE SCOTTSDLUFF HIGH SCHOOL
SCOTTSDLUFF, NEBRASKA

A Project Paper Presented to
Dr. Kenneth E. Bryant of the Graduate Faculty
Northern State College
Aberdeen, South Dakota

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by
Arnie A. Quinonez
June 1971

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APPROVAL SHEET

This project paper is submitted by Arnie A. Quinonez in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science in Education at Northern State College, Aberdeen, South Dakota, and is hereby approved by the sponsor under whose direction the study was made.

Project Sponsor

James E. Bryant

Date

June 29, 1971

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is no evidence that any person has attempted to investigate the progress in education of Spanish-American students in the North Platte Valley area of Scottsbluff, Nebraska, or that a survey has been made to determine what use is being made of the education that these students have received. This investigation is such an attempt although it will be limited to one particular school system, the Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Public School System. A history of the background of these students will also be included.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. This author has investigated the educational progress, dropout ratio and post-school occupations of the Spanish-American students who attended the Scottsbluff High School, Scottsbluff, Nebraska, during the 1965 and 1968 school years. The purpose of this investigation was to tabulate and interpret the significance of findings related to the students' (1) post-school occupations, (2) drop-out ratio, (3) educational progress, and (4) spouse occupation. It is expected that through the efforts of this investigation a better understanding of the Spanish-American adults and their children may be reached.

Significance of the study. A definite need exists for continuing research in the field of minority groups and their behavior in our educational structure. This study concerns Spanish-American students in the Scottsbluff, Nebraska, school system. It should indicate whether the drop-out rate is significantly high; whether post-school occupations reflect educational achievement; and whether the citizenship, educational progress, and spouse occupation is an accurate reflection of the educational system.

This study should lend statistics and data to a program improving educational opportunities for Spanish-American students in the Scottsbluff High School system.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Spanish-American. Throughout this investigation the Spanish-American is referred to as those people of Mexican nativity and their offspring who immigrated to the United States and settled in the North Platte Valley of Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Post-school occupation. This term describes the current occupations of the subjects in the sample.

Drop-out. This term is used to identify the Spanish-American student who has ceased voluntary attendance at the Scottsbluff High School.

Educational progress. This term quantifies the number of years of formal education completed by Spanish-American students who attended the Scottsbluff High School.

III. DELIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PROBLEM

The samples selected for this study were drawn from Spanish-American students enrolled in grades seven through twelve at the Scottsbluff, Nebraska, High School during the years 1965 and 1968.

Efforts were made to locate and interview all subjects of the sample, but because of relocations and other reasons this was not always possible. It was assumed that the segment of the sample that could not be located or would not cooperate with the researcher would not affect the results of the study.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

By means of personal interviews, this researcher has gathered, quantified, and summarized data relative to each respondent:

1. Earned a high school diploma.
2. Attended vocational school or college.
3. Completed the educational program attempted.

4. Dropped out of school because he wasn't able to achieve academically.
5. Dropped out of school because he had to work.
6. Dropped out of school because of peer group influence.
7. Dropped out of school to get married.
8. Completed grade classification at withdrawal from school.
9. Is presently employed.
10. Has a head of household occupation.
11. Has a spouse presently employed.
12. Has had career opportunities.

V. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The sample selected for this study was drawn from a population of Spanish-American students who attended school at the Scottsbluff, Nebraska, High School during the years 1965 and 1968. By means of direct and indirect interviews information was tabulated relative to the following areas: (1) post-school occupations; (2) drop-out ratio; (3) educational progress; and (4) spouse occupation. The results of the interviews were then analyzed in an effort to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE RELATED TO SPANISH-AMERICANS

Since the majority of immigrants from Mexico have settled in the South, most of the available literature on this investigation is based on studies or surveys made in the southern states. The review of literature available has provided most of the basis for the study to follow, although some of this study is based on information obtained through interviews with the older Spanish-Americans of the North Platte Valley who have played an important part and are concerned in the review and study being made.

I. LITERATURE ON SPANISH-AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

It is impossible to give a completely accurate statement as to the number of Spanish-Americans who now reside in the United States. This is partly due to the large number of migratory workers among these people. However, on the basis of available information, it is estimated that there are about fifteen million persons in the United States known as Spanish-Americans.¹

¹Helen Bain, Sparling-Norwood, Antoni Q. Sarinana, and Dan M. Smith, "What Do You Want From N.E.A.," The Journal of the National Education Association, 60:26, January, 1971.

The origin of these Spanish-Americans can be traced to Mexico. These people have been immigrating to the United States since the late seventeenth century. The majority of these immigrants came from the Mexican states of Michoacan, Jalisco, and Guanajuato.² Since the majority of these Spanish-Americans came to the United States to work in agriculture occupations, the immigrants from the three states mentioned were especially suited for this type of work. Most of the occupations of the population of Michoacan, Jalisco, and Guanajuato are agricultural.

Other states contributing a major number of immigrants in the United States are located in northern Mexico. Including a few are Nuevo Leon, Durango, Zacatecas, Chihuahua, Coahuila, San Luis Postosi, and Aguascalientes.³ These states had a great number of common laborers which were having a hard time finding work and turned to the United States for work which they badly needed.

The immigration of Spanish-Americans to the United States has been and continues to be basically an economical one.

Wage differences have been so great between the United States and Mexico that many persons felt they could

²Manuel Gamio, Mexican Immigration to the United States (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1930), p. 13.

³Ibid.

make more money in the United States in a shorter period of time than in Mexico. This was especially true for the common laborer.

Between the years of 1850 to 1900 Spanish-American immigration was largely a two-way traffic in which they went north to work and returned home without any restrictions by officials of either border. Immigration continued until in the middle twenties, when immigration reached its peak, one hundred thousand a year.⁴

During the late twenties and early thirties the Mexican government became alarmed at the loss of so many of its citizens and instituted efforts to repatriate these citizens. They promised these lost citizens rail rates for their return to Mexico. During this period of time the United States also offered to pay transportation fares and provide food for those Spanish-Americans who wished to return to their native country. It was assumed that it would be more economical for the United States to pay for their transportation and food than to have these Spanish-Americans on relief. Between three and four hundred thousand did return to Mexico at this time and the chief reason was the coming of the depression of the thirties.⁵

⁴John H. Burma, Spanish-Speaking Groups in the United States (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1964), p. 42.

⁵Ibid., p. 43.

From 1930 to 1941 the number of immigrants that came to the United States was very small. There were now two reasons for this small immigration, (1) the depression of the thirties and (2) more recent Mexican restrictions.

Since 1941, the number of legal and illegal Spanish-American immigrants entering the United States has increased because of economic reasons.

Approximately 80 percent of these immigrants are concentrated in a narrow chain of southwestern communities stretching from Los Angeles, California, to Brownsville and Corpus Christi, Texas. Of these, over two million five hundred thousand live in Texas.⁶

Outside of these regions mentioned, Denver ranks high in the list of cities with a large Spanish-American population. Between fifty and one hundred thousand live in Chicago, Detroit, Gary and Kansas City, Kansas.⁷ Much of this city residence consists of using the city as a winter home which is left in the spring and summer for migratory agricultural labor. Migration has become accepted as a stable source of labor by growers of cotton, vegetable crops, and sugar beets. Only in the cotton areas of south-central and southwestern Texas have a great number of Spanish-Americans been able to become tenant farmers, replacing the Negro.⁸

⁶Ibid., p. 36.

⁷Ibid., p. 37.

⁸Ibid., p. 50.

A nationwide survey indicated that two-thirds of all sugar beet field workers were Spanish-Americans and in Texas where one-fourth of the nation's cotton is raised, three-fourths of Texas' cotton was picked by Spanish-Americans.⁹

A number of Spanish-Americans came to the United States as skilled workers. Many of these have been forced into the unskilled labor market because of ignorance, discrimination, and lack of skills applicable to the urban American labor field. As a group, however, the Spanish-American have been agricultural rather than industrial workers.

The first major non-agricultural opening for these people was in railroad work. Since then Spanish-Americans have been employed in steel mills, meat packing, automobile manufacturing, and in all types of miscellaneous industrial occupations.

In business and professional positions the Spanish-Americans have seldom profited substantially, for they have had to depend upon their compatriots for customers and clients. However, conditions have continued to improve and these people are finding a better way to make a living in different selected fields.

⁹Ibid., p. 53.

Vocational training and on the job training programs undoubtedly have helped many Spanish-Americans to acquire the necessary skills for better positions and special agencies have also helped them to secure jobs in which they can utilize their abilities.

Everywhere except possibly in Texas, the Spanish-Americans have begun to find more employment from non-agricultural employers. In stating that Texas is possibly an exception, there can be no question that continuing immigration in Texas has been and continues to be a serious problem for the Spanish-Americans in the border areas. These people continue to live in poverty caused by the new immigrants who keep wages very low, retard assimilation, and contribute to discrimination and to ethnic hostility.

Taking everything into consideration, the authors of the book, One America, made this statement:

Concern about the welfare of the Mexicans is undoubtedly increasing and becoming more widespread, but the persons in whose hands the greatest amount of economic and political power is concentrated are just beginning to become aware of the situation of this group. These Mexicans themselves are, however, becoming active and efforts to bring about improvements are multiplying. The traditional inarticulateness and lack of organization of the Spanish-speaking population in the United States is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. The number of its leaders in strategic places, while still small, is growing. As isolation breaks down and hopes for a new day develop, frustration will increase unless opportunities are opened up and the principles of healthy democratic living are more widely known and followed. The task is not only to improve the situation of a depressed

group, but also to establish creative intergroup relationship.¹⁰

It is interesting to note that in tracing the story of Spanish-American immigration to the United States, the rise of the great regional industries such as railroads, mining, steel mills, meat packing, citrus fruits, sugar beets, winter vegetables, and cotton has caused a flow of Spanish-American population into each state that has had a new emerging development or prosperity.

II. LITERATURE ON SPANISH-AMERICANS ON EDUCATION

Needless to say, this whole way of migratory life has very serious effects on the children of school age. More than one-fourth of the Spanish-American children aged six to nine years, and four-fifths of those between ten and fourteen worked at sometime during the preceding year.¹¹

Nearly all the boys and girls over fourteen were regular members of the family working force. While the younger children sometimes worked only during the summer and early fall, the older children generally worked whenever

¹⁰Francis J. Brown and Joseph S. Roucek, One American (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), pp. 354-355.

¹¹Burma, op. cit., p. 58.

work was available, regardless of whether school was in session or not.

In the United States it is estimated that 75 percent of the Spanish-American children of school age are in school, and that the number in high school is only about one-third of what it should be on the basis of population.¹²

The Spanish-American children have been faced with several problems which serve as obstacles to their educational ventures. These problems of the children are also problems of the schools. It is generally agreed, by educators, that the major problem of these children is their linguistic handicap. The Spanish-Americans must first master the English language to the point where they can take their proper places in English-speaking classrooms.

Different methods used by our school systems to overcome this handicap have not been satisfactory in most cases. The normal procedure is to admit children of school age, carry on all teaching in English, and trust that the child will learn the language and content.

Another method was to admit the child a year before he becomes of school age, use Spanish to teach English, and admit the child to regular school work the following year. This plan was also found to be unsatisfactory.

¹²Ibid., p. 73.

The Puerto Ricans have been experimenting with a plan where the child is admitted at regular school age, taught oral English and written Spanish for a year and a half, and then taught written English.¹³ Although this plan has been partly successful in Puerto Rico, it has not been used much in the United States. It is felt among the educators that there is a need for more study; more and better textbooks; more collateral materials and a need for specially trained teachers before this plan can be initiated successfully in this country.

The most common method has been simply segregating the Spanish-American children until they learn English. Those in favor of this plan argue that these children can learn English at their own rate. Therefore, they will have a better chance to succeed and will not acquire that inferiority complex that often comes with failure.

Those against this plan, mostly parents of students who attend segregated classes or schools, argue that the criterion for segregation is too often the parents' national origin rather than a linguistic reason. Other arguments against this plan are (1) that the segregated schools are usually inferior schools; (2) that Anglos acquire a superior attitude; and (3) that Spanish-American children placed with Anglos where English is spoken progress slowly in language development.

¹³Ibid., p. 75.

Regardless of the pros and cons, this plan has proved to be the most successful and feasible method to use at the present. It has not always been used in the way that it was intended, but it has proven to be the most satisfactory.

Equally significant among these children are problems created by their relatively low economic, social, and cultural level.

It is evident that the problems of the Spanish-American children have created undesirable situations in our school systems. The majority of our schools were not prepared to offer a program which could adequately provide special teaching methods or classroom materials necessary to teach these children. There is little knowledge and understanding of the Spanish-American child's social characteristics, economic background, cultural heritage, and language. Only recently have teacher training institutions, especially in the south, become aware of this situation.

The children of migratory parents previously mentioned also created a problem for our schools which was different from those cited. This was a problem of overcrowdedness in schools which were already filled to capacity. Even though these children were in school only during the duration of the seasonal work in a community, the schools had to provide education for them. Since the number of these children was somewhat unpredictable, a carefully prepared program was not available to them.

These problems have possibly reached their peak. The strain at the chief points of tension has been gradually lessening, and at the same time better techniques for dealing with these problems are being developed and more widely used. Where one may expect a relatively few Spanish-American students to complete high school, college, and vocational training schools, better conditions are changing the trend. Each year a greater number of these youths are finishing high school, and continuing their higher education through special loans, government grants, and special educational college programs.

III. LITERATURE ON SPANISH-AMERICANS IN THE NORTH PLATTE VALLEY

The first Spanish-Americans that came to the North Platte Valley consisted mostly of agricultural common laborers; however, those coming from Kansas were previously engaged in industrial work. These workers were employed in such non-agricultural work as railroad construction, railroad maintenance, meat packing, and other industrial occupations. Why did they sacrifice these apparently good occupations for farm work in Nebraska?

The Spanish-American families were usually large families. In the industrial occupations in Kansas only the man could work; his wages were not enough to provide for his

family as well as he would like. In Nebraska, even though wages were not as high, the head of a family could utilize his children in doing farm work. This meant a better income for the family than the one obtained in Kansas.

The first of the North Platte Valley movements was in the years 1915 and 1916 when a group of Spanish-American men were sent by the railroad companies in Kansas to construct and maintain railroads in this region. After being in the Valley for a period of a year or two, these men began to bring their families to the area. The families became residents of the area and eventually the men abandoned railroad work and went into farm work which was plentiful and economically advantageous for the whole family.¹⁴

The next movement of Spanish-Americans was the result of the importation of these workers by the Great Western Sugar Company.

In 1920 and 1921 the Great Western Sugar Company began to recruit Spanish-American workers for their sugar beet crops. These people were imported from several states especially Kansas and Colorado. This movement brought most of the Spanish-American population into this area. Because of the relatively long duration of employment made by the

¹⁴Statement of Mr. Geronimo Perez, personal interview, September 18, 1970.

sugar beet industry, a great number of these families became residents of the valley.¹⁵

With the coming of the depression the Spanish-Americans found it increasingly difficult to find work because Anglos were given priority for the jobs that were available.¹⁶ At this time the Great Western Sugar Company followed the trend that was evidenced throughout the country and offered transportation and food for those people who wished to return to Mexico. This brought about a great decrease in the Spanish-American population in the North Platte Valley. Those who chose to remain went through a period of hardship probably similar to those previously experienced in their mother country.¹⁷

With conditions improving in the early forties, the agricultural demand for workers began to grow. This time the bulk of Spanish-American migration came directly from Texas and other southern states.¹⁸ The peak of this migration was reached during the period of World War II. Much work was now available and wages were more attractive. Many

¹⁵Statement of John Lopez, personal interview, October 18, 1970.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Statement of Evaristo Fonseca, personal interview, November 14, 1970.

¹⁸Statement of Jose Dorador, personal interview, December 5, 1970.

of the families that came to the North Platte Valley up to this period had settled throughout the Valley and had become residents of Nebraska.

Migration of the Spanish-Americans has continued through the seventies, but has become one of migratory seasonal workers. Very few families have established residence in the North Platte Valley area; instead they come during the period when work is in season and leave for other regions for seasonal work. Their permanent residences are located in the southern states, mainly Texas, where their annual migration starts northward.

Modern transportation has contributed largely toward the migratory type of labor. It is economical and feasible for these workers to travel from one region of seasonal work to another. This type of migration is becoming more and more important to farmers, especially since many of the North Platte Valley resident Spanish-Americans are going into industrial semi-professional or professional work. Only a few of the "old resident" Spanish-American families are now involved in farm work.

The migration to the North Platte Valley has been one of (1) being sent here, (2) being brought here, and (3) having come here on their own accord.

The most important reasons or purposes for these people migrating to the North Platte Valley have been stated.

However, there are undoubtedly many other reasons which are of the personal type.

IV. SUMMARY OF LITERATURE

The Spanish-American immigrants came to the United States for economic reasons. Since nearly all of them were unskilled their major source of employment was agriculture.

During 1850 to 1900 the workers came to the United States for the work season and returned home for the off season. In the 1920's the Mexican government became alarmed at the number of lost citizens, and restrictions were placed on the flow of traffic across the border. With the new restriction and the depression immigration decreased until 1941.

The railroads brought some Spanish-Americans to the United States during their building days. This was one of the first job opportunities outside the field of agriculture and may have started the practice of on-the-job training. Some types of vocational training were also started because of this semi-skilled job market.

Education is one of the major problems of Spanish-American citizens. Because agriculture provides jobs for all members of a family, except the very small children, the Spanish-American tended to stay with this kind of labor rather than a semi-skilled job which would allow only the

head of the family to work. With all members of the family working during the work season the children are not apt to benefit from much formal education. Also the migratory nature of farm harvest keeps the family from staying in any one location long enough to get the children settled into a learning situation.

Some of the immigrants' problems are being solved but far too many are still without solutions.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA RECEIVED

This chapter is devoted to information received on Spanish-American students from two different classes of the Scottsbluff, Nebraska, Public School system. Fifty students are included in the study being made, twenty-three from one class and twenty-seven from the other.

These classes have been picked at random without special attention to any particular class. The study follows these students from the seventh grade through graduation and to their present occupation. Those who dropped out of school prior to graduation have similarly been studied.

I. METHODS AND PROCEDURES USED

A list of Spanish-American students from the years 1965 and 1968 was obtained from the cumulative records in the school files. Addresses were obtained from the school, students, parents, friends, relatives and town directories.

The next step was to locate and interview former students and compile desired information on a master list. One phase of this data is shown in Table I. The number of Spanish-American students to graduate from the two classes cited was twenty. This was 40 percent of the total number

TABLE I

NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS GRADUATING FROM THE CLASSES
OF 1965 AND 1968 AT SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH SCHOOL AND
NUMBER SEEKING FURTHER EDUCATION
BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

Class	Number in seventh grade		Number of graduates		Education beyond high school	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1965	6	17	2	10	2	5
1968	12	15	4	4	2	0
Total	18	32	6	14	4	5
		50	20			9

of these students who had entered the seventh grade. The majority of them being girls can be attributed to the fact that the largest part of the classes were girls to begin with. However, it can be pointed out that a higher percentage of the girls--44 percent--graduated as compared to 33 percent of the boys.

Contrary to what would be expected, the earlier of the two classes had a higher percentage of graduates. The Class of 1965 had 52 percent graduates while the Class of 1968 had the comparatively low percentage of 30. This would make it appear as if the percentage of graduates was dropping year by year. However, a further investigation of other classes would be required to obtain a more accurate picture.

One may also see from Table I, page 22, that almost half of those students who graduated from high school continued on with some type of education or training beyond their high school education. In this particular study the boys and girls continuing their education or training beyond high school are fairly evenly divided. Again it is found that the class of 1968 had a smaller percentage in this activity. It is interesting to note that in this class only boys continued with higher education.

School records also showed that 60 percent of the Spanish-American students in the two classes studied dropped out of school before graduation. The two classes varied

from 48 percent drop-outs for the Class of 1965 to as high as 70 percent drop-outs for the Class of 1968. In either case the percentage of drop-outs is extremely high. As shown on Table II, below, the largest number of drop-outs occurred in the seventh grade. At this grade level 33 percent of all dropouts occurred. As the students continued through the higher grade levels the percentage of drop-outs diminished until only 7 percent of the drop-outs occurred in grade twelve. As indicated in Table II, the number of drop-outs from grades seven through twelve decreased gradually at a regular rate.

TABLE II
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF DROP-OUTS PER GRADE,
CLASSES OF 1965 AND 1968,
SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH SCHOOL

Grade	Class of 1965	Class of 1968	Total drop-outs	Percentage of total drop-outs
7	5	5	10	33.3
8	1	4	5	16.7
9	1	4	5	16.7
10	2	3	5	16.7
11	1	2	3	10.0
12	1	1	2	6.7
Total	11	19	30	100.0

II. INTERVIEWS

The data obtained through personal interviews contributed to the major part of this study. The personal interviews were either direct interviews with the former students studied, or indirect interviews with either the students' parents or close relatives who had the information sought.

Through these personal interviews the reasons for students dropping from school were obtained. The reasons for these drop-outs are presented in Table III, page 26. Of the many reasons for these drop-outs, those associated with work are most numerous. Among the total number of drop-outs eight boys and one girl stated that they had left school because they had to work, and four girls stated that they had to help at home. In other than work requirements categories, marriages, lack of interest, and difficulty of studies were common reasons among the students who dropped out of school. It is interesting to note that only 23 percent of these reasons stated reflections on the school.

In the previous chapters it was pointed out that the Spanish-American immigration consisted of people mainly engaged in agricultural work. It was also cited that more recently the "older resident" Spanish-Americans in the North Platte Valley were engaging in industrial, semi-professional, or professional work. The occupation of the Spanish-American students in this study substantiates the latter

TABLE III

REASONS FOR DROP-OUTS, CLASSES OF 1965 and 1968
SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH SCHOOL

Class	To Military work service	Lack of interest	Help at Home	Marriage	School too difficult	Removed by relatives	Release by school	No Unknown reason
1965	3	2	2	1	2	-	-	-
1968	6	1	2	3	1	1	1	3
Total	9	3	4	4	3	1	1	3

statement. This is presented not only in Tables IV, page 28, and V, page 29, which pertain to the students studied, but also Tables VI, page 30, and VII, page 31, which pertain to the occupations of the husbands of the married female students included in this study.

Other than those married female graduates who are actually engaged in the occupation of being housewives, the majority of the graduates in this study are engaged in semi-professional or professional work. This is shown in Table IV, page 28, where nine of the possible twenty graduates are so employed. Another three of these graduates, upon completion of their schooling, will also enter semi-professional or professional fields. This means that excluding those girls who are married and devoting their full time to housekeeping, only two of the graduates would be considered out of this category. Only one was found to be making no use of his education inasmuch as he has been unable to hold any permanent position. What part-time work he does acquire consists of mostly work that is considered as common labor.

Comparison between Table I and Table IV indicates that approximately 83 percent of the boy graduates and 50 percent of the girl graduates are going into semi-professional or professional occupations.

TABLE IV

PRESENT OCCUPATIONS OF GRADUATES, CLASSES OF 1965 AND 1968
SCOTTSELUFF HIGH SCHOOL

Class	Clerical or secretarial	Student	Teacher or instructor	Housewife	Military service	Nursing	Own housekeeping operator	Beauty operator	Printer	Cleaners employee	No Permanent work
1965	2-1*	1	2	3-5*	-	1*	-	1	1	1*	-
1968	1*	2	-	2-1*	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total	3-2*	3	2	5-6*	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1

* denotes working wives

TABLE V
PRESENT OCCUPATIONS OF DROP-OUTS, CLASSES OF 1965 AND 1968,
SCOTTSBUFF HIGH SCHOOL

	Wife	Store clerk	Construction work	Maid	Railroad	Foundary work	None
	Military service	Mechanic	Farm labor	Barber	Cook	Popcorn stand	Unknown
1965	6	1	1	-	-	-	-
1968	6	1	1	1	1	1	2
Total	12	2	1	1	1	1	2

TABLE VI
PRESENT OCCUPATIONS OF SPOUSES OF MARRIED FEMALE GRADUATES, CLASSES OF
1965 AND 1968, SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH SCHOOL

Class	Barber	Military service	Electrician	Teacher	Sheep shearer	Unknown
	TV career	Foundry worker	Sugar factory employee	Landscaping foreman	Auto parts manager	
1965	1	1	1	-	1	-
1968	-	-	-	1	-	1
Total	1	1	1	1	1	1

TABLE VII

PRESENT OCCUPATIONS OF SPOUSES OF MARRIED FEMALE DROP-OUTS, CLASSES OF
1965 AND 1968, SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH SCHOOL

Class	Farm labor	Ordinance employee	Construction worker	Government work	Unknown
	Lens-grinder	Miner	Railroad and Barber		
1965	2	1	1	-	2
1968	3	-	-	1	1
Total	5	1	1	1	3

Even among the drop-outs studied, the tendency to hold occupations other than agriculture is apparent. Table V, located on page 29, indicates that insofar as most of the girls married are full-time housewives, only two of these drop-outs are engaged in farm work as common laborers. However, the occupations held by several of these drop-outs are considered to be somewhat semi-skilled work rather than semi-professional or professional.

The girls in this study who married also seemed to establish a trend in the type of husbands they obtained. As shown in Table VI, page 30, the girls who graduated married men who were engaged in either industrial, semi-professional, or professional occupations. Only one of these husbands was engaged in work which was related to agriculture. However, this one individual was employed in an occupation that required skill and not just common labor. The occupations of these vary with no two engaged in the same work.

Among the girls who dropped out of school and married, their choice of husbands was somewhat of a lower degree although a number of these did quite well as shown in Table VII, page 31.

It was discovered in this study that those girls who dropped out of school at the higher grade levels, obtained husbands with better positions. Those girls who dropped out

of school in the lower grade levels were married to husbands engaged in agricultural work.

In comparing Tables VI and VII, it is evident that most girls who graduated obtained husbands with better positions than those girls who dropped from school. It is therefore apparent that all of the girls included in this study married men who were approximately within their educational level.

In concluding, the former students were also asked, "What could have been done to make the in-school time more helpful?" The males responded as follows:

1. Teach the use of better study habits.
2. Place more emphasis on world affairs, thereby making the students aware of social problems.
3. Greater emphasis should be placed on grammar.
4. Vocational courses should be offered to students not planning to attend college.
5. Rapport between students and teachers should be improved.
6. Have necessary guidance personnel available to students.
7. Discipline and attentiveness of the students should be improved in classrooms.
8. Make classes more interesting.
9. Place greater emphasis on English composition.

10. More social activities where one can meet more students.
11. Stricter enforcement on doing home work.
12. It isn't what the school could have done, it's what I could have done for a better education.
13. Offer a course in mechanics.
14. Try to communicate the importance of your high school education.
15. Pressure students into taking courses they don't want for their own good.

When the females were asked to respond to the same question, the following comments were given.

1. More economics could have been taught.
2. Psychology and sociology courses could have been offered.
3. Should have a course in money management and personal finance.
4. More classes in vocational training.
5. Teach several courses that would prepare you for the outside work.
6. Have more chances of choosing own subjects instead of required courses.
7. Treat everybody equally.
8. More experience with office machines.
9. A firm background in English--especially grammar.

10. Teachers need to be broadminded enough to properly understand the problems of today's youth.
11. There should be proper communication between the students, faculty, and the administration on school procedures.
12. Adult education classes should be included in the curriculum.
13. Greater emphasis should be placed on reading; especially remedial and speed reading.
14. Better guidance and counseling should be available to the students of the school.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper was written due to the author's interest in former Spanish-American students who attended the Scottsbluff High School, Scottsbluff, Nebraska, during the 1965 and 1968 years, and to determine if anything could be done to improve the existing education students receive from the school.

I. SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the education that former Spanish-American students received from the Scottsbluff High School, Scottsbluff, Nebraska. In order to do this, information was needed from former students of this school concerning their education, present status and suggested school improvements.

Information for the investigation was received from former Spanish-American students of Scottsbluff High School, those being former students from the years 1965 and 1968. The spread in years was used so a comparison could be made as to educational progress and post-school occupations.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The interviews of former Spanish-American students were very complete, and the information received may be regarded as invaluable to Spanish-American students and school personnel. The information can assist in structuring an educational program which might better help future students meet the demands placed upon them by today's society.

This investigation has revealed that there is a definite trend toward the improvement of the Spanish-American's position in the North Platte Valley. The majority of these people were originally mostly common farm laborers. They are now finding more and more attractive positions in industrial, semi-professional or professional occupations. As an example it can be cited that Spanish-American graduates from the Scottsbluff High School have been pursuing their educational ventures toward some professional goal. Among those who have reached their goals are a dentist, a chiropodist, two registered nurses, and five teachers. It is interesting to note that one of these teachers is an instructor in the School of Pharmacy at the University of Notre Dame. The success of these people is greatly attributed to the increasing tendency among Spanish-Americans to take advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Insofar as education is concerned the study of the two classes from the Scottsbluff Public High School provided several facts pertaining to the trends among Spanish-American students.

Of those students studied the number who were graduates from high school was less than half. A higher percentage of the girls graduated than the boys. About one-half of those students graduating from high school go on to higher education or special training beyond the high school education. The largest number of the graduating students are now engaged or will be engaged in semi-professional or professional occupations.

The problem of a relatively high percentage of drop-outs prevails among the Spanish-American students. The main reason for these drop-outs is closely associated with work. In the grades seven through twelve, there is a tendency for the largest percentage of drop-outs to occur in grade seven and diminish through grade twelve.

In contrast to their graduating classmates, these drop-outs are engaged mostly in industrial occupations. It is apparent that of the total number of students entering the seventh grade, the number of those engaged in farm work is almost nil.

There is also a tendency for girls who graduate to marry men who are engaged industrially, semi-professionally,

or professionally. Of those girls who dropped out of school and married, the majority married men who were engaged in semi-skilled or non-skilled occupations. The few girls who dropped out of school at the higher grade levels succeeded in marrying men who were engaged in semi-professional or professional occupations as did their graduating classmates. It can, therefore, be said that in the marriage of the girls studied, there was a tendency for these girls to marry men on approximately the same educational level as they were.

Socially, there is a definite relationship between the amount of education acquired by these Spanish-Americans and their participation in community activities. There also exists a better understanding between the Anglos and these educated Spanish-Americans. Even with as little as a seventh grade education, the desire for an improvement in the Spanish-Americans and Anglo relationship is present. This is evident in the number of Anglo friends that these people have. The Spanish-Americans have become part of the communities because of this understanding that now exists, and also because their over-all standards have risen to the point where they are being accepted as an active part of the communities.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing study is complete in itself; however, it would be interesting to make another study, four to eight years from now, on the utilization of education of the individuals studied herein.

From reviewing the information received from former Spanish-American students, a number of problems are brought to mind. As a result of this study the writer would recommend the following:

1. The possibility of having group guidance classes at the junior high and high school level should be explored. As the reader goes through the results of the study he will notice there are several problems that might have been lessened through group counseling procedures.
2. The possibility of extending or enlarging the present vocational educational program for those students who do not plan to attend college should be considered.
3. A larger selection of adult education classes could prove helpful to the community and drop-out students, as stated by one of the former students interviewed for this study.
4. Students in both classes studied would probably have benefited by more help in career planning.

5. More emphasis should be placed in making sure the students realize the importance of obtaining a good high school education, as stated by several former students.
6. Results of this study should prove valuable if distributed to present Spanish-American students of the school.
7. A bilingual counselor should be employed by the Scottsbluff High School.
8. There should be more emphasis placed on English communication.
9. The school should take a good look at the curriculum and adjust it to the needs of all students and not to fit administration or the faculty needs.
10. Parents should be given as much available information as possible to help them in their efforts to keep their youngsters in school.
11. An effective plan must be developed to detect early signs pointing toward students who are potential drop-outs so preventative steps can be initiated.

As a final recommendation, the school officials should continually evaluate the students' educational program, and thereby determine to what extent the school is meeting its

responsibilities. In addition a comprehensive long range plan should be established to help insure that all youths are being provided with the best possible education.

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