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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

RACE RELATIONS IN AUSTIN, TEXAS, c. 1917-1929

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ABSTRACT

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RACE RELATIONS IN AUSTIN, TEXAS, c. 1917-1929

by Jason John McDonald

This thesis studies the dynamics of race relations in Austin, Texas, during a period of rapid social and demographic change. A principal objective has been to assess the impact that a massive influx of Mexican immigrants had upon what was formerly a biracial society, composed of whites and blacks. Such areas as education, residential patterns, employment, politics, and law enforcement have been examined to determine whether or not the segregation and discrimination traditionally faced by blacks were also extended to the newly-arrived Mexican immigrants. Austin was chosen for this study because of its unique position, being located in both the American South's 'black-belt' region and the 'Mexicanized' area of the Southwest. Moreover, by the end of the 1920s Austin resembled a microcosm of Texas in terms of the proportions of African-Americans and Mexicans in the population. Austin was also at the centre of two major demographic movements affecting the United States between World War I and the onset of the Great Depression: unprecedented levels of Mexican immigration and the Great Migration of southern blacks to the industrial centres of the North. Bearing in mind the multiracial character of American society and the fact that African-Americans and Mexican-Americans are presently the nation's two largest - and among the most deprived - ethnic 'minorities,' this study aims to shed light upon the historical origins of some of today's most pressing social issues in the United States.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFL	American Federation of Labor
AISD	Austin Independent School District
BRSS	Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences (University of Texas)
CIC	Commission on Interracial Cooperation
CWA	Community Welfare Association (Austin)
LULAC	League of United Latin-American Citizens
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
TESC	Texas Educational Survey Commission
URC	University Race Commission
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

In the past, academics have neglected the history of ethnic minorities in Texas and only in the last two to three decades has the important role played by nonwhite groups been finally acknowledged. Although recent scholarship has revealed much about the historical experiences of individual ethnic and racial groups, few attempts have been made to investigate the contours and complexities of the ethnic landscape in Texas. More specifically, a major comparative work on Mexican-Americans and African-Americans - the state's principal ethnic minorities - has been conspicuously absent. The present work is intended as a tentative step towards redressing this historiographical imbalance. Focusing upon relations between whites, blacks and Mexicans in Austin, Texas, during 1917-1929, the main objective of this study is to assess the impact that massive Mexican immigration had upon what was traditionally a biracial community.

Between 1917, when the United States entered World War I, and the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, Austin was at the centre of two major population shifts: Mexican immigration on an unprecedented scale and the Great Migration of southern blacks to northern industrial centres. As an outpost of the black-belt

region of East Texas, a sizeable proportion of the city's population was African-American, while its close proximity to San Antonio - the United States' principal entrepot for immigrants from Mexico - ensured a heavy influx of Mexicans. In this study, such areas as residential patterns, law enforcement, politics and educational provision, among others, will be examined to determine whether or not the segregation and discrimination long experienced by blacks was also extended to local Mexicans, who were mostly newly-arrived immigrants. As well as looking at white attitudes towards and treatment of African-Americans and Mexicans, the responses of these two groups will be considered and compared.

A. America's Two Largest Ethnic Minorities

Despite the racial and ethnic heterogeneity of American society, the term 'ethnic minority' is generally only used in reference to certain underprivileged nonwhite groups. African-Americans and Mexican-Americans are, by far, the largest and most visible of these so-called 'deprived minorities.' The less numerous, though no less disadvantaged, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans are the other groups usually included in this category. As a group of distinguished scholars has recently pointed out, the prominence of the black and Mexican-American presences is relatively self-explanatory:

'There is hardly a major Northern or Western urban area without its black and/or Spanish-speaking ghetto.'[1] Moreover, there is every indication that these two groups will become even more dominant features of the American ethnic landscape. Currently, African-Americans still comprise the nation's largest nonwhite minority, while Hispanics (of whom Mexican-Americans represent the biggest single element) are the fastest growing population group. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, blacks and Hispanics are projected to reach numerical parity around the middle of the next century, by which time these two groups combined will have increased from their present one-fifth to one-third of the total U.S. population.[2]

African-Americans and Mexican-Americans have arrived at their present somewhat similar positions within American society by very different paths. The historical experience of blacks in the United States has been unique. Unlike any other ethnic group, they were enslaved and taken to the country against their will. By the 1860s, slavery in the United States was almost entirely confined to the South, which after its defeat by the North in the American Civil War was compelled to relinquish the institution. Following their emancipation, most of the former slaves remained in the South and for the next fifty years this region contained about nine-tenths of the nation's black population.[3]

The post-war period of racial readjustment was far from harmonious and southern whites immediately set

about enforcing the complete subordination of blacks. White supremacy took many forms. Legal and extra-legal means were used to keep blacks out of politics; contact between the races rapidly diminished as segregation - through the so-called 'Jim Crow' laws and practices - became the norm in most areas of life; and when the Negro was perceived as being 'uppity' and resentful of his 'place' in society (or even if blacks made no such outward display of discontentment), whites would often resort to violence in order to maintain the existing order. Indeed, by the early twentieth century lynching had become almost entirely a southern phenomenon and the victims were invariably black males. The most influential black leader of the time, Booker T. Washington, promulgated a policy of accommodationism. Washington counselled African-Americans not to seek social and political equality with whites, but to concentrate instead upon improving their economic standing. Not all African-Americans supported Washington's programme. Among his critics was W. E. B. Du Bois, who argued that blacks should agitate for the restoration of their civil and political rights. However, Du Bois did not enjoy much influence until after World War I. This period, known as the nadir for African-Americans, culminated in the election of Woodrow Wilson, a southern-born Democrat, to the White House in 1912. The inferior status of blacks was given the federal seal of approval under Wilson, with segregation being introduced in government departments at the

nation's capital. Only since the black civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s has the dismantling of America's segregation system proceeded apace.[4]

Mexican-Americans are currently the second largest ethnic minority in the United States. They have traditionally been concentrated in an area of the Southwest that had formerly been part of Mexico. In 1848, the United States acquired these lands (which include the present-day states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California, as well as parts of Colorado, Utah and Nevada) after waging an expansionist war against its southern neighbour. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), the federal government pledged to recognise and protect the rights of Mexicans remaining in the conquered territories. However, during the nineteenth century, white settlers (usually referred to as 'Anglos') used both their knowledge of American law and a campaign of violent intimidation to systematically dispossess many Mexicans of their lands, especially the more susceptible small-holders. Despite strong resistance from the Mexicans, by the twentieth century the Anglo usurpation was a *fait accompli*.[5]

While some of today's Mexican-Americans are descended from the pre-1848 inhabitants of the Southwest, the overwhelming majority are immigrants or the offspring of immigrants who have arrived during the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1930, for example, over a tenth of Mexico's population immigrated to the United States. This major demographic shift had two

main causes: internal unrest and economic dislocation caused by the Revolution in Mexico, and a growing demand for unskilled workers to meet the labour needs of the Southwest's developing economy. Once in the United States, Mexicans faced numerous forms of discrimination: they were generally confined to low-paid and low-status occupations. In some states, their children even had to attend segregated schools. Until recent decades, they were very much a 'forgotten' minority, ignored (especially compared with blacks) by scholars and policy-makers alike. However, this all changed in the 1960s, when Chicanos - as the younger Mexican-American leaders preferred to describe themselves and their ethnic group - adopted a stance similar to that of black civil rights activists and generated increased public awareness of Mexican-American grievances.[6]

Despite their unique pasts, the historical experiences of African-Americans and Mexican-Americans are far from dissimilar. In an article dealing with conditions for Mexicans in twentieth-century Texas, the historian David Montejano contended: 'On the eve of World War II, segregation was regarded as an appropriate solution to the "Negro problem" in the South and the "Mexican problem" in the Southwest.' Montejano added:

> 'Jim Crow' may appear to be an odd description to apply to Mexicans in Texas. There was no constitutionally sanctioned 'separate but equal' provision for Mexicans as there was for blacks.

> According to the prevailing jurisprudence, Mexicans were 'Caucasian.' But in political and sociological terms, Negroes and Mexicans were basically seen as different aspects of the same 'race' problem.[7]

The white attitudes described by Montejano were also expressed in the standard histories of Texas. Although references to African-Americans and Mexican-Americans were generally few in number and sparse on detail, they prove to be quite revealing. In 1939, Ralph W. Steen claimed that both the black and Mexican presences constituted a 'serious social problem.' While referring only indirectly to the segregation and disfranchisement of blacks in Texas, Steen apportioned much of the blame for social and economic inequalities to African-Americans themselves.[8] Mexican-Americans were treated with similar condescension by the historian Rupert N. Richardson, in his 1943 work, *Texas: The Lone Star State*. Significantly, Richardson made a distinction between the 'peon class' of Mexicans with their 'pronounced Indian characteristics,' and the 'relatively small groups of proud and aristocratic people of *superior* culture, mainly of Spanish origin.'[9]

While scholars have regularly remarked upon the striking similarities between the conditions of African-Americans and Mexican-Americans in the United States, the subject has not attracted much serious attention in its own right. Comparisons between blacks and Mexicans have usually appeared in either of two kinds of work:

monographs dealing with one or other of these groups, or general studies of ethnicity and the ethnic landscape. The former can provide revealing insights into how blacks and Mexicans coped with the same set of circumstances (i.e. the region and time-period under investigation), but, as might reasonably be expected of such specific studies, references to both groups are often incidental and sometimes lack detailed analysis.[10] To those seeking a fairly balanced coverage of the African-American and Mexican-American experiences, works which come from the latter of the two categories mentioned above may prove more satisfying, but they also have severe limitations. As a matter of course, the authors of general studies are heavily reliant upon research carried out by other scholars, which means that their main sources are monographs covering an individual ethnic group. In any consequent comparisons, therefore, it is invariably the case that the information on blacks and Mexicans comes from different sources, which may not even cover the same localities and eras.[11]

In 1963, the benefits to be derived from a comparative study of African-Americans and Mexicans were demonstrated in a brief article by Alphonso Pinkney. Concentrating his attention upon a western city with around 100,000 inhabitants, where blacks and Mexicans were the largest ethnic minorities and each made up about 8% of the total population, Pinkney set out to assess and compare white attitudes towards these two

groups. His findings were based upon standard interviews with a random sample of over three hundred local whites. From the responses that he received, Pinkney concluded: 'The pattern of prejudice toward Negro and Mexican Americans in this community is essentially the same.' To varying degrees, blacks and Mexicans both experienced segregation in residential patterns and in the public schools, and were generally 'relegated to the lowest possible status in the community.'[12]

Clearly, there are a number of reasons for studying the historical experiences of blacks and Mexicans in a single community. If conditions for both groups were essentially the same, then this might reveal a great deal about how American society handles its nonwhite minorities. Likewise, variations in treatment would provide useful insight into white attitudes towards each minority. A further matter worthy of consideration, is the impact that the African-American or Mexican-American presence had upon the general racial climate of a community, and the extent to which this led to either an improvement or deterioration of circumstances for the other group.

B. Between World War and Great Depression

The period from the beginning of the First World War to the onset of the Great Depression proved to be a turning

point in the histories of African-Americans and Mexican-Americans alike. It witnessed major demographic change, with significant numbers of blacks and Mexicans abandoning rural homelands in the South and Mexico, respectively, and settling in new, increasingly urban, environments. Moreover, the continuing marginalisation of these two groups within modern American society acted to intensify ethnic awareness and organisational activity among them.

World War I set in motion a combination of demographic forces that were to have a longterm impact upon the geographic distribution of African-Americans, who traditionally had been one of the most static population groups in the United States. As the historian T. Lynn Smith observed:

> . . . for more than half a century, while the white and immigrant populations of the nation were pushing westward, filling up the newly opened sections of the country, . . . the Negro population hardly budged from the same restricted portions of the country which it occupied at the time slavery was abolished. [13]

In 1910, two-thirds of all African-Americans were still located in the rural districts of twelve southern states (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas); by 1960 the proportion

had fallen to less than a quarter. Since the end of the Civil War, growing numbers of southern blacks had been moving from the rural to the urban sections of the South, but in the decade and a half after 1916 the region experienced its first mass exodus of African-Americans. Most migrants headed for the industrial centres of the North, where the wartime economy and later consumer boom of the 1920s, combined with the curtailment of foreign immigration, created a wide range of job opportunities for southern blacks. Between 1910 and 1930, around one and a quarter million blacks moved north, principally to cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit and Cleveland. During the 1930s, the Depression stemmed the flow of black migration from the South, but the movement began again during the run-up to World War II; this time, a large proportion of African-Americans went to the urban centres of the West Coast, particularly Los Angeles, as well as the North. Moreover, the second wave of the Great Migration took place on an even larger scale than the first. Over one and a half million blacks left the South during the 1940s alone and, although the movement continued at a slower pace thereafter, by 1990 about half of the nation's African-Americans resided in region's outside of Dixie.[14]

Like the migration of southern blacks to the North, Mexican immigration to the United States reached unprecedented levels during the First World War and was only curtailed by the Depression of the 1930s. Between

1910 and 1930, there was about a threefold increase in the number of foreign-born Mexicans in the United States, which rose from over 200,000 in 1910, to nearly 500,000 in 1920 and almost 650,000 in 1930. Prior to the census of 1910, Mexicans had constituted an insignificant proportion of the nation's total foreign-born population, but by 1930 there were at least one and a half million persons of Mexican ancestry or recent origin living in the United States. As one contemporary observer noted: 'This count ranked the Mexicans as the third largest "racial" group in the Nation, exceeded only by whites and Negroes.'[15] Initially, Mexican immigrants were mainly employed as seasonal agricultural labourers and tended to settle in rural parts of the Southwest, but they soon found work in other occupations and eventually gravitated to the cities. In the past, scholars have too often characterised Mexican-Americans as being a predominantly rural-based group, but, as the historian Ricardo Romo has demonstrated, this view is grossly misleading. Even by 1930, 51% of Mexicans in the United States resided in urban centres, compared with 56% of the total population and only 44% of blacks. Significantly, most of this urbanisation had taken place since 1900.[16]

During the 1920s, a transformation took place within American society which had significant implications for both African-Americans and Mexican-Americans. In many ways, World War I had been the catalyst for change. As we have already seen, it set in motion the mass

migration of large numbers of blacks and Mexicans. The war also heralded the final triumph of urbanisation and industrialisation over the former agrarian order: the census of 1920 showed that most Americans now lived in cities. Moreover, the urban and industrial sectors of the economy continued to boom during the twenties, with some elements of the population experiencing previously unrivalled levels of material prosperity. An increasing number of American homes were supplied with water and electricity, and serviced by the modern appliances - most popular of which was the radio - made possible by these utilities. The motor car became affordable to many households and soon established its supremacy over other modes of transport. The era finally came to an end in October 1929, when the virtual collapse of the stock market soon brought the American economy to its knees, ushering in the longest and most devastating slump in the nation's history.[17]

Many Americans, especially those newly arrived in urban centres, were disorientated and traumatised by the complexity and mutability of life in a modern society. Moreover, economic rivalry increased tensions between different ethnic groups. During the war, these anxieties immediately came to expression, taking the form of widespread racism and nativism. Race riots broke out in numerous parts of the country, including northern industrial centres, reaching a climax in the so-called 'Red Summer' of 1919. In that year, serious clashes between whites and blacks took place in no less

than twenty-six cities; the most severe occurring in Washington, D.C., where six people were killed and over 150 injured, and Chicago, which lasted for six days and left thirty-eight dead. Blacks were not the only target for white hostility. Nativist attacks on Mexicans were commonplace in parts of the Southwest. In 1922, for example, there were an estimated twenty-two Mexicans lynched in the United States, along with fifty-nine blacks.[18]

Renewed nativism took a multitude of forms: including, a spate of laws severely restricting immigration; a nationwide hysteria in 1920 over the threat apparently posed by communist subversives; and the revival of the Ku Klux Klan. The new Klan combined the traditional strain of southern negrophobia with anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism and general hostility towards foreigners. During the early twenties, the organisation had an estimated four million members and branches throughout the United States. Klan support was by no means restricted to the South; some of its largest chapters were in the Midwest and various northern cities. In a number of states, the Klan made a significant impact upon politics by backing its own candidates and even dominated some local administrations.[19]

In 1920, the Republicans gained control of the White House and held onto it for the rest of the decade. Nonetheless, Republican ascendancy proved a dismal disappointment for African-Americans; the party had

changed a great deal since the Civil War, when it had championed the cause of the former slaves. In an attempt to make inroads into the so-called 'Solid South,' where the Democratic Party ruled supreme, the Republicans had by the 1920s conformed to the racism and segregationist practices of southern whites. In the South, the Lily White faction of the party systematically excluded blacks from all positions of power and influence, while at the national level Republican Presidents refused to publicly condemn the Ku Klux Klan or put their weight behind federal anti-lynching legislation (which was subsequently scuttled by southern Congressmen). Moreover, the Republicans did not even stem the tide of Jim Crow laws being passed by many state and local governments at this time. In fact, a recent study of Louisville, Kentucky, reveals that the city's Republican administration, which held office from 1917 to 1929, actually introduced more segregation ordinances. To varying degrees, this pattern was replicated throughout the United States.[20]

The 1920s was also an important decade in terms of the social and political development of African-Americans and Mexican-Americans alike. In the urban setting, where both blacks and Mexicans were largely confined to segregated neighbourhoods, the group consciousness of individual ethnic minorities was greatly enhanced. Among blacks, this increased racial awareness was demonstrated by the appearance of what has been termed the 'New Negro.' The New Negro was

typically more assertive and rejected the accommodationism of the now deceased Booker T. Washington. This new mood was particularly evident in the rapidly expanding black ghettoes of northern urban centres, such as Harlem in New York City. Indeed, Harlem was the focus for an African-American cultural renaissance that left an indelible mark upon American civilisation.[21]

Also reflecting the new spirit of black self-esteem, were two of the most prominent black organisations: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. Formed in 1909, the NAACP increased the number of its branches from 80 to 310 during 1917-1919 alone, while membership expanded tenfold in the same period, exceeding the 90,000 mark.[22] During the 1920s, the NAACP maintained a high profile by fighting cases of segregation and discrimination in the courts, as well as lobbying for legislative action on behalf of blacks - such as its unsuccessful attempts to secure passage of a federal anti-lynching law.[23] In contrast, Marcus Garvey rejected the aims of social equality and assimilation. Garvey, who was born in Jamaica and settled in New York just before World War I, preached racial pride and even promoted a back-to-Africa movement. For a while, until he ran into trouble with the authorities and was deported, Garvey had been able to convert his message of black nationalism into a movement that attracted the

support of the urban black masses, as opposed to the more middle-class appeal of the NAACP.[24]

The process of urbanisation also facilitated the proliferation of Mexican voluntary associations. During the period 1917-1929, many new organisations appeared, while some of the older ones flourished and increased their membership. *Mutualistas* (mutual benefit societies) were a traditional and popular form of Mexican self-help group. One of the best known of these *mutualistas* was the *Alianza Hispano Americana*; founded in Arizona in the 1890s, by 1920 it had 275 branches across the Southwest. Some local associations, such as the *Cruz Azul* and *Comisión Honorífica*, were set up by the nearest Mexican consul, but there was an increasing tendency among Mexican communities to carry out this organisational function themselves. In addition to *mutualistas*, Mexicans established a variety of political, charitable, cultural and religious associations, as well as their own labour organisations in some places. Significantly, in 1929, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) was formed by a group of predominantly middle-class Mexican-Americans from Texas. In terms of its objectives, tactics and public image, LULAC eventually became very much the Mexican-American equivalent of the NAACP.[25]

Clearly, the period 1917-1929 was one of great change for blacks and Mexicans in the United States. Moreover, the experiences of these two groups bore many resemblances: both were involved in migratory movements

of giant proportions and increasing urbanisation, and both became the targets of white racist and nativist hostility. There were also parallels between the ways blacks and Mexicans responded to the demands of the era, such as their increased awareness of ethnic identity and growing interest in organisational activity.

C. Where South and Southwest Converge

Despite the redistribution of the black and Mexican populations that took place from World War I onwards, by the time of the Great Depression each of these two groups was still mainly concentrated in a single geographic region of the United States. In 1930, nearly four-fifths of all African-Americans in the United States resided in the South, while the Southwest contained over nine-tenths of the nation's Mexican population.[26] Geographically speaking, Texas formed part of both the South and the Southwest (see Map 1), yet, in terms of history, racial composition and social structure, it was neither entirely one nor the other. It was, however, one of the few states to have large and almost equal proportions of both blacks and Mexicans living within its borders. Moreover, many of the social and political developments characteristic of America during the twenties were replicated - sometimes to an exaggerated extent - in Texas. In the presidential election of 1928, for instance, Texas even momentarily

broke ranks with the rest of the Solid South and voted for the Republican candidate, Herbert Hoover. Nonetheless, typical of white Texans, this action constituted more a rejection of the Roman Catholicism and anti-prohibition views of Al Smith, the Democratic nominee, than genuine approval of Hoover and his policies.

The origins of modern Texas date back to the 1820s, when the Mexican Government granted Stephen F. Austin permission to establish an Anglo-American colony in one of its remote northeastern territories. Thereafter, white settlers, many of whom were from the American South, rapidly increased in number, bringing the institution of slavery with them. By 1830, there were about 20,000 Anglos and 2,000 (some sources estimate 5,000) black slaves in Texas. Tensions between the Mexican authorities and white settlers were not long in surfacing; the chief issues of contention being Mexico's opposition to slavery existing within its territory and the Anglos' constant jostling for greater autonomy, even independence. The final breach came in 1835, when the Anglos and some of the wealthier Mexican settlers staged a revolt. A Mexican military expedition led by Antonio Santa Anna marched north to restore order. However, after initial victories at the Alamo and Goliad in 1836, Santa Anna's army was eventually defeated at San Jacinto by a force under the command of Sam Houston. For the next decade, Texas existed as a separate republic, until in 1845, with the support of its Anglo inhabitants, it

was annexed by the United States. In 1848, following a devastating and largely unprovoked invasion of Mexico by the United States, the Mexican Government finally renounced its claim to Texas, as well as most of what is now called the American Southwest.[27]

After its admission to the Union, Texas quickly began to resemble every other state in the plantation South. By 1860, a quarter of white Texans owned slaves and blacks comprised thirty percent of the state's population. The development of Texas was heavily reliant upon black labour, and cotton production rose rapidly from 58,000 bales in 1850 to 182,000 in 1860. The slave population was largely confined to an area in the northeast, east and central parts of Texas. To compliment the cotton culture, white racial attitudes were distinctly Southern. According to one scholar, slavery 'provided a system of race control' that whites in ante-bellum Texas believed was 'essential to their way of life.'[28] Slavery and the black presence even influenced white perceptions of Mexicans, who in 1850 and 1860 were classed as 'free Negroes' by census enumerators in some Texas counties. In 1860, Texas was among the first southern states to secede from the Union and help form the Confederacy, as well as being one of the last in which federal forces proclaimed the emancipation of all slaves. Since the Civil War, black-white relations in Texas have generally followed the pattern of the segregation and subordination of blacks mirrored across the South.[29]

While Texas forged strong ties with the South, it retained much of its identity as a border state. Indeed, from about 1900 onwards, Texas began to develop more along the lines of the Southwest. Technological advances - such as irrigation systems, improved railroad communications and refrigerated freight cars - opened up the semi-arid portions of the region to commercial farming. While cotton growing rapidly spread westward from East Texas to the Rio Grande valley, Arizona and even as far as California, the Southwest also became the principal fruit and winter vegetable producing region of the United States. The economic expansion of the Southwest created a massive demand for unskilled labour, which was mostly met by importing workers from nearby Mexico. In Texas, the regional prosperity was enhanced by another factor: oil. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, world oil consumption rocketed and the discovery of large deposits of oil (and other natural resources, such as gas) in Texas transformed the economic fortunes of the state. By the eve of World War I, Texas had already begun to break out of the southern economic mould of debilitating dependence on one-crop agriculture and industrial underdevelopment.[30]

Above all, the characteristic which set Texas apart from both the South and the Southwest, was the racial composition of its population. Compared with the rest of the United States, Texas ranked fifth in terms of state population size by 1930, containing the country's first and fifth greatest number of Mexican and African-

American inhabitants, respectively. Moreover, the 850,000 blacks and 680,000 Mexicans in Texas comprised the state's two largest nonwhite minorities. Together, they made up over a quarter (26.4%) of the total state population, while the two and a half thousand or so Native Americans, Asians, Filipinos and other nonwhites accounted for less than 0.1%. Almost half (48.1%) of the Mexicans in the United States resided in Texas; the state's Mexican population was double the size of California's and six times larger than Arizona's, its closest rivals. As for rest of the South, the Mexican presence was virtually non-existent. Although Mexicans made up a smaller percentage of the total population in Texas (11.7%) than in Arizona (26.2%) or New Mexico (14.0%), in neither of the latter two states - nor any other in the Southwest - was the number and proportion of blacks comparable to that of Texas. In fact, Texas contained nine-tenths of all blacks living in the seven states of the Southwest. Next to Texas, California, with 81,000 African-Americans, had the second largest black community in the Southwest, but they made up only 1.4% of the state population and were vastly out-numbered by both Mexicans and Asians.[31]

Forming part of both the South and Southwest, enjoying an era of economic progress, and possessing a population composed almost entirely of the nation's three largest racial groups, Texas clearly occupied a unique position during the period 1917-1929. When W. E. B. Du Bois came to survey the opportunities

confronting whites, blacks and Mexicans in Texas as they entered the 1930s, he wrote:

> They form a center for racial cooperation and understanding. They are in the midst of a vast and rich country. The bounty of nature in its land fertility, its oils and minerals, has endowed their people with a great gift which may be the basis of enduring prosperity. All that is necessary is justice and freedom and understanding between men. [32]

Unfortunately, Du Bois's vision of the future has been a long time in materialising, and is in stark contrast to the reality of Texas on the eve of the 1970s, as depicted by D. W. Meinig in his book, *Imperial Texas*. According to Meinig, Texan society had a 'hierarchical order':

> . . . with the more wealthy landowners and businessmen at the top, small white proprietors and white workers ranged in the middle, and Negroes and Hispanos of whatever occupation at the bottom. It is basically a white, Anglo-Saxon, fundamentalist-Protestant society, in which . . . other racial groups are regarded as natural adjuncts, to be firmly locked into patterns of residential segregation, social discrimination, political subservience, and economic dependence. [33]

Meinig concluded that, while many individual features of Texas were not unique, the state achieved differentiation through its fusion and tendency to manifest 'exaggerations of some common American traits.'[34]

Ethnic relations in Texas had always been strained and the high level of violence regularly attracted nationwide attention. The period from World War I to the Great Depression was no exception to this rule. Herbert Shapiro, in his recent work, *White Violence and Black Response*, describes how 'a pattern of terrorism prevailed in the state of Texas,' which was 'a leader in lynching statistics.'[35] Between 1917 and 1929, at least forty lynchings were committed in Texas, a level matched only by two other states, Florida and Mississippi. In 1922, one of the worst years of the decade, Texas led all other states and accounted for over a quarter of total recorded lynchings, while the Mexican Government claimed that half of the twenty-two known Mexican victims in the United States that year had been lynched in Texas. Indeed, since the Mexican Revolution, the border region of Texas had virtually become a racial battleground between Anglos and Mexicans. Fatal attacks on Mexicans - which some estimates for the period 1908-1925 count in the hundreds - generally went unpunished and were often even committed by official law enforcers, like the Texas Rangers. Texas was also the scene of some major urban race riots. In August 1917, police provocation of black

soldiers sparked off a riot in Houston, Texas, in which seventeen whites were killed. President Wilson, ignoring protests from the NAACP and African-Americans generally, permitted the military to make an example of the black soldiers, thirteen of whom were summarily executed. Two years later, at Longview, Texas, a white mob descended upon the main black neighbourhood in an effort to drive all African-American men out of the city. The homes of blacks were burned and the authorities had to impose martial law before finally restoring order.[36]

The arrival of the Ku Klux Klan did nothing to improve the already tense racial climate in Texas. In 1920, Klan organisers made their first attempt to enlist members in the state and met with staggering success. Before long, Texas had become a stronghold of the so-called 'Invisible Empire' and at its peak, around 1924, state membership reached at least 250,000. The Klan contributed to a spiralling of ethnic violence in Texas; blacks and Mexicans, along with Jews, Catholics, and immigrants in general, were among the groups victimised by the Klan. For a while, state politics were even dominated by the Klan issue. In 1922, Klan organisers mobilised political support in Texas for Earle B. Mayfield, a fellow klansman, who was consequently elected to the U.S. Senate. In the same year, Hiram Wesley Evans, from Dallas, successfully challenged William J. Simmons - the founder of the modern Ku Klux Klan - for the leadership of the national organisation

and became the new 'Imperial Wizard.' However, after its candidate for state governor was defeated in 1924, the Texas Klan witnessed a sudden decline in both membership and influence.[37]

Fundamentally, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Texas constituted a response to the scale and impact of recent social changes, particularly urbanisation. Between 1900 and 1940, the South experienced phenomenal rates of urban population increase, while city growth in the traditionally more urbanised Northeast and Midwest proceeded at a relatively modest pace. This period also witnessed the emergence of Texas - flourishing from the rise of the petro-chemical industry and agricultural expansion - as a major metropolitan subsystem. In 1900, only San Antonio and Houston ranked among the ten biggest southern cities, occupying eighth and tenth place, respectively. By 1940, Houston had the second largest urban population in the South, while Dallas, San Antonio and Fort Worth were all ranked among the region's top ten cities (indeed, Texas was the only state to have more than one city in this category).[38] As the urban centres of Texas swelled, they attracted large numbers of black and Mexican migrants, especially during the twenties. By 1930, 38.6% of the state's black population was urban based, compared with 31.7% for the South as a whole. The level of urbanisation was even greater among Mexicans in Texas, 46.7% of whom lived in cities, which was slightly above average for the Southwest. In spite of these differences, blacks

and Mexicans were about equally represented in Texas cities, each making up around fourteen percent of the state's total urban population.[39]

Urbanisation had an equally profound effect upon blacks and Mexicans in Texas. Reflecting the broader national trend, organisational activity among these two groups was, to say the least, vibrant. During 1917-1929, Texas witnessed both the phenomenal growth of the NAACP and the formation of LULAC.

Prior to World War I, the NAACP was largely a nothern-based movement, with only a sprinkling of representation south of Washington, D.C. However, after 1917, branches of the organisation sprung up all other the South and nowhere was this surge of support more pronounced than in Texas. At the end of 1918, the NAACP had eleven branches and over 2,500 members in Texas. A year later, there were thirty-five branches in Texas, which by then led all other states in numbers of branches and members.[40] It was not long before the Texas wing of the association was at the forefront in the nationwide campaign against racial discrimination and oppression. As well as petitioning the state authorities to combat lynching, the various Texas branches embarked upon several prominent legal battles; such as the one which in 1926 brought about the removal of a ten-year-old Dallas civic ordinance that called for residential segregation of the races. However, the NAACP's most important success in Texas came with the overturning of two consecutive state laws designed to

exclude blacks from the primary elections of political (specifically the Democratic) parties. In both cases, the plaintiff was Lawrence A. Nixon, a black physician from El Paso, who received the backing of the NAACP's national leaders and legal advisors. In 1927 and 1932, respectively, the two Texas laws - the first of which required, and the second permitted, parties to hold segregated primaries - were declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. Subsequently, the Texas Democrats went back to their previous informal exclusion of blacks from party primaries. Nonetheless, these legal victories bolstered the national prestige of the NAACP and helped establish a strategy that would culminate in the famous *Brown* v. *Topeka Board of Education* decision, in which the 'separate but equal' provision was finally overturned.[41]

Mexican organisations in the United States also underwent a major transformation in the decade after World War I, with LULAC eventually emerging as the country's first truly national body to represent peoples of Mexican origin. During the 1920s, Mexican associations multiplied across the Southwest, largely as a result of the increasing concentration of Mexicans in urban centres, where relatively stable communities were being established. Old-style organisations, like the *mutualistas*, remained popular and carried out various useful functions. As well as providing a range of services to their members, such as funeral benefits and insurance against hardship, the various *mutualistas*

constituted an informal network of community spokesmen. Nonetheless, their members were usually Mexico-born and drawn mostly from the ranks of either skilled workers or the lower middle class. The *mutualistas* also tended to be nationalistic in leaning and maintained close ties with local Mexican consuls. While they recognised a duty to defend the civil liberties of Mexicans in the United States, the *mutualistas* shunned radicalism, avoided involvement - whether direct or indirect - in party politics, and generally attempted to maintain a low profile within the broader American community.[42]

By the early twenties, a movement seeking alternatives to the more traditional forms of Mexican organisation was beginning to crystalise. One of the Texas associations spearheading this trend was *La Orden de Hijos de América*, formed in 1921. Its founders, by adopting the name 'Sons of America,' demonstrated their growing sense of allegiance to the United States over Mexico; indeed, many were veterans who had served with the U.S. armed forces during the war. These groups, composed predominantly of members who were either born in the United States or had become naturalised American citizens, preferred to describe themselves not as 'Mexican' but 'Mexican-American.' Rejecting the sojourner mentality that acted as a restraining influence on many of the *mutualistas*, the new-style Mexican-American organisations were more aggressive in their stance over such issues as civil rights. In 1927, the first steps were taken towards merging various like-

minded groups scattered across Texas into a single body. Within two years, the process had been completed and LULAC was established. Dominated by an educated, middle-class and mostly urban-based Mexican-American élite, the organisation - whose membership was restricted to American citizens - actively supported the Americanisation of Mexican immigrants. However, LULAC demanded that, in return, American society should grant full social, economic and racial equality to Mexican-Americans.[43]

Although LULAC and the NAACP were not without critics among the respective groups they claimed to represent, both of these organisations were firmly established in Texas by the end of the 1920s. The state contained large black and Mexican populations, increasing proportions of whom were congregating in urban centres, which provided an adequate base for the growth of ethnic protest movements. Moreover, the influence of the Ku Klux Klan and prevalence of white hostility in Texas, gave blacks and Mexicans, alike, the grounds for seeking to protect themselves through organisation.

D. Race Relations in the Lone Star Capital

Geography and, more specifically, demography were the determining factors in choosing Austin as the focus for this study of relations between whites, blacks and

Mexicans, during 1917-1929. Located in Central Texas, Austin occupied a unique position on the border between the 'black belt' northeastern portion of the state and the 'Mexicanized' areas of the south and southwest. Consequently, the ethnic composition of Austin's population mirrored the statewide picture, with neither blacks nor Mexicans significantly outnumbering each other. In various other ways, Austin resembled a somewhat refined version of Texas in microcosm. Set within the farmlands of Travis County, Austin still remained close to the pulse of rural Texas. However, with a population of 53,000 in 1930, it ranked comfortably among the state's second-tier of urban centres. Moreover, as state capital and the centre of government in Texas, as well as home of the state's principal university, Austin matched in stature, if not in size, the great metropolises of Texas.

In 1930, African-Americans and Mexicans together made up, in almost equal proportions, about twenty-seven percent of the urban population in Texas. The state's five metropolitan centres, Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Fort Worth, and El Paso, each contained over 100,000 - and, in the case of the first three named, from 200,000 to 300,000 - inhabitants. Even so, about three-fifths of the black and half of the Mexican urban populations in Texas were located in cities of under 60,000 residents. Ranked immediately beneath the metropolitan tier of cities was a group of five averaged-sized urban centres, which ranged in size from 50,000 to 60,000

population. This category included, in size order, Beaumont, Austin, Galveston, Waco and Port Arthur.[44] With the single exception of Austin, two types of city were represented among the first- and second-tier urban centres: ones in which blacks outnumbered Mexicans by a ratio of at least 5:1, or ones in which Mexicans outnumbered blacks by a ratio upward of 5:1. Significantly, only San Antonio and El Paso (in which city the ratio of Mexicans to blacks was 31:1) came under the latter category, these two being the only cities of over 50,000 population located in the west and southwest of Texas, and therefore close to the border with Mexico (see Table 1 and Map 2). Although blacks outnumbered Mexicans 2:1 in Austin, this ratio was much lower and hence closer to the state average for urban centres than in other East Texas cities like Houston (5:1), Fort Worth (6:1), Dallas (7:1), or Beaumont (29:1).

Although Anglo-American settlements had existed in the vicinity of Austin since before Texas declared its independence from Mexico, the city really dates back to 1839, when it was chosen by President Mirabeau B. Lamar as the site for the new republic's capital. Despite challenges from other Texan cities (most notably Houston) and with the exception of a few episodes when the seat of government was temporarily moved elsewhere, Austin has served as national and then - after annexation by the United States - state capital of Texas ever since. On the eve of the Civil War, the city's

population had reached about 3,500, including numerous black slaves. In 1830, Travis County's first Anglo-American settlers (who came from Mississippi) had brought slavery with them and thereafter there was always an element of local whites who retained a vested interest in the institution. However, during the sectional crisis, the county's citizens defied the statewide trend and voted against seceding from the Union to join the Confederacy. Despite these earlier reservations, when hostilities between the North and South finally began, Austin gave its support to the Confederate war effort; as well as furnishing volunteers, the city spawned a small-scale munitions industry. Following the South's surrender, Austin fell into a state of turmoil. The city was beset with unpaid and mostly desperate Confederate soldiers, a group of whom raided the state treasury and escaped with a hoard of bullion. Not surprisingly, local residents welcomed the arrival of Union troops, who, in addition to restoring order, heralded the beginning of Reconstruction in Austin.[45]

Texas was readmitted to the Union in 1870, after a coalition of white and black Republicans had won control of the state government and drawn up a new constitution. This period of 'Radical' rule only lasted until 1874, when the Democrats regained power. Compared with other ex-confederate states during this period, a much smaller proportion of the elected office-holders in Texas were African-Americans. Moreover, the Freedman's Bureau -

established by the federal government to assist blacks in the transition from slavery to freedom - only operated in Texas for three years (1865-1868). Nonetheless, Austin's African-American community was transformed by Reconstruction. They established their own churches, such as the First Baptist and Wesley Chapel Methodist Episcopal, which, as well as providing spiritual succour, created a base for the further social, political and economic development of the black population. Similarly, this era witnessed the appearance of numerous suburban all-black communities around Austin. Set up by African-American community leaders, these areas - such as Wheatville and Clarksville in West Austin - provided local blacks with less-crowded and generally better living conditions than elsewhere in the city. Local blacks also became active in politics and some even stood for office. The advances made during Reconstruction were of lasting benefit to Austin's black community, but this period of progress soon came to an end. Whereas a few African-American candidates won seats on the city council in the early 1880s, thereafter no blacks were elected to local political office until the 1970s.[46]

In the four decades between the end of Reconstruction in Texas and the onset of World War I, Austin changed a great deal and emerged with many of its modern characteristics. While the city missed out on the industrial expansion created by the oil business in some parts of Texas, it was nonetheless firmly

established as the state's principal seat of both government and learning. Austin's reputation as an educational centre was greatly enhanced when it was chosen as the site for the University of Texas, which opened in 1883. Similarly, the city's political influence grew considerably and, during the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, reached as far as the White House. Chief among the citizens of Austin to gain national prominence was Colonel Edward M. House, Wilson's closest and most trusted advisor. The President also chose Austin men for the positions of attorney general, secretary of agriculture and postmaster general. The latter post was filled by Albert Sidney Burleson, who was a prime mover in reversing the fifty year tradition of a racially integrated federal civil service. Burleson began introducing segregated toilets, lunchrooms and workplaces for whites and blacks almost as soon as he took office, and he was the first cabinet member to recommend extending segregation to all government departments. Fundamentally, Burleson was only attempting to recreate in the civil service the kind of strict racial separation that already existed in Austin before his departure for Washington, D.C.[47]

Although local whites liked to believe that Austin enjoyed more harmonious race relations than elsewhere in Texas, any differences were superficial and relatively insignificant. Indeed, by the early twentieth century, racial demarcations in Austin were sharply drawn and conformed to the general pattern for the South. The

public school system claimed to make 'separate but equal' provision for white and black children (although for the latter it was more separate than equal), while in most public places, such as hospitals, theatres, restaurants, train coaches and railroad stations, to name but a few, African-Americans were either segregated or denied access altogether. In 1906, following the passage of a municipal ordinance requiring separate compartments for whites and blacks on urban streetcars, Austin's African-American community organised an effective boycott of the service. However, the protest campaign was eventually called off when it became clear that the city council would not repeal the ordinance and might even resort to a police clampdown on the local black community. In 1907, the Texas legislature made streetcar segregation mandatory on a statewide basis.[48]

Prior to World War I, black-white relations overshadowed all other ethnic considerations in Austin. About a quarter of the city's inhabitants were African-Americans, while Mexicans accounted for less than two percent of the populace. Moreover, Austin's other nonwhite groups - Chinese, Japanese and Native Americans - collectively never constituted even as much as 0.1% of the total population throughout the period 1910-1930. Incidentally, by the latter date, this category was composed entirely of about two dozen Chinese. It was not until the United States entered the First World War that Austin witnessed an increase in the proportion of

Mexicans in its population. Compared with African-Americans, Mexicans had previously been an inconspicuous and neglected minority. However, during the 1920s the city experienced a massive influx of Mexican immigrants, who immediately became a prominent and - as local whites soon began to realise - permanent feature of the ethnic landscape. [49]

During the period 1917-1929, Austin underwent the transition from a biracial to essentially tri-ethnic community. Significantly, the social adjustments necessitated by the massive influx of Mexicans had mostly been completed by the eve of the Great Depression. Thereafter, a three-way system of segregation operated in Austin, whereby blacks and Mexicans (who were separated as much from each other as they were from whites) were discriminated against in the important areas of housing, employment, and education, as well as being denied access to power. This rigid form of ethnic stratification only began to collapse during the 1960s.

The prime objective of the present study is to analyse the dynamics of race relations in Austin during the period 1917-1929. In the first three chapters, the emphasis is mainly upon assessing the impact of Mexican immigration on Austin's ethnic landscape. Chapter 1 deals with the demographic and economic forces at work between World War I and the Great Depression, while chapters 2 and 3 describe the nature and extent of changes in ethnic stratification and residential

patterns, respectively. The final three chapters of the work examine and compare the treatment of blacks and Mexicans at the hands of whites, who were the dominant racial group. This is done by concentrating on three key areas: the legal system; the political arena; and educational provision. Insofar as racial attitudes have been considered, the focus is mostly upon white perceptions of blacks and Mexicans, and to a lesser extent black and Mexican perceptions of whites. Regrettably, this imbalance, and the relative absence of black and Mexican views on each other, reflects the bias of surviving primary sources. Nonetheless, every effort has been made to counteract any distortions that may result from an overdependence on materials that convey white interpretations.

Finally, a note on terms appearing in the text is necessary. In line with current practice, 'African-American,' 'black' and, to a more limited extent, 'Negro' have been used interchangeably and with no difference of meaning intended. The same is also true of the designations 'white,' 'Anglo' and 'Anglo-American,' which (conforming to present-day usage in the Southwest) generally refer to all persons of European origin or ancestry. Likewise, unless the meaning of the text suggests otherwise, the term 'nonwhite' has been adopted as a convenient definition for encompassing blacks and Mexicans. For the sake of clarity, if nothing else, the term 'Mexican' usually refers to recent immigrants from Mexico, while 'Mexican-American'

denotes a naturalised or native-born American citizen of Mexican descent. That said, it has been difficult to confidently apply either of these two terms with total accuracy; a problem that is a natural outcome of covering a period in which immigration and internal migration so often overlap. For instance, while this work is mainly concerned with issues relating to Mexican immigrants, the American-born offspring of this group have variously and unavoidably been classed with both 'Mexicans' and 'Mexican-Americans.' To prevent further confusion, therefore, the more generalised appellations 'Chicano,' 'Mexicano,' 'Hispanic,' 'Latin-American' and 'La Raza' have largely been dispensed with.

Chapter One

WAR, WORK, AND MIGRANTS

CHAPTER 1. WAR, WORK, AND MIGRANTS

For Austin, the period between World War I and the Great Depression was one of rapid transition from a biracial to a more multiracial community. Characteristic of this whole era was a series of interrelated and sometimes overlapping mass migrations, which frequently affected the size of the city's African-American and Mexican populations alike. Initially stimulated by the war, then by the consumer boom of the 1920s, the local and national economies experienced unprecedented expansion. In the United States, continued economic growth and national prosperity often depended upon a ready supply of low-paid workers. However, as a result of the First World War and restrictive immigration legislation, American employers were progressively denied the usual supplies of cheap labour from Europe and Asia. The resulting labour shortages gave impetus to large-scale migrations and population shifts throughout North America. Two of these movements were of great importance for Austin; the Great Migration of southern blacks to the industrial centres of the North and the twentieth century's first major wave of Mexican immigration to the Southwest. Previously a traditional southern city, with a biracial population largely made up of white and African-American elements, by 1930 the

pace and scale of demographic change had transformed Austin's racial composition. Following the Mexican influx and the cityward migration of most other groups, it became a tri-ethnic community whose nonwhite inhabitants were growing in both number and as a proportion of the total population.

A. Causes of Demographic Change

To understand the nature of demographic change in Austin during the period 1917-1929, it is necessary first to examine trends of migration at the state and national levels. The American economy in general was undergoing a major transformation, as it adjusted to a decline in the volume of immigration from Europe and elsewhere. Most regions of the United States were affected by these changes, and the impact upon Texas was considerable. Briefly, there are two main reasons for the decline in European immigration; first, the outbreak of war in Europe acted as a brake upon emigration from 1914 onwards. Second, a spate of immigration laws, designed to severely limit the number of migrants entering the country, were passed in the United States between 1917 and 1924.[1]

Initially, the impact of a slump in European immigration was limited to the North, where newly-arrived immigrants made up a larger portion of the workforce than in other regions. Eager to find internal

replacements for the external labour markets now closed to them, northern employers directed their attention towards the South with its untapped supply of low-paid workers. Impoverished and oppressed, the black population seemed especially ripe for enticement away from its traditional homeland.[2] Northern captains of industry began to draw upon the South's 'huge reservoir of negro labor,' as the *Austin American* described it, thus initiating the first phase of the Great Migration of southern blacks to the urban and industrial centres of the North.[3]

'Negro migration,' the University Race Commission asserted, was 'the most immediate, pressing problem for the South, and one of the most important for the nation.'[4] The Commission - a select and distinguished group of southern academics of which Professor William S. Sutton, Dean of the University of Texas, was a member - was alarmed at white complacency over the prospects of a general black exodus. In an open letter, published by the *Austin Statesman* in November 1917, the URC warned that southern blacks were no less susceptible to the 'economic law of supply and demand' than any other group of workers. The promptness with which large numbers of blacks were responding to changes in the national labour market provided ample proof to support this view. 'The dollar has lured the negro to the East and North,' declared the Commission. Following 'the complete shutting off of the European sources of supply' after 1914, and the consequent labour shortage created in the

North, northern employers had 'turned to the South' in their search for an alternative pool of cheap labour:

> And so they sent their agents with very alluring promises and liberally used the negro press, hand-bills, letters, lecturers, and other means designed quickly to uproot the negro and draw him to the the railroads, factories and mines where his labor is sorely needed.[5]

Texas, with the sixth largest population of blacks in the United States, was as much a prey to the intentions of northern employers as other states in the South.[6] By the summer of 1917, labour agents were already actively recruiting workers from among the black population of Austin and the surrounding area for the journey north.[7] 'The labor question,' noticed the *Austin American*, less than a year later, 'has been brought very close to home in Austin by the fact that one-third of Austin's negro population has already gone.'[8]

At this juncture, employers in Texas as a whole, and Austin in particular, could ill afford a depletion of the indigenous workforce. Economic activity, especially among oil and agricultural producers, had been stimulated by World War I, which brought about increased demand for raw materials, manufactured goods and food-stuffs. Moreover, from the turn of the century onwards, whole areas of the state - particularly in West

Texas and the Lower Rio Grande Valley - were continually being opened up to the cultivation of such labour-intensive crops as cotton and market-gardening products.[9] Desperate for manpower, therefore, local employers were faced with two options: compete with northern concerns by raising pay and improving conditions for workers in Texas; or seek out for themselves an untapped supply of cheap labour to exploit. While attempts to pursue the former strategy were short-lived and relatively unsuccessful, the importation of outside labour soon proved to be a convenient and practical alternative.

Needless to say, the initial response of Austin's white élite to black migration was unfavourable. As employers and landowners, they were alarmed at the prospect of losing one of the city's chief economic assets - an abundant supply of cheap black labour. Consequently, in May 1918, the mayor and city council commissioned a group of local black dignitaries to survey social and economic conditions among Austin's African-American community, in order to ascertain the reasons for the recent spate of migration. Two months later, the Colored Welfare Board reported back to the city council with their findings, announcing that the problem of black migration - which the black leaders believed would become 'more and more serious' - was 'due mainly to the low wages in this section.'[10] Local employers responded to this report with astonishing speed and resolution. Within a week, a local black

newspaper, the *San Antonio Inquirer*, was reporting that the 'merchants and business men of Austin' had 'raised the salaries of nearly every Colored employe,' with wage increases ranging anywhere from twenty to fifty percent. However, the article concluded that such action would only be effective in 'temporarily stopping the exodus.'[11] Austin's business community never again adopted this approach towards satisfying its labour requirements; confirming the view of the University Race Commission that 'the South cannot compete on a financial basis with other sections of the country for the labor of the negro.'[12] Henceforth, when the black workforce failed to respond to local pay scales, employers endeavoured to secure from elsewhere labourers that would.

For some time there had been widespread concern in Texas that the state was, or soon would be, in the throes of an acute labour shortage. After the United States entered World War I the combination of black migration and military conscription drained the state of manpower and forced employers to turn to what the *Austin American* described as 'the only other available source of supply . . . Mexican labor.'[13] With its southern border accounting for well over half of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico, Texas was ideally situated for easy access to the pool of cheap labour below the Rio Grande. Essentially, it was hoped that an influx of immigrant workers from Mexico would fill the vacuum created by

black migration to the North. 'To meet [the] deficit in negro labor,' reported the *American* in July 1918, local employers were 'bending every effort to bring in Mexican labor over the border.'[14]

In the spring of 1919, Austin businessmen made their first concerted effort to import a large number of labourers from below the Rio Grande. Walter E. Long, secretary of the Austin Chamber of Commerce, and W. F. Gohlke, manager of Walker Properties (one of the city's leading business concerns), appealed directly to Governor Hobby of Texas for assistance in gaining federal permission to bring Mexican workers across the border. As the *Austin Statesman* reported:

> The Governor's telegrams to Washington finally put the thing over, according to Mr Gohlke, and farmers in this section - who have been so terribly handicapped by the lack of farm hands - can now obtain very cheap help from this source.[15]

In addition to the needs of his own company, Gohlke announced that he was willing to supply workers to any farmer in the Travis and Williamson counties area, adding that even within the past few days a group of thirty or forty Mexicans had been brought across the border at Eagle Pass by one of his representatives.[16] In reference to such developments, Dr. W. H. Crawford, a prominent member of Austin's black community, warned the local white élite in 1918 that 'the South . . . will pay

dearly, in many ways, for any other labor to take the place of its Negro labor.'[17] In fact, local employers rapidly became dependent upon Mexican labour and, within two years of Crawford's prediction, local newspapers reported that more than a hundred Travis County farmers would find themselves in 'dire straits' if they had to return the workers imported since World War I.[18]

In contrast to earlier periods, therefore, it is evident that blacks moving to the North and Mexicans moving into the Southwest were doing so largely in response to a growing demand for unskilled workers in those regions. The sudden decline in immigration from Europe had precipitated a major restructuring of the internal labour market in the United States, creating circumstances particularly propitious for both black and Mexican migrants.[19] Because of labour shortages, new openings were appearing in the job market and continued to do so throughout the 1920s. Noting this development, the black sociologist, Charles S. Johnson, remarked:

> . . . two sources of labor have responded, and with such uniformity that it seems almost useless to point it out. The Negroes from the South have filled the first gaps made by the receding Europeans, and the Mexicans have filled the gaps created by the Negroes.[20]

Johnson also suggested that a desire for economic betterment among migrants was at the root of these

upheavals.[21]

In Austin, blacks were clearly dissatisfied with the low wages and poor standards of living that members of their race had to endure. The overtures of northern employers suggested to many that an opportunity was at hand to escape these conditions. Also believing that economic considerations were the prime motivation for black migration, W. H. Crawford described how local blacks had 'begun to seek other climes, where wages are better, and opportunities to make a more satisfactory support for their families are furnished them.' 'The shops, the factories, and the fields of the North,' continued Crawford, 'are fast replacing their foreign labor with colored people and they are making good. They are being paid better wages, their quarters for living are better, therefore a great majority of them will not return.'[22]

Economic deprivation, however, was not the only form of oppression that African-Americans in Austin were hoping to liberate themselves from by leaving the South - though it was the prime consideration in most cases. Jim Crow institutions, imposing social restrictions upon blacks and stripping them of many of their civil and political rights, were a further cause of disaffection likely to prompt migration. (A fact recognised by the University Race Commission, which advised that southern blacks, despite all 'allurements,' could easily be dissuaded from migrating if only they were offered 'a larger measure of those things that human beings hold

dearer than material goods' - such as fair treatment and greater equality of opportunity.[23]) Some of the first blacks to leave Austin and the South behind them soon discovered that there were, indeed, geographic boundaries to Jim Crow's domain. In a letter to a local black newspaper, one African-American migrant described how liberating an experience it had been to leave Austin and set up home with his wife in San Diego, California. Writing in August 1918, he told how for the first time in his life he felt like 'a free man with a man's privileges and rights.'[24] It is impossible to quantify the number of similar stories passing back along the grapevine, but the influence of such reports upon the local black community should not be underestimated.

Some African-American religious leaders in Austin, alarmed by the declining size of their flocks - a development which they realised would, if left unchecked, eventually undermine their power and influence - were among the first groups to come out in open opposition to continued black migration.[25] Few had more to lose than the Reverend Lee L. Campbell, pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Austin and president of the St. John's Negro Baptist Association (a religious organisation whose reputation and membership extended far beyond the Central Texas area). Until his death in 1927, Campbell was without doubt the city's most influential black leader (see Chapter 5). Accommodationist in tone, his aim was to allay white

fears concerning a potential black exodus, while tirelessly seeking to discourage elements of the local black population from migrating themselves. In August 1919, at the height of black migration from Austin, he asserted before an executive meeting of the St. John's Association that:

> Every day letters are coming from the North and the East on the part of negroes who went away some time ago. They are asking for money to get back home. These people have learned some valuable lessons. Those of us who remained at home looking after our affairs, not giving away our property, have been growing along every line and we don't have to start life over.[26]

Days later, in the presence of Mayor Wooldridge and other leading white dignitaries, the St. John's executive committee issued a resolution, warning 'the laboring element' of the local black population against 'moving to the North, where conditions and environments are altogether different.' Describing the South as a 'goodly land,' where 'climatic conditions' were 'suitable for the negro,' it was suggested that 'the negro who is honest and industrious need not migrate, but stay here and enjoy the blessings of prosperity in this land, where Providence has placed us.'[27]

Despite such efforts, African-Americans in Austin displayed a keen interest in the idea of moving North.

L. M. Mitchell, one of the black community's most respected figures and a member of the NAACP, actually travelled to the North to examine conditions there for himself. Upon returning to Austin, Mitchell gave lectures to interested blacks, relating his experiences and impressions.[28] Others, moreover, resented the idea, expressed by Campbell and the St. John's Association, that the Negro should stay in his 'place', because it seemed to be playing up to white-racist assumptions and denying blacks any control over their own destiny. Chief among Campbell's detractors on this issue was Mansfield M. Haynes, editor of *The Herald* (Austin's long-standing black newspaper), who declared: 'The Negro has the same rights to go North or to any other section of this country, singly or collectively, just as other people and races do, whenever he chooses.'[29]

On the issue of black migration, the stances adopted by Campbell and Haynes represented the polarities of opinion among local African-Americans. W. H. Crawford, as spokesman for the middle ground, displayed a greater awareness of the significance and long-term implications of the black migration than did many of his contemporaries. Like Campbell's adherents on the executive board of the St. John's Association, Crawford also saw the hand of Providence at work, but he drew entirely different conclusions. 'We do not know,' said Crawford,

> whether He is using the problem of labor to remove from the South a race of people who have contributed their all to its growth and development. We do not know but that it is in the mind of Providence to distribute our race over this vast domain.[30]

Like many African-Americans at the time, Crawford perceived American involvement in World War I as the catalyst for dramatic social change at home. While regretting the recent departures for the North, he detected an opportunity to exploit the threat of further migration in order to improve conditions for Austin's remaining black population. 'Right here in our city,' he told the mayor and city council of Austin, 'many of our best colored citizens are leaving daily . . . and unless some inducements are offered in the future for their betterment . . . more of them will permanently take up abode in other parts of this country.' It was upon the strength of this argument that employers in Austin were induced to implement a general wage increase for black workers in the summer of 1918.[31]

Mexicans entering Texas during the early part of the twentieth century were, like blacks moving North, also motivated by economic considerations - though the decision to leave their homeland was frequently less a matter of choice than of necessity. As Max Handman, a sociologist at the University of Texas during the 1920s, remarked:

> . . . in the main, the native Mexican is too much addicted to his village and village ties to move easily. A crisis had to come and tear him away from his moorings and send him sprawling and dazed all over the land, hungry and afraid and in search of shelter and food. This was accomplished by the Revolution of 1910.[32]

For most of the next two decades Mexico was gripped by violent revolution and civil war, conditions which caused considerable economic dislocation, not to mention tremendous loss of human life.[33] Among the Mexicans flocking across the border to the United States were many middle-class refugees seeking political asylum, but the vast majority of migrants were of the impoverished *peón* class.[34] This latter group came to Texas in search of work and food, both of which were scarce in Mexico at the time - a situation which remained relatively unchanged for most of the twenties.[35] Earl Connell, in a 1925 survey of Mexicans living in Austin, discovered the main reasons for their moving to Texas. Although the Revolution and its consequences had predisposed many towards leaving Mexico, the over-riding consideration for most was the desire to 'make more money.' However illusory it turned out to be, most of these immigrants held the belief that the United States was a 'land of freedom and plenty,' where they could make their fortunes.[36]

On the eve of America's entering World War I,

therefore, the stage was set for an era of mass migration. The curtailment of immigration from Europe had a knock-on effect throughout the United States and, as the internal labour market adjusted to the imbalance created, a whole series of demographic forces were set in motion. Moreover, the northward trend of African-American and Mexican migration had double implications for Austin and Texas. First, they stood to lose a significant proportion of the local black population, as northern employers competed for the labour of this group; and further, they were about to witness a sudden influx of Mexican immigrants, which had been brought on, in part, by the recent expansion of the economy in the Southwest. To cap it all, black dissatisfaction with impoverishment and the constraints of Jim Crow in the South, and the economic disruption created in Mexico by the Revolution, were both factors which helped ensure that the potential for major demographic change was realised.

B. An Era of Mass Migration

The demographic changes stimulated by the First World War and its aftermath were not short-lived. There followed in Texas a decade and a half characterised by the restless wandering and indefinite resettlement of entire population groups. Wave after wave of native blacks abandoned the state for more promising parts of

the country, and wave after wave of Mexican immigrants came from below the Rio Grande in search of their own promised land. Although a continual stream of migration seems to have been maintained throughout the period 1917-1929, intermittent surges of population movement, usually spanning a few years at a time, are clearly discernible. Being relatively easy to pinpoint, these phases of greater activity provide a convenient tool for analysing the interplay of forces likely to generate a spate of migration.

The first phase of migration to be considered covers the period from about 1916, when the influence of World War I was first felt in Texas, to 1920, by which time its effects were beginning to wane. It is in this period that the greatest migration of blacks from the state occurred. In July 1918, portraying the magnitude of this sudden migration, and alluding to its primary cause, the *Austin American* announced: '100,000 negroes have left Texas within the past two or three years to secure better and higher wages than Texas gives.'[37] Much to the dismay of local business interests, blacks were responding to the 'blandishments of labor agents from the north' and departing for that region in their droves.[38] It is impossible to know exactly how many African-Americans did leave Texas during World War I or, for that matter, where they all went to. Most of the southern blacks arriving in the North at this time came from states east of the Mississippi River, like Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, and not from Texas, Louisiana,

and other states more to the southwest.[39] Furthermore, the urban centres of California probably seemed just as alluring as those of the North to black Texans, as is suggested by the example cited earlier of an Austin couple moving to San Diego.[40] Nonetheless, between 1910 and 1920 the number of southern-born blacks from Texas living in northern states increased by 183.4%, from 5,875 to 16,648. Modest in comparison with the 58,632 blacks from Georgia or the 54,398 from Alabama moving north in the same period, these figures still suggest that by 1920 blacks from Texas were more likely to be arriving in northern centres than had been the case just a decade earlier.[41]

For local whites, black migration became an issue of major concern during this earlier period, and one to which Mexican immigration took a subordinate place. 'The importation of Mexicans is a makeshift at best,' argued the *Austin American*, 'necessary in the present situation, but the situation would not have arisen had the negro been allowed a proper wage.'[42] The prevailing preoccupation with black emigration becomes more understandable once the nature of Mexican immigration before 1920 has been considered. Firstly, the influx of Mexicans that had occurred during the past decade had been the result of exceptional circumstances - revolution in Mexico and an acute labour shortage in the United States. Prior to 1911, Mexican immigration to Texas and the United States had been a fairly modest affair and was expected to resume that state once more

normal conditions had returned. 'The Mexican is a "homer",' said Texan employers at the time, 'like the pigeon, he goes back to his roost.'[43] Furthermore, between 1918 and 1920, importing Mexican labour on a grand scale had only been made possible by the relaxation of entry requirements to the United States. The head tax and literacy test, usually stipulated for immigrants, were waived by the U.S. Immigration Service as part of a move to relieve labour shortages created by the war emergency.[44] All of these factors gave weight to an argument, adhered to by supporters of unrestricted immigration, that the recent influx of Mexicans was not only a temporary relocation, but one that was unlikely ever to recur again. They could not have been more wrong; the volume of Mexican immigration to the United States actually doubled during the 1920s (see Table 2) – a decade renowned for its peace, prosperity, and 'normalcy.' After 1931, the level of immigration from Mexico fell off sharply, chiefly as a result of the Depression, but by then more than half a million Mexican immigrants had already entered the United States.

Although the proportion of immigrants entering Texas between 1910 and 1920 was high compared with both earlier and much later periods, there appears to have been a slight trailing off in numbers after 1915 (see Table 3). Well over two-thirds of the state's foreign-born population came from Mexico, so it is rather surprising to find that during the First World War, when the need for Mexican labour was at its greatest,

immigration actually slowed down.[45] In truth, the solution to this problem is relatively simple, but highly significant for all that. Mexican immigration to Texas was given its first great impetus when revolution broke out below the Rio Grande in 1910. The movement then eased off between 1916 and 1917, coinciding with a period of relative calm in Mexico and America's entry into World War I.[46] In May 1917, for example, there were daily reports of Mexicans crossing the border at Laredo in their thousands and returning to Mexico in order to escape the draft.[47] Alarmed by this development, Governor Ferguson was compelled to issue a general statement, carried in newspapers throughout the state:

> It has come to my knowledge that a great many of our Mexican population have left or are contemplating leaving Texas on account of the fear of conscription into the national army. . . . In my opinion the national government will not conscript Mexican citizens into the national army as long as they are engaged in farming, railroad and ranching work. Let me advise our Mexican people to stay in Texas. We need you and you need us. Let us help each other.[48]

Once the menace of conscription failed to materialise, and relaxed immigration requirements had been introduced, it became apparent to Mexican immigrants

that they were more valuable to the United States as workers than as soldiers. Consequently, the volume of immigration to Texas picked up again after 1918.

Above all, this episode reveals the almost unique character of Mexican immigration to the United States. For one thing, the distances and difficulties involved in the migration process were less substantial for Mexicans than they were for immigrants from other continents, such as Europe or Asia. As Max Handman observed:

> No other immigration has come to us which shifts back and forth between America and the home country as does the Mexican immigration. It is not at all a serious undertaking for the Mexican to come to America, certainly not nearly as serious as the undertaking of any other immigrant group that has come to America heretofore.[49]

Moreover, the close proximity of the Mexican border symbolised the impermanent nature of much immigration from below the Rio Grande. For many a Mexican immigrant, the journey north simply meant that he could 'make money, buy an automobile, and go back home to his own pueblo, a gentleman instead of a peon.'[50] In February 1923, for example, having acquired knowledge of modern American farming techniques and accumulated some capital, several hundred Mexicans from Austin and the surrounding area petitioned the Mexican Government for

land grants, with a view to returning to Mexico and establishing agricultural colonies.[51]

Whereas Mexican immigration invariably gained much of its impetus from the turmoil caused by the Revolution, a periodic lull in hostilities below the border would frequently attract immigrants back to Mexico. As the *Austin American* reported in November 1920:

> Trains going through Austin are carrying many Mexicans back to Mexico, while Austin railroad ticket offices announce that many Mexicans from Austin and Travis County are buying tickets for the return to their country since peace is said to have been made.[52]

Even so, whilst some immigrants did return to Mexico during the twenties, the importance of such a movement should not be exaggerated, because it was usually overshadowed by the volume of immigration heading in the opposite direction - towards Texas. Outbreaks of peace in Mexico, moreover, tended to be relatively short-lived affairs. After interviewing a cross-section of Mexicans in Austin, Earl Connell found that the majority showed little inclination to return to Mexico, whereas those expressing a strong desire to remigrate were unable to do so, usually through lack of funds. Furthermore, most of the latter group had been in Texas for comparatively shorter periods of time than the former and were often

of a lower economic standing, which may account for their being relatively unsettled.[53] Nonetheless, the nature of Mexican immigration varied significantly from that of European or Asian origin; and sufficiently to account for its being perceived by contemporaries, however wrongly, as a less than permanent phenomenon.

The black sociologist, T. J. Woofter, therefore, was reflecting widely held views when he described Mexicans as 'potentially the most mobile' element of the nation's population; attributing this to the existence of certain 'culture traits' which prevented them from permanently settling down in one place.[54] Southern blacks, on the other hand, were thought to be totally averse to any form of nomadic lifestyle, so the loss of its traditional labour force came as a major psychological blow to the region's white community. Most of all, white complacency was shattered by the suddenness of black migration. 'The negro question,' urged the *Austin American* in the summer of 1918, 'is so closely interwoven with the labor question that it is worthy of equal intelligent discussion and solution.'[55]

Unquestionably, such sentiments had their origins in the slave era of the past, when the South's peculiar institution afforded blacks little other choice than to remain in a given location. Similarly, whatever their prejudices, local whites still considered the Negro to be 'a component part of the south.'[56] The comforting utterances of spokesmen like the Reverend Campbell, moreover, only helped to enforce these views among

whites and lull them into a false sense of security. 'There is no doubt,' he would say, 'about the South being the garden spot of the world, and there is something lacking about the man who can not be happy down here.'[57] The panic that ensued over black migration, therefore, was probably less attributable to its magnitude than to the fact that it was taking place at all. As we have already seen, the number of Mexicans entering Texas between 1911 and 1920 more than made up for the number of blacks leaving the state during the same period.

The second phase of population movement to be considered covers the period 1921-1929. While the outward migration of blacks slackened off a great deal during the 1920s, the number of Mexicans both entering Texas and leaving the state to find work elsewhere in the United States increased tremendously.

As an issue, Mexican immigration truly comes into its own during this period, not least because of the far-reaching effect it was to have upon the American labour market. Northern employers, forced to poach workers from other parts of the country in order to satisfy their own needs, were once again stimulating migratory activity in Texas. This time, however, it was not an external influence, like the First World War, that had precipitated a labour shortage in the North, but a series of laws passed in the United States and designed to restrict immigration from all parts of the world, except the Western Hemisphere. Unaffected by

this legislation, Mexican labour became a sought after commodity, now that the supply of European and Asian immigrants had been seriously curtailed. While the regulations affecting Mexican immigrants, such as the head tax and literacy test, were reimposed after World War I, their enforcement appears to have been lax for most of the twenties. In January 1920, when the wartime suspension of immigration regulations was ended, 800 Mexicans from Travis County were ordered to return to the border, where they would have to comply with official entry requirements before being permitted readmission.[58] Not until late in the decade, however, did the Immigration Service attempt to institute a similar statewide scan of immigrants with lapsed visas - and only then under pressure of interest groups bent upon curbing Mexican immigration.[59] Following the passage of the 1921 and 1924 immigration 'quota' laws, reported a delegate to the National Conference of Social Work's annual meeting in 1926, this laxity of enforcement was tacitly condoned by American employers, especially in Texas, because 'Mexican laborers' were 'more in demand than ever.'[60]

With the threat of further legislation on immigration looming, labour agents recruiting for northern concerns were particularly active in parts of Texas during the early to mid-twenties. In March 1924, the departure north of a large number of Mexicans from Austin was recorded for the first time by the local press. All fifty of them were to be employed as foundry

workers in Michigan.[61] The concerns aroused by such developments were clearly, and constantly, expressed by the *Austin American*, which stated:

> Thousands of Mexicans and negroes are being taken to the steel mills of the north and the east, and the managers of those mills are going to do their best to keep the Mexicans and negroes constantly on their payrolls. . . . Texas is the reservoir that is being tapped by the agents of railway companies, milling and mining magnates, and large contractors. They need common labor. They are willing to pay for it. They are coming to Texas and the southwest for it.[62]

Most of all, local employers feared that because Texas offered such 'an inviting field,' they would lose their own supply of cheap labour to northern interests. As the *American* declared, 'steel kings . . . are going to strip the southwest of Mexican laborers and the states east of the Mississippi of negro laborers.'[63] Newspaper editorials, especially in the *American*, evoked provocative images of the hardships suffered during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, in order to highlight the economic consequences of any such mass migration:

> For fifty-seven years the cotton crop of the South has been produced by cheap labour. Now, if the Mexican and black exodus continues, whatever cotton

is to be produced . . . must be produced by high price labor.[64]

Significantly, large numbers of Mexicans only began appearing in the workforce of northern industries after 1923, as was revealed in a U.S. Bureau of Labor report on steel plants in the Chicago-Gary region (see Table 4). Nonetheless, within six years there were almost as many Mexicans in the workforce as there were African-Americans; suggesting that, as a result of Mexican competition, conditions in northern centres were less propitious for blacks than they had been just a few years earlier.[65] Because they worked for lower wages, observed Charles S. Johnson, Mexicans were being 'used as a whip for Negro labor as Negro labor was used as a whip for white labor.'[66]

Not surprisingly, compared with the number of Mexicans heading north from Texas, black out-migration had slowed to a trickle. Despite a few rhetorical statements to the contrary, by the mid-twenties Austin newspapers were increasingly using the past tense when referring to black migration, associating it more with 'war times' and attaching far less urgency to discussion of the subject.[67] As early as 1923, Joseph S. Myers, the state commissioner of labor, had said that all reports of 'a general negro exodus from Texas to the North' were 'mythical and without foundation.'[68] Based upon data collected from labour recruitment agencies operating throughout Texas, Myers was able to

show that of the 43,811 workers sent out of the state between March and September 1923, 97.6% were Mexican, 1.8% white, and only 0.6% black.[69] 'How could anyone,' pondered Myers, 'desire a more convincing proof of the falsity of reports which would lead one to believe that negroes were leaving Texas in their droves?'[70] The figures for January to May of the following year portray a similar situation, with only twenty-four blacks, as opposed to 12,612 Mexicans, leaving the state to work elsewhere.[71] No doubt, some migrants were leaving Texas independently, and not under the directive of a labour agent, but it is highly unlikely that any large outward migration of blacks would have gone unnoticed - least of all by the state authorities, who paid particular attention to the movements of the workforce in Texas.

The Reverend Campbell expressed little surprise over the 'small percentage of negro migration' reported for Texas, remarking:

> Texas negroes are too busy making their living to find time to listen to alluring tales of riches elsewhere, which would lead them to sacrifice their homes in Texas and begin life over elsewhere among strangers.[72]

Admittedly, Campbell's utterances on the subject of black migration, because of his known opposition to it, need to be viewed with caution. It is highly debatable,

for instance, whether the slump in outward migration was really attributable to the lack of interest shown by local African-Americans, rather than receding opportunities for blacks in the North. Nonetheless, Campbell's main contention was reiterated by Commissioner Myers, who confidently asserted that, while 'negro migration' was indeed 'becoming a problem in some of the southern states,' no such difficulties existed in Texas by the mid-twenties and nor were any foreseen.[73]

While black migration to the North had been progressively slowing down since the early twenties, a combination of factors were about to arrest the relatively unfettered movement of Mexicans to and from the United States. For some time, a national coalition of forces opposed to further immigration from Mexico had been forming and by the end of the decade this group had attained a position of considerable influence, especially among U.S. Congressmen. Support for unrestricted Mexican immigration had never been unanimous and, as the volume of immigration increased, so did the level of opposition to it. By 1928, the subject had become so highly politicised in Texas that the *Austin American* considered it to be the central issue in that year's U.S. Senate elections.[74] In fact, by that time the question of allowing Mexican immigration to continue was attracting national interest. Public awareness had been aroused, in part, by a plethora of recent propagandist works. These articles, some more spurious than others, appeared in

many of the country's most respectable and widely circulated journals and frequently carried highly emotive titles, referring to the 'perils' and 'dangers' of the Mexican 'invasion.'[75]

By the late twenties, the debate over Mexican immigration centred around support for or opposition to the so-called Box Bill. For nearly a decade, U.S. Representative John C. Box of Texas had been campaigning through Congress for the passage of a law to restrict immigration from Mexico.[76] This was to be achieved by placing a quota upon the number of Mexicans allowed to enter the United States, as was already the case for immigrants coming from countries outside of the Western Hemisphere.[77] As critics of the Box Bill were quick to point out, its chief support came from organised labour and the Ku Klux Klan.[78] Conversely, most of the opposition to the bill emanated from business and employer groups, who argued that labour organisations would 'create a monopoly for unskilled labour in Texas and other states if the Mexican' was 'kept on his own side of the Rio Grande.'[79] Along with commercial organisations from all over the Southwest, the Texas Chamber of Commerce sustained a prolonged campaign of lobbying and petitioning at Washington, D.C., against the passage of restrictive immigration legislation.[80] For its part, the Austin Chamber of Commerce sought to guarantee the constant supply of Mexican labourers, claiming that it had 'done everything in its financial power to have a Federal statute passed which would

permit them to remain.'[81]

Nonetheless, opponents of Mexican immigration were themselves not without influence and by 1929 their cause was almost assured of success (although consequent events made the victory seem quite hollow, because the Depression effectively put a stop to most migration). The call for a restriction of Mexican immigration came from a variety of sources. Describing itself as an organisation of 'native-born white American citizens,' the Austin chapter of the Ku Klux Klan was among the first local groups to declare in favour of restricting all 'foreign immigration' - Mexican included.[82] Judge James R. Hamilton, a prominent member of the local judiciary, was another proponent of curbing Mexican immigration. Although an opponent of the Klan, he made immigration restriction a central plank of his 1926 campaign for election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Significantly, announcing that 'Immigration must be so restricted as to effectively protect labor conditions,' Hamilton was hoping to enlist support from among the ranks of organised labour in Austin - the group most renowned for vociferously condemning the Mexican influx.[83]

As early as April 1920, the fears of organised labour in Texas had been aroused by the volume of immigration coming from below the Rio Grande. In a telegram to President Wilson, the State Federation of Labor protested that Mexican immigrants were being used

to displace American workers, even in non-agricultural pursuits. The message ended:

> Please inform Congress that organized labor in Texas is desirous of having the maximum assistance rendered farmers of Texas, but do protest against using the needs of the farmers as an excuse to flood the country with cheap labour.[84]

In 1928, with restriction of Mexican immigration at the top of its agenda, the State Federation scored a major victory when it was able to secure the appointment of Charles McKemy as state commissioner of labor. McKemy, who had been an official in one of the state railroad workers' unions, believed that the problems related to Mexican immigration were 'far more acute in Texas than elsewhere.' Taking this message to the nation's capital, he appeared as a witness before the House Committee investigating immigration and strenuously called for the passage of laws that would restrict immigration from Mexico.[85] As the debate over Mexican immigration intensified towards the end of the decade, organised labour was sufficiently represented in Austin to force at least one of the local newspapers - the *Statesman* - into adopting a non-partisan stance for fear of alienating a proportion of its readership.[86]

In May 1929, with the Box Bill on the verge of being passed by Congress, the U.S. Immigration Service stepped up its activities in Texas accordingly. Primarily in an

attempt to deflect criticism, officials began deporting large numbers of Mexican immigrants and enforcing entry requirements far more stringently than had been the case in the previous few years.[87] William Trenckmann, a representative of the Immigration Service stationed in Austin, informed the local Chamber of Commerce that any Mexicans who had entered the United States within the past eight years, had not paid the head-tax, were on short-term contracts, or had no passport, would be rounded up and deported.[88] These forced repatriations, as an article in the *Austin American* graphically illustrated, were frequently conducted in a ruthless and arbitrary manner:

> Under a new policy of the United States Immigration Service, Mexicans who have been in Texas for ten and twelve years are being sent out of the country. Many have families and considerable property, their children being American-born. Complaints received . . . state that well-to-do Mexicans are seized and hurried across the Rio Grande without being given time to dispose of their property or make arrangements for their families.[89]

In theory, Mexicans picked up for deportation were entitled to a formal hearing, but they were not usually informed of this fact; hence, William Trenckmann's comment that 'few such appeals are made in this section.'[90] Harassed by American officials, or

heartened by the news that peace had once again been restored in Mexico, many Mexicans in Texas were prompted to return to their homeland at this time.[91] All that local employers could do, therefore, was fight a rear-guard action. In an effort to keep as many Mexican labourers in Texas as possible, the state legislature quickly passed the 1929 Emigrant Agent Law, which placed a heavy tax upon labour agents exporting workers from the state.[92] The final brake to be applied to both black and Mexican migration, moreover, came with the approach of the Depression, which forestalled any further demographic upheavals of a similar magnitude for at least another decade and a half.

C. Formation of a Tri-Ethnic Society

In addition to activity of a national and international character, a great deal of internal migration was occurring in Texas during the period 1917-1929. From a base in South Texas, the Mexican population began to branch out and penetrate most parts of the state, including sections with a pronounced African-American presence. As an outpost of the black-belt region of East Texas, Austin faced head-on the tide of advancing Mexican immigrants. Significantly, Travis County was one of only three counties in Texas that had black and Mexican populations each of over 10,000 persons by 1930 (see Map 3). Moreover, in common with the rest of the

population, increasing numbers of blacks and Mexicans were flocking towards the urban centres of Texas. The various paths of migration frequently overlapped or ran parallel, with the Austin and Travis County area being a major point of convergence.

Despite the activities of the Austin Chamber of Commerce and local businessmen in recruiting workers from below the Rio Grande, few immigrants appear to have moved directly from Mexico to Austin. Earl Connell's findings, for instance, suggest that about two-thirds of all Mexicans in Austin had found their way there from other parts of the state.[93] In fact, by the time large numbers of Mexicans began arriving in the city, a clear path of migration originating at the border had already been established. As E. E. Davis, of the University of Texas, observed in 1916:

> This wave of peon and middle-class Mexican refugees has very perceptibly extended itself along the International and Great Northern, and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroads as far north as Bexar, Hays, Caldwell, and Travis Counties. The 1910 census showed the greatest density of Mexican population in Texas to be in Bexar and Caldwell Counties. Those Mexicans have since served as a nucleus to which their refugee friends have gravitated and spread out to neighboring counties.[94]

San Antonio, situated in Bexar County, soon contained one of the largest Mexican populations in the United States - second only to that of Los Angeles, California.[95] With Central Texas rapidly becoming a focal point for the concentration of Mexican immigrants, the implications for Austin were ramified.

The manner in which newly-arrived Mexican immigrants were dispersed throughout Texas - and, indeed, the rest of the United States - was to a large extent determined by the activities of employment agencies based within the state, especially those at San Antonio. Max Handman, with obvious justification, described Texas as the 'corridor and clearing house for the majority of the Mexican casuals who are distributed over the country.'[96] By 1930, while there were almost one and a half million Mexicans in the United States as a whole, 684,000 of them, or just over forty-eight percent, were located in Texas, which ranked first among individual states in the size of its Mexican population.[97] Naturally, as the demand for workers multiplied during the 1920s, so did the volume of business conducted by recruitment agencies. Not all of this human traffic, however, passed through the official channels. As the *Austin American* stated:

> Agents of railway companies are in the market for Mexican laborers; big contractors are in the market for Mexican laborers; steel, coal and iron kings are in the market for Mexican laborers. This rising

> demand for Mexican laborers is certain to make smuggling of aliens across the Rio Grande river a most profitable business.[98]

In practice, the activities of both regulated and unregulated agencies contributed not only to a greater geographic diffusion of the Mexican population, but also to a larger number of immigrants eventually becoming permanent residents of the state. To workers recruited from below the Rio Grande, contractors usually made a pledge that 'they would be returned to Mexico when their work had been done or their services were not needed.' By 1923, however, it was being reported that, of the Mexicans imported in 1920 and 1921, many had been 'turned loose to shift for themselves.'[99]

Mexican immigration, while not the only cause, also gave impetus to a general cityward migration in Central Texas during the 1920s. Events in Travis County were typical of the population shifts occurring throughout the region. During World War I and its immediate aftermath, American immigration regulations stipulated that Mexican immigrants on short-term visas could only be employed in agricultural work; consequently, their presence was first felt in rural areas.[100] 'In central Texas,' observed Handman, 'there has been a definite exodus from the country to the city, farm-owners leaving their old places and turning them over to Mexican tenants on halves while they live in town.'[101] Furthermore, compared with black and white tenant

farmers, landowners found that Mexicans were relatively easy to supervise, would work for less pay and be satisfied with a much lower standard of living. 'The displacement of white tenants by Mexican tenants,' suggested E. E. Davis, was rapidly 'diluting' the white population in rural parts of Travis County.[102] Unable or unwilling to compete with the incoming Mexicans, rural whites were increasingly abandoning agriculture altogether and moving to the city.[103]

During the twenties, rural blacks experienced a similar displacement; the *Austin American* remarking that 'Mexicans have displaced negroes, or rather the negroes have deserted agriculture and flocked to the cities and towns.'[104] Mexican immigration was not so much the cause of cityward migration among blacks in Texas, as an additional factor acting to hasten a process already begun several decades earlier. Southern blacks in general had been flocking to the region's urban centres since the turn of the century, and the black population of Texas was no exception.[105] African-Americans became increasingly urbanised and, between 1900 and 1930, a dramatic shift occurred in which the percentage of blacks living in urban centres of the state more than doubled (see Table 5). By 1930, the first signs of blacks in Texas becoming a predominantly urban-based group were clearly evident.

Although urban centres in general became a magnet for rural migrants, the direction of most internal movement was towards the great metropolises of the

state, such as Houston, Dallas, San Antonio and Fort Worth. Offering higher wages and a wider range of opportunities, the larger Texan cities were able to attract labour from all over the state and the region beyond. Since the 1870s, Texas had been a goal for blacks migrating from the Deep South and even as late as 1920, when northward migration was in full swing, blacks entering the state outnumbered those leaving it.[106] Indicating the regional character of this migration, the number of blacks entering Texas from the neighbouring states of Louisiana, Oklahoma and Arkansas actually increased between 1910 and 1920, while there was a corresponding decline in the volume of migration from other southern states (see Table 6). The number of blacks moving to Texas from Louisiana, moreover, increased by over two-fifths during this period. Medium-sized cities, like Austin, had a secondary role to play in this process, acting as terminals through which migrants passed *en route* to their final destination. Frequently, elements of the indigenous workforce were also drawn towards the larger cities. In 1918, for instance, the *San Antonio Inquirer* reported that local blacks were abandoning the workshops of Austin and moving to Houston, where they could earn up to double the amount of pay.[107]

Blacks were not the only ones migrating towards the cities of Texas; Mexicans, too, were increasingly becoming urbanised. Victor S. Clark, an economist working for the U.S. Bureau of Labor, detected this

movement at an early stage. 'Austin and San Antonio,' he reported in 1908, 'have large colonies of immigrant Mexicans, which are undoubtedly growing rapidly, and not, like that of Los Angeles, about stationary in total population.'[108] During the twenties, this cityward movement continued and by 1930 more than two-fifths of the Mexican population of Texas was urban-based, compared with just under two-fifths of all blacks.[109]

Considering the relatively recent arrival of most Mexicans, the pace at which they became urbanised in Texas was remarkable. In fact, the process of urbanisation among Mexicans was closely connected to the migratory nature of their employment. Mexican workers, it should be remembered, were ostensibly imported for agricultural purposes. In Austin local agents would contract a group of workers from below the Rio Grande, organise their passage to the United States, and then hire them out to local farmers.[110] The seasonal nature of agricultural production, with the harvest providing the period of fullest employment, regularly meant that work was only available for three or four months of the year. Instead of returning to Mexico, labourers would follow the cotton crop north as it matured and often leave the state altogether. At the end of each annual cycle of migration they would return again to Austin, San Antonio, or some location in South Texas, and use this as a base for the winter.[111] 'The current picture of the Mexican seasonal labourer,' noted T. J. Woofter, 'is that he piles his family possessions

and family into an old car and flits from place to place, camping in outbuildings or temporary shacks.'[112] Some Mexicans, however, were beginning to forsake this transient lifestyle and settle down more permanently in one place. One Austin school teacher, astonished by the number of children still attending during a harvesting period of 1920, exclaimed 'the Mexicans seem to be coming to town instead of leaving!'[113]

In addition to agriculture, many Mexicans were employed in railroad construction. This type of work immediately took them into the interior of the state and away from the border region. Victor S. Clark discovered that Mexican immigrants were often 'located in city colonies, having drifted away from the railroads to engage in various occupations requiring little skill.'[114] Clark also suggested that Mexicans would opt for city life because it afforded a more stable environment for their families and they were even prepared to accept lower wages in the process.[115] Nonetheless, the extent to which Mexicans were becoming a stabilised element of the urban population should not be exaggerated. By the late twenties, Mexicans were still the most transitory of Austin's racial groups, as can be seen from an examination of Table 7. Researchers at the University of Texas found that two-fifths of the Mexican population in 1929 had left Austin by 1931, while of the total Mexican population for the latter year, over half had arrived since 1929. Whether

entering or leaving the city, therefore, there was a far greater level of activity among Mexicans than either whites or blacks.[116]

In part, the explanation for this lies in the fact that African-Americans were generally more reluctant migrants than Mexicans. As W. H. Crawford affirmed, 'Our people as a rule are not a roaming people.'[117] Black communities, especially rural ones, were well established and had usually been in existence for several generations. Unlike recent Mexican immigrants, who had already uprooted themselves, African-Americans in Central Texas had strong local ties, which were likely to deter them from moving cityward or abandoning the state altogether. Broadcasting such ties, the Reverend Campbell remarked: 'Here they [have] come in possession of millions of dollars worth of property . . . here they have their own homes . . . their own farms.' And Campbell, for one, 'could not see the wisdom of breaking up all of this.'[118] Urban-dwelling blacks were no more likely to adopt a nomadic existence than their rural counterparts. In July 1929, a representative of the federal employment service stationed in Austin complained bitterly that it was impossible to persuade local blacks to migrate, even temporarily, to work as cotton pickers in the Corpus Christi or Rio Grande areas of the state. Local Mexicans, on the other hand, were enlisted with ease.[119] The reports of Joseph S. Myers, state commissioner of labor, also illustrate how readily

Mexicans would migrate to other parts of the state for work, especially during harvesting. In the first half of 1924 alone, over 19,000 Mexicans were recruited by employment agencies for work in Texas, which exceeded by several thousands the number of workers of all races being sent out of the state during the same period.[120] Not only do such examples indicate that Mexicans could more easily be induced to migrate than blacks, they further illustrate the economic nature of most internal migration.

Whatever the cause or direction of the movement, for nearly two decades there seemed to be an endless flow of black and Mexican migrants entering or leaving Austin. The city was caught between a crosscurrent of migratory paths, with Mexicans advancing from the south, African-Americans leaving for the North, and all groups moving towards the urban centres of Texas.

All of this migratory activity had a dramatic impact upon Austin. While the balance between white and nonwhite elements of the population shifted slightly during the period 1890-1930, the most significant change was in the composition of the nonwhite population. By 1930, the black and Mexican populations combined accounted for twenty-eight percent of the total population - a modest increase over all of the past four decades (see Table 8). Above all, this transformation in the city's racial composition had been brought about by the dramatic growth of the Mexican population, which was most pronounced during the 1920s. In addition,

partly as a result of the Mexican influx and partly on account of black migration to the North, the declining importance of African-Americans as a proportion of the total population first becomes noticeable in this period.

In estimating the size of the Mexican population during the 1920s, a number of difficulties arise. As Max Handman pointed out, the Mexican population of Texas was composed of three main elements; first were the *émigrés*, a small group of political refugees from Mexico who were members of the ousted ruling élite and usually of creole or European ancestry. Second were the *Tejanos*, a Spanish-speaking group of mostly Mexican-Indian ancestry that had inhabited the border regions of Texas since long before its separation from Mexico. Thirdly, and the group with which this study is most concerned, were the large number of Mexican immigrants of the *peón* class that had entered Texas in recent years.[121] Prior to 1930, all three groups had been categorised as members of the white race and were counted as such by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. This meant that in the censuses of 1910 and 1920 *Tejanos* were indistinguishable from the rest of the native-born white population, while both the Mexican *émigré* and *peón* groups were counted as foreign-born whites. In 1930, however, the Census Bureau decided to create a new racial category and Mexicans - along with African-Americans, Native Americans, and Asians - were suddenly classified as nonwhite elements of the population.[122]

Consequently, *Tejanos* and Mexican *peones* were grouped together as nonwhites, while most *émigrés* were still classified as foreign-born whites.

It might be expected that the resulting figures would exaggerate the scale of immigration from Mexico, because the native *Tejanos* were lumped together in a category with immigrant groups, but experts at the University of Texas contended that even the 1930 census had grossly underestimated the size of the Mexican population in Texas. Both Max Handman and Herschel Manuel estimated that the margin of error was in excess of ten percent, with a little under ninety percent of all Mexicans in Texas being recent immigrants or their offspring.[123] By the mid-1920s there were over three thousand Mexicans in Austin, more than half of whom - and at least two-thirds of all adults - were probably foreign-born.[124] This was a threefold increase over 1920 and, if the census figure for 1930 did err on the minus side, it makes the growth of the Mexican population between these dates all the more phenomenal. Within the space of three decades, the Mexican population of Austin changed from being a small and relatively inconspicuous group into the city's second largest nonwhite minority - and a highly visible one at that.

While blacks, like whites, were decreasing as a proportion of the total population, this decline was mostly relative and needs to be set against a backdrop of massive Mexican immigration. In the years leading up

to the First World War, Austin's black population had been growing steadily, but this process was reversed following the sudden exodus that occurred after 1917 (see Table 9). Within only a three year period, Austin lost a fifth of its total black population, with many migrating to the North or other parts of the state, making it one of the few southern cities to suffer a net loss of blacks between 1910 and 1920.[125] As outward migration slowed, a recovery in the black population's growth-rate occurred; which rose to 42.6% for the 1920s, modestly exceeding that of the white population (see Table 10). During the same period, however, the Mexican population grew at over ten times the rate of either blacks or whites in Austin, and marginally missed catching up with the black population in size. Despite the loss in numbers suffered between 1917 and 1920, therefore, blacks had become one of the more stabilised elements of the local population by 1930 and, for the time being at least, continued to be the city's principal nonwhite group.

With African-Americans regaining their former numbers and Mexicans arriving at an astounding rate, nonwhite groups in Austin were growing in both size and importance, adding new complexity to the racial composition of the city's population. The pace of outward migration among blacks had clearly abated by the early twenties and would not become a serious problem for at least another two decades.[126] Mexican immigrants, moreover, after they had begun settling down

and raising families in Austin, gave every indication that their relocation from Mexico was of a permanent, rather than a temporary, nature. Family ties are a notorious restraint upon population mobility and the rate of natural reproduction was relatively higher among Mexicans than it was for the rest of the population. Throughout the period 1910-1930, while Mexicans never made up more than ten percent of Austin's total population, they regularly provided more than their fair share of local child-births and in one year accounted for almost a quarter of the total number registered (see Table 11). Clearly, Austin's Mexican community was giving birth to a whole generation of American-born children and, as one contemporary observed, the latter would 'automatically become citizens of the country when they reach the voting age.'[127] With the creation of such ties, Mexican immigrants were further inclined towards becoming permanent residents of the United States. Whether Mexican immigrants had initially intended to remain in Austin or not, therefore, it became apparent that a growing number of them were there to stay.[128]

Partly as a result of its geographic position, the situation in Austin was a microcosm of the state in general, especially regarding the proportions of African-Americans and Mexicans to be found in the total population (see Table 12). In addition to Travis County, only two other counties in Texas had significantly large populations of both blacks and

Mexicans by 1930; these were Bexar County and Harris County, in which were situated the cities of San Antonio and Houston respectively (see Maps 2 and 3). The impact of black migration and Mexican immigration had been felt to varying degrees in both Houston and San Antonio. Unlike Austin, however, in neither city did the population's racial composition closely parallel that of the state in general. In Houston the balance between white and nonwhite elements of the population was less radically altered than elsewhere in Texas by 1930. Despite a constant influx of immigrants from Mexico, the African-American presence continued to overshadow that of the city's Mexican population (see Table 13). In contrast, San Antonio experienced the effects of Mexican immigration to an exaggerated extent; in 1910, blacks had been the city's largest nonwhite group, but within a decade Mexicans outnumbered them by a ratio of nearly two to one and, by 1930, over a third of San Antonio's population was Mexican. The state's other large cities seem to have conformed to one or other of the two models outlined above; the situation in Dallas closely mirrored that of Houston, while the Mexican presence in El Paso was even more pronounced than in San Antonio. Compared with the state's other main cities, therefore, the scale and pace of demographic change in Austin was far more typical of Texas as a whole.

D. Economic Opportunities for Nonwhites

Having examined the way in which a combination of economic and demographic forces transformed the ethnic landscape of Austin during 1917-1929, it is worth considering the impact that such changes had upon local African-Americans and Mexicans. On the eve of the First World War, William Hamilton asserted in a study of social conditions in Austin: 'The Mexican and negro population are important factors in the commercial life of this city; they could not be dispensed with.'[129] By the late 1920s, the local economy was, if anything, even more dependent upon nonwhite workers. Nonetheless, the increased demand for their labour did not mean that either African-Americans or Mexicans witnessed a concomitant broadening of occupational opportunities or accelerated levels of economic advancement. On the contrary, members of both groups experienced various forms of discrimination and were largely confined to a subordinate role within the economy, mostly employed as unskilled, manual and often temporary workers. Consequently, they were more susceptible to the vagaries of low-pay, poor working conditions and unemployment.

In general, white Austinites had strong, preconceived ideas about the kinds of occupations that African-Americans and Mexicans either were or ought to be confined to. In terms of economic policy, white attitudes towards blacks were a potent reminder of the legacy of slavery. Blacks were perceived not as

individuals invested with the power to determine their own economic destinies, but more like a faceless mass of auxilaries whose prime purpose was to respond to the needs of the dominant social group. In May 1918, the *Austin Statesman* displayed interest in some very revealing recommendations emanating from the state labour department for the remedy of labour shortages caused by the war. It was proposed that white housewives 'dismiss their negro servants, yardmen and chauffeurs and have them go on the farms' in order to 'chop cotton and corn.' According to the *Statesman*,

> . . . such a plan, if successfully carried out, would result in sending to the farms thousands of able-bodied negro men and women at this time when farm labor is so scarce; besides, the average negro is at home on a farm and would be of valuable assistance to the farmers in Texas.[130]

Moreover, it was not only periods of national urgency or economic crisis which brought such views to the surface. In 1927, during the heyday of 'normalcy,' the *Statesman* neatly summed up prevailing white attitudes towards blacks by contending that the most suitable economic role for the Negro was 'that of hewer of wood and drawer of water.'[131] These stereotypes of African-Americans were further reinforced by accommodationist black leaders like L. L. Campbell, who assured whites that 'Happiness for the negro comes from work.'[132]

Essentially, nonwhite workers - whether African-American or Mexican - were expected to do the jobs that did not appeal to whites. As the *Austin American* remarked in February 1928: 'Some one has to do the work performed by the Mexican and the negro. They are not complaining.'[133] In contrast, observed the *American*, 'Your young American does not love to perform rough work. He dearly loves a white collar job.'[134] In opposition to organised labour and other proponents of restricting immigration from Mexico, the *American* took pains to demonstrate the necessity for and merits of the Mexican worker:

> His standard of living is not as high as the union labor man, but nine-tenths of the union labor men would not have his job or his salary. Suppose union workers did take over all cotton picking jobs, worked eight hours a day and received a much higher wage than the Mexican. Then the farmer would have to greatly increase his prices, and if he didn't get it would go broke speedily. If he did get his price, then mills and manufacturers would add an enormous amount to their own bills. And you would be paying double prices for your clothing and gowns, but you can bet you would not get a 100 per cent increase in income as suddenly as that.

Contending that Mexican immigrants posed no threat to white labour, the article concluded: 'Better let the

mild and hardy little Juan continue at his little job, while his little wife Juanita cooks tortillas for him. They're not hurting any one.'[135]

Undeniably, African-Americans and Mexicans did tend to be employed in the unskilled and often menial occupations usually attributed to the standard stereotype of either group. Indeed, Austin's affluent whites were generally of the opinion that the local black community existed primarily for the purpose of furnishing middle-class homes with yardmen, nannies, cooks and other household helpers.[136] The 1930 census showed that almost half (47.4%) of the city's black workforce was engaged in some form of domestic service, compared with only 5.5% of all other workers. This difference in employment patterns is principally attributable to the fact that women made up a larger proportion of the black than total workforce. While women made up less than a third (32.8%) of the non-black workforce, nearly half (48.6%) of all African-Americans in gainful employment were women - four-fifths (80.0%) of whom were employed in domestic service. African-American men were not so heavily concentrated in one occupational field, but domestic service was still their single largest employer. The principal areas of employment for black men were domestic service (which accounted for 16.5% of all African-American male workers), the building industry (14.6%), and wholesale and retail trade (11.5%). Within the construction trade, which was the largest employer of a specific

occupational group in Austin, blacks maintained a strong presence and made up 22.2% of the total labour force. However, African-Americans were significantly under-represented among public service workers, 6.9% of whom were black, and on the city council's extensive street construction and improvement programme, where blacks accounted for only 8.8% of the total employees. Moreover, only 6.9% of the African-American working population was engaged in banking, insurance, real estate or professional work, like teaching, medical practice and dentistry, whereas 20.7% of non-blacks pursued such occupations.[137]

Unfortunately, the 1930 census abstract does not contain a breakdown of occupations for Austin's Mexican workforce, but information from a number of sources can be utilised to provide a rough guide in this respect. During 1917-1929, it should be noted, the vast majority of Mexican immigrants entering the United States were unskilled labourers; the records of the U.S. immigration service for the year 1922-23 revealed that about ninety percent of males admitted from Mexico came under this category.[138] Although the federal authorities only allowed Mexican workers into the country on the condition that they remain in agriculture, immigrants soon branched out into and even came to dominate other occupational fields. This was particularly true in railroad construction, where Mexicans were rapidly displacing blacks.[139] In 1925, over a third of the Mexican workingmen surveyed by Earl Connell were

employed on either streetcar or railroad section gangs, while only 2.1% of black males were engaged in this type of work by 1930, comprising 13.3% of the workforce. Connell also found Mexican men working in such diverse areas as agriculture, construction, telecommunications, hotel and clerical work. Only a small proportion of Mexican housewives were in gainful employment; of these most were engaged in domestic work, such as washing clothes, and home industries like making candy and tamales, or labelling bottles.[140] Significantly, there was an even smaller proportion of professionals among Mexicans than blacks. By 1929, for example, Austin had only one physician, one public school teacher and four pastors of Mexican descent.[141]

The hiring practices of many Austin employers were extremely discriminatory, although this occasionally worked in favour of African-American and Mexican workers. From an employer's point of view, there were two main reasons for either excluding or only recruiting members of particular racial and ethnic groups: to guard against ethnic disputes between workers and to keep wage levels down.

By maintaining a relatively homogeneous workforce the likelihood of racial tensions interfering with business efficiency was greatly reduced. Consequently, nonwhite workers were often excluded from workplaces where it was felt that their presence would lead to conflict with or protest from existing - usually white - employees. 'White laborers,' noted a contemporary

observer of economic conditions in Texas, 'feel themselves superior, say to negros [sic.] or Mexicans and will become more or less dissatisfied to remain in a mixed group.'[142]

Mexican immigrants, generally perceived as outsiders by native Austinites, were invariably the last group to be hired on local works projects. In January 1915, when the city council began recruiting labourers for a street paving programme, Mayor Wooldridge issued a request 'that only white men and negroes be employed, so that local men may be given preference over Mexicans.'[143] On other occasions, African-Americans were the excluded group, as is evidenced by job advertisements appearing in the local press. In October 1917, for example, the *Austin American* carried an advertisement for construction labourers which stated that whites, blacks and Mexicans could be used at one site, but only whites and Mexicans at another.[144] Sometimes black and Mexican workers were the only groups enlisted for a given workplace, but this practice did not prevent ethnic conflicts from arising. At the L. Frank Produce Company, situated in what was Austin's main business district, about one hundred black and Mexican employees worked alongside each other in the same building. In November 1920, a quarrel broke out between elements of the two groups, which culminated in a black worker drawing a weapon and shooting two Mexicans.[145]

Ironically, the Jim Crow laws of Texas requiring the segregation of blacks and whites in such areas as

education and transportation actually provided African-Americans with job opportunities that otherwise might not have existed. The segregated nature of the school system meant that only black teachers were employed in the schools for black pupils. Although segregated schools were also maintained for Mexican children, these were ostensibly part of the white school system and there was no guarantee that teachers of Mexican origin would be hired. By 1929, only one Mexican teacher worked for the local school board, despite the fact that eight teachers were employed entirely for the purpose of instructing Mexican children.[146] This pattern was mirrored in transportation. In 1928, a private company announced plans to establish a segregated bus service - for black passengers only - that would link Austin with several other major cities in Texas. The route headquarters was to be located in Austin and, as the *Austin American* reported, 'All drivers and employes, except the manager of the line, will be negroes.'[147]

Another reason why employers chose to hire only nonwhite workers was that they would usually accept a lower rate of pay than white - especially unionised - labour. In 1927, Charles S. Johnson found evidence of American employers operating a 'double wage scale for white and Negro workers, and the frequent practice now of carrying a double wage scale for Negroes and Mexicans.'[148] By the mid-1920s, the minimum rate paid for white unskilled workers in Austin was $3.00 a day and most black labourers could earn at least this

amount. However, according to Earl Connell's survey, only about one eighth of all Mexican men were likely to earn more than $3.00 a day and over a fifth worked for less than $2.00.[149] In 1931, Jet C. Winters, having investigated both the living standards and income levels of Mexicans in Austin, noted in a University of Texas report: 'They are, on the whole, unskilled workers and belong to the lowest wage-earning group.'[150] The leaders of organised labour in Texas claimed that, because Mexicans would work for such low wages, they were rapidly displacing all other groups in a variety of unskilled occupations. Many of Austin's largest industrial employers relied heavily or entirely upon Mexican labour, particularly in the area of food manufacture and processing.[151] A prime example of this was the Walker Chili Products factory, of which W. F. Gohlke - one of Austin's leading importers of Mexican labour - was the secretary-treasurer and general manager. When Gohlke had taken command of the plant in 1914 it was ear-marked for closure by its owners, but he persuaded his superiors to keep the concern running. By 1927, the factory employed 150 staff and, amongst other things, annually exported 7,500,000 cans of chilli and tamales to forty-two states of the Union, Canada, England and elsewhere throughout the globe. A key factor in this impressive reversal in fortunes was Gohlke's preference for employing low-paid, relatively unskilled Mexican immigrants, who made up a large proportion of the factory workforce.[152]

The terms and conditions under which most African-Americans and especially Mexicans worked in Austin were comparable to the low wages they invariably received. Mexican immigrants, many of whom did not understand English and had received little or no formal education, were particularly susceptible to exploitation by unscrupulous employers. It was commonplace for labour contractors in Texas to renege on wage payments to Mexican immigrants and some employers were even known to arrange the deportation of unpaid workers.[153] Aware of the abuses practiced in other parts of the state, Austin businessmen claimed - not without justification - that Travis County enjoyed an unrivalled reputation for its 'fair treatment of Austin Mexican labor.'[154] In August 1920, a delegation of Austin Mexican leaders informed the city council that 'no complaint has been received over the treatment of Mexicans by Travis County employers and that they are well satisfied with working conditions.'[155]

Nonetheless, even in Travis County there were signs of discontent among Mexican immigrants over the often oppressive terms of their employment. An illustration of this is the frequency with which Mexican workers, especially those engaged in agriculture, secretly took leave of employers before their contracts had expired. Austin police records are replete with reports from local farmers of 'Run-a-way Mexicans,' who often absconded in groups of up to three or more. The policy of the police in such cases was to apprehend and return

the workers to their employer, indicating that some Mexican immigrants were even denied the opportunity of terminating contracts at their own discretion.[156] Moreover, because most Mexican immigrants had originally been permitted entry to the United States on the condition that they remain in agricultural employment, those settled in urban centres and engaged in non-agricultural pursuits were liable to arrest and possible deportation. Not surprisingly, an increasing number of contemporaries came to agree with John C. Box, who said that the importation of Mexican casual workers 'involved a system of peonage and did not smack of freedom.'[157]

Mexicans tended to tolerate such deplorable treatment because their standard of living in the United States was still much higher than it had been in Mexico. However, African-Americans, who had a greater awareness of local employment practices and wage levels, generally refused to accept the conditions under which most Mexicans worked. In Austin, this was evidenced by a growing reluctance among black labourers to work in agriculture, where local farmers had used the ready supply of Mexican immigrants as a means to keep wage levels down. Traditionally, Travis County farmers had relied upon Austin's black workforce to provide them with seasonal labourers. Each year at harvest time, for example, large numbers of South Austin blacks found employment in the cotton fields of nearby rural districts. Likewise, local farmers regularly journeyed to Austin to hire black field-hands.[158] Although

such practices continued into the 1920s, from World War I onwards employers in agriculture were finding it increasingly difficult to attract black labour. In May 1917, a white businessman claimed that there were about five hundred unemployed blacks in Austin at a time when local farmers were suffering from a shortage of labour. Just over a year later, Austin's Colored Welfare Board established an employment bureau in an effort to reduce unemployment among local blacks and at the same time meet the labour needs of local farmers. Nonetheless, by the late twenties Mexicans had displaced African-Americans as the major source of agricultural labour. In 1930, the proportion of Austin blacks (1.8%) engaged in agriculture was smaller than for the workforce as a whole (2.0%), while some evidence suggests that about half or more of the city's Mexican workers were employed on farms for at least part of the year.[159]

During the 1920s, despite a relatively buoyant demand for labour in Austin, there was still a great deal of unemployment among local African-Americans and Mexicans. The sustained influx of Mexican immigrants intensified competition for jobs - especially in unskilled occupations - and by mid-decade there were signs that the supply of labour was well in excess of local demand. In the early part of the twenties, Travis County farmers had continually complained about severe labour shortages and often poached workers from each other in order to meet their needs. Similarly, the Austin Chamber of Commerce adopted numerous strategies

designed to attract Mexican workers to the vicinity. In 1920, for instance, the Chamber of Commerce helped turn the local Mexican community's celebrations of Mexican Independence into a regional event, which was attended by about 6,000 Mexicans from various parts of Central Texas and beyond.[160] Local employers made no pretence about the purpose of this policy, asserting that 'the attendance of several thousand Mexicans from outside Travis County would benefit not only the Mexicans but those using labor as well.'[161] By 1925, however, Austin had become a net exporter of agricultural labour. In August of that year, the Chamber of Commerce made arrangements for two hundred farm labourers unable to get work in the harvest fields of Central Texas to be employed in the north of the state. Austin's role as an exporter of Mexican labour increased throughout the latter half of the twenties.[162]

Mexican immigration also contributed to a contraction of opportunities for industrial workers in Austin and local Mexicans were affected by this as much as - and possibly more than - other groups. By the late 1920s, Mexican workers had infiltrated most areas of the local economy, to the extent that they were an indispensable element of the workforce in manufacturing, streetcar and railroad maintenance, construction and the public utilities. In 1929, one Austin merchant remarked that not only had Mexicans 'displaced our American cheap labor class entirely,' but 'hundreds of business establishments are employing Mexican girls and boys at

such a low wage that even a self-respecting Mexican adult cannot live suitably.'[163] Over a quarter of the Mexican families surveyed by Earl Connell in 1925 were either partly or entirely dependent on the income of child workers. Connell found that almost half of the Mexican children engaged in gainful employment had first started work between the ages of eleven and thirteen, and two thirds before they were sixteen years old. Additionally, Connell discovered a high level of unemployment among Mexican men, nearly two-thirds of whom reported that they were out of work most of the time.[164]

Mexicans who could not speak English were the worst affected group; largely confined to agricultural work, they encountered difficulty in securing continuous employment for more than three or four months of the year. The severe economic plight of many Austin Mexicans is illustrated by the disproportionate number of them applying for assistance from local charities. Much of the work conducted by the United Charities Association, Austin's principal social work agency, involved relieving the distress caused by poverty and unemployment. In 1918, Mexicans made up 23% of the cases dealt with by the United Charities, while African-Americans (16%) and whites (61%) were both under-represented. Although Mexicans and blacks each accounted for about one-fifth of those in receipt of help during 1919, by 1921 the former comprised a quarter of all charity cases for the second year running, while

the proportion of the latter had fallen back to its 1918 level.[165] Various governmental, business and charitable agencies operated employment bureaus in Austin and, to a certain extent, these were able to alleviate unemployment among Mexicans. The International Institute - a social centre run by the city's Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) - established a free employment service for local Mexicans and regularly found work for them. In December 1926, for example, the Institute secured employment for two-fifths of the fifty persons applying for work that month.[166]

Although African-American and Mexican workers must have harboured many economic grievances, neither group was well-represented within the ranks of organised labour in Austin. Admittedly, compared with other parts of Texas during the 1920s, labour unions in the state capital were few in both number and members. Set up in 1900, the Austin Trades Council was an umbrella organisation for the local branches (referred to as 'locals') of various national unions. The Trades Council soon displayed an interest in organising local black workers and encouraged the activities of B. F. Shearod, an African-American organiser for the American Federation of Labor (AFL). However, Shearod did not receive adequate backing from the Texas branch of the AFL. In 1915, he complained to the State Federation of Labor's annual convention:

> The Waco [1911] convention adopted a resolution to help me organize my people in Texas. I have never got any support from it yet . . . [and] I ask this convention to take the matter up with the American Federation of Labor. I can do much with a little help. I have two or three unions on the way in Austin, but I am not able to be there now. It is going to take some time to educate my race to let them know what organization can do for them.[167]

Despite Shearod's efforts, Austin locals continued to discriminate against and, consequently, alienate black workers. By 1929, most of the city's seventeen locals either excluded, discouraged or did not solicit black membership, while four admitted blacks but segregated them.[168]

Organised labour's hostility towards Mexicans has already been noted and there is no evidence of Austin locals attempting to unionise this group during the twenties. In 1925, Earl Connell discovered that none of the Mexicans surveyed by him belonged to a union, remarking that 'some difficulty was encountered on [sic.] making most of them understand what is meant by a labor organization.'[169] Indeed, employers often preferred Mexican workers to those of other races and nationalities for the very reason that they showed no inclination to form or join labour unions.[170] Consequently, organised labour in Austin believed that the hiring of Mexicans lowered wage rates and threatened

the jobs of white workers. Determined to resist such developments, in 1924 the Austin Trades Council intervened in a local political contest and urged union members to support candidates pledged to excluding Mexicans from city council positions.[171]

Discriminated against by employers and white workers alike, African-Americans and Mexicans were generally confined to unskilled and low-paid occupations. Nonetheless, the barriers to economic advancement were not insurmountable and for a number of black and Mexican entrepreneurs the 1920s proved to be a highly successful decade.

By the eve of World War I, a network of African-American business establishments already existed in Austin. To some extent, segregation actually facilitated the growth of a black sub-economy. For some groups of African-American business men and women - most notably, undertakers, barbers, beauty parlour owners, restauranteurs and hoteliers - the constraints of racial etiquette meant that they faced no competition from whites and were able to virtually monopolise the patronage of the black community.[172] By way of illustration, it is worth reviewing the career of William M. Tears, who in 1901 left the Austin police force to open a funeral parlour. Within a few years, Tears had established himself as one of the city's two main African-American undertakers. In 1902, along with Lewis D. Lyons, a local black merchant, Tears organised a burial-fund association for Travis County blacks,

which by 1920 had 3,500 subscribers. Tears also used his influence with city officials to secure various municipal contracts, such as the provision of ambulances for African-American accident victims and the burial of black paupers. For this latter service Tears actually charged more than the undertaker employed to bury white indigents, indicating the extent to which the fortunes of some blacks were tied to the continuation of segregation practices.[173]

The burgeoning economic opportunities of the 1920s generated a mood of confidence among Austin's African-American entrepreneurs, who were able to corner the black community's demand for a number of newer services. In the realm of entertainment, the growing popularity of motion pictures created a roaring trade for the city's only black-owned cinema. Similarly, as the motor car rapidly outmoded all other forms of urban transport, the number of African-American taxi-cab operators mushroomed. Other black businesses, such as grocery stores, tailors, filling stations and garages, also flourished in the years leading up to the Great Depression. Even so, the phenomenon of African-American business success was not always well received among local whites, many of whom resented the way 'negroes have overrun Sixth street,' one of the city's main commercial thoroughfares.[174]

Although black business leaders were no less rapacious or personally ambitious than their white counterparts, most believed that by providing employment

for and setting an example of economic success to other blacks they were benefiting the African-American community in general.[175] This view was supported by *The Herald*, which called upon local blacks to display racial solidarity and patronise black businesses whenever possible.[176] To a certain extent, Austin's African-American business élite was influenced by the ideas of Booker T. Washington, the national black leader who had recommended economic self-reliance - rather than political agitation or purely academic attainment - as the principle means of racial advancement. In 1900, to promote the application and wider acceptance of his programme, Washington formed the National Negro Business League, which had three branches in the Austin area by the early 1920s.[177] Links were also maintained with black commercial leaders in other parts of the state. Guest speakers regularly visited the city to lecture on such topics as modern methods of business organisation and the need for blacks to achieve economic independence. In June 1923, taking inspiration from a recent discourse by E. M. Grigg, the president of an African-American bank in Palestine, Texas, a group of local businessmen announced that henceforth they would no longer 'solicit funds from the white people of Austin' to support the annual 'Juneteenth' festivities (held in commemoration of 19 June 1865, the day on which Federal troops enforced the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas). African-Americans, declared the heads of the city's Emancipation League, 'have been free long enough

to finance their own celebrations.'[178]

As might be expected, a network of Mexican businesses in Austin was only just beginning to emerge during the 1920s. Nonetheless, by the middle of the decade, Mexican-owned foodstores were located throughout the city, particularly in districts with a heavy concentration of Mexican inhabitants. To a large extent, the proliferation of Mexican retailers was facilitated by the fact that their Spanish-speaking customers - possibly as many as four-fifths of all Mexican women in Austin could not speak English - encountered no difficulty in purchasing the goods they required. This is not to imply, however, that Mexican shopkeepers enjoyed a monopoly over the patronage of Mexican consumers. As Earl Connell discovered, the city's small number of Italian immigrants had established a unique relationship with local Mexicans: 'Many of the Italians are merchants, and as a rule their places of business are located in the Mexican districts. This proximity, and the ability to speak the Spanish language, give these merchants a large per cent of the Mexican trade.' Similarly, many white retailers adopted the practice of hiring Spanish-speaking shop assistants, in an effort to attract Mexican customers.[179]

As well as shopkeeping, Austin's Mexican entrepreneurs and self-employed artisans were engaged in such diverse occupations as tailoring, farming and freight haulage. However, the production, processing and marketing of foodstuffs continued to be the

principle and most lucrative forms of economic endeavour for local Mexicans. The explanation for this phenomenon can, without excessive over-simplification, be reduced to a few simple factors: the inimitable flavour, appeal and marketability of Mexican cuisine. For many years, Mexican street vendors, selling homemade tamales, candy and other snack foods, were a common sight in Austin. In 1921, two weeks before the annual Mexican Independence celebrations were held in the city, the committee of local Mexicans in charge of organising events announced that they had already received twenty-five applications for concessions to sell foodstuffs, refreshments and other goods.[180]

By the late twenties, a number of Mexican entrepreneurs had, through a combination of culinary expertise and business initiative, raised the production and marketing of Mexican foods above the level of a home industry and turned it into profitable financial concerns. The nature of this transformation is exemplified by the separate careers of two men: Crescenciano Segovia and Ben Gonzales, both of whom won recognition from local whites for their commercial achievements and were ranked alongside prominent white businessmen in an *Austin Statesman* series on 'Builders of a Bigger and Better Austin.'[181] Responding to a growing local demand for tortillas - a round flat maize bread, which was a staple part of the Mexican diet - Segovia launched the Austin Tortilla Manufacturing Company. In 1929, his purpose-built plant, equipped

with the most up-to-date machinery that had been specially imported from Mexico, was running seven days a week. Before long, Segovia's company was exporting its products to markets as far away as New York.[182] Ben Gonzales's success stemmed from the fact he cashed in on the relatively untapped demand among local whites for traditional Mexican food. In 1925, after having worked as a waiter in Austin for a number of years, Gonzales opened his own restaurant - the New Way Café. By 1929, the restaurant had established itself as one of the city's premier eating-houses and gave employment to eight local Mexicans. Significantly, Gonzales recognised that commercial viability was linked to earning a reputation for both quality and exclusivity, which is reflected in the fact that the New Way's clientele was principally composed of university students and upper-class whites.[183]

Like all other sectors of the local economy, Austin's African-American and Mexican businesses were hard hit by the Great Depression. While the slump in trade forced some concerns to collapse, others, like Segovia's tortilla factory, continued to flourish. More typical, however, was the Edwards Transfer Company, which survived, but only as a result of slimming down its operations. Formed in 1918, by Matthew Edwards, an African-American truck driver, the company had been able to add a new vehicle to its fleet every two years, reaching a maximum of four trucks by 1928. This expansion was cut short by the Depression and for a time

Edwards struggled to keep the business afloat. The company only got back to operating at its 1928 level of activity in 1940.[184]

In the final analysis, even the most successful African-American or Mexican entrepreneurs were - like all nonwhite workers - still confined to a subordinate economic role. Indeed, the only business organisation in Austin to exercise any degree of control over the local economy was the Chamber of Commerce, a body composed of and dominated by whites.[185] Moreover, despite the occupational advances made by many nonwhites during the 1920s, at the end of the decade blacks and Mexicans remained the city's two most economically deprived groups. They were also the hardest hit by the initial impact of the Depression. One study of the period 1929-1931 showed that in a small section of East Austin - which contained a quarter of the city's black and half of its Mexican inhabitants - the number of persons reporting no occupation rose by 5.5%, compared with 2.7% for the main white working-class neighbourhood and only 1.8% for the city as whole.[186]

Summary

Clearly, World War I ushered in an era of major demographic upheaval in Austin, which was only brought to a halt by the the Great Depression. Most population movement was stimulated by the beckoning of economic

opportunities, either in specific localities, such as the Southwest and Northeast, or urban centres in general. In addition, the Revolution in Mexico and Jim Crow practices in the South acted as respective 'push' factors to the influx of Mexicans and exodus of blacks experienced in Austin. African-American out-migration was most severe during the period 1917-1920, but had slowed down considerably by the late 1920s. The pace and volume of Mexican immigration, however, continued uninterruptedly for most of the decade. As a result of these migratory movements, the racial composition of Austin's population had been radically transformed by 1930. Whereas the city had previously been a biracial community, in which whites predominated over a large black minority, almost overnight a tri-ethnic population was created in Austin following the massive infusion of Mexican immigrants. This rapid transition had profound social implications. The economic subordination of both African-Americans and Mexicans meant that nonwhites were generally confined to unskilled and relatively low-paid occupations. Moreover, in a society in which individual and group status were largely determined by skin colour, the arrival of numerous brown-skinned Mexican immigrants was bound to have a dramatic impact upon race relations. Indeed, as shall become evident in the next chapter, by the early twenties the foundations had already been laid for a new racial order in Austin.

Chapter Two

THE 'PROBLEM' OF RACE

CHAPTER 2. THE 'PROBLEM' OF RACE

While the origins of black out-migration and Mexican immigration can both be traced back to events which were of an external nature and preceded the period 1917-1929 - namely, the outbreak of war in Europe and of revolution in Mexico, respectively - the impact that demographic change was to have upon Austin's social fabric did not become fully apparent until after America had itself entered the First World War. In many ways, World War I was the catalyst for major social change in Austin, invoking both age-old concerns among whites that a breakdown of existing racial demarcations might occur and, conversely, a mood of optimism among elements of the nonwhite population who believed that the war would usher in a period of greater tolerance, as well as opportunity, for themselves. The purpose of this chapter will be to follow this social transformation from its embryonic stage through to the consummation of a new social order in Austin. In addition to examining the roles that race, ethnicity, colour and nationality played in determining the place that either blacks or Mexicans would occupy in the social and racial hierarchy of Austin, an assessment will be made of the extent to which white fears and nonwhite aspirations alike were realised by the end of the 1920s.

A. Wartime Tensions: Black-White Relations

Prior to American involvement in the First World War, and in spite of signs that blacks were already beginning to leave and Mexicans beginning to enter the city in unprecedented numbers, local whites could still afford to view the comings and goings of Austin's nonwhite inhabitants with an air of complacency. With the advent of war, however, such luxuries disappeared. As the urgency of the situation became more apparent, the white community grew concerned that all groups should be fully committed to the war effort. Naturally, the most marginalised segments of society attracted the most suspicion - particularly if this condition had been imposed upon them by whites and was a possible source of unrest (as in the case of blacks and, to a certain extent, Mexicans as well). It was under these circumstances that local whites turned their attention with renewed interest to the nonwhite and foreign-born populations of Austin. Consequently, prevailing conceptions about racial and social relationships within the city - especially as they related to either blacks or Mexicans - were re-evaluated in the light of recent demographic changes.

Not since the days of Reconstruction had there been reason to challenge the view that in Austin African-Americans were at the bottom of an essentially biracial social system. In 1917, when America's entry into the First World War prompted local white observers to once

again review the situation, they came to the conclusion that relations between blacks and whites had altered little since the times of slavery. As the *Austin American* confidently asserted:

> The negro of the present generation is different from his old slave ancestors, who were the most devoted people in the world when the question of loyalty to their masters and families to which they belonged was concerned, [yet] much of this loyalty and devotion has been inherited by the younger negroes.[1]

Nor was it felt that World War I would have any adverse effects upon race relations in Austin. Indeed, early in the war white commentators totally dismissed the idea that local blacks would fall prey to German propaganda. In April 1917, carrying the headline 'Negroes Will Not Be Misled,' the *Austin American* declared:

> It is difficult to believe that German agents would attempt to create disaffection among the negroes of the south, but so persistent are rumors to this effect, backed up by authorized reports from federal officers, that credence must be given them.

Despite such reports, the editorial continued,

> . . . it can readily be imagined with what resentment the plea of a German agent would be met with when he proposed that the negro revolt against the people who employ him and make possible the attainment of property and an independent living for himself and his family.[2]

Had any doubts still remained, local whites could take comfort from similar articles appearing in Austin's black newspapers. 'There are 12,000,000 Negroes in these United States,' declared *The Herald*, 'who are as loyal to the United States as the needle is to the pole.'[3]

The need to hear such reassuring utterances, however, suggests that underlying the confidence expressed by local whites was a deeper concern regarding the loyalty of the black population. Austin's white élite was keen to nip internal dissension in the bud and so, with the assistance of prominent local blacks, took part in a series of campaigns designed to 'arouse patriotism among the colored people.'[4] In June 1917, the 'loyalty day celebration arranged especially for the negroes of Austin and vicinity' was heralded as 'a great success in every way' by the *Austin American*. The event, timed to coincide with the first day of registration for the selective draft in Texas, was held at the Ebenezer Tabernacle on East Tenth Street, home to the largest black congregation in Austin. W. H. Crawford and the Reverend L. L. Campbell had organised

the day, although all of the three main speakers were white. First, the audience were given 'a clear and comprehensive review of conditions leading to the present war between the United States and Germany,' and then urged as part of their 'patriotic duty' to invest in Liberty Loan Bonds. The importance of registration was emphasised by General W. H. Stacy.[5] His remarks seem to have had the desired effect, because on registration day the *Austin Statesman* reported: 'The negroes have shown themselves [to be] very loyal, and in nearly all cases willing to serve the country.' Indeed, the first person to register for the draft in Austin during World War I was most likely an African-American. On the day before official registration a large group of men, 'principally negroes,' presented themselves at the city clerk's office and were 'privileged to register in advance' because they had recently been contracted for agricultural work and were about to leave town.[6]

To a large extent whites went to needless lengths in order to promote black participation in the war effort. In both words and deeds, black Austinites proved themselves to be equally as patriotic as other elements of the community - and usually as a result of their own initiative. For instance, in May 1918 the students of Samuel Huston College decided to 'eliminate all unnecessary expenses during the closing weeks of school' in order 'to invest their savings in Liberty bonds and war saving stamps' - this was in addition to their having already made a steady contribution to Red Cross

work.[7] Such efforts, as is illustrated by an article appearing in the *Austin Statesman*, did not go unnoticed:

> It is said none have shown more zeal and interest in the War Work Campaign than the colored people. Their patriotism and sacrifice are equal to those of others. They have rapidly organized under intelligent leaders and are pressing the campaign with a vigor and enthusiasm that is amazing. Not a few are giving largely, and none are giving without sacrifice.[8]

L. L. Campbell, as joint head of a statewide organisation to get blacks involved in war work, played a pivotol role in motivating the black population of Texas.

Of even greater significance was the fact that local blacks were being called upon to serve in the armed forces. By 1918, there were more than seven hundred local blacks registered as eligible for the selective draft; this represented a fifth of all registrants in Austin, mirroring the relative size of the city's black population. While over seventy-five percent of the population in Austin were white, the latter group accounted for only sixty-five percent of all registrants; in comparison with whites, therefore, blacks were probably over-represented among persons registered for the draft.[9] It is not known what proportion of black registrants were eventually called

up, but that many were enlisted and actually saw military service is without doubt. On 20 June 1918, for example, the *Austin Statesman* reported: 'sixty-seven Austin and Travis County negroes hit the trail for Berlin this morning via Camp Travis,' adding that twenty-five of these had come from the city itself.[10] A local black playwright, Captain Harry Lot, captured the mood among blacks in Austin - as well as winning their applause - with a play entitled *Answering Our Country's Call.* Influenced perhaps by this play's message, the younger members of some of Austin's most prominent black families began entering military service with increasing regularity.[11] At least five men from the congregation of the Ebenezer Baptist Church were commissioned as officers in the army, among them being W. B. Campbell - son of the Reverend L. L. Campbell - who rose to the rank of captain.[12] Another Austinite, Spencer Cornelius Dickerson, was by the end of the war probably the highest ranking black Texan in the U.S. armed forces, having risen to brigadier general.[13]

As World War I drew to a close, the commitment shown by black Austinites to the war effort and the distinction gained by those that had served in the military were duly acknowledged by the white community. The *Austin Statesman* credited the local black community with 'showing a good spirit at home, as did their soldiers at the front.'[14] Leading members of the white community, pleased that their earlier confidence in the 'younger generation of negroes' had been

justified, also favoured 'giving the colored soldiers who served in the great war a ripping fine time in appreciation of the services they rendered.'[15]

Such reports, however, belie the fact that the First World War had generated a considerable amount of friction between blacks and whites in Austin, as well as elsewhere in Texas. On a statewide scale, the tone of race relations throughout the war was largely influenced by the outbreak of racial violence which occurred at Houston during August 1917. Following intimidation from the Houston police, black soldiers of the 24th Infantry, stationed at Camp Logan, were provoked into an uprising in which seventeen whites were killed. Of the black participants in the disturbances, thirteen were hastily tried and executed, while another forty-one received life sentences. The riot at Houston immediately attracted nationwide attention; African-Americans especially resented the summary justice meted out to the black soldiers, while the white perpetrators were allowed to elude justice. In a muted response, yet one that was laced with bitterness, a semi-anonymous contribution to *The Herald* read:

> Treason against one's country is punishable by death! President Wilson has sounded a note of warning: "Obey the law and keep your mouth shut." I suppose that will hold 'em for a while? C.[16]

The NAACP embarked upon a decade-long campaign to have the harsh sentences received by members of the 24th Infantry commuted. Its efforts were instrumental in making both the American public and the U.S. Government aware of the injustices of the affair, thereby leading to the commutation of ten death sentences and the eventual freeing of all but one of the surviving infantrymen by the end of the 1920s.[17]

For Austin, the significance of the Houston riot was that it led local whites to question the wisdom of allowing blacks to enter into military service. The initial response of the white community was to argue that the Houston incident demonstrated the 'inadvisability of stationing black soldiers in the South.' Similar disturbances at Brownsville and Waco, it was suggested, added to 'the mass of evidence against the negro trooper as a desirable in this part of the country.'[18] In October 1917, following the war department's announcement that 6,500 black soldiers would be stationed at Camp Travis, in nearby San Antonio, the *Austin American* reported that local whites were displeased with the news. 'The protest,' commented the editor, 'certainly has been fully justified by the occurrence at Houston.'[19] 'To prevent such things in future,' added the *Austin Statesman*, 'negro troops should be kept out of the Southern states, and either sent immediately to France or stationed at isolated Western posts.' At the heart of this white hostility was the realisation that, once southern blacks had seen

military service and mixed with their less inhibited northern counterparts, they would not so readily acquiesce to the South's 'more severe racial demarcation.' Black soldiers, concluded the *Austin Statesman* – especially those coming from the North or the West – were frequently 'arrogant and insolent in their conduct, believing the possession of a uniform of Federal service renders them immune from local laws and customs.'[20] Returning black soldiers were often viewed with deep mistrust by the white community. When black ex-servicemen sought to form the Star Progressive Association in Texas, their application for a charter was turned down by the state authorities, on the grounds that it was 'composed largely of negroes who saw service in France: that it was planned in France, and that social equality is the real purpose behind the movement.'[21]

Mirroring the situation throughout the United States, there was considerable unrest between blacks and whites in Texas during the summer of 1919. To whites, it seemed as though the existing racial order – which depended upon the continued subordination of the black population – was being undermined by the migration of blacks to the North and the social impact of World War I. At a November 1917 conference held at Washington, D.C., the University Race Commission had already drawn attention to the strains appearing in black-white relations in the South. In calling for the 'adjustment, on a sound basis, of race relationship[s]

in the south,' the Commission urged upon white southerners the need to immediately address the problem, 'particularly at this time when, from many points of view, there is danger of maladjustment and misunderstanding' arising.[22] Such warnings, however, were not heeded in time. In July 1919, growing racial tensions in Texas finally erupted into a full-blown race riot at Longview. As disclosed by investigations into the riot carried out by the Texas Rangers, there existed 'a general unrest among negroes of the state,' which was largely attributed to the 'attitude of returning negro soldiers.'[23]

Similar signs of discontent were evident among elements of Austin's black community. L. L. Campbell, in his assessment of the situation, 'realized that social unrest was a natural result of the war' and hoped that 'conditions would soon return to normal.'[24] Other black leaders, however, seemed to welcome the idea that a combination of black migration and World War I would give impetus to social change in Austin. 'This war,' declared W. H. Crawford,

> is bringing to our door many serious problems, we do not know but that it is in the mind of Providence to distribute our race over this vast domain, and in some way prepare the coming of the new order of things in the readjustment of the world.[25]

Improved conditions for African-Americans, it was hoped, would form part of that new order.

The First World War, therefore, was perceived as an opportunity for blacks to prove, through their patriotic commitment to the war effort and valour upon the battlefield, that such changes were long overdue and fully warranted. President Wilson, in declaring that American involvement in the war was justified because victory would make the world safe for democracy, gave further cause for black optimism. As already mentioned, the Austin authorities had sought and actively encouraged greater involvement by local blacks in the war effort. Similarly, President Wilson appointed Judge William Harrison, of Oklahoma, to make a speaking tour of the South, the purpose of which was 'to arouse patriotism among the colored people.' In May 1918, the latter made a stop at Austin, as a guest of L. L. Campbell and the Ebenezer Baptist Church. Describing Harrison as 'among the best speakers of the negro race,' the *Austin Statesman* remarked: 'He has a message full of hope and inspiration and wherever he has gone he has left a better feeling among the colored people with respect to their duty during these perilous times.' Nonetheless, by 'arousing the fire of patriotism' in this way, the white élite - along with the conservative black leaders cooperating with them - risked the danger of unleashing forces that could not easily be contained and which might eventually result in local blacks challenging the validity of Austin's entire social

system.[26]

Whether intended or not, members of the African-American community were encouraged by white and black spokesmen alike to believe that their contribution to the war effort would be justly rewarded. Blacks in Austin were especially receptive to the idea of America's involvement in the war being a moral crusade, to right the wrongs of the world and free the oppressed; as opposed to a mere closing of ranks with southern whites who, even at the best of times, were no less tyrannous than the supposed common foe. In September 1917, for instance, a day of speeches held by one of Austin's African Methodist Episcopal churches was dedicated to local black soldiers who had 'gone to war as a sacrifice for the preservation of a sound democracy.'[27] However, the notion that American foreign policy could be used to shape domestic affairs was totally dismissed by local whites. An article appearing in the *Austin Statesman* openly shed scorn upon blacks who were 'writing letters to Northern papers supporting the League of Nations because, they affect to think, it will mean "self-determination" for the negroes of the South.'[28]

Not all members of the black community, however, were convinced that the hoped for improvements would actually materialise with the end of the war. In May 1918, D. Jenkins, a black employee of the federal government assigned to work in Austin, was forced by local whites to leave the city and return to his home in

Indiana. According to African-American sources, the white community objected to Jenkins's appointment 'simply because of his color.' Following this incident, *The Herald* was moved to ask its readers: 'Wonder if our boys who are fighting for world democracy will be treated as Mr. Jenkins was when they return home from the battle front?'[29]

Despite the patriotism and commitment to the war effort displayed by local African-Americans, the First World War acted as a strain upon relations between blacks and whites in Austin. As it gradually became apparent that the war to secure democracy abroad would not substantially alter the status of blacks at home, the black community's initial optimism and enthusiasm gave way to disappointment and discontent. At first, the white community were slow to realise the threat World War I posed to the social order, but, as the dangers involved in mobilising blacks to fight in a war became apparent, they were quick to react. Whites became less concerned with how patriotic or loyal the black population were, and more anxious to preserve the *status quo.* While white supremacy in Austin had survived the combined impact of World War I and black out-migration, the period 1917-1919 also illustrated that racial demarcations - no matter how well established they were - could not be depended upon to go unchallenged forever.

B. Wartime Tensions: Mexicans and Americanisation

Just as World War I had forced black-white relations in Austin to be re-examined, it also impressed upon the white community the extent to which immigration from Mexico had enlarged the size of the city's foreign-born population. During peacetime such matters might be overlooked, but under the 'war emergency' there was a pressing need to discover which elements of the population were loyal Americans and could be relied upon to play an active role in the war effort. Relations between the United States and Mexico had often and only recently been marred by open conflict, so Mexican immigrants were among the first groups to be classed as potential subversives. The heavy Mexican presence in Austin, therefore, suddenly became a real cause for concern to local whites. Because Mexican workers - whether they were temporary sojourners or more permanent residents - had become indispensable to the local economy, their exclusion from Texas or forced repatriation was unthinkable. The only option available was to have Mexicans remain in Texas, where they could make a valuable contribution to the war against Germany and her allies. From another standpoint, the participation of Mexican immigrants in the American war effort - either as workers and home front activists, or as combatants - proved for many to be the first step on the road towards full Americanisation, whilst accelerating the process among those for whom it had

already begun.

In 1917, the most immediate problem facing Texas was that of preventing an exodus of valuable Mexican workers from the state. Many Mexicans feared that, following the United States' declaration of war, they might be drafted into the American armed forces. Intending to forestall any such mass movement, Governor Ferguson 'issued a statement to the Mexicans that they need not fear of conscription, and urging them to remain at their posts and cultivate the crops.' Ferguson also appointed Colonel F. A. Chapa, of San Antonio, to the task of getting this message over to the Mexican polulation.[30] Carrying the headline 'EXODUS OF MEXICANS NOT YET CHECKED,' the *Austin American* detected 'another influence at work among them to offset this information,' alleging that German propaganda had instilled a 'fear of conscription into them.' When reporting back to the governor in May 1917, Colonel Chapa also concluded that the situation was 'much more serious than is generally believed' and blamed it upon 'an organized propaganda of German origin which is being worked to get the Mexicans out of Texas.'[31]

To a large extent, white concerns over the loyalties of Mexicans had been fuelled in early 1917 by disclosure of the Zimmermann Note, which contained German proposals to form an alliance with Mexico and support a reconquest of Texas and the other parts of the Southwest ceded in 1848. Although Mexico showed no interest in the German offer, the plan served to confirm white suspicions of

Mexicans as a 'potential internal enemy.'[32] Echoing such sentiments, the *Austin Statesman* linked the recent 'steady exodus of Mexicans' with the 'misrepresentations in some Mexican papers of conditions in the United States affecting Mexicans.' As far as the local white press was concerned, the recent remigrations to Mexico and threat of a Mexican insurgency in Texas were both linked to the fact 'that German propaganda is being forwarded on both sides of the Rio Grande.'[33] While the activities of German agents, and more importantly their influence on Mexicans, were exaggerated out of all proportion by white newspapers, these reports raised doubts about the loyalty of local Mexicans that lasted for the duration of the war and into the 1920s (see Chapter 5).

In truth, a general aversion to military conscription, and not German propaganda, was the major cause of Mexican return-migration during 1917; as events leading up to the commencement of draft registration illustrate. On 4 June 1917, it was estimated that, by noon alone, about one thousand Mexicans had crossed the international border at Laredo into Mexico. 'Reports from other towns,' the *Austin Statesman* confirmed, 'indicate a thousand or more will arrive during this afternoon and try to get across the boundary before registration begins tomorrow.' Nearly three hundred passports were issued by the Mexican consul stationed at the border and, while a few persons were 'held because of American citizenship,' it was claimed that 'many

others suspected of being Americans, but not proven to be, were permitted to cross.'[34] So great was the flight of Mexicans from Austin during these weeks that it had a visible effect upon the day to day running of the city. Dr. Samuel A. Woolsey, the city health officer, wrote in his report for June 1917 that, 'owing to the fact that so many Mexicans have left the city on account of the fear of being drafted into service during the war, the work of the City Physicians has been materially lessened.'[35] To many observers, such occurrences suggested that most Mexicans were sojourners in Austin and that the immigrant population could vanish almost as quickly as it had appeared. Naturally, local employers were also afraid that this might be the case. G. F. Gohlke - manager of the Walker Properties Company, which employed a large number of Mexican workers - sought the assistance of G. R. Beltram, the American consul-general to Mexico, in tackling the problem of return-migration among local Mexicans. Following consultations with Gohlke, Beltram issued for general circulation 'a letter written in Spanish, giving assurances to Mexicans of military age that no molestation would take place after the registration for the selective draft on June 5.'[36]

By remaining in Austin at this time, the more settled groups of immigrants from Mexico ensured that - in spite of heavy return-migration - a significant, residual population of Mexicans would become a permanent feature of the ethnic landscape in Austin. Those

Mexicans persuaded to stay were nonetheless reminded of their 'citizen's duty' on registration day. 'It makes no difference,' announced the *Austin Statesman*, 'whether one is white or black, native or foreign born. . . . If a male within the conscription ages, he must register' for the draft.[37] To encourage a good turn-out among Mexicans, especially in the second ward, where they were most numerous, the city authorities ensured that 'two interpreters were kept at that ward to give assistance' in registration.[38] On the day, everything ran smoothly. 'There was not a disturbance, white, black, Mexican, or Chinese' reported William J. Morris, the chief of police, which he saw as 'another proof that Austin has the best class of citizens to be found anywhere in the world.'[39] Such utterances were bound to reassure local Mexicans that, despite white suspicions about pro-German sympathies and the bad impression caused by return-migration, their position in Austin was still relatively secure.

In order to furnish Texas with a workforce sufficient to meet the demands of wartime production, it was essential for the state and national authorities to actively encourage further immigration from Mexico. Consequently, the U.S. Government eased immigration procedures for Mexicans and publicly declared that aliens, even those that had fled the state only a short while earlier, would not be drafted. To clarify the situation for local employers, the *Austin American*

petitioned the war department, which in July 1918 replied that:

> A Mexican citizen of military age who has previously resided in the United States, but who has not registered and who returns to the United States, is required to register, but the selective draft service laws and regulations provide for his complete exemption from performing military duty unless he waives his right thereto.[40]

Although the volume of Mexican immigration to Texas soon picked up again, many immigrants were still unconvinced by assurances that they would not face military conscription, or were unaware of either the need to register or the exemptions applying to them once they had done so.

In Austin, while local Mexicans had shown 'no disposition to evade the duty of registering,' they often failed to complete and return the routine questionaires sent out to registrants by the commissioners of the draft. In January 1918, of the two hundred or so questionaires still to be returned, it was noted: 'Most of them belong to Mexicans, many of whom are aliens.'[41] By September, this response had improved little and there were still one hundred and ninety non-declarent aliens in the city, compared with only seventy declarent aliens.[42] Language difficulties and a high rate of illiteracy among

Mexicans probably account for this lack of response, but as the *Austin Statesman* pointed out: 'Failure to return the questionaire to the board within seven days, subjects the registrant to classification among the men who will be first called to the colors.' As a result of this ruling, many Mexicans were unwittingly drafted into the armed forces. The practice became so common that, in October 1917, the Mexican ambassador to the United States made a formal complaint against 'the drafting of Mexicans, particularly from the border states.'[43] This was on top of the fact that, in Austin, a disproportionate number of the persons classified as eligible for the draft were Mexicans. Whereas Mexicans made up less than two percent of the city's total population, they accounted for at least nine (and possibly as high as fourteen) percent of prospective conscripts. The fact that whites were the only group to be under-represented on the roll of potential draftees suggests that local Mexicans, like blacks, were discriminated against in its compilation and faced a far greater likelihood of being enlisted into the armed forces. In contrast, recognition of the contribution made by Mexican-American servicemen was not always forthcoming, as is evidenced by the story of a local woman who waited nearly five years to receive a federal widow's pension earned by a local Mexican who had died in action in France.[44]

On the home front, Mexicans also played an active role in the war effort. In September 1917, the Mexican

community of Austin - illustrating how as an immigrant group they could retain their cultural identity at the same time as assimilating into American society - turned their annual celebrations of Mexican Independence into a fund-raising event for the American Red Cross. Augustino Nuñez, president of the organising committee, declared that 'the Mexicans of the city fully realized the worth of the Red Cross organization' and 'would be glad to give whatever aid they could in an effort to help it.' To some degree, the organisers of the celebrations were being conciliatory in toning down the emphasis upon Mexican nationalism; otherwise, holding the event might have been construed as an unpatriotic gesture and evidence of divided loyalties. To offset such adverse reactions, the organising committee invited Mayor A. P. Wooldridge to be a special guest speaker and announced that the celebrations, although essentially for Mexicans, would 'also be open for Americans.' In short, every effort was made to portray the event as both a harmless display of ethnic diversity by 'former citizens of the sister republic,' and proof that Mexicans were willing to support their adopted country in its hour of need.[45] This strategy, moreover, of encouraging 'the other folks of Austin' to participate in Mexican festivities so that cultural pluralism would gain greater acceptance, set a pattern that was followed by leaders of the local Mexican community throughout the 1920s. In May 1918, however, Mexican leaders thought it impolitic to hold any further events and announced that,

'on account of the war,' the local community would not celebrate *Cinco de Mayo* that year. By way of explanation, it was stated that 'the Mexicans are too busy with the Red Cross work, war work of other kinds, and have invested so heavily in stamps and bonds they do not feel like holding the celebration until the war is won.'[46]

Through involvement in the war effort, therefore, assimilating influences were beginning to reach ever wider sections of the Mexican community in Austin, but for many whites the process of Americanisation was not proceeding fast enough. On a national scale, World War I had led to a major shift in attitudes, because the United States was confronted with the problem of turning a population composed of diverse ethnic and racial groups into a nation that could successfully wage war against a formidable external enemy. As T. J. Woofter observed: 'The flare up of nationalism that accompanied the war weakened the faith in the melting pot and stirred up a strong and sometimes hysterical demand for more efficient assimilation.' The answer seemed to lay in promoting the ideal of 'One Hundred Percent Americanism.'[47]

White Austinites came to realise that they, too, lacked a cohesive and comprehensive Americanisation programme for dealing with the growing number of immigrants entering the city. Earlier attempts to carry out such work had been intermittent and largely ineffective. In 1914, the city's public school board

introduced an Americanisation class for the benefit of foreign-born persons wishing to attend night school, but according to A. N. McCallum, the local superintendent of schools, 'the attendance had been very small.' In relating this experience to the U.S. Bureau of Naturalization, McCallum described how 'most of the aliens in the vicinity were Mexicans' and that it was 'difficult to get the proper interest' for Americanisation classes.[48]

However, following American involvement in World War I and the post-war Red Scare, Americanisation work was given a great boost in Austin. In 1919, Raymond T. Crist, director of citizenship at the Bureau of Naturalization, wrote to civic groups in Austin criticising them for their previous lack of commitment to Americanising local Mexicans. Crist's accusations caused a great deal of resentment in Austin, especially as he implied that Travis County should be placed on a 'list of white slacker counties.' By 1920, almost every organisation in the city - from the Chamber of Commerce to the Catholic Church - was in some way or another involved in the Americanisation programme. Austin even became the state headquarters for the National Security League, with A. P. Wooldridge as its director. The declared purpose of this association was to work on 'the Americanization of those adults who cannot be reached through children, the schools or the churches.'[49]

The organisation which had the most lasting influence in assimilating foreign-born groups, however,

was the local branch of the YWCA. Taking advantage of national government policy to subsidise Americanisation work in localities where the need was greatest, the YWCA used a $1,800 federal grant to establish an International Institute in Austin. Located at 408 Nueces Street, the Institute described itself as a 'Social Center for the Foreign Speaking People of Austin.'[50] Among the groups initially catered for were Syrians, Poles, Greeks, Italians, Czechs, 'Bohemians' and Mexicans - 'the last named being the most numerous.'[51] By the mid-twenties, European and Middle-Eastern immigrants were much less in evidence at the centre, which was operating almost entirely for the benefit of the Mexican community.[52] Financed largely by the YWCA and the missionary societies of various Austin churches, the International Institute became a valuable means of support to local Mexicans and was 'one of only two in the United States depending entirely upon volunteer help to carry its ministrations to the foreigner.'[53] Part of the Institute's purpose was to encourage the adoption of 'American ways of living and thinking' by Mexican immigrants, so that they would be able to 'understand American customs and to better adapt themselves to the new environment.' At the end of the 1920s, it was claimed that the centre produced 'Citizens for Texas and America' out of Mexican sojourners.[54] In 1927, when a local newspaper came to review the work and achievements of the International Institute, its origins were consciously traced back to 'the World War,

which brought to the American people a keener realization of the importance of a better assimilation of foreign populations in this country.'[55]

Although initially intended as a means to combat wartime subversion, Austin's Americanisation campaign soon took on another aspect. Following the experience of World War I, in which a generally mixed response to the war effort had been received from the local Mexican population - many of whom abandoned the country altogether - a number of prominent whites were convinced that there was a permanent need for Americanisation work in Austin. By the time Austin witnessed a further, much larger wave of immigration from Mexico during the 1920s, therefore, assimilation was a subject still fresh in the minds of many local people and the rudiments of an Americanisation programme already existed.

C. 'Melting Pot' or 'Dumping Ground'?

For Austin, World War I was a social and demographic watershed. It marked the divide between a biracial society, in which whites and blacks were the principal elements of the population, and a newly emerging tri-ethnic society. In 1914, the early signs of change were present, but not immediately apparent to the white community. By 1918, it was plain for all to see that Austin stood at the threshold of a new era in race relations. During the intervening years, the

traditional relationship between blacks and whites - which had been a distinctive feature of Austin society - was seriously undermined; first, by the Great Migration of blacks to the North, and then by the radicalising influence which involvement in the war effort and military service had upon elements of the black population. At the same time, Austin's ethnic landscape was being irreversibly transformed by other demographic forces; most notably, the stream of Mexican immigrants which continued to enter the city throughout the 1920s. With the need to Americanise these immigrants came the realisation that, largely as a result of Mexican immigration, racial issues had become far more complex and could no longer be perceived purely in terms of relations between blacks and whites. It was therefore with a heightened awareness of the difficulties involved in managing nonwhite and unacculturated groups, that the white community came to contemplate the long-term implications of recent social and demographic changes.

Whether white commentators were addressing the 'Negro Problem,' the 'Colored Question,' the 'Mexican Problem' or the 'Race Problem' in general, the same theme was central to all of their arguments; did American society have the capacity to absorb a medley of cultural and racial groups? Prior to World War I, as T. J. Woofter noted, 'the dominant theory was laissez faire with the feeling that the melting pot would automatically care for the situation,' but this had been superseded by the desire 'to pour all aliens into some

sort of hundred percent American mould.'[56] Because of their extraneous and deep-rooted characteristics, however, it was argued that some groups could not or should not be allowed to assimilate and enter into the mainstream of American society. Blacks had always been placed in this category and, during the 1920s, Mexicans increasingly were also. In both cases, the racial and physical attributes of the groups were a determining factor. In 1925, Robert F. Foerster, reporting for the U.S. Bureau of Labor on the advisability of permitting the continued immigration of nonwhite groups, wrote:

> There are evident differences between the traits of a hundred thousand Swedish immigrants and a hundred thousand negro or Mexican immigrants; when these immigrants have themselves passed away there will still be manifest differences between the children of the Swedes and the children of the negroes or Mexicans.[57]

The implication being that because of their skin colour Swedish immigrants would easily be integrated into American society and soon become indistinguishable from the rest of the white population, which was impossible for almost all African-Americans and most Mexican immigrants.

It was believed that a sudden influx of blacks or Mexicans, therefore, would burden the United States with large unassimilable groups. Noting how 'but few surface

differences' existed between patterns of migration for either blacks, Mexicans or Europeans, Charles S. Johnson claimed: 'the differences, where they exist, appear most conspicuously in community reaction on the question of assimilability.' Having made this observation, Johnson pondered over the existence of 'a possible saturation point for a group which does not, like the European immigrant, lose itself and its racial identity after the first or second generation.'[58] If any such saturation point existed, it had certainly been exceeded by both blacks and Mexicans in Austin and by the 1920s the question of how to assimilate these groups was high on the agenda of local concerns.

American civilisation, according to the *Austin American*, was based upon a set of 'customs, institutions and ideals' which, although maybe no better or worse than those of other civilisations, were nonetheless unique. The nation's unity of character, moreover, was dependent upon two simple facts: 'It speaks a certain language, and its people are of a certain physical race.' 'These things,' it was suggested, 'determine the degrees of assimilability.' By such criteria, it is difficult to imagine how either blacks or Mexicans could ever have qualified for inclusion in American society, but the *Austin American* had already anticipated this paradox:

> Such a nation can assimilate almost instantly others of its own race and language. It can assimilate

> rapidly those of the same race and of similar institutions, and of related, though different, language. It assimilates more slowly those of slightly different race and very different languages and institutions. It may not be able to assimilate at all those of wholly different physical race.[59]

By inference, the ethnic and racial composition of each of these four categories can be summarised as: (1) 'old stock' Americans, such as the English, Scots, Welsh, and Protestant Ulstermen (or Scotch-Irish as the latter are known as in America); (2) the Catholic Irish and the Nordic races like the Germans, Dutch, and Scandanavians, who were typical of the 'old' immigration from Northwest Europe; (3) the 'new' immigrants from East and Southeast Europe, particularly Eastern Jews or Catholics from Poland and Italy (a few Latin Americans of pure European ancestry might also have been included in this category); (4) Blacks, Asians, such as the Chinese and Japanese, the vast majority of Latin Americans - including Mexicans - and all other nonwhite groups.

Ostensibly, the concern was to protect the integrity of America's customs and institutions, because immigrant groups were expected to adapt to these and eventually accept them as their own. The inclusion of blacks in the final category, however, clearly indicates that race was the crucial issue. In Texas, the African-American presence actually predated by several centuries that of Anglo-American settlers and, although blacks continued

to be ostracised by whites and excluded from many fields of social interaction well into the twentieth century, few groups were more acculturated, Americanised, or acquainted with American ideals, customs and institutions. Publicising this anomaly, *The Herald* proclaimed:

> People come from across the ocean by the shiploads who cannot speak one word of English and are received with open arms. Then why should we who speak the English language, [are] reared in this country, pay our taxes, [and] fight for the stars and stripes as others do, be looked upon as undesirables?[60]

In October 1921, at Birmingham, Alabama, President Warren Harding, almost by way of a direct response to *The Herald's* question, declared that the 'race problem' was 'not a question of social equality but a question of recognizing a fundamental, eternal [and] inescapable difference' between the races.[61] Blacks and whites, it would seem, could live together in peaceful coexistence only as long as strict social separation was maintained. This, as most white southerners agreed, was the crux of the so-called 'Negro Problem' or 'Colored Question.' In Austin, while the white community displayed a degree of understanding about and sympathy for the plight of the Negro, they failed to recognise any solution to this dilemma: 'His ancestors' stated the

Austin American, 'did not come here of their own accord. They were stolen by white men. They were emancipated by white men and they are here to stay.'[62]

However, following the Great Migration of blacks to the North and the resulting outbreaks of racial violence experienced in that region during and after the First World War, southern whites could take solace in the emergence of a national consensus regarding racial issues and attitudes towards blacks. 'Yes, for a hundred years,' exclaimed the *American*, 'the negro problem was exclusively a southern problem. Now the negro problem is a national problem.'[63] Commenting upon this change in attitudes, President Harding remarked:

> The World War brought us to full recognition that the race problem is national rather than sectional. . . . It has brought the question of race closer to the North and West, and I believe it has served to modify somewhat the views of those sections on this question.[64]

The sociologist Emory Bogardus, in attempting to rationalise white racism, concluded that 'antipathy against the Negro is due to differences in biological appearances and forms, to variations in cultural levels, and to widespread propaganda.'[65] As an illustration of this type of propaganda, it is worth citing Robert Foerster's work again, not least because he utilised the

pseudo-scientific ideas circulating at the time to suggest that both blacks and Mexicans - whom he described as being of predominantly Indian, as opposed to Iberian, ancestry - were not the kind of elements that should be welcomed as additions to the 'race stock' of America. Whereas it was conceded that some 'pure Indian strains' or 'pure negro strains' might have a greater 'race value' than other similar strains, and that the 'mixed strains' of mulatto and mestizo could be afforded a more 'favorable judgement' still, Foerster argued that it 'remains true that one or other of these groups merely approaches but does not attain the race value of the white stocks.'[66] Both blacks and Mexicans, therefore, were considered to be innately inferior to whites.

The greatest fear among whites was that the presence of large nonwhite groups in the United States would eventually lead to widespread miscegenation and the watering down of the white American stock. Foerster was even resigned to the inevitability of this process, concluding that 'there seems no reason to suppose that in the course of long time negroes and whites in the United States will not be indistinguishably blended.'[67] S. J. Holmes, in an article entitled 'Perils of the Mexican Invasion,' proposed that the United States should 'exclude all peoples who do not measure up to the average level of our own American stock.' 'Immigration,' he protested, 'can be made a means of racial improvement instead of degeneracy.'

Drawing a parallel between blacks and Mexicans, Holmes lamented that with 'one race problem on our hands, which was the outcome of the demand for cheap labor, we stand ready to take on another one, and for precisely the same reason.' Most deplorable to Holmes, however, was the fact that 'intelligent and enterprising one hundred per cent Americans' were largely to blame for this 'insidious elimination of their own breed in favor of the progeny of Mexican peons, who will continue for centuries to afflict us with an embarrassing race problem.'[68]

By the mid-twenties, Texas was rapidly becoming the focus of national attention concerning the 'race problem.' As Don H. Lescohier informed the 1927 annual meeting of the National Conference of Social Workers: 'Texas constitutes the center of the Mexican problem.' Echoing Foerster and Holmes, Lescohier considered 'race' to be the most 'vital problem' involved in Mexican immigration. 'What sort of blood strains,' he asked, 'are they injecting into our social fabric?' The large African-American population and much smaller Native American presence, it was contested, further complicated matters in the Lone Star State:

> The racial and social problems faced by the 3,500,000 whites of Texas are colossal. Let us not fail to appreciate them. It is easy for the outsider to underestimate what a state like Texas,

> with its vast territory and relatively sparse population, has on its hands.[69]

Indeed, partially as a result of Mexican immigration, rural parts of Travis County had already begun to experience an array of 'almost insurmountable social and economic complications.' As E. E. Davis saw it, the social structure of rural districts was being torn apart by 'the selfish landlord, the restless tenant, the movement from country to town, the negro and the Mexican, and white foreigners of un-American spirit.' Even so, this upheaval did not result in a blending of the races, but in the breakdown and abandonment of rural white communities in Central Texas, where 'few counties, if any' had been 'so fortunate as to have entirely escaped all the evils mentioned.' In Davis's opinion, the reason for this was clear: 'A population consisting of approximately 5,280 whites, 3,320 Mexicans, and 4,760 negroes, is not productive of first class community spirit.' As one school trustee from Travis County also remarked: 'The great trouble with our community is we have too few white families.'[70]

In Austin, although the white population was far from outnumbered by nonwhites, the level of concern was just as great. Once again, World War I and the resulting Americanisation programme were instrumental in bringing to the awareness of local whites the full extent to which Mexican immigration was transforming the city's ethnic landscape. By 1919, even the Austin

Chamber of Commerce - the organisation most responsible for the importation of Mexican labourers - was beginning to have second thoughts. With reference to the recent influx of Mexican immigrants, it was stated: 'America may be a "melting pot" but it should not become a "dumping ground" as long as red-blooded Americans exist.'[71]

Whether further immigration would be permitted or not, the Chamber of Commerce and other whites also came to realise that most of the city's Mexican inhabitants were there to stay. Occasionally, Mexicans were even referred to as 'citizens,' suggesting that, along with blacks, they were considered to be an integral part of the local community.[72] Moreover, although local whites became no less abhored by the idea of blacks and Mexicans interbreeding with themselves, during the twenties these fears gradually subsided as it became apparent that no such blending of racial groups was about to occur. Consequently, the local business community - eager as always to give precedence to financial concerns - quickly reverted to its former position over the issue of Mexican immigration, contending that 'the Mexican is no menace to Texas or other border states' but 'is regarded as an economic necessity.'[73] Whereas, regarding the question of interbreeding with African-Americans, the *Austin American* confidently asserted: 'Race amalgamation . . . is never coming under the stars and stripes.'[74]

As a means of assimilating nonwhite groups into

Austin society, therefore, the 'melting pot' theory was totally rejected by local whites; African-Americans and Mexicans were considered to be racially inferior and the blending of either group with whites as something to be avoided at all costs. At the same time as subscribing to these views, however, many whites acknowledged that a large nonwhite population in Austin was both unavoidable and - from an economic standpoint - totally desirable. Consequently, white society was confronted with a major dilemma; how could the long-term presence of blacks and Mexicans be accommodated for, without undermining the racial integrity of the white population and the cultural uniformity of the community as a whole?

D. Blacks and the Issue of 'Social Equality'

In the case of blacks, a form of limited assimilation had existed for some time in Austin, whereby they were encouraged to cherish American values, customs and institutions as their own, but were expected to acquiesce in their exclusion from the higher realms of society, which were solely the domain of whites. At their most benevolent, white attitudes towards blacks were paternalistic; since emancipation, the Negro had supposedly been under the tutelage of his ex-masters and was not considered suitable for 'social equality' with southern whites. Although cultural differences played some role in defining racial demarcations, it is clear

that whites sought to ostracise blacks largely on the basis of their race and colour. This exclusion, moreover, was intended by whites to be of a permanent nature.

Unlike Mexicans, the nationality of African-Americans and their right to American citizenship - albeit a second-class citizenship - was not at issue. Whites felt relatively more comfortable with a large black presence in Austin (which had existed since the earliest days of Anglo-American settlement in the city) than they did with the idea of being flooded by an influx of Mexican immigrants, who were both alien in customs and something of an unknown entity in terms of their suitability for socialisation. In July 1918, following reports that the 'Negro Exodus' from Texas was continuing unabatingly, the *Austin American* declared: 'As much as many may differ on the colored question, yet the fact is quite apparent that Texas is far better off with these 100,000 negroes than with [the] 100,000 Mexicans whom it will be necessary to bring in to take their places.' 'These negroes,' continued the article, 'have been born in Texas of parents who were born in Texas and have a sense of fealty, interest and pride in this state that no Mexican will have.'[75] Similarly, E. E. Davis concluded that 'the negro is not such a serious social problem' because 'negroes speak the English language while the Mexicans do not.'[76] Clearly, blacks were considered to be as highly assimilated and acculturated an element of the local

community as it was necessary for them to be.

It was the 'colored question,' already alluded to, which proved to be the major stumbling block towards integration for blacks in Austin. The prevalence of racist attitudes among whites, and the tendency to stereotype African-Americans, dated back to the slave era. In two important ways, the legacy of slavery handicapped blacks in gaining acceptance by whites: firstly, whites reminisced to excess about the antebellum South, and in the process idyllised the 'old time negro,' mostly at the expense of the 'modern negro.'[77] 'The younger generation' of blacks, lamented the *Austin American* in June 1928, 'knows little of the bonds of slavery, of sultry days spent in cotton fields, of the quiet, lazy life of the old south, but the old slaves remember.' At this time, there were still about fifty surviving former slaves residing in the Austin and Travis County area.[78] The comparisons made between the ex-slaves and subsequent generations of blacks were always unfavourable to the latter. Bob Harrison, a black barber on East Sixth Street, who during the 1920s still served to a white clientele, seemed to typify the kind of 'good negro' that whites preferred to be surrounded by. He was born into slavery in Austin, in 1855, his mother having been brought from Tennessee by one of the earliest white families to settle in the city. As the *American* remarked: 'Even before he was old enough to know the art of manipulating razors and shears, he was known as "a white man's

nigger," which term is applied to him down to this day.'[79]

This paternalistic attitude was in stark contrast to the mocking contempt with which the more recent generations of blacks were viewed. Since emancipation, it was suggested, the Negro had sunk into a 'moral and physical' decline.[80] Furthermore, contempt of the 'new' Negro had become more pronounced since the unsettled period at the end of World War I and was part of a white backlash against black assertiveness. In 1919, for instance, the *Austin Statesman* acknowledged the existence of a black middle-class in Austin, but it implied that 'the better element of the negroes' were a small minority and that the 'idle and shiftless' were more representative of African-Americans in general.[81]

Modern blacks, it seemed, had abandoned the simple ways of their forebears in favour of agitation and hedonistic pursuits. As the *Austin American* remarked:

> Darkies, in days gone by, rode to emancipation celebrations in wagons, old surreys, on horse back, or walked down dusty roads to the picnic grounds in a broiling June sun. Nowadays, they drive up in automobiles, dressed in straw hats and linen suits, silks and satins, with a surprising number of portable phonographs in the back seats whining out such tunes as 'How Come You Do Me Like You Do?'[82]

It was not uncommon for otherwise respectable white newspapers to portray African-Americans in such derisive stereotypes, nor was the practice frowned upon. However, for whites to act as apologists for blacks - even upon serious issues - was far less socially acceptable. Indeed, members of Austin's white community were virtually unanimous in their condemnation of 'negro-loving white men' who, influenced by northern ideas and racial practices, questioned the subordinate status imposed upon blacks. Moreover, those who chose to differ with the 'red-blooded white men' of the city usually kept it to themselves, for fear of being labelled a 'nigger lover.'[83]

The only sentiment that whites could safely express was one of paternalistic interest in the efforts that blacks were making towards their own self-improvement. Nonetheless, this attitude was not always very forthcoming - even among the more educated whites. In its work with southern white college students, the University Race Commission found that most of its energy was expended 'endeavoring to induce them to study the so-called "race problem" with sympathetic interest and without prejudice.'[84] Few whites were inclined to question the validity of the colour line, fewer still bold enough to challenge it. White newspapers were particularly reticent about heralding the advances made by blacks since emancipation, for fear of alienating their readers. Even when the achievements of African-Americans were acknowledged, it was suggested that white

society deserved most of the credit, for the benevolent guidance it had offered. Following upon the headline, 'Negroes Make Progress,' the *Austin American* noted with satisfaction, 'they worship the God of the white man, and they are doing their best to work on their own salvation.' Aware that even such kindly condescension might be misconstrued, the editor was at pains to point out: 'This isn't a defence of the negro.' God, it was further intimated, 'gave the negro a black skin and a wooly head' as both a physical mark of his racial inferiority and justification for the exclusion of African-Americans from white society.[85]

Clearly, there was a limit as to how far white paternalists would go in support of racial advancement for blacks. In adopting a paternalistic approach towards racial issues, the objective of Austin's white leaders was simply to make the imposition and maintenance of social proscriptions more palatable to the local black population. 'White people of Austin,' boasted the *Austin Statesman*, 'have encouraged negroes in every legitimate aspiration, and leading negroes have often expressed their appreciation.'[86] As far as whites were concerned, however, social integration was definitely not a 'legitimate aspiration' for the Negro. To illustrate this point, it is worth considering the reaction in Austin to reports of public disturbances breaking out in Paris, France, following attempts by visiting white Americans to forcefully impose the colour line. The French authorities were castigated for

upholding the rights of blacks to freely frequent restaurants and cafés, and even to call upon white partners in dance halls (it was this latter occurrence which led to the most violent outbreaks by visiting Americans). In August 1923, the *Austin American* protested:

> It appears that the French government looks upon the brother in black as a man and a brother, entitled to social recognition and everything else. And right there is where France is going to lose the respect of the American people.

'Race equality,' continued the article, would never be accepted in America, 'but if the French stand for it, then it is the funeral of France and not of the United States, nor the American people.'[87]

White leaders in Austin were also anxious that local blacks understood, and would hopefully even assent to, the social limitations of their situation. The 'white man,' demanded Mayor A. P. Wooldridge, in September 1919, 'will tolerate no idea of social equality and I will be fair to the negro in saying that he does not want social equality in the South.' To a certain extent, Austin's black leaders did internalise the arguments of white paternalists. 'The southern white man understands the southern negro,' announced officers of the St. John's Association, 'and the same is true of the negro with respect to the white man.'[88] The onus,

however, was upon blacks to realise that they were the junior partners in this relationship, a point regularly conceded by accommodationists. 'In every part of our state,' said the Reverend Campbell, 'the white people are taking an interest in the development of the negro,' and 'where the negro accepts the advice of his white neighbor prosperity is in evidence.'[89]

Yet, even Austin's accommodationist black leaders hoped that one day African-Americans would achieve total integration. At this stage, however, they were extremely cautious in the expression of such views and carefully avoided using the term 'social equality' - the mere mention of which was guaranteed to create alarm amongst the white community.[90] As already mentioned, World War I brought with it a ray of hope and, in July 1917, L. L. Campbell was inspired to court a more intimate relationship with the 'better class of white people' in Austin, requesting that they in turn should 'seek to understand and know the better class of negroes.' He 'regarded the friendship of the Southern white man of far more value than dollars and cents,' and said that 'the leading negroes of the country needed the sympathy of the best white people.' By drawing a parallel between the 'bad negro' and the 'bad white man,' who were 'together in everything that stood for the worst in both races,' Campbell hoped to gain recognition for the black middle-classes and thereby bridge the racial divide in Austin.[91] In January 1918, even *The Herald*, which was usually far more

outspoken in its demand for racial justice, advocated that local blacks should strive towards integration by trying to win 'the good will and respect of the leading people of the opposite race.'[92]

By 1919, however, the worsening racial climate in Austin had dispelled this mood of optimism. Bowing to white hostility, as expressed in the words of Mayor Wooldridge, the St. John's Association publicly declared its opposition to the demand for immediate 'social equality.' The 'southern white people' and the 'southern negro,' it was stated, represented 'two distinct races.' While the organisation did not give up its belief that the races would 'in time adjust all of [their] differences for the good of all concerned,' reluctantly it conceded that for the foreseeable future the 'southern negro must recognize the fact that he lives in the South.'[93]

E. Obstacles to Assimilation for Mexican Immigrants

In broad, cultural terms, then, blacks were assimilated Americans - that is, they spoke the English language, and understood American customs, traditions and institutions. Despite this high level of assimilation, however, blacks were not integrated into Texan society. Mexicans, on the other hand, were aliens and before they could even contemplate becoming an integrated part of society, they needed to assimilate. For immigrants from

Europe, the process of assimilation and Americanisation was usually the preliminary to their full integration into American society, but this was not so in the case of Mexicans. Most white Texans – who, more often than not, were the descendants of 'old stock' European immigrants – did not want to integrate the newly-arrived Mexicans and viewed efforts to assimilate them with suspicion. It was feared that, once they were assimilated, Mexicans would demand the full integration usually offered to other immigrant groups. During the 1920s, this became the central issue in an ongoing debate between the opponents of further Mexican immigration – contending that a combination of racial and cultural factors rendered Mexicans totally unassimilable – and those who felt that such differences were neither as intrinsic, nor insurmountable, as was being suggested. For their part, Mexican immigrants displayed only a moderate interest in Americanisation programmes and were often ambiguous in their attitudes towards assimilation.

Those opposed to further immigration from Mexico were relatively unconcerned with whether or not Mexican immigrants wanted to assimilate. Judge James R. Hamilton, for example, favoured restriction of Mexican immigration because it would 'prevent an influx of population unappreciative of our institutions and undesirable as citizens.'[94] Regarding the character of Mexican immigrants, Representative John C. Box, of Texas, declared before a U.S. Senate immigration

committee: 'They do not stand for good citizenship.'[95] Racial prejudice was a principal cause of this animosity, as is evidenced by the pronouncements of S. J. Holmes:

> Before we encourage so many new neighbors to live in our midst we should pay some attention to their value as permanent additions to our social order. A Mexican may be anything from a descendant of pure Castillian stock to an Indian peon without a trace of Caucasian blood. The latter type constitutes a large proportion of our recent immigrants.

Also noting the language difficulties present, Holmes concluded that 'of all the foreign stocks represented in any considerable numbers in our population the Mexicans appear to be the least assimilable.' Appealing to the deepest sensibilities of white Americans, he claimed that there were 'parts of the Southwest where certain districts have become almost entirely Mexicanized.'[96]

In 1928, Emory Bogardus stated that, while the Mexican immigrant sometimes had a 'greasy, swarthy appearance' and 'careless (or carefree) ways' that helped to 'maintain social distance between him and Americans,' in the South 'his worst traits are "played up" in the public eye; the less reputable Mexican becomes the standard type of Mexican.'[97] O. Douglas Weeks, writing just a year later, made a similar observation, noting that certain groups were continually

failing to distinguish between recent immigrants from Mexico and *Tejanos*. 'Those who favor the restriction of incoming Mexicans,' explained Weeks, 'are inclined to put all Texas-Mexicans into one category and to characterize them generally as ignorant, slothful, unclean, dangerous, and incapable of assimilation or of good citizenship.'[98] However, as the *Austin American* pointed out, these 'so-called Mexicans' were actually 'native Texans,' many of 'whose forefathers trod the soil of Texas before Christopher Columbus discovered America.' 'Regardless of this fact,' continued the *American*, 'they are classified as Mexicans by residents of Texas who were born under alien flags or in other states of the American Union.'[99] If *Tejanos* were still perceived by many white Texans as being an unassimilated group, recent immigrants from Mexico - whether they were sojourners or intended to settle permanently in Texas - could not expect to fair much better.

It is noteworthy that white observers showed no such difficulty in differentiating between the multitude of impoverished Mexican immigrants entering Texas, largely in search of work, and the more affluent political refugees coming out of Mexico at the same time. In 1927, John C. Box (who generally acted as a spokesman for organised labour in Texas, as opposed to large employers) fervently protested:

> All of the evils which our immigration laws have been designed to check are in, and it is known that not the best people of Spanish or Mexican extraction but the mass of illiterate, ignorant, often diseased and vicious Mexican peons are imported and moved about by their importers as only that class of people can be handled.[100]

Presumably, the upper-class, well-educated *émigrés* of independent means, usually characterised as the 'Castilian type,' were preferable to the poorer *peones* of Indian ancestry, even though (or maybe because) the former tended to keep 'strictly apart from the American community and the swarming numbers of their own kind.'[101]

Despite the antipathy shown towards Mexican immigrants during the 1920s, the view that Mexicans were capable of assimilating and, moreover, should be encouraged to do so, was gaining acceptance among a growing number of people in Austin. Probably the best indication of the importance attached to the assimilation of Mexican immigrants is offered by the general level of interest shown in Americanisation programmes at any one time. Between 1917 and the early 1920s, when the war and consequent Red Scare generated a sense of urgency, the popularity of such work was at its greatest. Concerning the significance of Americanising Mexican immigrants in Austin, Raymond T. Crist, of the U.S. Bureau of Naturalization, wrote to the editor of

the *Austin American*, saying: 'in my opinion, there does not appear to be any place where a more far-reaching effect can be produced by educating the ignorant and the illiterate than along the Mexican border.' By 1920, almost every 'religious, business, fraternal and social' organisation in the city was 'interested and informed as to the necessary work among these aliens.'[102] In its annual report for the same year, the Austin Chamber of Commerce saw 'no more vital subject for the American of the future than the Americanization work at the present time.' Whilst advocating the temporary restriction of immigration from Mexico, on the grounds that Austin had not 'Americanized those emigrants which we received [during] the past decade,' the report readily admitted that the city owed 'a duty to those who have already come to us and we will do well to discharge that obligation first.'[103]

In 1920, to suggest that today's immigrant or his offspring might constitute an 'American of the future,' amounted to recognition of the permanent nature of the Mexican presence in Austin, as well as being a first step (although probably an unwitting one) towards the eventual integration of this group. Even so, those in favour of exposing Mexican immigrants to assimilating influences were fully cognisant of the difficulties involved. 'The fundamental problem,' observed O. Douglas Weeks, was of absorbing 'the impact of two races and two civilizations,' which were meeting in Texas during the 1920s.[104] Because of Austin's sizeable

African-American population, moreover, this process of cultural and racial adjustment between native whites and Mexican immigrants could not take place entirely within a vacuum. As contemporaries were keenly aware, the so-called 'Negro problem' had a pervasive influence over all race and ethnic relationships in the city. 'It should not be overlooked,' warned a local activist in February 1920, 'that Americanization work in the South is more difficult in some ways than some other sections, because there are races and nationalities here which can not be wisely mixed.'[105]

Nonetheless, the Mexican presence was not totally alien to white inhabitants of Texas. 'The Mexican immigrant,' wrote Victor Clark, in 1908, 'is regarded as something of an American, with more moral right in this country than the Asiatic.' Similarly, Clark quoted the editor of one labour journal as saying that Mexicans 'were born in this country, or pretty nearly in this country, and have more right to be here than these Japanese and Italians and Greeks.'[106] Admittedly, these statements were made before Mexican immigration began to reach the greater proportions of later years, by which time the attitude of organised labour in Texas was in direct contrast to its earlier position.

Such sentiments, however, persisted throughout the 1920s and, in Austin, the International Institute acted as their chief proponent. In 1920, a spokesperson for the Institute remarked, with reference to the Mexicans and lesser numbers of Syrians, Greeks, and other groups

in the city: 'Such groups of foreign born people living in our midst are a challenge to Austin to render them every service possible that they may become Christian American citizens.'[107] Austinites who were concerned with 'the problems of foreign assimilation' perceived the Institute - which by 1925 was catering almost exclusively for Mexicans - as a '"Melting Pot" of Alien Races.'[108] Without wider social acceptance of Mexicans and other immigrants, it was argued, their efforts to acculturate and acclimatise would be drastically impeded. Kitie Gray, a veteran YWCA missionary in Austin, asserted that 'Americanization results from natural and normal relationships.'[109] Although Gray believed that assimilation should be a preparation for the eventual integration of Mexican immigrants, this was not a view that most whites, or even her fellow social workers, subscribed to. For instance, religious denominations, particularly the Catholic Church, were continually active in promoting Americanisation work in Austin, but some, like the Methodists, seemed to be more interested in poaching converts from Roman Catholicism than in bringing about the social integration of Mexican immigrants.[110]

As an insight into the chief areas of concern to Americanisation activists, the nature and stated purpose of their work also signify the principal cultural (as distinct from racial) obstacles standing in the way of full assimilation for Mexicans. Without doubt, the matter requiring the most immediate attention was that

of overcoming the language barrier. Spanish was invariably the native tongue of Mexican immigrants and, as W. B. Hamilton noted when making a social survey of Austin in 1913, 'a majority cannot speak the English language when they first come to our city.'[111] Because Mexican immigrants entered Texas in such large numbers and tended to congregate in the same places when settling down, the task of teaching them English became all the more formidable. Regarding Austin's Mexican community, Earl Connell estimated that just over half of the men could speak English, but only a fifth of the women. Connell also found that 'the Spanish language is used exclusively in the Mexican homes.'[112] As already mentioned, there were interpreters present at draft registration points during World War I, and for the benefit of Mexicans - whose support was often courted by local white politicians - the same facilities were provided at numerous political rallies during the twenties.[113]

Consequently, the main emphasis in the early years of Austin's Americanisation programme was upon language instruction in English, in which area a parallel effort was being made by the International Institute and the local school board. In February 1920, the local YWCA announced that 'one important phase of the international institute work will be the teaching of English to adult groups' (incidentally, at this stage of its operations, the Institute only held classes for women). At the same time, Americanisation classes were also being offered by

the city's night school. 'The Americanization class,' reported the school board, 'has been advertised in various ways. Circulars are issued and distributed to all foreigners, the last issue of circulars numbering 5,000.'[114] In November 1920, a similar class was established at West Avenue School, in the heart of Austin's principal Mexican district. 'All Mexicans,' it was declared, 'who desire to learn the English language should take advantage of this school.'[115]

Fluency in English, however, was not considered to be an end in itself, but a means by which Mexican immigrants could progress in successive steps 'towards responsible citizenship.'[116] Between 1920 and 1923, for instance, the Americanisation classes provided by the school board were chiefly concerned with teaching the English language, but in 1924 the study of American history and, later the same year, of government were added to the curriculum.[117] In 1927, Mrs. Woodie Spore, the secretary of the International Institute (which by then was being dubbed a 'School for Citizenship' by the local press), said that Mexicans, along with a few Chinese, were 'learning to speak English, to understand American customs and to better adapt themselves to the new environment.'[118] For its part, the Austin Chamber of Commerce continued to promote Americanisation for Mexican immigrants and encouraged 'those businesses who employ foreigners to get their employes to become citizens.'[119] Despite the enormity of their task, those carrying out

Americanisation work often displayed great sensitivity and were concerned not to rush the pace of assimilation. 'Americanization,' explained Kitie Gray, 'is a process and like all other processes in life is secret and slow.'[120]

To what extent, however, was this a two-way process, in which the native white population made reciprocal allowances for the idiosyncracies of Mexican immigrants? The organisers of Austin's International Institute clearly saw this as a prerequisite of assimilation, stating as their objective 'to promote a better understanding and greater sympathy between native and foreign-born people and to help the foreign-born become adjusted to America and her institutions.'[121] Nonetheless, the onus was definitely upon Mexicans to change their ways in order to gain acceptance, and not upon the dominant society to make concessions in any way. As the sociologist Edwin Bamford indicated, 'in so far as social accommodation is taking place, it represents almost a one-way process, since the Mexican is doing practically all the accommodating or adjusting.'[122] Even O. Douglas Weeks - who by the standards of the time was fairly liberal-minded and actually favoured greater assimilation for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans - still viewed matters in an extremely ethnocentric light. Before Mexicans could 'stand their ground' within Texan society and gain white recognition, stated Weeks,

> . . . they must correct their own deficiencies, resulting from ignorance, docility, and prejudice against the Anglo-Saxon and his ways. And doing such, they will show him that they can meet his standards and hence demand his rights. Thus, without sacrificing the best of their heritage, they can remove his racial prejudices.[123]

Conscious of such attitudes toward the Mexican immigrant, Emory Bogardus believed that 'Americanization as it is sometimes proclaimed does him more harm than good.'[124]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Mexican immigrants themselves were frequently less than enthusiastic about Americanisation programmes. The number of Mexicans attending the night school Americanisation classes fluctuated throughout the 1920s, often reflecting the amount of effort made by local civic organisations 'to induce them to attend the night classes established for their benefit.' While in 1914 the level of 'attendance had been very small,' following an intensive Americanisation drive in 1919-20, it was said to be 'holding up remarkably well' and the Americanisation classes were described as 'one of the biggest departments in the entire school now.'[125] There were nearly forty in this class, ninety-five percent of whom were Mexicans, with a sprinkling of Italians and other nationalities.[126] By 1923-24, although the night school administrators claimed that

'interest in particular is being manifested in the classes in Americanization,' the enrollment for that year was down to 'Twenty-six persons'; even if these were all Mexicans, it was a poor showing for a population estimated to have more than tripled in size since 1920.[127] This is partly explained, no doubt, by the reluctance of Mexican immigrants to enter strange and somewhat overbearing surroundings, but, as a 1929 edition of the *Austin News* illustrated, night school instructors were equally disorientated by the experience of Americanisation classes. In an article entitled 'No Spik English,' it was related how, on enrollment day,

> . . . one small group, seated near the rear of the large auditorium, remained after the others had eagerly rushed off to the classrooms for the first meetings. They had heard the announcements, but not a word of it did they understand. They were Mexicans who had heard of the school and its citizenship training class. Professor Fertsch saw them and came over to them. But they could not understand his English nor he their Spanish.

Eventually, a Spanish-speaking student on her way to another class came to the rescue and offered to act as interpreter.[128]

In contrast, the International Institute faired slightly better than the night school, both in terms of the comfortable environment it created for Mexican

immigrants and the numbers attending its courses. This is probably attributable to the fact that, for the Mexican women and girls it served, the Institute operated more like a social centre than an educational establishment. The teaching of English was only one aspect - although a very important one - of its work, and both language and Americanisation instruction could also be carried out indirectly through a variety of other mediums, such as courses in handicrafts, home economics and domestic hygiene, which were very popular because of their practical applications.[129] In September 1921, there were 197 foreign-born women, mostly Mexicans, registered with the International Institute. However, following the appointment of Miss Della Wright, who served as secretary from October 1921 to September 1924, there was a sudden leap in numbers, rising from 325 at the end of October, to 738 in November, and 940 in January 1922.[130] Although an enlarged enrollment could be expected during the winter months, because Mexicans were often seasonal workers and at that time of year would use Austin as a base for their families, these figures still represent a more than fourfold increase in only four months. The year 1925 was even more successful; the April report 'proved a distinct revelation' and 'stirred social workers in Austin,' showing as it did that the number of participants in the Institute's classes had risen from 700 to 1,680, between February and March.[131] By the period 1926-27, a levelling-off seems to have occurred

and from then onwards the more usual figure for monthly attendance was a little over three hundred.[132]

The major hurdle to eventual assimilation for Mexican immigrants and their offspring came not from opponents within the white community, who admittedly were both numerous and influential, but from the Mexicans themselves. Mexican immigrants that had lived in Texas for years, sometimes even decades, refused to consider their residence there as permanent and fervently maintained a sojourner mentality. As Emory Bogardus noted, 'the Mexicans who migrate bring with them a high degree of loyalty to their native country,' and this sentiment was 'not to be treated lightly; it cannot be changed by preaching to him or by the fist of any government authority.'[133] 'The nearer a foreigner is to his home land,' observed one Austin social worker in 1920, 'the more difficult it is to Americanize him; consequently some of the difficulties with the Mexican population.'[134] In 1925, Earl Connell found that over a third of the Mexicans he had interviewed in Austin 'expressed the desire to return to their native land.' Half of these had been in Texas for over a decade, although few displayed any real intention of immediately returning to Mexico.[135] Mexicans were also keen to hold on to their nationality, so that, circumstances permitting, they might someday return to their homeland. For instance, during a 1926 campaign to encourage payment of the state poll tax – the proceeds of which, an audience of mostly Mexican immigrants was reminded,

went towards providing educational facilities for their children - it was necessary for local Mexican leaders to state emphatically that 'payment of the poll tax does not endanger the citizenship of a Mexican in his native country.'[136] The explanation for these types of behaviour, suggested Bogardus, was that rarely would immigrants 'admit to their fellow-Mexicans that they liked the United States better than Mexico.'[137]

Nothing better illustrates the level of resistance to Americanisation and the persistence of a sojourner outlook among Mexicans generally, than their failure to apply for naturalisation as American citizens. Although a 1926 editorial in the *Austin American* was correct in its assertion that Texas had 'thousands of Mexicans who are naturalized citizens,' this belied the fact that there were tens and probably even hundreds of thousands more who were not.[138] Noting that nationally only a relative handful of Mexicans had been accepted as U.S. citizens in 1926 and 1927, Bogardus remarked: 'Hence the general impression is supported by the facts - the Mexican immigrant is not becoming naturalized.'[139] Between February 1925 and June 1929, out of more than forty residents of Austin applying for naturalisation - including Syrians, Greeks, Poles, Swedes and others - only two were Mexican or Mexican-American. Significantly, these comprised a native-born Mexican-American woman and her Mexico-born husband, whose application was made in October 1925. The husband, moreover, had resided in the United States since 1894

and so his ties with Mexico were already partially severed, unlike the more recent immigrants.[140] 'Statistics show,' concluded O. Douglas Weeks in 1929, when commenting upon the situation in Texas as a whole, 'that relatively few Mexican residents have submitted to naturalization.'[141]

No doubt, the opponents of Mexican immigration felt that the failure to naturalise was a perfect example of the Mexican's unassimilability and excellent grounds for preventing a further influx of immigrants from Mexico. Most importantly, other white Americans, who might earlier have been predisposed towards granting a limited degree of toleration - probably in excess of what black Texans could expect - to Mexicans, were alienated by and resentful of the latter's evident lack of interest in either Americanisation or naturalisation. Texans, said a 1928 editorial in the *Austin Statesman*, felt 'a real sense of pride that here is a land of opportunity, of freedom and educational facilities, offering the natives of another country [i.e. Mexico] and the children of these immigrants a happier condition.' It was hoped that Mexican immigrants would eventually feel the same way about their 'Land of Adoption.'[142] After all, the whole purpose of providing Americanisation classes, it was widely believed, was to facilitate the foreign-born in 'working toward naturalization as United States citizens.'[143] Aware of this growing resentment, Emory Bogardus noted: 'An important attitude is expressed by those Americans who claim that since the Mexican

immigrants are enjoying the advantages of living in the United States they should become citizens and assume their full responsibility for the problems of the country.' Mexicans, continued Bogardus, 'appreciate the advantages of living in the United States, but after all there are certain things that stand out in their reactions to life which make their loyalty to Mexico an abiding thing.'[144]

Nonetheless, the principal deterrent to Mexican immigrants becoming naturalised was the prevalence of white racism and nativist hostility. The majority of Mexicans saw little point in assimilating or applying for American citizenship, because they would still be treated like outsiders and whites displayed little willingness to integrate them. For instance, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans were generally referred to as 'greasers' by whites, whether they were naturalised citizens or not.[145] Similarly, in 1918, a speaker addressing the white congregation of Austin's Central Christian Church characterised Mexicans as 'aliens' with their 'feet still wet from the waters of the Rio Grande.'[146]

As long as such attitudes persisted, there was little incentive for Mexicans to work towards assimilation, because the chances were that, even then, they would be rejected by white society. O. Douglas Weeks concluded that

> . . . the Mexican sees nothing particularly attractive in the alleged privileges of American citizenship for one of his kind. It is perfectly evident that regardless of his naturalization he will still be considered a Mexican. He is in no way rescued from his lowly position nor is he freed from the contempt, abuses and injustices to which his race is often subjected.[147]

While Austin's Americanisation programme of the 1920s began the process of assimilating the Mexican population, it stopped short of offering them full integration into society. For their part, Mexicans were expected to relinquish many of their cultural, linguistic and emotional ties with Mexico, as well as adopt and adapt themselves to American ways - all without any guarantee that they would be accepted by white society. When it is considered that Mexicans were being offered a status similar to that of the Negro in Texas, it is hardly surprising that the majority of them showed little interest in assimilating.

F. Realignments in Ethnic Stratification

The large number of Mexican immigrants entering Austin between 1900 and 1930 did not encounter a community free of all social divisions, but a highly stratified, caste-like society, in which race and skin colour were the

major determinants of status. Traditionally, Austin had been a biracial society, with a straightforward ordering of racial groups; whites, irrespective of their nationality, wealth or educational attainments, were congregated towards the top of the social system, while blacks - with a similar disregard to class variations - were collectively confined to the bottom. Because of their dominance in the political and economic spheres, moreover, the white élite could quite arbitrarily designate the caste of different racial or ethnic groupings, and then allot each of these a relevant position on the social scale. The success of incoming Mexican immigrants, therefore, would largely depend upon their ability to gain recognition as the social equal of whites or, conversely, to avoid being associated with, or attributed a similar classification to, the Negro, which would have merited their ostracism.

In Austin, as elsewhere in Texas and the South during the first half of the twentieth century, there operated a rigid caste system, in which the premise of black racial inferiority was used to justify the social exclusion and economic subordination of African-Americans. 'This is a white man's country,' declared the *Austin Statesman* in January 1927, 'the Texas negro . . . knows where he is wanted and where he isn't wanted. He is popular in his place - that of hewer of wood and drawer of water.' Having thus described white perceptions and the general condition of the 'Brother in Black,' it was asked in conclusion: 'Why not the

unvarnished facts?'[148]

In truth, the white community was generally ill at ease with the large black presence in Austin, but tolerated it as a somewhat unfortunate economic necessity. A 1922 editorial in the *Austin American* conceded that 'if God made the negro' then 'he has a place here below'; the 'place' allotted him, however, was static and acted as a perpetual constraint upon his actions.[149] As far as local whites were concerned, the sole purpose of 'southern niggers' was to tend to the needs of 'white folks.' This entailed African-Americans being permanently confined to a variety of menial occupations; usually acting as domestic servants, in some capacity or other, to white households. Such was the lot of black Austinites, exemplified by the 'good negro' who knew his 'place' in society and contentedly devoted his life to the service of 'white folks.'[150] Whites had never known relations between the races to be otherwise and blacks knew better than to expect them to be. 'Our people,' said L. L. Campbell in August 1919, 'should be advised to . . . stay in their places' and not to make unrealistic demands for 'social equality.'[151]

On the eve of large-scale immigration from Mexico, therefore, African-Americans, as Austin's principal nonwhite group, occupied a 'place' at the bottom of society and whites had grown accustomed to them displaying a considerable amount of compliance. With the appearance of significant numbers of Mexican

immigrants on the scene, it was initially unclear how this new racial and ethnic element would fit into the existing social system. Would white society, conditioned by its dealings with blacks, expect Mexicans to occupy and be satisfied with a similar lowly position, or would the parameters of caste be redefined? The evidence suggests that, prior to the first great wave of immigration from below the Rio Grande, social demarcations between native whites and Mexicans in Texas, while not totally absent, were relatively fluid and surmountable.

Writing in 1908, Victor S. Clark found that 'in Texas, where people are more familiar with Mexicans, and a larger proportion of them are residents of the better class, the Mexicans as a body socially far outrank Indians or Negroes.'[152] 'The American Negro,' continued Clark, 'considers himself above the Mexican, and yet the latter receives more social recognition from the white man.' Clark also noticed that, while there were perceivable differences of class and race among Mexicans in Texas, so far little importance was attached to these by whites:

> The gradation, from those who associate on terms of equality with Americans to the peon, is so gradual that a race distinction hardly exists: and though the preponderant Indian blood of most recent Mexican immigrants can not be dismissed from a consideration

> of the effect of this immigration, it has not as yet created a race question along our southern frontier.

'Perhaps,' pondered Clark in an attempt to explain this anomaly, 'the existence of an upper class in Mexico, distinct from the laboring class and equal socially to Americans, gives even the laborer a better standing in this country.' When evaluating the 'race sentiment of Americans toward Mexicans,' he discovered that there was 'nothing of that stern race consciousness that marks the attitude of the white man in the South toward the Negro,' but 'more of the tolerance with which Americans have traditionally regarded the Indians.' Of even greater significance was the fact that Mexicans could 'fraternize with Negroes and not lose caste, as would a white man.'[153]

The ability to cross racial barriers with impunity, however, would only remain possible for as long as Mexicans were too few in number to constitute a real threat to the social order. However, between 1900 and 1930, Texas witnessed almost a tenfold increase in the size of its Mexican population, which by the latter date was not much smaller than the black population.[154] Under these circumstances, white society could no longer turn a blind eye to the ambiguous status of Mexicans without also running the risk of allowing blacks to traverse racial demarcations. As Max Handman observed in 1928:

> America has no technique for handling colored, or partly colored persons on any other basis but that of a subordinated or isolated group. In Texas where the negro is such an integral element of our population the usual Southern view prevails.

To complicate matters further, there was no easy way of telling on which side of the colour line Mexican immigrants truly belonged. 'The Mexican,' said Handman, 'present shades of color ranging from that of the negro - although no negro features - to that of the white.'[155] The resulting confusion also exposed the inflexibility of the existing social system: 'We have a place for the Negro and a place for the white man: the Mexican is not a Negro, and the white man refuses him equal status.'[156] While some uncertainty still remained over the exact racial status of Mexicans, white society finally came to address this matter during the 1920s. 'The theory that the Mexican is a white man,' indicated Handman, 'is receiving its acid test.'[157]

Although Mexicans had escaped being racially categorised for so long, it was almost inevitable that they would eventually be denied white status. Even as early as 1908, Mexican immigrants were perceived of as forming part of a socially marginalised, economic underclass, which at that time was composed almost entirely of nonwhite groups. Victor Clark reported one white worker as saying: 'The Mexican is all right in his place, and he's not so likely to get out of his place as

a Japanese or a Negro.' Mexicans were actually preferred by whites because, unlike European and Asian immigrants, they were not socially ambitious and showed no inclination to challenge the existing social order.[158] As long as Mexicans continued to behave in this manner and the size of the immigrant population was relatively small and manageable, there seemed little point in taking active steps to exclude Mexicans from white society.

By the early 1920s, however, following several years of massive immigration from Mexico – which were to reach even greater levels as the decade wore on – a radical shift in white attitudes had occurred. More than ever, Mexicans were associated with the rest of the nonwhite economic underclass that existed to furnish workers for Texan employers, but were excluded from the mainstream of society. Even after many years residence in the United States, claimed Emory Bogardus, 'Americans as a class still treat Mexican immigrants as laborers and not as full-fledged human beings and potential citizens.'[159] Like African-Americans and Asian immigrants before them, the economic subordination of Mexicans meant that they became dehumanised in the eyes of whites. Max Handman believed that any group 'brought or lured here for purposes of economic exploitation will carry with it the stigma of that exploitation,' and because it was 'wanted for no other purposes . . . it will soon find that there is no place for it under any other conditions.'[160] Mexicans, again like blacks,

were increasingly perceived as a despised and worthless elements of the population, with even their value to the local economy being down-graded. In 1928, T. H. Williams, an Austin businessman, referred to the local Mexican community as 'the poorer classes of peons . . . who contribute little or nothing to a city's advancement,' contrasting them with white 'laboring men and their families who are substantial builders of a city.'[161]

As a consequence of changing attitudes towards them, Mexicans as a group suffered a major loss in status and, by the late 1920s, had been assigned to the lower realms of the caste system. This decline became more pronounced as the size of the immigrant population itself increased. To justify their exclusion from white society, greater importance was attached to the skin colour and racial traits of immigrants from Mexico. In 1926, following a move by the Immigration Restriction League to have quotas applied to Mexico and any other country in the Western Hemisphere 'whose population is not predominantly [of] the white race,' the *Austin American* (always protective of employer interests) accused the infamous John C. Box of wanting to 'shut the Mexicans out because they are brown and let the Canadians in because their skins are white.'[162] According to O. Douglas Weeks, even *Tejanos* and other well-established Mexican-Americans were 'not altogether unfavorable to the restriction of Mexican immigration,' because it was felt that 'the newcomer drags down his

racial brother' and 'by his ignorance of American law and customs creates racial prejudice which reacts to the detriment of the Mexican-Americans.'[163] Equally aware of this drop in esteem, Emory Bogardus claimed that 'on occasion, the Mexican is classed with the Negro.'[164]

In 1916, E. E. Davis, reported that the white, black and Mexican populations of Travis County were already divided by 'sharply drawn lines of social and racial demarcation.' Davis, who perceived Mexican immigrants as a social evil of the first order, was perplexed by the anomaly that, whereas African-Americans were safely held in check by an elaborate array of social and legal devices (see Chapter 4), 'the Mexicans are legally classed as white.'[165] Clearly, there was increasing pressure to assign Mexicans to the same position in the racial hierarchy as blacks. As a November 1922 editorial in the *Austin American* admitted, 'Mexicans are regarded as on a level with the negroes.'[166] Whilst acknowledging the prevalence of such attitudes, Max Handman asserted that the Mexican was 'not a negro and he will refuse the status of a negro.' According to Handman, the only viable solution to the problem of ethnic stratification in Texas was for Mexicans 'to form a third, separate group, on the border between the negro and the white man.' However, even this situation would eventually become intolerable for the Mexican, 'because the temptation of the white group is to push him down into the negro group, while the efforts of the Mexican will be directed toward raising himself to the level of

the white group.'[167] The almost inevitable outcome of this conflict, therefore, was that Mexicans - as the brown-skinned element in society - would form a new tier of the caste system, equally as exclusive as those already in existence for blacks and whites, and probably positioned somewhere between the two, but definitely on a scale lower than that of whites.

In 1930, the U.S. Census Bureau gave official confirmation at the national level to the new racial ordering of society which had been taking shape over the previous decade and a half in Austin and other parts of Texas. When classifying the U.S. population by colour or race, the Census Bureau stated that it only distinguished between 'three main groups, namely, white, Negro, and "other races."' Hitherto, Mexicans had always been categorised as 'white' - the only differentiation being that between native-born and foreign-born persons. For the 1930 census, however, the Bureau declared that 'all persons born in Mexico, or having parents born in Mexico, who are not definitely white, Negro, Indian, Chinese, or Japanese, should be returned as Mexican.'[168] As a result of this ruling the number of Mexicans in Austin recorded as foreign-born whites fell from 899 in 1920 to just 23 in 1930, while the city's 'Mexican' population experienced a fivefold increase in size during the same period. Clearly, some Mexicans who had previously been classed as 'white' were now included within the new category. By way of explanation, the Bureau said: 'The Mexican

element in the population has increased very rapidly in certain parts of the United States during the past 10 years' and because of its 'growing importance, it was given a separate classification in the census returns for 1930, having been included for the most part with the white population at prior censuses.'[169]

As much as it tried to hide the fact, the Census Bureau had set the seal of racial inferiority on the vast majority of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans living in the United States at that time. In effect, the term 'Mexican' no longer denoted the nationality, but the race, of the person it was applied to. Earl Connell, for example, even labelled two Italians living in Austin as 'Mexican,' because they had married Mexican women, suggesting that whites could actually lose caste through associating with Mexican immigrants too regularly.[170] Mexicans now found themselves part of the 'other race' category, along with Native Americans, Asians and other nonwhite groups. In 1940, after protests from Mexican-American groups and various Latin American countries, the Census Bureau reverted to its former practice of classifying Mexicans as either native-born or foreign-born whites.[171] By then, however, the damage had already been done. The classification as nonwhite in the 1930 census represented the crystallisation of a derogatory view of Mexicans that had been gaining ever wider acceptance among whites since at least the first decade of the twentieth century. To paraphrase Max Handman, the theory that Mexicans were white had not

only received its acid test during the 1920s, but failed miserably.

Summary

Between 1917 and 1929, the roles played by race, ethnicity, colour, and nationality were pivotal in shaping Austin's newly emerging social order and determining the status of blacks and Mexicans alike. Various combinations of these factors, moreover, contributed to both groups being excluded from mainstream society. In the case of blacks, their nationality and right to citizenship were not in question, but their skin colour and the prevalence of white racist attitudes which dated back to the times of slavery continued to preclude their integration with the rest of society. For Mexicans, the process of assimilation was very slow, not least because the incentives to abandon the language and customs of their homeland were not as great as for other immigrant groups, who were more readily accepted into white society. Partially as a result of their persisting loyalty to Mexico, therefore, yet probably more a as result of the American aversion to nonwhite groups, by the late twenties Mexicans in Austin occupied a racial no-man's-land between the white and black communities.

World War I, which set in motion a black exodus to the North and created the environment for a massive

influx of Mexican immigrants, was the major catalyst for both social and demographic change in Austin. To ease the transition from a biracial to essentially tri-ethnic population, it was necessary for the social institutions of Austin to undergo a similar transformation. A re-ordering of the racial and social hierarchy, principally to accommodate for the rapid growth of the Mexican immigrant population, was the most noticeable adaptation to occur between 1917 and 1929. Because of an initial failure to define the status of these mostly brown-skinned, Spanish-speaking immigrants, they could often cross the colour line with impunity and their mere presence seemed to be undermining age-old racial demarcations. The caste system, therefore, was expanded to include a third tier, which facilitated the exclusion of Mexicans, as well as blacks, from white society in Austin. This new social hierarchy formed the basis for what David G. Steinicke later described as 'a three-way segregation involving native white, Negroes, and Mexicans,' when he came to investigate the characteristics of the Dallas population in 1938.[172] A segregation, moreover, which in Austin operated in almost every aspect of community life by the end of the 1920s.

Chapter Three

RACE AND THE URBAN SETTING

3. RACE AND THE URBAN SETTING

The most vivid manifestation of the three-way segregation evolving in Austin during 1917-1929, can be seen in the residential patterns of the various racial groups. Reflecting the triracial composition of the population, the city became a patchwork of ethnic enclaves, with both African-Americans and Mexicans being highly segregated from the white community, and to a lesser degree from each other. In 1913, when surveying local residential patterns, William Hamilton remarked:

> A study of the housing conditions of Austin must be made in accordance with the three classes of population, American, Mexican and negro. Not that in many places the three races will be found living side by side.[1]

By the late twenties, because residential segregation continued to proceed apace, the spatial separation of these three groups had become even more accentuated. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to convey the form that residential segregation took in Austin and examine how it came about, assessing the impact this was to have upon both the urban landscape and race relations in general.

A. Racial Residential Patterns

It has become customary among historians and social scientists to refer to the 'clustering' of different ethnic and racial groups that has taken place within American cities over the past one hundred years or so, and this term neatly portrays what was happening to both the African-American and Mexican populations of Austin during the early twentieth century. A cluster can best be described as an area or neighbourhood of a city in which there is such a high degree of ethnic and racial homogeneity among the inhabitants that it stands out as a landmark upon the urban environment.[2] In Austin, there were principally four such clusters of blacks and two of Mexicans during the period in question (see Map 4). Although the black population of Austin had not always been so highly concentrated in the four main neighbourhoods of Clarksville, Wheatville, South Austin and East Austin, there had long been a pronounced black presence in these parts of the city. In the nineteenth century, black households had been fairly evenly distributed throughout Austin, but between 1880 and 1910 a marked shift towards greater concentration of African-Americans in distinct racial enclaves took place.[3] Hamilton, by the time of his survey, had noticed the appearance of several 'large sections of the city almost entirely populated by negroes.'[4] Obviously, sizeable clusters of Mexicans did not begin to appear in Austin until after the first wave of immigrants from Mexico had

arrived. Nonetheless, as early as 1880 the concentration of the Mexican population in an area between Shoal Creek and Congress Avenue, just north of the Colorado River, was already noticeable and the neighbourhood soon became known to locals as 'Little Mexico' or the 'Mexican District.' Of the main ethnic clusters existing on the eve of the Great Depression, the Mexican neighbourhood of East Austin was the most recently established. By 1910 a number of Mexican households were already present, but the existence of a large ethnic enclave in that part of the city truly dates back only to the 1920s.[5]

The extent to which African-Americans and Mexicans were residentially segregated in Austin becomes apparent once the size of these ethnic clusters is considered. In order to do this it is necessary to have a break down of the racial composition of the population in each of the various parts of the city. When examining residential patterns in American cities, there are three units of measurement available; these are, in order of size, the census tract, the city ward and the neighbourhood block. Because of their greater accuracy, the smaller units of measurement frequently reveal higher levels of residential segregation.[6] Unfortunately, the city block unit of measurement was only adopted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the first time in 1940. From earlier censuses, the ward by ward break downs of the population are the most accurate data for measuring levels of segregation. However,

these are only available for the larger metropolitan areas of Texas, such as San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, El Paso and Fort Worth, which had populations of 100,000 or more in the years leading up to 1930.

To compensate for the lack of census data relating to residential patterns in Austin, it is necessary to turn to a body of material compiled in 1941 by a group of social researchers at the University of Texas, under the guidance of Professor Carl M. Rosenquist. This material proves invaluable for examining residential patterns in Austin, as well as in measuring the levels of segregation. Even so, it has a number of deficiencies which need to be taken into account. First, the information was gathered from the local city directories for 1929 and 1931. Consequently, because persons under the age of eighteen were not listed, the study only relates to the adult population of Austin, as opposed to the entire census population. Second, the tract was adopted as the unit of measurement for the compilation and analysis of information, instead of the smaller and more accurate blocks or wards.[7] Nonetheless, the validity of this source as a reliable guide to residential patterns in Austin is not seriously affected by either of these factors. Actually, the Rosenquist study has several advantages over the more common census material: the population is broken up into its three main elements, including Mexicans; each tract is described in detail, both as to its geography and character; and a variety of usually unavailable

information, such as inter-tract population movement, is provided.

From an examination of Table 14, it is evident that a high level of residential segregation existed in Austin during the late twenties. The most striking feature of this data is the fact that in nine out of the fourteen tracts, almost ninety percent or more of the population is white. Significantly, the tracts with the highest percentage of white residents were also located furthest away from the inner-city area and contained some of Austin's most recently formed suburbs. As a comparison of Tables 14 and 15 shows, between 1929 and 1931 the new suburban districts - such as Tracts 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 - were attracting greater numbers of white residents, while at the same time becoming more and more segregated (see Maps 5 and 6). Although the data available is too limited in its scope for conclusions about long-term trends to be drawn, the evidence suggests that the white population in general was moving away from the centre of the city and towards the periphery. Only in Tracts 8 and 9, which had the largest black and Mexican populations respectively, did the white presence fall substantially below seventy-five percent of the total. Even so, an initial examination of this data still fails to portray the true extent of residential segregation in Austin, because the impression given is that African-Americans and, to a lesser extent Mexicans, were present in most sections of the city.

A variety of sources, including Rosenquist's own account and the earlier descriptions offered by William Hamilton and Earl Connell, have been used to construct a more accurate picture of ethnic clustering in Austin.[8] This information reveals that the black populations of Tracts 4, 7, 8 and 9, were not separate geographical entities, but constituent parts of the compact East Austin cluster (see Maps 4 and 7). This suggests that somewhere in the region of eighty percent of the total black population of Austin resided in a single cluster. Equally significant is the fact that over thirteen percent of the remaining black population also lived in racial enclaves that were highly segregated from neighbouring whites, such as Clarksville (Tracts 1 and 12), Wheatville (Tract 6), and South Austin (Tract 13).

The Mexican population was no less concentrated than the African-American, in fact it was probably more so. Connell's description of the traditional Mexican District (Tracts 11 and 12) shows that it had expanded its geographical boundaries since Hamilton's time and by 1929 about thirty-nine percent of Austin's Mexican population probably resided in this area.[9] However, East Austin (Tracts 7, 8, 9 and 10) had clearly emerged as the city's principal Mexican neighbourhood by this time, housing over fifty-five percent of the total Mexican population (see Maps 4 and 8). Therefore, more than ninety percent of all Mexicans in Austin were located in two main areas, a more pronounced degree of racial clustering than even blacks experienced.

Significantly, the largest individual concentrations of both the black and Mexican populations were situated directly adjacent to each other in East Austin.

In contrast, Rosenquist's data suggests that there were indeed a number of integrated or, at least, more heterogeneous neighbourhoods in Austin, most notably, Tracts 4, 11 and 13. However, closer examination reveals a totally different picture.

The reason for this discrepancy can be traced to Rosenquist's use of the census tract as a unit of measurement in his study, as opposed to the more accurate city block. The figures in Tables 14 and 15, therefore, give the impression that while the populations of Tracts 4, 11 and 13 were predominantly white, each contained a significant number of Mexicans or blacks, or both. But, as a comparison of Maps 4, 7 and 8 illustrates, the nonwhite populations of these three tracts were mostly concentrated within identifiable ethnic enclaves. For instance, contemporary accounts all indicate that the Mexican inhabitants of Tract 11 were almost entirely confined to either the 'Mexican District' (situated between Shoal Creek and Congress Avenue) or along the banks of Waller Creek (located to the west of East Avenue). Rosenquist himself depicted the Mexican population of Tract 11 as living in a 'colony' - a term which unmistakably suggests that they were an isolated group. This view is also supported by the accounts of both Hamilton and Connell.[10]

Similarly, the black population of Tract 4 was made up of two highly segregated groups. They either lived in a section of the East Austin cluster which extended north of East 19th Street or in an isolated pocket of residences situated to the northeast and just within the city limits. Moreover, as will be explained later in this chapter, the part of Tract 4 known as University Park was one of Austin's exclusive, whites-only neighbourhoods. In South Austin, far from being intermingled with whites, the black and Mexican populations were largely concentrated in an outlying area that was hemmed in by a creek on one side and a major road - South Congress Avenue - on the other.

An absolute separation of the races was never achieved in Austin, but the level of segregation was still extremely high. Most accounts of the Mexican District, for example, suggest that the white or black presence was minimal. Even in areas which appear to have been more heterogeneous, the three groups, whites, blacks and Mexicans, usually lived apart from each other. Describing the section of East Austin situated along Waller Creek and bordered by East Avenue on the east (this area would have formed part of Tract 11), Earl Connell remarked:

> There are a few native white people living within these bounds, but in the main the section is occupied by Mexicans and negroes. Naturally, there is a tendency for each group to live by itself, but

> frequently they [blacks and Mexicans] are found in adjacent houses with a common yard or playground.[11]

A pattern clearly emerges, therefore, in which Mexicans and blacks often lived next to each other. Less frequently Mexicans are found residing close to whites, but it is almost impossible to find a white neighbourhood in close proximity to a large cluster of African-Americans.

On the rare occasions that this does occur, there is usually a Mexican neighbourhood acting as a buffer between whites and blacks. The most obvious example of this is in East Austin, which Carl Rosenquist described as follows:

> Tract 9 is perhaps the most heterogeneous area of the city. In the northern portion, the Negro colony in Tract 8 extends to overlap with the largest Mexican colonies. Interspersed among the Negro and Mexican homes are several isolated areas of white homes, residences of families of the unskilled labour class. To the south, the Negro homes disappear, and the Mexican homes predominate. Still farther south, these too disappear, and along the boundary of the tract - East First Street - white homes are in the majority.[12]

It is noteworthy that the whites found living among blacks and Mexicans were invariably of the lowest social and economic class. Moreover, the 'white' residents of predominantly nonwhite neighbourhoods were often not old-stock whites at all, but Syrians, Italians, Greeks or members of other distinct immigrant groups. This was particularly true of local Italians, who displayed a marked preference for living in Mexican neighbourhoods, where they mostly operated as retailers and landlords.[13]

The difference between levels of segregation for African-Americans and Mexicans was only a matter of degrees. Rosenquist flatly denied that Mexicans, because of greater social acceptability, were less prone to experiencing residential segregation than blacks. Emphasising this point, he remarked:

> Actually, the Mexican population of Austin is rather strictly segregated within Tracts 9, 10, and 11, although they share these areas with white families to a greater extent than the Negroes share the areas in which they are concentrated.[14]

There may have been a greater incidence of whites living in Mexican neighbourhoods, therefore, but this does not alter the fact that the vast majority of Mexicans, like African-Americans, were confined to residing in predominantly nonwhite ethnic clusters. Furthermore, the joint Mexican and white presence in parts of East

Austin was largely attributable to the fact that Mexicans moving from other parts of the city, such as the old Mexican District, were encroaching upon traditionally white neighbourhoods. Indeed, Mexicans were gradually displacing both blacks and whites in the section of East Austin located within Tract 9 (see Tables 14 and 15).

Despite the continued existence of African-American communities in West and South Austin, as well as the traditional Mexican District, the most significant development in residential patterns during the 1920s was an increasing tendency among both the black and Mexican populations to concentrate in parts of East Austin. As early as 1915, large areas of East Austin had been denuded of white residents by the expansion of the black neighbourhood and by the late twenties Mexicans, too, were rapidly populating that section of the city.[15] In 1925 Earl Connell estimated that between a quarter and a third of all Mexicans in Austin changed residence annually, remarking that 'almost all of those who moved last year now live in the eastern part of the city.' Many charitable and religious bodies that catered to the Mexican population - such as the Catholic Church, the missionary wing of the local Methodist churches, and the YWCA - were forced to relocate their facilities to East Austin during the mid-twenties, because 'the Mexicans were rapidly settling in that section.'[16] Enrollment at the city's two public schools for Mexican children also indicates the extent of the eastward shift in

population. In West Avenue School, which catered for the traditional Mexican District, school attendance rose by 25.6% between 1928 and 1929. However, Comal Street School, in East Austin, witnessed a 53.2% rise in enrollment during the same period. Despite the presence of a Catholic school which also catered for the Mexican population of East Austin, enrollment at Comal Street was a third higher than that at West Avenue by 1929. The main cause of the eastward shift of the Mexican population was the exapansion of business establishments in and around the old Mexican District, which led to the destruction of much of the low-cost accommodation in that vicinity.[17]

Similarly, while African-Americans increasingly concentrated in the east of the city during the 1920s, Austin's other black neighbourhoods were experiencing a relative decline in importance. Clarksville and the South Austin community were able to survive this period, but, as an area of heavy black residence, Wheatville was almost non-existent by the end of the 1930s.[18] Something that did not exactly work in Wheatville's favour was the fact that it was located so close to the University of Texas and lay directly in the path of that institution's expansion. In 1929, as Table 14 illustrates, Wheatville (Tract 6) was already the smallest of the main African-American clusters in Austin and, of them all, was the one most likely to disappear. Table 15 shows that by 1931, whereas Clarksville (Tracts 1 and 12) and South Austin (Tract 13) were continuing to

hold their own, and East Austin's black population was growing considerably (Tracts 8 and 9), Wheatville (Tract 6) was already showing signs of decline as a principal black cluster.

From a study of ethnic residential patterns in Austin, therefore, three trends are clearly discernable. First, the vast majority of both African-Americans and Mexicans lived in distinct racial clusters, with East Austin rapidly becoming a focal point for nonwhite elements of the population. Secondly, partially as a result of this clustering, there was a high level of spatial separation between the races; illustrated on the one hand by the existence of districts (particularly in suburban parts of the city) where the population was almost totally white, and on the other by the fact that, even in the few heterogeneous areas that did exist, the three groups were rarely intermingled. Thirdly, while Mexicans may not have been as segregated as blacks, nonwhites were generally far less segregated from each other than they were from whites. Moreover, nothing illustrates the trends of the 1920s more graphically than the emergence and rapid growth of a ghetto in East Austin that was populated almost entirely by African-Americans and Mexicans.

B. The Consolidation of Ethnic Enclaves

It has often been suggested that African-Americans and Mexican-Americans are equally prone to experience high levels of residential segregation because, either individually or as groups, they have traditionally displayed a preference for living amongst members of their own race. Although the case for 'natural' or self-imposed segregation has been overstated, it is evident that during the 1920s the black and Mexican populations of Austin were becoming increasingly entrenched within their own distinct racial enclaves. Consequently, the forces acting upon both groups which inclined them towards congregating in segregated neighbourhoods need to be examined. There are three main reasons why this natural segregation was occurring. These can be summarised as: wider demographic forces; economic factors; and the strength of communal ties within racially segregated neighbourhoods. Far from manifesting themselves in isolation, there was a considerable amount of interplay between these three influences.

As already noted, the period 1917-1929 was characterised by intense demographic upheaval in Austin and residential patterns did not remain unaffected by the changes taking place. Although the level of in-migration to Austin among whites, blacks and Mexicans, was proportionate to the relative size of each population group,[19] compared with whites, there was an

extremely uneven distribution of black and Mexican newcomers throughout the city. Table 16 shows that nearly seventy percent of all African-Americans entering Austin between 1929 and 1931 set up home in East Austin, the city's largest black neighbourhood, while over eighty percent of Mexican new arrivals settled in one of the two main ethnic enclaves for their race, the old Mexican District (Tract 11) and East Austin (Tract 9). This suggests that, in time, as the black and Mexican populations were augmented in size by new arrivals, the levels of segregation experienced by both groups would increase accordingly, because newcomers were undeniably attracted towards the larger ethnic clusters.

Contemporaries were apt to notice this process more readily among Mexicans than blacks, probably because the Mexican districts of Austin appeared so suddenly and then proceeded to expand at such a phenomenal rate; the community in East Austin being a perfect example. By 1931, after several decades of heavy immigration from Mexico, it was widely recognised that urban-based Mexicans throughout Texas tended to 'live in segregated districts of towns and cities.'[20]

Economic factors played a crucial role in the development of distinct ethnic neighbourhoods. Earl Connell, for example, described the Mexican population of Austin as 'almost entirely a tenant class' and suggested that they were highly dependent upon the availability of cheap housing.[21] Consequently, Mexicans had only limited control over which parts of

the city they were going to reside in: for instance, it is worth noting the almost total absence of Mexican households from the affluent suburban districts of North and West Austin (Tracts 1–6). Commenting upon the tendency among Mexicans to congregate within the cluster between Shoal Creek and Congress Avenue, William Hamilton remarked: 'A majority cannot speak the English language when they first come to our city, so they are forced into this section, for there is no other place for them.'[22] By the mid-1920s, Austin's Mexican neighbourhoods had increased in number since the time of Hamilton's pre-World War I survey, but conditions remained very much the same. As Earl Connell observed:

> . . . no matter where we find the Mexicans they occupy about the same type of physical surroundings. They live in the poorest houses, near the railroads, with no paved streets or sidewalks, in the business slum districts or on the creeks, and among them negro residences are interspersed.[23]

This pattern was mirrored throughout the Southwest. According to Emory Bogardus, a sociologist specialising in the study of nonwhite groups, the major cause of segregation among Mexicans was their 'low economic status,' which gave them no other choice than to 'congregate in the less desirable and low sections of a city, beyond the railroad tracks, and in other places where the average American will not live.'[24]

Being equally close to the bottom of the economic pile, local African-Americans experienced many of the same economic pressures to congregate in segregated neighbourhoods as Mexicans. In West Austin, the continued existence of African-American communities so close to some of the city's most affluent white neighbourhoods is partly attributable to the economic subordination of local blacks. The populations of Clarksville and Wheatville were highly dependent upon employment by nearby whites, usually in a domestic capacity, for the provision of their livelihood.[25] Without this means of support, it is unlikely that such isolated ethnic clusters could have survived; a point illustrated by the fact that as the University of Texas began to expand westward, it undermined the functional purpose of Wheatville's black community, which went into decline and eventually disappeared.[26]

Clearly, demographic and economic factors played a major role in the formation of large ethnic clusters. Once situated within segregated neighbourhoods, considerable internal pressures and influences acted upon the black and Mexican populations which were likely to persuade them to remain. As ethnic clusters became more established a whole infrastructure of social, religious and business institutions also developed around them. Furthermore, because many of these organisations had grown from the ground up, there was a strong emphasis laid upon racial and neighbourhood self-help, a factor likely to deepen ties within the ethnic

community. This process had reached a fairly advanced stage among the black population of the city, especially those centred in the East Austin cluster, which one account described as having 'its own business, social, and professional life.'[27] By 1916, a majority of the city's black churches, institutions with an influence that went far beyond solely religious matters, were already situated in East Austin, or otherwise close to one of the other major black neighbourhoods.[28] Similarly, when deciding to build the city's first health centre for African-Americans, the Community Welfare Association (CWA) - a local black women's organisation, dedicated to relieving health and social problems among their race - opted for a site in East Austin.[29] With a greater proliferation of social and religious institutions taking place in the larger ethnic clusters, it was natural for the black population as a whole to gravitate towards these areas. In such surroundings, with an on-going increase in the size of the potential clientèle occurring, it was also possible for black businesses to take root and flourish, bringing the process of racial consolidation within a segregated neighbourhood to completion.[30]

The attraction of Austin's ethnic enclaves to newly-arrived members of nonwhite groups becomes apparent upon examination of the city's burgeoning Mexican community. As with blacks, a similar development and consolidation of communal institutions had taken place within Mexican neighbourhoods. Initially, the focus for this activity

had been the old Mexican District in West Austin, but during the mid-1920s the emphasis rapidly switched to East Austin, which was fast becoming the largest Mexican neighbourhood in the city. As already mentioned, local religious organisations, such as the Catholic Church and Methodist missionaries, swiftly adapted themselves to the eastward shift of the Mexican population centre in Austin. In order to accommodate for this movement, the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe was moved from its traditional site, near West Fifth and Guadalupe Streets, and relocated in East Austin, where a new building with an adjoining school was erected during 1926-1927.[31]

Newcomers to Austin, especially those recently arrived from Mexico, encountered a ready-made support system which would ease the trauma of adapting to life in an American city. The various Mexican sections of the city, for instance, were all served by specialised retail outlets. As well as offering Mexican food products, transactions in the so-called 'Mexican stores' could be conducted entirely in Spanish. This last factor was extremely important for Mexican housewives, four-fifths of whom could not speak English and rarely went outside of their own neighbourhood to shop for groceries.[32] Similarly, retailers and businesses which specifically catered to the needs of local African-Americans were concentrated in East Austin, or located nearby on East Sixth Street.[33] It is not surprising, therefore, that Austin's larger ethnic

clusters attracted the greatest proportions of both African-American and Mexican migrants entering the city (see Table 16).

Black and Mexican neighbourhoods, supporting their own infrastructure of community services and self-help organisations, became havens for their inhabitants, offering limited protection from the excesses of white supremacy and oppression. Aided by such institutions as the Church, both the African-American and Mexican communities were able to strengthen and sustain their own sense of cultural and ethnic identity. In a world where the pressures of white domination frequently became unbearable, it was especially important for leaders among nonwhite groups to publicise the advances already made towards achieving a greater degree of communal self-reliance. Concerning the quality of community life in Austin's black neighbourhoods, the Reverend Campbell asserted: 'we have our churches, our schools, our social functions, our fraternal relations, our property and every conceivable advantage and comfort for our physical, moral and intellectual development.'[34]

There were numerous agencies run by African-Americans in Austin to provide help for the needy within their community. Two of the city's long-established black charitable institutions were the St. John's Orphanage, founded by L. L. Campbell, and a rest home for elderly African-American women. The latter was maintained by a black women's organisation known as the

King's Daughters, which was involved in a wide range of charitable and community work. Similarly, African-American churches, along with the city's two private black colleges (see Chapter 6), all at various times acted as health centres and clinics for mothers with young children. By the late 1920s, the newly-formed CWA had assumed this role of supervising health care among local blacks, while the American Star Aid Society was organised to provide more generalised charitable assistance. Significantly, these bodies were mostly based in East Austin, which placed African-Americans in other neighbourhoods at a disadvantage and encouraged them to take up residence in the eastern part of the city.[35]

The principal community-based charities managed by local Mexicans were *La Cruz Azul* (for women) and *La Comisión Honorífica* (for men). The Austin branches of these organisations had been set up in April 1921 and operated under the auspices of the Mexican consul at San Antonio. The main purpose of the *Cruz Azul* and *Comisión Honorífica* was to alleviate poverty and distress among local Mexicans, which ranged from finding work for the unemployed to providing financial assistance to destitute families. These services were financed by local contributions and numerous fund-raising activities. In a single year, it was not uncommon for the *Cruz Azul* to organise a concert, lawn party, bazaar and tag day, all for the benefit of charity.[36] African-American charities were equally concerned to be

self-financing and not dependent on white support. In June 1920, a group of five hundred blacks assembled in Austin heard Major P. Graham, of the Negro State Baptist Convention, stress the need for ethnic solidarity and self-reliance. 'The white people of Austin have been very kind to St. John [sic.] Orphanage in donating to help care for those children,' said Graham, 'but we should not spend our money foolishly and not help our own race.' He urged local blacks to 'join hands in helping' to take care of the needy within their community.[37]

The support system in ethnic enclaves also provided a sanctuary for those eluding the forces of law and order. In September 1920, the Austin Police Department was called upon to apprehend three young Mexican men and turn them over to their employer, in nearby Del Valle. The three men, who had been brought under contract from Mexico specifically to work as agricultural labourers for a local farmer, had reportedly deserted their employer. Much to the consternation of the local police, the runaways were 'thought to be in Austin, hidden in the Mexican district of the city.'[38] The records of the Austin police force are replete with similar reports of both black and Mexican fugitives from justice escaping their pursuers by disappearing into one of the city's main ethnic enclaves.[39]

By the late 1920s, a combination of demographic forces, economic factors, and the strength of ethnic ties, had assisted the natural development of a few,

very large residential clusters in Austin, which housed the bulk of the city's nonwhite population. Nonetheless, this situation did not prevent local whites from vigorously taking matters into their own hands, in an effort to prevent either African-Americans or Mexicans from settling in traditionally white neighbourhoods. Before considering the extent to which attempts at imposing racial separation were responsible for the high levels of residential segregation in Austin, it is necessary to examine prevailing white perceptions of the expanding nonwhite ghettoes. Only then does a greater understanding of white responses to the black and Mexican urban presence become possible.

C. White Perceptions of Nonwhite Ghettoes

During the 1920s, there was a direct correlation between the rate at which Austin's nonwhite groups were becoming concentrated within particular parts of the city and the level of white concern over maintaining, and to a certain degree extending, the spatial separation of the races. Far from alleviating racial tension, the growth of large ethnic clusters, which continued to house increasing proportions of the nonwhite population, actually inflamed white animosity towards African-American and Mexican neighbours. Whether white intolerance was responsible for the acceleration of racial clustering, or just a product of it, is a

question that requires careful consideration. From the outset, however, it is evident that increasing levels of residential segregation, and a greater polarisation of racial groups within the community, were two developments which tended to advance hand in hand.

To some extent, contemporaries took it as a matter of course that Austin's African-American and Mexican inhabitants were, and ought to be, concentrated in their own separate neighbourhoods. Similarly, local whites also held certain strong ideas, partly preconceived and partly based on fact, about what social conditions in black or Mexican neighbourhoods were like. Needless to say, white impressions of nonwhite districts were generally unfavourable. The largest African-American cluster, located in East Austin (Tract 8), was considered to be 'one of the city's worst slum areas, a place of high disease and death rate, and of much juvenile delinquency.' Moreover, this distinction, of being dubbed a 'slum area,' was shared by only one other neighbourhood in Austin, the old Mexican District (Tract 11).[40] Adding substance to already existing views, local white newspapers regularly carried articles on crime waves occurring in nonwhite districts; the black neighbourhoods around Waller Creek being particularly notorious.[41] In addition to crime, immorality was thought to be rampant in nonwhite neighbourhoods - a view given credence by the fact that Austin's traditional red light area was located in the middle of the old Mexican District.[42] Similarly, in attempting

to stamp out another social ill, marijuana use, the city authorities singled out the 'Mexican section' as an area requiring the most urgent attention of the law enforcement agencies (see Chapter 4).[43]

Basically, the larger African-American and Mexican residential areas were perceived by outsiders as incubators for all of the social problems usually associated with ghetto conditions. Rather than entertain the idea that high levels of residential segregation were possibly responsible for the growth of nonwhite ghettoes, whites preferred to believe that it was a racial characteristic of both blacks and Mexicans to create ghetto conditions. As Max Handman remarked:

> The Mexican tends to bring back . . . slum conditions. We are having 'Mexican Districts' and the ancient 'battle with the slum' will have to be fought all over again, perhaps on a more dismal and distracting scale.[44]

In Texas, as far as most whites were concerned, the two concepts of a slum and a nonwhite ghetto were synonymous.

Undeniably, Austin's main African-American and Mexican ghettoes were among the most run-down sections of the city, but this deprivation was a direct consequence of segregation. The municipal authorities were, to say the least, extremely lax in providing areas inhabited by African-Americans and Mexicans with the

same services as white neighbourhoods. Whereas from one-half to three-quarters of Austin households were connected to the public sewer system in 1917, the city council did not extend this service to a major black or Mexican district until 1930. Even then, some of the smaller communities, like Clarksville, were still not connected to the sewer network. Similarly, municipal refuse collectors rarely visited African-American or Mexican sections and when they did it was often to dispose of waste, because city dumps tended to be located in or near nonwhite neighbourhoods. The health hazards created by such conditions were compounded in the many black and, especially, Mexican clusters of residences situated along the banks of Waller and Shoal creeks, where cases of malaria were not uncommon.[45] Overcrowding was also a major problem. In the black and Mexican sections of East Austin (Tracts 8 and 9), population density was double the city average, while in the old Mexican District (Tract 11) it was over four times higher.[46] Not surprisingly, both African-Americans and Mexicans experienced a substantially higher death rate, and incidence of diseases like tuberculosis and typhoid, than whites. In 1927, the death rate among blacks and Mexicans alike was about 14 per 1,000 population, compared with 9 per 1,000 for whites. Moreover, blacks were four times and Mexicans thirteen times more likely to die of tuberculosis than whites.[47]

The proposition that African-Americans and Mexicans

unwillingly endured slum conditions was not given serious consideration by most local whites. As noted earlier, William Hamilton admitted that Mexican immigrants newly arrived in Austin were faced with little other choice than to settle in one of the main ethnic clusters. However, he qualified this statement by asserting that 'a national trait of the Mexicans is to live in shanties surrounded by rubbish and tin cans.'[48] Regarding the black population, Hamilton discovered evidence of East Austin residents moving to one of the city's other main clusters, in order to escape the 'dust and filth' of the ghetto and the 'commonly practiced immorality which comes from too many living . . . too close together.'[49] Nonetheless, such reports seem to have made little or no impression upon prevailing white attitudes towards the inhabitants of Austin's nonwhite ghettoes.

Aroused by the assumption that slum conditions inevitably followed in the wake of African-American or Mexican settlement of an area, concern in white neighbourhoods over the threat of an 'invasion' by nonwhite groups frequently reached panic level. The last thing that any group of white residents wanted was for a sudden influx of blacks or Mexicans to occur, because it was felt that the tone of the neighbourhood would inevitably be lowered, having a disastrous effect upon property values. As T. J. Woofter noted, this was a problem common to cities throughout the United States during the 1920s:

> There is undoubtedly a period, just after Negroes begin to move into an area, when the white owners begin to be fully aware of the depreciation, and when their eagerness to sell often approximates a panic.[50]

In East Austin the process of succession, whereby white neighbourhoods were encroached upon and finally overrun by nonwhite elements of the population, created a great deal of animosity. In 1915, Harry L. Haynes, a local politician and former white resident of East Austin, declared:

> I was frozen out and my former home is occupied by negroes. . . . What happened to East Austin will happen to West Austin once the negroes get a foothold here. The white people have been driven out [of East Austin]. . . . This is one of the prettiest sections of the city. Why should we give it to the negroes?[51]

By the late twenties, the situation in parts of East Austin had become even more complex, with contemporaries observing that Mexicans were 'slowly displacing both Negroes and whites.' As data relating to inter-tract mobility illustrates, there was a general white exodus from parts of the city experiencing an influx of Mexicans. Between 1929 and 1931, 21.1% of Austin's total white population moved from one tract to another

within the city, but in Tracts 9 and 11 - where the highest levels of white outward movement and Mexican inward movement took place - it is recorded that 25.3% and 26.4%, respectively, of all whites left for other tracts.[52]

Clearly, white anxiety over the impact that settlement by nonwhite groups could have upon a neighbourhood emanated in part from a concern over protecting property values. Despite the existence of several large ethnic clusters in Austin, therefore, the fact that portions of the black and Mexican populations were 'scattered through practically every portion of the city' was a constant cause of irritation to the white community.[53] Local city planners, in particular, felt that the unrestricted presence of nonwhite groups had a destabilising effect upon property values, stating that 'with their encroachment the sightliness of the sections has deteriorated.'[54]

This suggests that, in their preference for segregating blacks and Mexicans residentially, whites were motivated equally as much by economic considerations as by their own deep-seated racial prejudices. Although the extent of white toleration can easily be exaggerated, it is worth mentioning the few occasions upon which whites showed little or no aversion to having nonwhites, and blacks in particular, living amongst them. In the past, both Gunnar Myrdal and Charles S. Johnson have drawn attention to the custom, practiced in many southern cities since ante-bellum

times, of black domestics living in or very close to the homes of their white employers.[55] There are numerous examples of black domestics, both male and female, residing with white households in Austin during the 1920s, especially in western parts of the city where the more affluent neighbourhoods were situated.[56] Similarly, the black communities of Clarksville and Wheatville were grudgingly tolerated by nearby whites, chiefly on account of their functional purpose; providing as they did a ready supply of black yardmen, washer-women, and other domestic helpers for white households.[57] Nonetheless, the nonwhite presence in these situations was only tolerated because it posed little or no threat to the status of the whites involved. For instance, black domestic workers were economically dependent upon employment in white households, placing them in an obvious position of inferiority *vis-à-vis* their white employers. Furthermore, as is illustrated by the eventual demise of Wheatville's black community, any fear of the smaller ethnic clusters encroaching upon nearby white neighbourhoods was clearly unwarranted. It can be concluded, therefore, that, regardless of how irksome the situation proved to be, a limited nonwhite presence was tolerable as long as it did not constitute an affront to white supremacy or the integrity of white neighbourhoods.

Although Austin's expanding African-American and Mexican residential clusters posed only a minimal threat

to white neighbourhoods as a whole, it is significant that the fear and dread of nonwhite groups encroaching upon an area was fairly widespread among the white community. Indeed, the increasing concentration of both the black and Mexican populations within fewer and more isolated parts of the city was in many ways a result of white fears and preconceptions about these two groups. An examination of the views and anxieties of the white community, therefore, provides a useful insight into the white psyche and may help to explain why it was considered such a necessity for the black and Mexican populations to be residentially segregated. As Emory Bogardus perceptively noted, the scope of residential segregation in southwestern cities during the 1920s went far beyond the purely physical realm of the urban landscape, for its influence was 'partly spatial and partly psycho-social.'[58]

There was a growing need among whites for reassurance that the nonwhite population, in both a physical and a psychological sense, was successfully being kept at arms length. Little attempt was made to deny the existence of large nonwhite ghettoes in Austin, which housed the bulk of the city's black and Mexican populations. On the contrary, such circumstances were considered by whites to be positively desirable. In 1927, city planners suggested that the attractiveness of Austin as a city could be greatly enhanced by encouraging the black population to become concentrated into a single district.[59] Similarly, an editorial in

the *Austin Statesman* declared that experience had shown residential segregation to be conducive to 'the welfare of both races.'[60] Mexicans were regarded in the same light; the fact that they tended to 'keep to themselves,' and opt for a form of self-imposed segregation, was viewed favourably by local whites.[61]

Evidently, the white community had few misgivings about the increasing concentration and ghettoisation of nonwhite groups that was occurring in Austin during the twenties. In fact, some comfort seems to have been derived from the knowledge that both the black and Mexican populations tended to congregate within their own residential areas. Furthermore, this sense of security was fostered by the existence of physical barriers, such as creeks, railway lines and major roads, which tended to create natural boundaries for the developing ethnic ghettoes (see Map 4). For instance, the black and Mexican neighbourhoods of East Austin were handicapped in expanding towards either the north, west or south, by the existence of Waller Creek, East Avenue and the tracks of a main railway line. Indeed, all of Austin's principal ethnic clusters were, to some extent, enclosed in this manner. Emory Bogardus noted how white perceptions of ethnic clusters, and hence their inhabitants, were being influenced by the way in which increasing residential segregation was reshaping the urban environment:

> 'Beyond the railroad tracks' means a part of town where living conditions are naturally the least desirable and the poorest. . . . Nearly every city in the Southwest has an area such as the one referred to here.[62]

Huddled together within residential enclaves and hemmed in by 'natural barriers,' African-Americans and Mexicans were set apart from the rest of the urban population, allowing whites to feel secure that the sanctity of their own homes and communities would not be violated by the presence of nonwhite neighbours.[63]

Nonetheless, white peace of mind came at a price, albeit one that contemporaries were apt to dismiss or, at best, overlook. Perhaps white Austinites believed that, by increasing the spatial distance between nonwhite groups and themselves, their cause for concern over the significant African-American and Mexican urban presence would thereby be removed. If so, they were wrong. Despite the fact that the nonwhite population was becoming ghettoised at an increasing rate during the 1920s, rather than abating, anxiety over the integrity of white neighbourhoods grew worse as the decade wore on. While some of Austin's smaller ethnic clusters, such as Clarksville and Wheatville, had been tolerated since the 1880s and showed no sign of encroaching upon nearby white neighbourhoods, by the late 1920s they were a cause of constant irritation to the white community. Similarly, although it was presumably desirable for the

black and Mexican populations to be concentrated within sections of East Austin, most whites were alarmed by the process of neighbourhood 'invasion' taking place in that part of the city, where nonwhite groups were fast displacing and forcing out white residents. For whites, this particular consequence of increasing ghettoisation was decidedly unpalatable, because white residents were being forced to adopt a defensive posture and appeared helpless in the face of advancing nonwhite groups.[64] Furthermore, as they became more established, the larger ethnic clusters gained the appearance of being cities within a city, suggesting that nonwhite groups enjoyed a greater autonomy inside of the ghetto than out. Such developments may well have been construed as an affront to the dominant creed of white supremacy.

Whether congregated in large ethnic clusters or isolated pockets of nonwhite residence, therefore, the presence of sizeable black and Mexican populations in Austin created considerable anxiety within the white community. Not only did whites recognise that nonwhite groups tended to be highly segregated, they seem to have been entirely satisfied with this arrangement. Residential segregation was seen as a means of protecting white neighbourhoods from slum conditions and plummeting property values, which it was thought would be the inevitable outcomes of nonwhite neighbours moving in. As long as African-Americans and Mexicans were content to remain within their own ethnic clusters, then it seemed as though white neighbourhoods were safe.

But, as had been graphically illustrated by events in East Austin, the city's nonwhite ghettoes were increasing in size and beginning to engulf adjacent areas, showing little regard for the race of the former occupants. Under these conditions local whites felt an irrepressible urge to take control of the situation and so embarked upon a series of enterprises designed to maintain, and possibly extend, existing levels of residential segregation.

D. Imposing Residential Segregation

During the 1920s there was a growing movement among city governments in Texas to search for a means by which to shape and control the configurations of the urban environment. Not surprisingly, racial residential patterns were high on the agenda of matters that needed to be addressed. Essentially, this was a movement to extend the domain of the state's existing Jim Crow laws (see Chapter 4). Efforts to impose *de jure* residential segregation, therefore, were - in the traditional manner - almost entirely directed against African-Americans. The more recent arrival of most Mexicans in Texas may explain the total absence of Jim Crow laws relating specifically to them, but a variety of restrictive practices ensured that *de facto* residential segregation was the rule for blacks and Mexicans alike.

The statewide campaign to legally impose residential

segregation on blacks was led by the urban planners of Dallas and Houston. Although the former adopted a more aggressive and frictional approach than the latter, they both shared a common goal - to restrict nonwhite groups to living within clearly defined sections of the city. By 1926, Austin's civic leaders were themselves showing an interest in how urban planning could improve their city's future growth and development, and it is from this time forward that the influence of ideas from other parts of the state, as well as elsewhere in the South, becomes discernible. A pattern emerges in which the energies of a variety of white interest groups, operating at the state, municipal and neighbourhood levels, eventually combined to produce a sophisticated and highly effective system for imposing residential segregation upon nonwhite elements of the population. The manner in which this process was perfected and then brought to bear can best be illustrated by following the activities of the Austin City Plan Commission, which, during the late twenties, was framing a policy that would shape local residential patterns for decades to come.

Significantly, the circumstances which led to the creation of the City Plan Commission arose in response to a communication from the Kessler Plan Association of Dallas, on 8 November 1926, which asked the Austin Chamber of Commerce to co-operate in ensuring the passage of state laws 'permitting cities of over 40,000 residents to pass their own racial segregation

ordinances.'[65] Within days of receiving this request, the Chamber's committee on city planning had drawn up proposals for an ordinance that would establish a local planning commission, which were duly submitted to the city council for review and enactment.[66] By February 1927, with the Fortieth State Legislature in session at Austin, the City Plan Commission was already in existence and its functionaries (most noticeably Mayor P. W. McFadden and Walter E. Long, Secretary of the local Chamber of Commerce) were busy lobbying for the passage of a bill, introduced by Senator Thomas B. Love of Dallas, which aimed to 'foster a separation of white and negro resident communities in the interest of peace, safety and welfare.'[67] Furthermore, the alliance formed between Austin and Dallas interest groups played a pivotal role in a campaign that was rapidly attracting statewide support. A noteworthy illustration of this close collaboration occurred when Will Caswell, a leading light on the City Plan Commission, and J. E. Surratt of Dallas, jointly headed a delegation of urban planners from all over Texas which appeared before the legislature in order to promote their interests. (Incidentally, some reports estimated that representatives from as many as one hundred different towns and cities throughout Texas were active in supporting the passage of the Love Bill.[68])

The proposed legislation eventually became law without encountering any serious opposition in either

house of the state legislature.[69] In its final form the first section of the Act read:

> That the power and authority is hereby conferred upon the Cities of Texas to provide by suitable ordinances for the segregation of negroes and whites in any such city and to withhold permits to build or construct a house.[70]

The rather imprecise terms in which this passage was couched, especially the allusion to the provision of 'suitable' ordinances, meant that the law itself was open to very broad interpretation. For example, prior to the passage of the Love Bill, an editorial in the *Austin American* broached the question of adopting a system then in operation in Louisiana which had, it remarked, 'proven quite satisfactory to all concerned.'[71] However, the New Orleans segregation ordinance referred to, which had been in operation since 1924, was itself overturned and declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1927.[72] Unperturbed, some groups in Texas were convinced that the new state law would enable them to implement a system of residential segregation whereby 'a majority of one color in a city block may exclude members of the other from establishing homes in the same block.'[73]

It was at this point that - at least in their efforts to formulate viable strategies for making residential segregation the uniform practice within

their respective cities - the urban élites of Austin and Dallas appear to have parted company (although the influence of the latter group upon the Austin City Plan Commission was to continue for some time). A previous Dallas segregation ordinance, which differed very little in detail from the proposals outlined above, had only recently been overturned by a Texas court of civil appeals, in 1926, on the grounds of its being unconstitutional.[74] Despite this setback, and following the passage of the Love Bill, the city authorities in Dallas introduced another ordinance prohibiting the occupation of city blocks by more than one racial group. In 1929, this enterprise also foundered as a result, once again, of a civil appeals court ruling, which declared that neither the state nor city governments had any jurisdiction to legislate upon such matters, because they were interfering with individual property rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution.[75] Such developments were followed with interest by urban planners throughout Texas, as an announcement by the Austin City Plan Commission, in 1928, illustrates:

> There has been considerable talk in Austin, as well as other cities, in regard to the race segregation problem. This problem cannot be solved legally under any zoning law known to us at present. Practically all attempts of such have been proven unconstitutional.[76]

Keenly aware of the difficulties encountered by their Dallas counterparts, planners in Austin preferred to adopt a more cautious approach to the subject.

In April 1927 came the first indication that local politicians were keen to explore all of the avenues open to them, and not rashly adopt a policy towards residential segregation that could lead to protracted legal difficulties. It was at this point that Will Hogg, chairman of the Houston City Planning Commission, addressed members of the Austin City Plan Commission.[77] While recognising the need for treading carefully in such matters, Hogg held distinct views on how best to achieve strict residential segregation:

> . . . negroes are a necessary and useful element of the population and suitable areas with proper living and recreation facilities should be set aside for them. Because of long established racial prejudices, it is best for both races that living areas be segregated. Segregation by zoning has been proven unconstitutional, therefore the best method is by mutual agreement.[78]

Hogg's ideas seem to have made a great impression upon his audience (Mayor McFadden, Will Caswell and Walter Long were just a few of the local dignitaries present); not least, the proposal that existing ethnic ghettoes should be turned into 'Race Restriction Areas.' Moreover, Houston planners were concerned that other

nonwhite groups, as well as blacks, should be separated from the white community, arguing that 'as the Mexican population lives for the most part under conditions similar to the negroes, their conditions should have equally careful consideration.'[79] Although less contentious from a legal aspect, therefore, the Houston programme for residential segregation was well-defined and far more comprehensive than any hitherto operated in Dallas.

Nonetheless, the Dallas connection was never completely severed: by July 1927, the City Plan Commission had hired Koch and Fowler, a Dallas firm of city engineers, to draw up the Austin city plan proposals. In fact, Koch had previously served for eight years on the Dallas City Planning Commission.[80] Naturally, making provisions for the residential segregation of nonwhite groups was not the sole preoccupation of city planners in Austin during the late twenties, but, along with the zoning of commercial and industrial areas, the development of an urban traffic system, and the formulation of a public parks programme, it was a topic given a great amount of consideration. Lamenting upon the 'absence of appropriate legislation,' it was initially suggested that the problem of imposing residential segregation be dealt with from the 'economic standpoint, which will cause negroes to move into one solid district, to be purchaseable within their means.'[81] However, when the plans were eventually

published, in February 1928, the proposals clearly revealed the influence of ideas originating in Houston:

> In our studies in Austin we have found that the negroes are present in small numbers, in practically all sections of the city, excepting the area just east of East avenue and south of the city cemetery. This area seems to be all negro population. It is our recommendation that the nearest approach to the solution of the race segregation problem will be the recommendation of this district as a negro district; and that all the facilities and conveniences be provided the negroes in this district, as an incentive to draw the negro population to this area.[82]

Consequently, all new public schools or park areas provided for African-Americans would in future be situated in East Austin.[83] Moreover, unlike East Austin, the more isolated black neighbourhoods, such as Clarksville, were deliberately excluded from the street paving and sewerage system extension programmes. By withholding essential public services, the city council sought to undermine the smaller ethnic clusters and encourage the movement of nonwhites to eastern parts of the city.[84]

Although no specific mention of the Mexican population was made in the Austin plan, once implemented the policies outlined above were to have an equally

dramatic impact upon all nonwhite groups in the city. Austin's public schools for black children were already concentrated in East Austin, where there were three altogether. As for the schools serving Clarksville and South Austin, it was not politically viable to move these elsewhere, but Wheatville School was closed in 1932. This event hastened the decline of the African-American community in Wheatville, many of whose members settled in nearby Clarksville or made the almost inevitable cross-city move to East Austin.[85] After 1922, new public school facilities for local Mexican children were also located on sites in East Austin. Similarly, when the local authorities embarked upon a playground improvements programme, a totally new park 'for Mexicans' was created in East Austin, named Zaragosa Park.[86]

A further proposal in the 1928 plan that became local policy was for East Avenue to be widened, turning it into 'the backbone for all traffic in the eastern portion of the city.'[87] Whether intentionally or not, the capacity of East Avenue to form a formidable physical barrier between the nonwhite ghetto of East Austin and the rest of the city was thereby greatly enhanced. (Even today, under its present name of Inter-State Highway Thirty-five, this same stretch of freeway continues to fulfil a similar function, albeit more effectively, by isolating the large African-American and Mexican communities that still exist in that part of the city.) The policies of Austin city planners were mostly

geared towards having a longterm effect upon racial residential patterns and were in no way sufficient to ensure that, in the meantime, white neighbourhoods would not be encroached upon by nonwhite groups.

At the municipal level, constitutional restraints clearly hindered local authorities in their efforts to impose residential segregation by legislation. However, no such restrictions existed for the residents of Austin's predominantly white neighbourhoods. One common practice, whereby home-owners would 'enter into mutual covenants or agreements' with a group of neighbours and promise not to sell their properties to any other than white purchasers, had only recently been given legal sanction in Texas, when it was included among the provisions of the Love Bill. Unlike other sections of that ill-fated bill, the article concerning 'restrictive' covenants did not prove to be unconstitutional. In fact, as recently as 1926 the U.S. Supreme Court had failed to outlaw racial deed restrictions, stating, in the case of *Corrigan* v. *Buckley*, that the matter was beyond the jurisdiction of the Court.[88] (Despite the concerted efforts of the NAACP, this ruling was to stand for another three decades.[89])

In the late 1950s, the U.S. Supreme Court finally ruled that racial deed restrictions were unenforceable, but by then large areas of Austin had been effectively closed off to settlement by either blacks or Mexicans. This practice was most prevalent in the affluent, more

peripheral parts of the city: particularly the areas spreading west and north of Shoal Creek; north and northeast of the University complex; and in various sections dotted across South Austin.[90]

Local property developers and real estate agents played a crucial role in the development of these predominantly all-white neighbourhoods. As early as 1900, the section of West Austin known as Hyde Park had been advertised as 'exclusively for white people' by the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Land and Town Company.[91] When creating 'restricted areas,' land developers were largely motivated by the need to protect property values, with the race or nationality of potential buyers being just a single factor - but, for all that, a decisive one - among many that was taken into consideration. For instance, University Park, located just to the southeast of the University of Texas campus, became Austin's most recent residential sub-division in November 1926 and was advertised in the local press as 'beautiful, restricted and desirable.' A. R. Hazard, as both owner and developer of the property, publicly disclosed the restrictions that would operate on this sub-division: there were to be 'No temporary shacks; No Negroes or Mexicans; No business houses'; and, finally, it was stated that 'homes must cost at least $5,000.'[92] Similarly, Pemberton Heights, situated west of Shoal Creek at a point level with Twenty-Fourth Street, was another sub-division being marketed as a 'restricted area' during the late twenties.[93]

As a means of imposing residential segregation, restrictive covenants affected both the African-American and Mexican populations of Austin. Whereas state legislators and municipal planners were more concerned with ensuring that blacks in particular were segregated from the white community, in Austin, at least, local whites were determined to prevent all nonwhite groups from encroaching upon their neighbourhoods. The apparent difference in emphasis that existed between official policy and grass roots practice is probably attributable to the fact that, while the majority of Mexicans were relative newcomers to Texas and their group status was, as yet, still largely undefined, blacks had traditionally been excluded from white society and legislation was considered an acceptable means of institutionalising this practice. The absence of legal mechanisms designed specifically to impose residential segregation on Mexicans, therefore, does not mean that whites regarded such a policy to be either unnecessary or undesirable. Indeed, when drawing attention to the fact that the Mexican population of Austin was 'rather strictly segregated,' Carl Rosenquist rejected unequivocally the 'theory that Mexicans are more generally accepted, and experience less pressure for residential segregation than do the Negroes.'[94] Essentially, local whites were keen to keep all nonwhites out of their neighbourhoods. Whereas the majority of Austin's Mexican population resided in one of the two main ethnic clusters, they were by no means

entirely confined to these areas. But as Earl Connell discovered, Mexicans were 'found in all parts of town except in the exclusive native white districts.'[95]

One means of assessing the effectivenss of white attempts to impose residential segregation is by examining the extent to which blacks and Mexicans, when changing their place of residence, could move freely from one part of the city to another. Fortunately, this kind of movement can be measured by drawing upon data relating to inter-tract mobility in Austin during 1929-1931 (see Table 17). These figures indicate that whites were considerably less restricted in their movements than either blacks or Mexicans. Moreover, Mexicans were the least mobile of all racial groups, even less so than blacks. However, Rosenquist evidently misinterpreted his own findings, concluding as he did that:

> . . . the Negro formed by far the most stable element in the city, from the point of view of inter-tract movement. This fact is explained, of course, by the strict segregation of Negroes within certain areas, as well as by their limited economic opportunities . . . Mexicans were only slightly more mobile than the Negroes.[96]

One explanation of this oversight is, perhaps, that Rosenquist - conditioned by his upbringing in a society founded upon and perpetuated by a belief in white supremacy - naturally assumed that blacks, the darkest

of all races, were bound to have been less mobile than the lighter-skinned Mexicans.

An examination of the figures relating to the inter-tract mobility of African-Americans and Mexicans residing in Austin's main ethnic ghettoes shows that these groups were even less mobile than the rest of the nonwhite population. For example, two of the lowest levels of inter-tract mobility recorded were for blacks in Tract 8, with 9.5% moving to another tract between 1929 and 1931, and Mexicans in Tract 9, with only 8.1% changing tracts.[97] The apparently greater inter-tract mobility of nonwhites living outside of the ghettoes may be attributable to the fact that, as white neighbourhoods operating racial deed restriction agreements proliferated during the 1920s, an ever-increasing number of blacks and Mexicans were being forced out of more and more parts of the city. It has already been shown how Austin's larger ethnic clusters were attracting nonwhites away from other parts of the city and the evidence offered above suggests that both blacks and Mexicans were finding it increasingly difficult to leave these ghetto areas once they had settled there. Therefore, largely as a result of white intentions and tactics, Austin's nonwhite groups were by the late twenties increasingly becoming isolated from the rest of the urban population. The spatial separation of racial residential areas was manifested as much in the conspicuous absence of blacks and Mexicans from the exclusively white neighbourhoods of the city,

as it was in the appearance and consolidation of large ethnic clusters. Nor were racially restricted areas solely the reserve of the more affluent whites. For instance, after describing Tract 10 as 'an area of low-income houses, belonging to whites of the unskilled and semi-skilled classes,' Rosenquist emphasised that: 'No Negroes live in this area.' Similarly, both African-Americans and Mexicans were successfully excluded from large sections of South Austin (especially in Tract 14), which were mostly occupied by whites of the moderate-income bracket.[98]

In short, despite the mixed results that accrued from efforts at the state and municipal levels to institutionalise racial residential segregation, a combination of local custom and the practices of property developers effectively achieved the same ends. Moreover, while traditional prejudices towards blacks were not discarded, nor even moderated by changing conditions within the urban environment, Mexicans were experiencing the same pressures to live in segregated areas as the black population. At first, white attempts to impose residential segregation upon nonwhite groups may have been haphazard, but the resolve to succeed in this task was evident from the start and, as the increasingly widespread adoption of restrictive covenants in Austin illustrates, so was the means.

Summary

In Austin, attempts to impose residential segregation upon nonwhite groups clearly proved effective; by the late twenties the black and Mexican populations both experienced a high degree of spatial separation from the white community. Residential patterns in the city (which generally conformed to the southern model[99]) were altered very little by the Mexican presence, with the exception that African-Americans were no longer the only group concentrated in a segregated and run-down section of the city. True, Mexicans did for the most part settle in their own distinct neighbourhoods, but, essentially, they experienced the same kind of residential segregation as African-Americans. Indeed, while the ghettoisation of the black population had been occurring rather gradually since the 1880s, the same process was accelerated among Mexicans and took place almost instantaneously.

The residential pattern emerging in Austin was one of a three-way segregation between whites, blacks and Mexicans. On rare occasions members of the three racial groups could be found living in fairly close proximity to each other, but this was the exception, not the rule. At least until the 1960s, the levels of racial residential segregation increased progressively. Based upon city block data, the figures in Table 18 illustrate that blacks in Austin, as elsewhere in Texas, were highly segregated from the rest of the population.

Although the levels in Table 19 are markedly lower - primarily, because the larger census tract, as opposed to city block, is the unit of measurement - these figures are slightly more revealing, in that the three-way nature of residential segregation is clearly portrayed. Significantly, Mexicans were highly segregated from the white population, but not to the same extent as blacks. This phenomenon is quite understandable, especially when it is recalled that in East Austin the Mexican population acted as a buffer between white and black neighbourhoods. To some extent, then, the Mexican presence acted to increase the spatial separation between white and black residences; without, it might be added, according the Mexican population any more of an even distribution throughout the city in the process.

In spite of these differences, the most striking feature about African-American and Mexican residential patterns in Austin during the 1920s is the similarities existing between them. Both groups were increasingly concentrated in East Austin, which emerged as the principal focus for the city's nonwhite population. Moreover, the demarcations between neighbourhoods of different racial and ethnic composition were becoming more clearly defined as the 1920s wore on, thereby reducing the possibility of interracial contact. In this process, some part was played by the tendency among blacks and Mexicans to gravitate towards and remain in distinct ethnic enclaves - and the ghetto's protective

role as a screen against white racism should not be underestimated - but, in the final analysis, residential segregation was more of an involuntary imposition than a natural development. Despite ever-worsening conditions, some nonwhites seemed content to reside in racial clusters, but, for those that did not, local whites were prepared to go to considerable lengths in order to protect the racial integrity of their neighbourhoods.

The fact that a map of Austin's racial residential patterns in the late twenties would closely resemble a patchwork of blacks and browns upon a white setting, is largely attributable to the deep-seatedness of white racism. Whether residents of affluent West Austin or moderate-income South Austin, local whites in general were not inclined to tolerate either a black or Mexican presence in their neighbourhoods. Occasionally, as in East Austin, whites preferred to abandon a section of the city rather than share it with nonwhite neighbours. However, with the widespread adoption of restrictive covenants, this strategy was becoming increasingly unnecessary. By the late twenties, through a combination of property developers' practices and neighbourhood action, blacks and Mexicans were effectively excluded from renting or obtaining property in large portions of the city. Furthermore, as is illustrated by the passage of state laws and adoption of municipal planning policies which aimed to formalise existing patterns of racial residential segregation, local practice was given explicit official sanction.

With such backing it is hardly surprising that residential segregation became a self-perpetuating institution in Austin, the effects of which can still be seen.

As will be shown in later chapters, the implications for Austin's nonwhite groups, of being confined to restricted parts of the city, went far beyond having to endure the overcrowded and pathological conditions that flourished in the ghetto. Residential segregation formed the spatial foundation of a entire superstructure of discrimination and segregation, affecting such areas as education, politics, and social welfare provision. Moreover, a theme that recurs throughout the period 1917-1929, is the way in which the isolation of black and Mexican communities facilitated the provision of segregated and inferior public services.

Chapter Four

A WHITE MAN'S LAW

CHAPTER 4. A WHITE MAN'S LAW

Increasing levels of residential segregation in the 1920s may have helped to minimise social interaction between whites, blacks and Mexicans, but it was impossible - and, from the point of view of many whites, impractical - to eliminate altogether the occasions upon which the three groups came into contact with each other. Nonetheless, Austin society was highly stratified along racial and ethnic lines and the white community was desirous that contact with nonwhites be kept to a minimum, and that when it did take place it was on terms set by and favourable to themselves. For this reason, a whole etiquette governing relations between the races had grown up, which was further buttressed by an extensive and still expanding body of legislation, commonly known as the Jim Crow laws. Although originally intended to segregate blacks, to a certain extent the newly-arrived Mexicans were also affected by the same social proscriptions.

The task of interpreting and ensuring the observance of Jim Crow conventions - whether they were enshrined in custom or written laws - largely fell upon the local courts and law enforcement agencies. Essentially, the role of the police and the judiciary was not only to maintain law and order, but to perpetuate existing

racial demarcations by keeping the city's nonwhite groups in subordination. This added dimension to the functioning of the legal system also meant that white supremacist motivations and racist attitudes often carried over into the more usual business of dealing with crime in general. Moreover, as well as being discriminated against and often victimised by the local police and judiciary, to varying degrees blacks and Mexicans alike found that they were not afforded the full protection of the law, especially in cases when they were the victims of physical violence inflicted by whites.

A. African-Americans and Legalised Segregation

To fully comprehend the nature and extent of Jim Crow practices in Austin during 1917-1929, a distinction has to be drawn between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation; the former being the kind given legal sanction, while the latter could be dictated solely by local customs and conditions. Whereas *de jure* segregation may have amounted to only a handful of state laws and civic ordinances, *de facto* segregation was invariably far more widespread and equally as entrenched. Similarly, as has already been illustrated in the chapter on residential patterns, while African-Americans and Mexicans may have experienced similar levels of *de facto* segregation, the legal apparatus erected to effect the same ends was in

all instances directed at 'the Negro.' In other words, no body of state or local legislation existed which called specifically for the segregation of Mexicans or persons of Mexican extraction. Bearing these points in mind, it seems appropriate to first examine the ways in which Jim Crow laws and conventions affected the lives of Austin's black inhabitants, before considering the extent to which they might also have been applied to Mexicans.

In 1930, Charles S. Johnson, in a specially commissioned study entitled *The Negro in American Civilization*, drew attention to the fact that far from being colour-blind American law was still riddled with what he termed 'race distinctions.' 'The laws of certain states,' he noted, 'requiring white and Negro passengers to occupy separate coaches on railroad trains' were 'recognised as a legal distinction, provided that all facilities for travel - clean quarters, courteous service, etc., are equal for both races.'[1] The legality of this 'separate but equal' principle had been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, in 1896, and was - according to its exponents in Texas and elsewhere in the South - the very essence of *de jure* segregation. In 1889, following in the footsteps of Tennessee (1881), Florida (1887), and Mississippi (1888), Texas was the fourth state to enact laws requiring segregated facilities on the railroads, being joined by a further ten southern states by 1907. Once again, conforming to a pattern mirrored across the

South, Texas passed laws calling for the segregation of African-Americans in numerous other spheres of life, such as the public schools (1905) and urban streetcars (1907).[2] Likewise, in 1916, Dallas city planners initiated a movement to legalise block-by-block residential segregation that by 1927 had attracted widespread support and culminated in the passage of a state law (see Chapter 3). The fact that the latter cause was only conceded as lost in 1929, after a series of unfavourable legal rulings, suggests that white Texans were still determined to extend the boundaries of *de jure* segregation.[3]

By the late 1920s, however, the tide of segregationist legislation was beginning to ebb in Texas. As in other parts of the South, many of the newer Jim Crow laws in Texas came as a response to innovations in technology and living patterns.[4] In March 1927, for example, members of the Texas House of Representatives first began to agitate for laws that would 'require motor bus lines to provide separate, designated compartments or seats for negro passengers.'[5] Over a year later, on 22 December 1928, the *Austin American* proudly announced that the city had been chosen as 'head-quarters for the only bus line exclusively for negroes in the United States.' The operation of the new 320 mile long bus route, for which San Antonio, Austin, Houston and Beaumont were the principal stops, was to commence as soon as an application for a state permit had been granted.[6] It

is noteworthy that instead of simply requesting permission to set aside a separate part of the bus for black passengers - as was the intention of the bill introduced in 1927 - the state authorities were now being asked to sanction the total segregation of African-Americans, whereby they were not even permitted to travel on the same vehicle as whites.

Although such a bold approach was characteristic of how white Texans dealt with race issues, on this occasion it immediately met with strong opposition. Early in January 1929, black leaders in Austin and other parts of Texas circulated petitions which were then presented to the bus division of the state railroad commission. Fearing that African-Americans were going to be excluded from all but the 'black's only' buses, the petitions demanded that the commission 'require all holders of certificates to transport negroes on their lines.'[7] Because the protest from blacks was not aimed at dismantling existing legislation, but rather to influence how the Texas authorities would 'interpret the "Jim Crow" laws of the state as they apply to motor buses,' the railroad commission was not under pressure to stand its ground for the sake of preserving white supremacy. A few days later, therefore, in a face-saving manoeuvre, the commission 'deferred' its decision on whether to sanction the 'establishment of separate buses for negroes.'[8]

By the end of the twenties, *de jure* segregation had about reached its natural limits in Texas, but there was

certainly no accompanying relaxation in the enforcement of Jim Crow laws. Indeed, compared with other southern states, Texas was more exacting in its application of legal segregation. Charles S. Johnson observed that 'in spite of several "unfortunate mistakes," the Negroes of means in the South enjoy considerable prestige and respect. There are few who cannot or do not evade the Jim Crow laws by getting Pullman accommodations.'[9] In Texas, however, such evasions of the Jim Crow laws were not generally countenanced. This is evidenced by the case of D. J. Flynn, an African-American minister from North Carolina who was travelling through the state in August 1920. At Austin he was arrested by a city policeman, taken into custody and charged with trespassing for 'being found in a Pullman Car.' Flynn claimed that he 'did not know that it was a violation of the law to enter a Pullman,' but the city attorney still instructed the police to issue a fine of $19.80 before releasing him.[10] In a 1923 article entitled 'Jim Crow in Texas,' William Pickens, a field secretary of the NAACP, related personal experiences of train travel in the state that were markedly similar to those of Flynn. Indeed, far from being an 'unfortunate mistake,' Pickens stated that it was usual practice for Pullman conductors to inform black passengers as the train approached the state border: 'Well, you can't ride in this car after you get into Texas. You'll have to get out of this car in Texas.'[11]

The article by Pickens is particularly illuminating,

because he also exposed the falsehood of the claim that 'separate but equal' facilities were provided. 'There is no such thing,' he asserted, 'as a fair and just Jim Crow system with "equal accommodations".' Not least because it was unrealistic to expect 'the railroads to go to the expense of duplicating their accommodations for the colored, . . . minority population.' The result, therefore, as conditions in Texas illustrated, was that

> . . . the colored traffic is usually attached to the general service with the least possible expense: a small waiting-room in one corner of the station, generally unswept and otherwise uncared-for; a compartment in one end of the white men's smoker for all the colored people - men, women, and children - to ride in: generally no wash basin and only one toilet for both sexes; with no privilege of taking meals in the diner or buying a berth in a sleeper.[12]

Charles S. Johnson also insisted that separate facilities for blacks were never of an equal standard to those available to the rest of the population and for this reason the laws requiring segregation constituted 'an infraction of Negro citizenship.'[13]

In a number of areas, the authorities did not even keep up the pretence of offering separate, let alone equal facilities. A case in point is the state prison

system for young offenders, which made no provision whatsoever for black girls. Male delinquents, both black and white, were held at the Gatesville Reformatory. In 1925, the state legislature ruled that Gatesville should be maintained for 'white boys only' and granted funds to establish a juvenile training school for blacks at a separate location.[14] However, the $30,000 voted for the removal proved to be insufficient and in February 1927 the state prison commission reported that 'Negro delinquents are still held at the Gatesville reformatory,' although members of the Texas House of Representatives were given a firm assurance that 'whites and negroes are kept well separated.'[15] 'The delinquent Negro boy may be sent to Gatesville,' announced the *Austin Welfare Councillor* in September 1920, 'but the delinquent Negro girls cannot be sent to Gatesville.' Commenting upon this predicament, the article continued:

> There is absolutely no place in the state except the county jail to which a delinquent Negro girl may be sent. The consequence is that we ignore her and just leave her alone in her delinquency. Can we expect such a condition to exist without becoming a menace to our city?[16]

Nor were the Welfare Council's warnings unduly alarmist. In July 1923, a young black woman was tried and found guilty of murder after slashing another black woman with

a razor. Being under eighteen years of age, her case was dealt with by a court for juvenile offenders, but she was set free on probation because – as a result of the Jim Crow laws – there was no institution in the state to which she could be admitted.[17] In April 1927, the state legislature took steps to remedy this situation and passed a law authorising the establishment of a reform school for black girls.[18] Nonetheless, two years later, in April 1929, it was still necessary for Mrs. Jesse Daniel Ames, director of the Texas Commission of Interracial Cooperation (CIC), to request that the state provide the $100,000 necessary to build the school. To illustrate the need for these funds, Mrs. Ames emphasised the fact that black girls were the only group denied such facilities in Texas.[19]

To gain an impression of how *de jure* segregation affected the daily lives of African-Americans residing in Austin, it is worth studying the operation of Jim Crow laws on the urban streetcars. Ever since its introduction in 1906, controversy had surrounded the civic ordinance requiring streetcar operators in Austin to 'provide separate compartments in each passenger car for the accommodation of white and negro passengers.'[20] Although the black community organised a highly effective boycot of the streetcars and demanded that the ordinance be repealed, the city council refused to back down and in 1907 the issue was settled beyond all doubt when a state law was passed calling for segregation on streetcars.[21] Moving on to the period

covered by the present study, from the summer of 1919 onwards (a year already noted for its strained relations between the races) there is evidence of a growing movement among blacks in Austin to flout the Jim Crow streetcar laws. Some black men and women began to openly and deliberately violate the civic ordinance by sitting in the front section of streetcars, which was reserved for whites. On several occasions, violent conflicts broke out between black passengers and the white motormen attempting to enforce the Jim Crow laws.[22]

In June 1920, after a prolonged series of such incidents, the city council resolved to enforce a strict observance of streetcar segregation. Commissioner Harry L. Haynes, accusing the Austin Street Railway Company of laxity, urged the council to insist upon a more rigid enforcement of the state segregation laws. Haynes, who had introduced and forced through Austin's original streetcar segregation ordinance, won a unanimous response from his fellow councillors and the management of the Street Railway Company were requested to ensure that a separation between white and black passengers was maintained.[23]

Following this official clampdown violations of segregation on the streetcars were far less frequent, and indeed became so rare that when they did occur they were deemed newsworthy events. In August 1925, for instance, both of the Austin daily newspapers gave coverage to the story of Willie Mae Cavaniss, a local

black woman who was fined $14.80 for defying the Jim Crow streetcar laws, which was described as 'the first [case] of its kind in a number of years.' According to the reports, Cavaniss had 'sat too far toward the front' of the streetcar and refused to move back to the so-called 'black belt' when asked to do so by the motorman.[24] Under such circumstances, the streetcar segregation ordinance gave the motorman 'the authority, police powers and right to remove from a compartment any passenger not entitled to travel therein,' and failure to fulfil this duty was itself a misdemeanour punishable by a fine.[25] What is particularly interesting about this episode, however, is the active role played by white passengers on the streetcar; they insisted that Cavaniss be arrested and one of their number actually filed the complaint.[26] By 1929, the general compliance with segregation on the streetcars, which – barring a few isolated incidents – had lasted for most of the decade, was again beginning to break down. When the case of two African-American men came up before Judge E. R. Kone in July 1929, he said: 'There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind but that the Jim Crow law was violated, wilfully and intentionally.' The *Statesman* reported that throughout the proceedings A. L. Love, the city prosecutor, 'interjected several innuendoes with reference to negroes' infraction of the Jim Crow law in recent weeks, and deplored them.'[27] This example, like the Cavaniss case, clearly suggests that Austin's white community generally favoured

segregation on the streetcars and were concerned to see it maintained.

B. Jim Crow for Mexicans?

In purely legal terms it is difficult to see how *de jure* segregation, as it existed for African-Americans in Texas, could have been construed as also applying to Mexicans. As already noted, none of the segregation laws in Texas explicitly referred to 'Mexicans' as a group covered by any kind of social proscription. Indeed, the state's segregation laws were framed in very precise terms and, as a rule, afforded little or no room for loose interpretation. Although theoretically immune from Jim Crow laws, Mexicans were nonetheless segregated in a number of ways and the reasons for this have to be explored, as does the extent to which Mexicans shared the same experiences as blacks.

In the case of Texas, it is clear from the wording of the text in most state laws and civic ordinances requiring segregation in some aspect of life, that the white politicians introducing and ratifying such legislation intended it to relate specifically to the African-American community. A typical Jim Crow law would denote 'Negroes' and 'Whites' as the two groups needing to be kept separate. The legal definition of a 'Negro' was any person of 'African descent,' including those of 'mixed blood descended from negro

ancestry.'[28] By no stretch of the imagination, therefore, would it have been defensible to include Mexicans in this category. Moreover, in many instances the term 'white' was deemed to apply to all persons who could not plausibly come under the definition of 'Negro.'[29] Even when the more problematic term 'colored race' was adopted, it usually referred only to blacks and not any other nonwhite groups.[30] For this reason, as William Pickens observed, 'all the non-American "colored peoples," yellow Chinese, brown Japanese, and the many-colored Mexicans,' were able to travel in the same compartments as whites on the railroads in Texas, because the Jim Crow cars were set aside for 'Negroes' alone.[31]

Whether Texan legislators deliberately intended to confer 'white' status upon Mexicans in this roundabout manner is unclear. In truth, the legal classification of a Mexican's race was most likely arrived at inadvertently. The majority of Texas segregation laws, it should be noted, were passed in the period 1889-1907, at the same time as similar legislation was appearing in states throughout the South. Instead of taking place in isolation, therefore, the introduction of legalised Jim Crow in Texas was part a broader movement, the general aim of which was to impose strict segregation on the region's black population.[32] This explains, in part, the very precise wording of Jim Crow legislation, because any ambiguity over the meaning of terms like 'colored' or 'Negro' might have provided blacks with the

loopholes necessary to evade such laws.

Admittedly, Texas law makers might have deemed it necessary to proscribe the 'Mexican' in the same way as they had the 'Negro,' but Mexicans as a group maintained a relatively low profile in the state during the periods of most prolific legislation over segregation. In other words, most Jim Crow laws in Texas were enacted before 1910 and therefore before the level of immigration from Mexico began to rise sharply. The accompanying concern over the huge Mexican presence only became widespread in the 1920s and it was not until 1930 that the Census Bureau decided to re-categorise Mexicans as 'nonwhite' (see Chapter 2). There is evidence, however, that this shift in attitudes towards Mexicans was beginning to influence the form of newly introduced Jim Crow legislation. A 1927 law, enabling Texas cities to impose residential segregation, conferred upon municipal governments 'the full power to define the negro race, negro community, white race and white community.'[33] While few local authorities would have attempted to classify Mexicans as part of the 'negro race,' they were at least permitted to deny the group inclusion within the 'white community.' As far as Jim Crow was concerned, therefore, Mexicans were beginning to find themselves in a legal no-man's-land: not lumped together with blacks, but liable to be segregated from whites.

An area in which Mexicans do seem to have escaped *de jure* segregation by default is that of interracial marriage. In Texas, the miscegenation laws dated back

to 1882 and as a result were far less comprehensive than those of other states.[34] Some southern states, like North and South Carolina, prohibited marriage or sexual relations between whites and either blacks or Native Americans, but in Texas it was only persons of 'European blood' - a term which, curiously, would not apply to the vast majority of Mexicans - and 'African blood' that were affected by such laws. At the turn of the century, a new wave of miscegenation laws appeared, mainly in the Pacific coast and southwestern states such as California, Oregon, and Arizona. Largely in response to immigration from Asia, these states banned the Chinese, Japanese and other groups from marrying whites.[35] The failure of Texas to outlaw intermarriage between Mexicans and whites was not linked to any declining interest in the subject, but, as Victor S. Clark discovered, in the early years of the 20th century there seemed little need for action. 'Intermarriage is rare,' observed Clark, 'and when it occurs seems to be a subject for apology.'[36] Another reason why the state probably did not revise its miscegenation laws is related to the close political and economic ties maintained between Texas and Mexico - any infringement of Mexican immigrants' rights would have met with official protests from below the Rio Grande (see Chapter 5).

During the 1920s, there were even attempts to introduce anti-miscegenation laws in northern states, a movement linked to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in that

region.[37] In Austin, too, sexual relations between blacks and whites became a prominent issue in this decade. In 1921, various Klan processions passed through the streets of Austin, with hooded participants carrying placards with such slogans as 'No more mixed breed' and 'No more mule niggers.'[38] The local branch of the organisation claimed that its central purpose was 'upholding the law, especially the Texas law against the co-habitation of white men and negro women.' According to the *Austin American* such relations between the races had been 'the subject of considerable comment and warnings were given against the practice.'[39]

Although the Texas miscegenation laws seemed to make no provision for any groups other than African-Americans and whites of European ancestry, on a number of occasions they were invoked in cases involving Mexicans. In November 1922, a black man was indicted by an Austin grand jury on the charge of 'miscegenation, or intermarriage of the races' for 'marrying a Mexican woman.'[40] A case of an opposite nature arose in February 1924, when a Mexican man accused of abducting and then marrying a 13-year-old white girl was arrested by the Travis County Sheriff's Office. Although kidnapping would have seemed the most appropriate charge, it was announced that the Mexican would face indictment mainly for 'miscegenation,' but 'possibly other charges.'[41] Above all, these two episodes illustrate the confusion that existed over the exact interpretation and application of Jim Crow laws with

regards to Mexicans; a problem which for the local authorities was compounded by the increasing Mexican presence. By way of contrast, it is worth mentioning that despite the Klan's apparent concern over and awareness of liaisons between white men and black women, there is no similar evidence to suggest that official charges were ever pressed in such cases.

It is only when the extent of *de facto* - as opposed to strictly *de jure* - segregation is considered that a clearer comparison of black and Mexican experiences can be drawn, although even here numerous exceptions and variations have to be taken into account. Segregation in Austin took one of two forms; it was either a simple matter of keeping whites and nonwhites apart, in which case Mexicans were lumped together with African-Americans, or else a more complex three-way separation of the races.

Although it was less common, African-Americans and Mexicans (both being nonwhite groups) were sometimes treated like a single entity when segregated from whites. The most noteworthy incidence of this was in the area of public health care provision. At City Hospital, an annex - known as the 'Old Building' - was maintained for 'the care of negro and mexican patients.' Dr. Samuel A. Woolsey, the city physician, justified segregating 'the different races' on the grounds that it was 'necessary for the proper care of our patients.'[42] As well as being segregated, the hospital facilities available to blacks and Mexicans were grossly inferior

to those for white patients. In June 1917, the Old Building was condemned by state fire-insurance inspectors who, according to Dr. Woolsey, recommended that it should be demolished. Similarly, Dr. C. H. Brownlee, Woolsey's successor, declared the site 'unsuitable for hospital uses.'[43] Among other defects, wards in the Old Hospital were overcrowded, infested with rodents and parasites, dimly lit and lacking in adequate ventilation, while plaster falling from the damp walls and ceilings posed a constant hazard to nonwhite patients. In 1928, the city council finally promised to improve hospital provision for nonwhites, but it warned Austin's white voters that if the necessary funds were not forthcoming 'the negroes will be moved in with the white patients.'[44] Although blacks were the group that whites most objected to sharing facilities with, this should not be construed as an inclination to desegregate Mexicans. From the outset, municipal planners favoured replacing the Old Building with a new 'negro and Mexican hospital,' which is exactly what the city council decided to do.[45]

As we have already seen, residential segregation generally took the form of a three-way separation and this pattern tended to be replicated elsewhere. Schools and churches, two social institutions that play an important part in most people's lives and around which a significant level of social interaction takes place, were both segregated in a trilateral manner. Of the denominations represented in Austin, the Baptists,

Methodist Episcopalians (South), Catholics, Presbyterians, and Pentacostalists, all provided for Mexicans to attend separate places of worship. By 1929, an independent Mexican congregation had appeared, known as the Assemblies of God and tended by the Reverend J. D. Castellanos.[46] Religion also played a central role in the lives of Austin's black inhabitants, who it was regularly conceded had 'more churches in proportion to their numbers than the white residents.'[47] The number of African-American churches rose from twenty in 1916 to thirty-two in 1929, with the Baptists being the best represented denomination. Reflecting the physical distance separating the races in their religious worship, most black and 'Mexican' churches were situated close to their respective residential enclaves in the highly segregated district of East Austin. Segregation in public education followed the same tri-ethnic pattern as the churches, with white, black, and Mexican children all being expected to attend different schools from each other (see Chapter 6).[48] Between 1927 and 1931, *de facto* segregation was extended to recreational activities, when the city council provided blacks and Mexicans with their own separate playgrounds, while continuing to exclude the two groups from white leisure facilities. Significantly, the segregated parks - Rosewood for blacks and Zaragosa for Mexicans - were both located in East Austin.[49]

Generally speaking, then, the social and community life of Austin's largest minority groups was highly

segregated. In the neighbourhoods where they lived, the schools and churches they attended, and the parks where they went for recreation and relaxation, contact between blacks and Mexicans – or between either group and whites – was minimised. It is only when nonwhites ventured out of these segregated worlds that dissimilarities and variations in treatment become apparent.

Before considering the ways in which *de facto* segregation for Mexicans was not the same as for blacks, it is worth noting that even for the latter group there were exceptions to the rules and situations in which some uncertainty prevailed over whether the colour line would or would not be drawn. However, it was the whites, and not blacks, who determined on which occasions the Jim Crow barriers ought to be lowered. The Austin city ordinance governing segregation on streetcars, for instance, stated that its provisions should 'not be construed so as to prohibit nurses from riding in the same compartment with their employer or charges, or so as to prohibit officers from riding in the same compartment with prisoners in their charge.'[50] As William Pickens observed, such laws existed for and at the convenience of whites, because 'a white man who objects to a colored person who rides in the other end of the car may have a colored servant with his family in his end of the car, and this colored servant may sleep in his house and be a wet-nurse for his baby.'[51] According to the *Austin American*, however, the management and customers of the Stephen F.

Austin coffee shop preferred a strict observance of Jim Crow conventions. In June 1925, when a young white couple, accompanied by a black nurse for their child, sat at a table, the 'unusual sight' immediately attracted the attention of the restaurant's other patrons. Before the group were even served, the coffee shop manager requested that the black woman leave. At this point, the nurse's female employer began 'bawling out' the manager. 'Why, I have taken her with me every place I go and besides, I must have her to feed the child,' insisted the white woman. To which the manager bluntly replied: 'Well, you can't bring that negro woman in here.' Finally bowing to local custom, the couple and their nurse left the coffee shop, after which 'the diners proceeded to finish their lunch.'[52]

The whimsical fashion in which Jim Crow was often enforced, as well as the fact that customs regarding the interaction of whites and blacks were more firmly established, meant that Mexicans faced a great deal of uncertainty over how they would be treated. 'Such matters as equal rights to enter theatres, restaurants, hotels, and other public places,' noted O. Douglas Weeks, 'are largely controlled by local customs, which vary greatly from place to place, depending on the local relationships of the two races.'[53] This point is illustrated by another incident concerning a restaurant. In February 1926, A. P. Carrillo, the Mexican consul-general to Texas, made a formal protest to Governor Miriam Ferguson after he had been refused service at a

restaurant in Granger, a small town situated about thirty miles northeast of Austin. Within minutes of addressing a gathering of Mexicans on the need to respect and abide by local laws, Carrillo and his entourage adjourned to a restaurant to eat. However, the restaurant owner refused to seat the Mexicans in the dining room, along with the white customers, but offered to serve them in the kitchen. Insulted by this rebuttal, the group travelled on to Austin where they encountered no difficulty in being served at a hotel.[54] Nonetheless, this episode should not be interpreted as implying that all Mexicans faced less discrimination in Austin. Because it was the state capital, and a place regularly frequented by dignitaries and businessmen from below the Rio Grande, the city's white community were more likely to draw a distinction between upper-class Mexicans - whom, for political reasons alone, it was important not to offend - and the more numerous immigrants of the *peon* class. The conventions governing the treatment of the latter group were probably no different in Austin than they were in Granger. In July 1923, for example, a Mexican found guilty of murder, but declared insane by a Georgetown jury, was turned away by the state insane asylum at Austin. 'Mexicans are no longer admitted to the asylum here,' stated Dr. John Preston, superintendent of the institution, who suggested that the prisoner be taken to the asylum at San Antonio where Mexicans were still allowed entry.[55]

During the 1920s, Mexican immigrants found that - as their numbers increased and nativist animosity mounted - the colour line was more frequently invoked against them. In 1908, Victor S. Clark had observed that 'Mexican immigrants ride in white [street]cars in Texas, and might eat at the same table with Americans,' although beyond that there was 'little social intermingling.'[56] Almost two decades on, Max Handman found that the recent influx of Mexican immigrants was producing widespread 'confusion.' Handman, a professor at the University of Texas, related how it was not uncommon for Mexicans to enter streetcars and be told by conductors 'to sit among the negroes.' 'At the same time,' said Handman, 'we have a curious loss of perspective in the contact between the races.' Referring specifically to the fraternisation of white girls with Mexican boys, he noted how, in response, a hardening of attitudes was taking place among the older generation of whites.[57]

If a principal purpose of Jim Crow was to maximise the group isolation of Austin's African-American and Mexican inhabitants, the field of popular entertainment provided some of the rare occasions upon which racial barriers - while not abandoned altogether - were comparatively relaxed. Admittedly, Austin's theatres and cinemas were segregated, all of which catered to either blacks or whites, but never both.[58] In June 1920, however, the Austin Lion's Club announced that the 'peanut gallery' of a white theatre would be set aside

for any local blacks interested in attending a forthcoming minstrel show.[59] Similarly, blacks and Mexicans regularly encouraged white attendance at some of their social gatherings. One of the largest annual events for the African-American community was the St. John's Encampment Baptist meeting, which for a week in late July attracted thousands of black Baptists from all over Texas and further afield. On the final day a 'white people's night' was often held and many prominent whites would attend in order to be entertained by the Ebenezer Baptist Church's 'Jubilee Singers,' or to hear a sermon from the travelling preacher Black Billy Sunday.[60] The Mexican festival held each year in Austin, to celebrate Mexico's Independence Day, was also well attended by local whites.[61]

On various occasions, therefore, Austin's white inhabitants saw it as either necessary or desirable to breach the divide between themselves and the nonwhite communities, but how did they justify the maintenance of racial demarcations at all other times? When interviewed by the *Austin Statesman* in August 1919, Texas Secretary of State C. D. Mims gave a traditional, conservative apology for Jim Crow. 'As a matter of fact,' said Mims, 'these segregation laws as to public transportation and places of amusement were framed for the protection of the negro and to prevent race disturbances.'[62] Jim Crow laws, concurred a *Statesman* editorial, 'are protective of order and of the welfare of both races.'[63] In 1929, responding to the news

that Mrs. De Priest, the wife of a black member of the U.S. Congress had been entertained at the White House, an editorial in the *Austin American* revealed a less benevolent reasoning behind Jim Crow. After criticising Mrs. Hoover, the President's wife, for her actions, the *American* claimed in defiance: 'social equality of [the] races will never come south of the Mason and Dixon line.'[64] Resentment of blacks improving their status, argued Charles S. Johnson, was at the root of such demands that 'there must be no social equality' and, as far as whites were concerned, Jim Crow's real purpose was 'keeping the Negro in his place.'[65] Similar forces were at work in shaping conditions for Mexican immigrants. As Max Handman observed:

> In the main we can say that the Mexican has been keeping to himself, but as he begins to share more and more in the occupations and activities of his American neighbor - even in a subordinate capacity - the situation is becoming strained.[66]

Despite the claims of white conservatives, the protection afforded by Jim Crow conventions was never apparent to those who found themselves on the receiving end. Having been 'jim crowed,' blacks and Mexicans were usually left with a sense of injustice rather than gratitude.[67] In a scathing condemnation of Jim Crow practices, Consul-General Carrillo made a comparison with Mexico - a country continually depicted as

uncivilised and dangerous in the American press - that was highly unfavourable to Texas. 'We don't treat a representative of a friendly nation in any such way,' said Carrillo, referring to the incident at Granger, 'nor do we even show such discourtesy to any gentleman, no matter what his race.'[68] William Pickens, another victim of Texan social customs, attempted to rationalise the motivation behind segregation. 'The Jim Crow car,' suggested Pickens, was 'not an institution merely to "separate the races",' but 'a contrivance to humiliate and harass the colored people.' Dismissing the defence of segregation as 'a bona-fide effort to preserve mere racial integrity on a plane of justice,' he asserted: 'The inspiration of Jim Crow is a feeling of caste and a desire to "keep in it's place," that is, to degrade, the weaker group.'[69]

As vociferous as certain members of the African-American and Mexican communities were in their criticism of Jim Crow, the vast majority complied with local conventions and few harboured any hope of conditions improving in the foreseeable future. In January 1918, *The Herald* recommended an accommodationist approach as the only way forward for blacks. 'The Negro race is on trial in Austin,' it declared, implying that only through self-improvement and white patronage would African-Americans ever aspire to the full privileges of American citizenship. In desperation, the paper asked that if the 'Negro who cries out against the unjust discriminatory laws of the land' also refused to 'line

up with the best white people' when the opportunity arose, 'then under heaven who is to blame for the Jim Crow conditions?'[70] Likewise, according to O. Douglas Weeks, Mexican-American leaders in Texas believed that the 'rectification of such discrimination is not usually subject to legislation, and can only be brought about by a change in community attitudes and customs.'[71] Emory Bogardus agreed that Mexican immigrants had 'not been aggressive in crowding in where it is clear that they are not wanted,' but felt that these accommodationist tactics were self-defeating. 'They have felt isolated, apart from Americans,' noted Bogardus, 'and have not received any encouragement in leaping the chasm.'[72]

Clearly, it is difficult to generalise about the form and extent of segregation existing for either African-Americans or Mexicans in Austin during 1917-1929. Undeniably, blacks were the primary target of *de jure* segregation, which was still imposed vigorously and showed little sign of relenting. The position of Mexicans was more uncertain and varied considerably; on the railroads they might travel on the same car as whites, but in City Hospital they shared the same segregated facilities as blacks. Nonetheless, in all of the most important areas of life, such as housing, education, and even religion, a three-way separation of the races existed. Moreover, in the case of African-Americans and Mexicans alike, segregation was imposed for the same reasons. As with other caste systems, the one existing in Austin depended upon customs and

institutions that symbolised, as well as compelled adherence to, rigid social and racial demarcations - Jim Crow conventions fulfilled both of these functions.

C. Police Treatment of Nonwhite Groups

More often than not, the task of ensuring strict observance of Jim Crow conventions was left to the local law enforcement agencies. This meant that, for officers of both the Travis County Sheriff's Office and the Austin Police Department, social control of nonwhite groups was as much a part of their work as crime prevention and detection. Indeed, from a black or Mexican point of view, it was hard to differentiate between the police acting in their capacity as upholders of the law or defenders of white supremacy. This blending of roles had important ramifications for African-Americans and Mexicans in Austin, because they were policed more heavily and shown less forebearance than the white population.

In January 1918, William J. Morris, Austin's chief of police, declared that it was his purpose to ensure that 'no injustice, intentionally or unintentionally, is done the humblest citizen regardless of race or color.' For blacks and Mexicans, despite being the most encouraging statement made by any local law enforcement officer in the period 1917-1929, it was an empty gesture. As sincere as Morris might have been, he

failed to see the impossibility of promising a 'square deal for all' at the hands of the police, and yet at the same time upholding Jim Crow laws and conventions that discriminated against nonwhites.[73] In contrast, few of Morris's successors ever attempted to keep up the pretence that no regard was paid to 'race or color' in police work. During the 1920s, the extent to which local law enforcement agencies were controlled by white supremacists became fully apparent. In November 1921, a special grand jury called to investigate the activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Travis County reported that the county sheriff admitted joining the organisation.[74] J. D. Copeland, superintendent and highest ranking officer of the Austin police force, was also accused - with some justification - of links with the Klan.[75] When asked by the grand jury whether he was a member of or knew anything about the activities of the Austin branch of the Klan, Copeland repeatedly refused to answer and was eventually remanded and sent to the county jail for contempt of court.[76]

Such obvious signs that law enforcement agencies were infiltrated by the Klan did not augur well for blacks and Mexicans expecting even-handed treatment from local police officers. Equally disheartening, however, were the utterances and behaviour of Charles H. Hamby, a Travis constable who stood for election as county sheriff in 1922 on an anti-Klan platform. Although he considered it improper for policemen to be members of a secret organisation like the Klan, Hamby saw no

contradiction between promising on the one hand 'the enforcement of the law by impartial officers, to all alike,' and on the other to 'keep negroes in their places.'[77] To shed light on Hamby's conception of his official duties and to illustrate the way in which blacks were often treated by police officers, it is worth considering his one-man campaign to stamp out 'drinking fountain racial equality' in the summer of 1921. On 9 August, after he had 'knocked down' a black man for drinking out of the public fountain on Congress Avenue, Hamby was awarded a brand new stetson by an admiring state senator who happened to witness the incident. Claiming to have assaulted over a dozen blacks for the same offence in recent weeks, Hamby boastfully asserted: 'As far as I am concerned there won't be any negroes drink out of that fountain when I happen to be around.' Bolstered by further displays of popular support, Hamby even took the matter up before the city council, requesting that a separate fountain for blacks be erected on East Sixth Street.[78]

While white policemen seemed to revel in their role as guardians of white supremacy, the presence of African-American and Mexican officers on the Austin police force did nothing to offset the effects of such racist tendencies. Blacks and Mexicans were both represented by at least one full-time city patrolman, as well as numerous special policemen who were usually appointed for specific events, such as the Mexican Independence celebrations.[79] It is evident from

Austin Police Department records for the 1920s that black and Mexican officers played a subordinate role within the force. Patrolmen like the African-American, Enos Baker, or the Mexican, Jose Acevedo, were primarily employed to save white officers the trouble of walking the beat in nonwhite neighbourhoods. Under no circumstances would Baker or Acevedo have been permitted to arrest a white person, and both were usually assigned to dealing with only the least important cases cropping up amongst members of their respective racial groups.[80] Despite such limited powers, nonwhite officers were no less prone to acting as the brutal instruments of the law than their white counterparts. For instance, in September 1924, Oscar Washington, an African-American, received fatal injuries from a blow to the head from the revolver of Ananias James, the arresting black patrolman. In spite of the fact that Washington was unarmed, Police Commissioner Harry Nolen conducted a speedy inquiry into the incident and concluded that there were no grounds to justify suspending James, let alone pressing charges.[81] Unhappy with the outcome of this internal inquiry, Washington's father filed a charge of murder against James, but no conviction was ever secured.[82]

To fully comprehend the oppressive role played by law enforcement agencies in Austin, it is necessary to examine the nature and extent of police victimisation of nonwhite groups. While the local police often turned a blind eye to crimes committed by whites, they were

exceptionally diligent in seeking out black and Mexican transgressors of the law. In a study of criminal cases appearing before district courts in 1930, Professor Roscoe C. Martin, a specialist in government studies at the University of Texas, revealed that blacks and Mexicans were both the targets of undue police attention. Martin's survey is particularly useful because he used a sample drawn from twenty-five Texas counties which, in terms of total population, urban-rural distribution, racial composition, and almost every other demographic detail, represented a miniature version of the state as a whole, scaled down to one-tenth of its size. More importantly, while the survey was intended to portray statewide trends, cases from Austin and Travis County made up about eleven percent of the entire sample.[83]

An irrefutable conclusion to be drawn from Martin's findings is that African-Americans and Mexicans were more likely to be arrested and dragged before the courts than Anglo-Americans. Blacks, for instance, made up 23% of all cases reported, but only 14.7% of the state's population, compared with whites, who made up only 66.6% of the defendants surveyed and 73.6% of the state population. Only Mexicans, who accounted for 10.4% of defendants in the survey, seem to have faced charges in proportion to their percentage of the state population, which was 11.7%. This data can be interpreted as meaning one of two things; either blacks committed crimes more frequently than whites, or, as Martin

suggested, they were being 'prosecuted with greater energy than simple justice demands.'[84] As Charles S. Johnson found when investigating crime rates in other parts of the United States, black offenders were far more likely to be arrested and have charges pressed against them than whites.[85] This was most evident in the area of petty crimes, such as theft. Martin's research showed that 20.1% of Anglo-American arrests were for theft - a fraction below the sample average of 20.6% - while almost a quarter (24.4%) of African-Americans arrested by the police faced similar charges, indicating that even for minor offences blacks were shown less leniency than whites.[86]

Although crime rates were not as high for Mexicans as they were for African-Americans, the former appear to have been arrested far more indiscriminately than any other group. Indeed, in cases of theft, law officers frequently arrested the first Mexican suspect they could find. For this reason, the acquittal rate for Mexicans charged with theft was, at 25%, almost twice as high as for Anglo-Americans (13.3%) and over four times as high as the rate for blacks (6.1%). Even more staggering is the record of wrongful arrests of Mexicans in murder cases. No less than two-thirds of all Mexicans arrested for murder were found not guilty, which was triple the acquittal rate for both Anglo-Americans and African-Americans facing the same charge.[87] It might be argued that these figures merely suggest that in cases of wrongful arrest Mexicans could often secure justice

in the courts, whereas innocent blacks were likely to be convicted. In some instances this may well have been the case, but other facts also suggest that Mexicans were often arrested in a haphazard fashion. It is noteworthy, for instance, that while the proportions of first offenders among Anglos and African-Americans were - at 66% and 67.1%, respectively - almost identical, among Mexicans the rate was significantly higher, at 75%.[88] This information can be interpreted in different ways; either crime was more widespread among Mexicans - which it has already been shown was not the case - or, once again, the police were showing less leniency towards a nonwhite group by prosecuting larger numbers of first offenders, instead of letting them off with a warning.

A perusal of some of the policing methods used in Austin and Travis County will illustrate how the disproportionate arrest rates for African-Americans and Mexicans were arrived at. Either individually or as a team, the sheriff's department and the city police used to organise raids on gambling dens, suspected bootleggers, or just pool halls with a reputation for being frequented by so-called 'vags' and 'loafers.' These raids, which took place periodically, fulfilled two functions: their immediate purpose was to stamp out crime and round-up some of the most notorious criminals; more importantly, however, they acted as a warning to other offenders and would-be offenders to be on their guard or risk facing the same fate. As Constable Hamby

warned in his annual campaigns to provide cotton pickers for local farmers: 'work or . . . you'll have to do your loafing in jail.'[89] Invariably, campaigns to 'clean-up' the city were launched by police raids on specifically black or Mexican targets. In December 1923, for instance, local law enforcers initiated 'a determined campaign to be waged . . . against vagrants and idlers among negroes and whites alike.' Despite this declaration of even-handed justice, the first series of raids were all aimed at African-American frequented domino halls on East Sixth Street and the only arrests made, more than thirty in total, were all of blacks.[90] At other times, Mexican gambling dens were also targeted in the same way.[91]

Similarly, Texas's prohibition and anti-narcotic laws were enforced more vigorously where African-Americans and Mexicans were concerned. It is no coincidence that the first person in Travis County to be convicted for breaking the Dean prohibition law was black, because bootlegging raids were usually aimed at this group - in spite of the fact that African-Americans in Texas were way behind either Anglos or Mexicans in the proportion facing charges for liquor offences.[92] Nor is it coincidental that a Mexican was the first person in the county convicted on a charge of trafficking narcotics. Although signs of a drug problem in Austin were visible as early as 1923, it was not until the end of the decade that a concerted effort was made to stamp out the trade in marijuana. This was

mostly because the authorities and the public perceived marijuana use as only being practiced 'among Mexicans and negroes.'[93] Despite evidence that marijuana use was spreading, and not just among Mexicans, whenever the police did take steps to combat the problem, their activities were almost entirely confined to the Mexican districts of town.[94] In December 1928, the city council finally had to face up to the fact that drug abuse was a community-wide problem - and not just confined to Mexicans and blacks - when Raymond D. Thorp, the chief of police, reported that white high school students had been found using marijuana. Significantly, only then was a city ordinance passed banning the cultivation, selling or smoking of marijuana and related substances.[95]

Undeniably, African-Americans and Mexicans were arrested for crimes that whites could sometimes commit with impunity. On top of this, the police tended to be slower in responding to calls of crimes committed in nonwhite neighbourhoods.[96] While white neighbourhoods were afforded the full protection of the law, crime prevention in black and Mexican districts was usually left up to the inhabitants. Black leaders frequently organised campaigns to combat crime waves in African-American districts, but only on rare occasions were they able to enlist the assistance of the local authorities.[97] It is little wonder, therefore, that to nonwhites the police were more familiar in their role as oppressor than protector.

D. The Courts: Doing Justice to Race

If African-Americans and Mexicans were harassed and discriminated against by local law enforcement agencies, they certainly faired no better in the courts. Compared with Anglo-Americans, blacks and Mexicans faced less sympathetic hearings, speedier trials, and harsher sentences. As Roscoe C. Martin remarked, the latter two groups were 'familiar with a sterner brand of justice.'[98]

At a 1927 Texas CIC conference, Galloway Calhoun, a state attorney, declared that 'Negroes usually can get justice in courts of record, but rarely in "fee" courts.'[99] The term 'fee' courts refers to local and municipal bodies which dealt with minor or uncontested cases, while county and district 'courts of record' considered more serious offences, especially those requiring trial by jury. While Calhoun's opinion of the latter was over-optimistic, his assessment of the way African-Americans were generally treated by the courts was equally applicable to Mexicans, if not more so. As the attitudes of local judges indicate, a certain amount of prejudgement took place even before nonwhite defendants entered the courtroom. In April 1925, Judge Frank R. Tannehill, who presided over a municipal court in Austin, remarked:

> Inasmuch as the majority of justice court cases come from the colored and Mexican citizenship, the delver

> into strange coincidences or psychological influences or heredity tendencies will have his field of research pretty well mapped out for him.[100]

If Tannehill's views were typical, then nonwhite defendants were not to expect the courts to give much consideration to mitigating circumstances.

African-American and Mexican defendants could take even less comfort from the knowledge that they would usually be facing an all-white jury. The hostility encountered by nonwhites is illustrated by an episode that took place in February 1922. In a case of child desertion being heard by the Travis County Court, the black defendant declared that he would act as his own defence, at which point a white juror refused to take part in the proceedings and was excused by the judge.[101] After the reappearance of the Ku Klux Klan in Austin during the early twenties, the impartiality of juries was even more open to question. In October 1921, the white defence attorney for an African-American accused of burglary created a minor sensation at the Criminal District Court when, in a routine questioning of prospective jurors, he began asking them if they were members of the Ku Klux Klan. When the first venireman refused to reply to such questioning, the defence used their prerogative to challenge his use as a juror and he was excused.[102] After this incident, observed the *Austin American*, it became 'quite the fashion' to quiz

jurors on membership of the Klan.[103]

To a limited extent, this imbalance was offset by the fact that Austin blacks and Mexicans were actually called upon to do jury service. However, nonwhite jurors tended to preside only over cases that involved nonwhite defendants and were of a less than serious nature.[104] With only a token presence, the influence that African-American or Mexican jurors might have exerted over the dispensing of justice was minimal. Moreover, the calling of venires was usually manipulated by the local authorities, so that only a few nonwhite jurors were called at any one time.[105] It was with some surprise, therefore, that the *American* reported on a six-man jury composed of four blacks, a Mexican, and a white. According to the court attendant, it was the first time that a Travis County jury had been composed of so many nonwhites.[106]

On the rare occasions that nonwhites did sit as jurors on important cases, the matter did not go unchallenged. In November 1923, a black juryman was picked to hear the case of two white men accused of murder and for whom the prosecution were requesting the death penalty. The district attorney at the time was Dan Moody, who later went on to become state attorney general in 1924 and governor of Texas in 1926. Once the black juror had been chosen, Moody told the court: 'I believe there are enough white men in this country to do jury service and so long as I am district attorney I am willing at all times to discharge any negro drawn on the

jury panel.' 'If the defendants want a trial before a jury of their peers,' continued Moody, '. . . they can accept the offer of the state to excuse negroes from the panel.' Displaying astonishment at Moody's announcement, and concerned not to make such a public display of discrimination, the defence attornies raised no objections to the black juror being appointed.[107] Similarly, it was not uncommon for Mexicans in Texas to be refused as jurors on account of their ethnic origin, although there is no record of such an incident occurring in Austin.[108] However, because of the subtle means used to manipulate venires in Travis County, this absence of evidence proves little.

Roscoe Martin's findings show that procedural devices of the courts were often used to the detriment of nonwhite defendants. For instance, it was a distinct advantage for defendants to obtain a continuance, yet these were only permitted in 11.3% of cases involving African-Americans and 11.5% of Mexicans, compared with 17.2% of Anglo-Americans. When it came to a change of venue being granted, Anglo-Americans were the only group so favoured; in other words, for blacks and Mexicans there was no means of escaping hostile or biased local juries.[109] A speedy trial was also to the disadvantage of defendants, because it gave defence attornies less time in which to prepare their case. On this score, Mexicans fared worse than any other group, waiting on average 124 days from the time they were charged to the trial being held. For blacks and whites,

the wait was 142 and 135 days respectively, although there is little evidence as to why the former were more favoured. It might be because blacks were more often accused of violent crimes and, especially if the victim was white, would have been taken out of town for safe-keeping, thereby delaying the legal process. For example, 12.2% of African-American defendants were charged with murder, compared with 3.1% of Mexicans and 1.5% of Anglo-Americans.[110]

To gain an impression of how these factors would have affected the justice meted out to individual blacks or Mexicans, it is worth considering the case of Homer Toney, an African-American charged with murder. On 6 February 1923, H. C. Greer, an Austin grain merchant, was - according to his statement - shot and seriously wounded when attempting to apprehend a black burglar. The police organised a dragnet; blacks were rounded up in an indiscriminate fashion and dragged before Greer who, now on his death bed, identified Homer Toney as the assailant. Initially, Toney was charged with assault with intent to kill and, following 'talk of mob violence' in Austin, was removed by the sheriff to Bexar County jail for protection. When Greer died a few days later, the charge was changed to murder. It soon became evident that Toney would not receive a fair trial. Not only had the case attracted considerable public attention, drawing some of the largest crowds of spectators ever witnessed at an Austin courthouse, but Dan Moody's assistant in the prosecution was John E.

Shelton, brother-in-law of the murder victim. Various attempts were made to speed up the proceedings and arrange an early trial. Indeed, the first venire was so hurriedly called that the proper procedures were not followed and it had to be disbanded. Despite the fact that defence attornies had only been employed two weeks before the date set for trial, Judge James R. Hamilton overruled motions for a continuance and during the actual trial late night sessions were held in order to speed matters up. Protesting his innocence from the very start, Toney argued that it was a case of mistaken identity and except for Greer's statement there was no other evidence against him. Even so, Toney only narrowly escaped being found guilty, when the jury were discharged after reaching a deadlock of seven to five in favour of conviction. After two months in jail, Toney was released on a bail of $5,000, with no guarantee that he might not face another trial at some later date.[111]

The role played by the prosecution in the Toney case is particularly worthy of attention. At the choosing of the jury, Moody declared: 'Where a man is on trial for his life, white or black man, he is entitled to a fair and impartial trial.' Nonetheless, Moody made no insistence that black jurors be appointed; presumably he saw no reason to offer Toney the privilege of being tried by his 'peers.' Indeed, both Moody and, for obvious reasons, Shelton insisted upon the death penalty for Toney. They were so convinced of Toney's guilt and - especially in Moody's case - so eager to obtain a

verdict popular with the white community, that the two prosecutor's even tried to conceal important evidence. When a gun identical to the suspected murder weapon was found at the home of a white woman, Mrs. Alma Bishop, all the evidence seemed to be pointing away from Toney. Bishop claimed that a white man, Benny Briggs, had carried out the killing in revenge for Greer's 'treating her wrong.' John Shelton had no intention of letting this new information reach either the press or the jury, so he had Bishop detained in the county jail, claiming that she was suffering from a nervous disturbance. To counter this setback, Moody attempted to stir up racist emotions in the courtroom by attacking Leon Keys, a black defence witness. Keys, who had taken the stand, allegedly replied in an arrogant way to Moody's questioning and the district attorney responded by striking the witness over the head with a chair. 'When his anger had cooled down,' reported the *American*, 'Mr. Moody apologized at length to the court, explaining that he was a southerner and insolence from a negro called up [in]voluntary action.' Incidentally, although Briggs was eventually charged with Greer's murder, he was released on a bond of $2,000, pending a trial that never took place.[112]

In order to verify that Toney's case, instead of being just an isolated event, was representative of many black and Mexican defendants' experiences, it is necessary only to examine the data relating to judgements handed down and sentences meted out by the

courts. Admittedly, Mexicans may not have been mistreated in open court in the way that a black witness like Leon Keys was, but they certainly received no favours either. In 1934, when the legal specialist Andrew A. Bruce surveyed the past record of Texas district courts, he concluded that 'though less of leniency is shown to the Negro than to the Caucasian, still less is shown to the Mexican.'[113] According to Roscoe Martin's analysis of all the cases in his 1930 sample, covering the whole range of charges, he found that 88.5% of Mexicans were found guilty as charged, compared with 86.8% of African-Americans and 81.7% of Anglo-Americans. This disparity is even more apparent in the figures relating to specific categories of crime, especially the more serious offences. In rape cases, a staggering 100% of Mexican defendants were found guilty, compared with 75% of blacks and only 58.3% of whites. In cases involving violent crimes, African-Americans tended to fare worse, while Anglos as usual were treated fairly leniently. For instance, when charged with assault to commit murder, 84.6% of blacks were found guilty, 72.7% of Mexicans and 33.3% of whites. The extremely low figure for the latter group is accounted for by the fact that 58.4% of whites charged with assault to murder were allowed to plead guilty of a lesser offence; this option was granted to only 18% of Mexicans and not one African-American.[114]

It would be wrong to interpret these figures as meaning that vast numbers of innocent nonwhites were

being wrongfully found guilty, which undeniably must have happened on occasion, but rather that guilty whites could generally expect a favourable judgement from juries. Texas juries were - and still are, to a certain extent - notorious for taking an extremely flexible view of what constituted self-defence in a murder case.[115] A typical example is the case of Oscar Wise, a white man, who in September 1924 murdered a black motorist, John Sneed, in broad daylight on a busy Austin street. Wise and Sneed had got into an argument when their cars nearly collided on a country lane. When Sneed asked Wise what he was 'going to do about it,' the latter threatened to take revenge and returned home to collect his gun. Later the same day, Wise saw Sneed driving his car along East Sixth Street and began shooting at him. In court, Wise claimed that he shot Sneed 'in fear of his own life,' despite the fact that the latter was driving a vehicle at the time, had no weapon in his hand, and died of wounds before he could even get out of the car. Nonetheless, after a week-long trial, the jury was out for only two hours before delivering a verdict of not guilty.[116] Had the races of slayer and victim been reversed, it is highly unlikely that the plea of self-defence would have been taken so seriously by the jury. Indeed, this plea was far more popular with white defendants than nonwhite, suggesting that the former group had greater expectations of it rendering a favourable verdict. In 1932, a study carried out by Carl M. Rosenquist showed that in cases of manslaughter,

murder, and assault with intent to commit murder, 20.2% of whites pleaded self-defence, compared with 13.7% of blacks and only 2.9% of Mexicans.[117]

Not only were African-Americans and Mexicans more likely to be found guilty, but they also had harsher penalties imposed upon them by the courts. Judges were far more concerned to make an example of nonwhite than white offenders, even for minor crimes, such as petty theft or breaches of the prohibition laws. It is noteworthy that, when surveying defendants facing the whole range of charges, 16.8% of Anglo-Americans found guilty of offences had no penalty imposed upon them at all, compared with 12.3% of blacks and 8.3% of Mexicans. Even when they were punished, whites usually escaped with either a fine, a short jail sentence, or a combination of both. In contrast, over half of all nonwhite defendants - 51.1% of African-Americans and 52.1% of Mexicans - could expect to be sentenced to terms in the state penitentiary, compared with about two-fifths (40.1%) of all Anglos.[118] As well as the fact that greater leniency was shown to whites, the handing out of stiffer sentences to nonwhites often had a deliberate purpose. Blacks, for instance, were punished more severely if their offences were interpreted as constituting a threat to white supremacy. To illustrate this it is worth considering two cases of aggravated assault - both committed by African-Americans and both stabbings of a particularly vicious nature - which occurred within a few months of each other in late

1921 to early 1922. The only significant difference between the two incidents was that in one the victim was a white man and the other a black man, yet, in the former the guilty party received a two-year prison sentence and in the latter only six months.[119]

It is clear that when African-Americans or Mexicans faced judge and jury in an Austin courtroom, the odds were stacked against them receiving either an impartial hearing or a lenient sentence. Compared with whites, both groups were more likely to be found guilty, and more likely to be given penitentiary terms than the relatively mild penalties of fines or jail sentences. As well as the fact that all-white or predominantly white juries were the norm, no African-American or Mexican lawyers existed to act as defence attornies for members of their respective ethnic group. Indeed, because nonwhite defendants often had insufficient means to hire white lawyers, it was not uncommon for them to face a court without the support of a defence attorney.[120] Generally speaking, Mexicans were shown less leniency than either African-Americans or Anglo-Americans, but for serious crimes blacks tended to receive the harshest sentences. However, the most significant difference was that existing between the treatment of whites and nonwhites; as Roscoe Martin observed: 'the Anglo-American occupies a position before the court which compares very favorably with that of any other criminal offender, while between the other . . . racial groups . . . there is not much to choose.'[121]

E. 'Those Rumors of Race Trouble'

Compared with other parts of Texas, the record of Austin and Travis County for incidents involving racial violence was extremely good, even if not entirely spotless. Nonetheless, the period 1917-1929 was one in which both African-Americans and Mexicans periodically experienced strained relations with the white community. The revived Ku Klux Klan played an important role in stirring up fears of racial conflict and assaults upon white supremacy, yet such warnings were groundless. Not only did the nonwhite communities express a desire to live in peace and harmony with their white neighbours, the former were more usually the victims rather than the instigators of racial violence. With the NAACP's agitation for a federal anti-lynching bill, the issues of lynching and mob rule had a high profile during the 1920s, and on a local level law enforcement agencies made a strenuous effort to stamp out or avert such practices. Undeniably, it was blacks and not Mexicans who were in greatest need of protection from white violence.

When it came to measuring the harmonious relations existing between the various racial and ethnic groups of Texas, white residents of Austin liked to feel that their city took pride of place. In 1919, describing Austin as a community 'wherein the races are at peace,' an *Austin Statesman* editorial vaunted the city's reputation by noting that it 'has never had a race riot

and has never had a lynching.'[122] Despite such claims, Austin's white inhabitants were just as likely as their counterparts in other Texan cities to be gripped by fears of impending racial conflict. This was especially so in times of social upheaval and general uncertainty, such as the brief period 1919–21, when the changes wrought by recent black migration and Mexican immigration, not to mention the First World War, became manifest in Texas.

As noted earlier, relations between blacks and whites were extremely tense following the Longview riot of July 1919. By early August, the *Austin American* observed that there were 'many reports prevalent regarding possible trouble between whites and negroes in Austin.' Following rumours that local blacks were storing up firearms and had even 'bought out' the entire stock of one hardware store, the police and newspaper switchboards were kept busy until late into the night with calls from worried and often hysterical callers.[123]

Later in the month, these concerns came to a head when John R. Shillady, national secretary of the NAACP, visited Austin for a few days to consult with members of the local branch and state officials. Although the Austin branch of the NAACP had been formed in the latter half of 1918, it already had a membership of seventy-five by the end of the year. In 1919, the Austin NAACP cooperated with other Texas branches in sending a delegation to Governor Hobby requesting that he support

a state anti-lynching law. Branch members also took care of the blacks taken prisoner during the Longview riot (many of whom were held in the county jail) and investigated the case of a racially-motivated assault on an African-American man. As a result of these activities, county and state officials began to clampdown on the Austin NAACP, which then sought assistance from the national office. When Shillady arrived in the city, he was immediately accused of 'stirring up the niggers.' Local whites constantly hounded and harassed him during his stay, until he was finally beaten up by a mob which included County Judge Dave J. Pickle and Constable Charles Hamby.[124] Sensing the volatile nature of the situation in Austin, Mayor Wooldridge warned leaders of the black community:

> Any outrages at this time on the part of lawless negroes toward the white race will cause trouble. Do you think that if an overt act were perpetrated in this town at the present time a riot could be avoided? Not for a minute.[125]

Within days of Shillady's departure, local law enforcers set about disbanding the NAACP's Austin branch, which remained dormant for the rest of the 1920s and most of the 1930s (see Chapter 5).

During the early twenties, the appearance of the Ku Klux Klan in Austin ensured that relations between the races would remain tense. As late as May 1922, sections

of the city were gripped by the 'wild rumor of a negro uprising.'[126] The new Klan, which was anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic as well as white supremacist, inflamed attitudes towards blacks and Mexicans alike. In August 1921, a crowd of between five and ten thousand people gathered around the Capitol grounds in Austin, to hear a speech by Caleb A. Ridley, a Klan spokesman from Atlanta, Georgia. Intimating that blacks and Mexicans posed a joint threat to white supremacy, Ridley declared: 'There isn't a colored race anywhere that wouldn't join with any other colored race to overthrow Anglo-Saxon civilization.'[127]

To understand how groundless and misconceived white fears of a nonwhite uprising were, it is worth considering the black and Mexican assessments of Austin's racial climate. Following the Longview riot, numerous black newspapers in Texas were damning in their coverage of the violence perpetrated by whites, which, in turn, led the state authorities to accuse these editorials of 'inflaming the minds of both races.' However, in Austin a delegation representing the leading black professionals and businessmen of the city called upon the adjutant-general's office to give 'assurance of their co-operation in efforts to keep peace between the races.'[128] Similarly, the immediate response of black leaders to the Shillady incident was to advocate calm on both sides. 'There is no disposition to crush out anybody down here,' announced Lee L. Campbell, 'our white friends who know us are not afraid of us and they

know there is no danger of our annihilating them.'[129] Although critical of Shillady's treatment, those associated with the Austin branch of the NAACP adopted an equally cautious approach. P. O. Womack, pastor of one of Austin's African Methodist Episcopal churches, informed the *Austin American* that 'none of the right-thinking colored or white want a race riot. We want to live here in the South in peace and harmony.'[130] Far from being in the mood for an uprising, the black community felt menaced by the threat of white violence. This partly explains why the black population of Austin decreased in size between 1916 and 1920 (see Tables 8 & 9); as the *American* remarked when commenting upon the 1920 census figures, the Shillady affair had 'stirred up quite a rumpus and hundreds of negroes went north.'[131]

The Mexican authorities viewed conditions in Texas in exactly the same way; in racial conflicts the perpetrators were always white and the victims nonwhite, and the best response was to keep away from the state altogether. In 1920, the Mexican Government issued a warning to workmen intending to leave the country, stating that Mexican immigrants 'would receive no protection from the American government, that justice would be denied them and that they would become victims of mob violence' if they went to Texas or other parts of the United States.[132] All too frequently, these predictions turned out to be accurate. 'Truth is,' observed the *American* in September 1926, 'the life of a Mexican is as cheap as the life of a dog.' When

Mexicans were the victims of white violence, the editorial continued, onlookers were apt to conclude: '"He is just a Mexican," and let it go at that.'[133] Despite this display of sympathy with the victims of white violence, by the late twenties, when agitation for repatriation of Mexican immigrants was becoming widespread in Texas, the *American* had undergone a change of heart. 'In handling transients from below the Rio Grande,' came the suggestion in March 1929, 'it seems Texas officers should learn the same lesson the Rangers learned years ago, "in case of doubt, shoot and investigate afterwards".'[134]

In any assessment of racial conflict in Austin during the 1920s, the activities of the Ku Klux Klan have to be taken into consideration. In July 1921, soon after its first appearance in Austin, the local chapter of the Klan claimed: 'Our creed is opposed to violence, lynchings, etc., but we are even more strongly opposed to the things that cause lynchings and mob rule,' naming interracial sexual relations as the 'direct cause of racial trouble.'[135] By the end of 1921, the Austin Klan had carried out three whippings, one tar and feathering, and one murder. Among the victims, two of those whipped were black, but numerous others were warned to leave the city or face similar consequences. The two blacks were porters at Austin hotels and were accused of 'being too familiar with lewd women and procuring men for women.'[136] The porters were both seized outside their workplaces, bundled into an

automobile, blindfolded, and then taken to a remote location outside of the city where they were whipped. Afterwards, both men were taken back to Austin and dumped out of the car, with a placard placed around their necks saying they had been 'whipped for trafficking in lewd women.' They had instructions to inform the local newspapers of the event, render warnings to certain other blacks and then leave town within twenty-four hours, on the condition that they not return before the end of the cotton season and never work for an Austin hotel again.[137] Describing the atmosphere created in Austin as a result of such occurrences, the grand jury empaneled by Judge James R. Hamilton to investigate the Klan reported that, of the numerous persons who had received threats: 'Some are fearless, others badly frightened, but all are on the defensive and like mad rattlers will strike at anything in reach, in the hope of retaliation.'[138]

Despite the spirit of mob rule and vigilantism engendered by the Klan in the early 1920s, by the end of the decade Austin was still able to boast that it had never been the scene of a lynching. In Texas as a whole, at least seventy lynchings took place during the period 1917-1929, with the victims being black in about nine-tenths of all reported cases. However, these figures are misleading and probably inaccurate, because records of lynchings in Texas vary from one source to another and are often admitted to be far from complete. The greatest discrepancy seems to be over the number of

Mexicans lynched. In 1922, for instance, Texas witnessed the decade's worst year for lynchings, with seventeen being recorded; two of the victims were probably Mexicans and the rest black. According to the Mexican Government and the NAACP, however, during the same year at least another eleven Mexicans were murdered or lynched in Texas alone, yet no official record was made of the incidents.[139] In November 1922, the *Austin American* admitted the truth behind an accusation from the *New York Times* that 'an open season for shooting Mexicans' existed in parts of Texas and that the 'killing of Mexicans without provocation is so common as to pass almost unnoticed.' Significantly, it was only in cities like Austin, El Paso, and San Antonio that a more tolerant spirit prevailed.[140]

Generally speaking, Austin's white newspapers claimed to be staunchly opposed to lynching and mob rule, yet their commitment to this cause was, at best, half-hearted. The *Statesman* was particularly ambiguous in its attitude towards the subject; most of all, it bitterly resented the way northern newspapers denounced the South each time a lynching occurred. Despite its dubious profession not to condone lynchings, the *Statesman* often rendered sympathetic interpretations of their occurrence. 'Down in the South,' read a July 1917 editorial, 'at intervals, there is a lynching. Some horrible crime rouses a community and the suspected man is dealt with summarily.'[141] The cause of lynchings in most cases was attributed to 'attacks upon white

women by negro men'; 'nor,' it was claimed, 'can the firmest pacifist be surprised at the anger of the white population in the face of such abominable provocation.'[142] In July 1919, when a mob of about five hundred whites in Gilmer, Texas, dragged a black prisoner out of jail and publicly hanged him, the *Statesman* failed to condemn the incident. In fact, by way of explanation, it said that the victim had been accused of assaulting a white woman and noted with admiration how the 'mob worked quietly and dispersed after the negro was pronounced dead.'[143]

During the 1920s, Austin's white newspapers adopted a more consistent attitude towards lynching, regularly carrying demands for its eradication in Texas. However, the motivation for this new earnestness was a desire to avoid federal intervention, which seemed imminent after the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was introduced in Congress. 'One need not be a condoner of lynching,' argued the *Statesman*, 'to oppose the Dyer Bill,' because it 'menaces all that is left of the police powers of the states.'[144] The *Austin American* also counselled against the need for federal legislation, contending that if juries did their duty and stopped letting murderers go free, then Texas would be 'a lynchless land.'[145] The weakness of this argument is displayed by the fact that in all categories of serious crime, Anglo-Americans were found not guilty with considerably more frequency than either African-Americans or Mexicans, yet they were very rarely the victims of

lynchings. Moreover, if mobs were only seeking justice when they lynched blacks and Mexicans (the principal victims of this practice), the statistics show that they could have depended on the courts to give satisfaction.[146]

Only the black press gave unconditional support to anti-lynching legislation. As *The Herald* announced in March 1918: 'the time has come for our government to get on the job and put a stop to this inhuman practice of hanging and burning of human beings.' Continuing its urgent message, the article conveyed a sense of how haunting fear of the lynch mob was for blacks:

> The most conservative of our race have almost lost patience, but the Herald still pleads for more patience on the part of our race and a speeding up of the government to the end that every man, irrespective of race or color, can feel that he is living in a country where life at least will be safeguarded.[147]

In order to defeat the Dyer Bill, Texas, like other southern states, adopted a two-pronged policy: U.S. Congressmen from the state participated in a filibuster that eventually killed the bill; and local law enforcement agencies made a genuine attempt to eradicate lynching and punish suspected offenders - this tactic, it was hoped, would silence demands for federal action. Consequently, the number of lynchings in Texas was

drastically reduced, falling from seventeen in 1922, to two in 1923, one in 1924, and none in 1925. Thereafter, except for the years 1926 and 1930 – in which five and four lynchings were committed, respectively – the number never rose above one or two a year, and by the late thirties the practice had almost entirely died out.[148]

The fact that no lynchings ever took place in Austin seems to suggest that its white citizens were never gripped by the mob spirit and that, for African-Americans and Mexicans alike, the city was a safe haven from the surrounding sea of white violence. In truth, it was not the more tolerant atmosphere in Austin that nonwhites could thank for their safety (although this undoubtedly had some influence upon the situation), but the rigour and speed with which local law enforcement agencies responded to any sign of mob violence. In December 1923, a lynching in Austin became a distinct possibility following an incident in which Walter Payne, a black laundry worker, assaulted Dr. N. W. Spring, an elderly white man. Spring had seen Payne waiting outside a shop owned by his son and told him to move on. When Payne refused and 'answered back,' Spring struck him over the head with a walking stick. In response, Payne drew a knife and stabbed Spring, after which he returned to his place of work. When city police officers arrived to arrest Payne, a large crowd had already gathered around the shop where he worked and, as the local press reported, 'mob violence was threatened.' Payne was taken to the city jail and then the county

jail, more for his own protection than for any other reason. Following further threats that he might be seized and dealt with summarily by a mob, the sheriff took the prisoner to 'an adjoining county for safe keeping.'[149] During the 1920s, this practice of spiriting prisoners away to safety was adopted with greater frequency by southern law enforcers in the drive to stamp out lynching.[150] As the *Austin American* approvingly observed: 'Wherever sheriffs do their duty in affording protection to prisoners in their keeping, mobs are foiled.'[151]

In their efforts to prevent a lynching taking place in Austin – which, as the state capital and centre of government needed to stand as an example of civility and law observance – local officials were chiefly motivated by a desire to protect the city's reputation. Even so, this did not stop even the most respectable members of society from demanding that the courts be used as instruments for appeasing the white community's anger. In cases of alleged black atrocities, such as the Houston or Longview riots, the *Austin Statesman* was not averse to demanding that punishment should be 'swift and sure,' if only to soothe the 'inflamed state of the public mind.'[152] It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find that some observers, like Charles S. Johnson, were inclined to be sceptical about statistics suggesting that there was a decline in the number of lynchings. As Johnson noted: 'several instances of hurried trial, conviction and execution indicate that

the "mob spirit" still exists under the disguise of legal form.'[153] Dan Moody and his fellow prosecutors were clearly animated by and pandering to this spirit in the trial of Homer Toney, who only narrowly escaped being the victim of what Arthur Raper, in his book *The Tragedy of Lynching*, termed a 'legal lynching.'[154] Significantly, in Roscoe Martin's survey the only defendant given the death penalty by a court was an African-American.[155]

Undeniably, African-Americans were the principal target of white aggression and hostility, although, as the data relating to lynchings illustrates, there may well have been as many Mexican victims of racial violence as there were black. Similarly, the Austin Ku Klux Klan may have concentrated its attention on intimidating blacks, but it had an equally intolerant attitude toward other nonwhite groups, Mexican immigrants included. Most importantly, while actual expressions of mob rule or racial violence were rare in Austin, the constant threat of white oppression always remained and acted as a persistent reminder to blacks and Mexicans alike to 'stay in their places.'

Summary

In a land where the rule of law was accepted by most as the linchpin of civilisation, it was of no insignificance that racial distinctions and

discriminatory practices were enshrined in the legal code and upheld by law enforcers. Mostly dating back to the period 1880-1910, the purpose of the Jim Crow statutes of Austin and Texas was to give *de jure* sanction to segregation where it already existed and to establish *de facto* segregation where there was none. In short, whites wanted to perpetuate the social and racial demarcations of the late nineteenth century and felt that the best way to do so was by keeping African-Americans segregated and subordinated.

By the early 1920s, when large numbers of Mexicans began entering Austin, conditions for blacks had not changed noticeably in decades and the colour line was just as strictly adhered to as ever. Nonetheless, the Mexican presence did alter and add complexity to the situation. In strictly legal terms, the newly-arrived immigrants appeared to be immune from Jim Crow proscriptions, yet on various occasions - such as on streetcars, in restaurants, or even in cases of allegged miscegenation - the laws and customs which usually applied only to blacks were invoked against Mexicans. Moreover, in the important areas of housing, education, and religious and recreational activity, a trilateral separation of the races existed, in which *de facto* segregation was equally as great for Mexicans as it was for African-Americans. Admittedly, the colour line was not always drawn so rigidly in the case of Mexicans, but it was still drawn and they were sometimes forced to use the same segregated facilities as blacks; the practices

at City Hospital being one illustration of this. Clearly, the proscriptions often imposed upon African-Americans by statute were in practice extended to cover Mexicans.

As is evidenced by the very existence of the Jim Crow laws, a primary function of the legal system was to perpetuate these segregationist practices. Not unnaturaly, therefore, law enforcement agencies were often perceived as the guardians of white supremacy. The extent to which the police, judges and juries took this role seriously is illustrated by the fact that all three were harsher in their treatment of African-Americans and Mexicans than they were of Anglo-Americans. Nonwhites were policed more heavily, arrested more frequently and in disproportionate numbers, more often found guilty by juries, and given stiffer sentences by judges - especially if the victims of the crimes were white. The extent to which blacks and Mexicans on juries and the city police force were able to exert a moderating influence was negligible, because in such situations nonwhites were always placed in subordinate positions where it was known they would be ineffectual.

Not only did nonwhites feel victimised and intimidated by the law and its enforcers, but there was also the ever-present danger of white violence. Although no lynchings ever took place in Austin, the mob spirit reared its ugly head on several occasions during the period 1917-1929, and the activities of the Ku Klux

Klan in the early twenties made the threat of violence even more immediate. Moreover, in their condemnation of lynching and other forms of mob rule, local white newspapers and politicians were half-hearted and often insincere. As the utterances of the *Austin Statesman* and Mayor Wooldridge clearly indicate, not only did the white establishment make excuses for outbreaks of white violence - arguing that it was the natural outcome of provocation from blacks - they also saw its benefits as a means of social control. Undeniably, blacks were more frequently the victims of racial assaults than Mexicans, and - as far as whites were concerned - the former posed more of a threat to white civilisation than the latter, but all nonwhites were aware of how little value was placed on their physical safety. White politicians, like white police officers and white judges, were concerned to protect Jim Crow institutions and to perpetuate the subordination of African-Americans and Mexicans, so the threat of mob violence was seen as just another useful means of instilling nonwhite groups with deference and compliance.

Chapter Five

THE LIMITS OF INTERRACIAL DIALOGUE

5. THE LIMITS OF INTERRACIAL DIALOGUE

Just as the foundations of legalised segregation had been laid by white politicians, if nonwhites were going to dismantle the edifices of Jim Crowism they would have to begin by attaining some degree of political power. However, the climate in Austin and Texas between 1917 and 1929 was not conducive to either African-Americans or Mexicans making significant advances in the field of politics, let alone achieving representation in proportion to their numbers. The reactionary tone of the period was set by the Red Scare - which gripped Texas, like other parts of the nation, in the immediate aftermath of World War I - and continued by the rise of the Ku Klux Klan during the early twenties. The ability of nonwhite groups to combat these conditions was greatly impaired by the existence of the poll tax and other restrictions, which were deliberately designed to prevent blacks and Mexicans from voting. On top of this, the state Democratic and Republican parties were both rapidly being transformed into highly exclusive, white supremacist organisations.

At the local level, while white domination was firmly entrenched and vigorously defended, there were greater opportunities for African-Americans and Mexicans to make their presence felt than in state politics.

Moreover, influence with the local white élite often granted immediate and in many ways more substantial rewards - such as the provision of health care facilities, better schools and neighbourhood improvements. Nonetheless, success depended upon the effectiveness of the respective nonwhite leaderships; if they were disorganised, factious, or unable to deliver a substantial bloc vote, then it was almost guaranteed that elected officials would ignore their needs.

A. From Red Scare to the Ku Klux Klan

Although the Red Scare of 1919-20 took place on a national scale, conditions in Austin and Texas in the years immediately after World War I were especially ripe for the manifestation of pent up reactionary impulses. Unlike other states, where the threat from foreign-born immigrants imbued with radical doctrines was relatively remote, Texas actually bordered on and was receiving a substantial number of immigrants from Mexico - a country undergoing a social and political revolution not dissimilar in either extent or form to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. There was also widespread concern among whites that since the war racial demarcations in the state were being eroded and the trend - whether real or imagined - was blamed on black assertiveness. Moreover, because Jim Crowism formed such an integral part of the established order in Texas, all doctrines or

activities which seemed to challenge the existing system of government were likewise perceived as a threat to white supremacy.

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that African-Americans and Mexicans were viewed with equal suspicion and labelled as potentially subversive elements. Indeed, the two groups were sometimes perceived as posing a joint threat to the *status quo*. A typically alarmist article appearing in a January 1920 edition of the *Austin American* carried the headline: 'MEXICAN "REDS" APPEAL TO AMERICAN NEGRO TO REVOLT.' Described as a Bolshevik regime, the Carranza government in Mexico was accused of sending agents to foment unrest among blacks in Texas and other parts of the United States. 'Among other things,' Mexican communists were accused of distributing literature which declared that 'the American negroes, constituting the most miserable and oppressed element of the American proletariat, have racial reasons as well as economic ones for immediate preparedness.' Illustrating the credence given to these allegations, the Texas State Senate appointed a special sub-committee to review the available evidence and investigate the influence that this propaganda was having upon blacks.[1]

The fact that such material originated in Mexico neatly fitted in with prevailing white conceptions of that country and its inhabitants. Ever since the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, the authorities in Texas had taken a keen interest in events below the Rio

Grande. According to one historian, the combination of an insurrection by Mexicans in Texas and reprisals by state and federal forces against banditry, which often penetrated deep into northern Mexico, turned the border region into 'a virtual war zone' during 1915-17. Whites were particularly alarmed by the 1915 Plan of San Diego, which called upon Mexicans in the Southwest to liberate the lands ceded by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (the territory in question included all of Texas, New Mexico, California, Arizona, and parts of other states) and declared a war of extermination on the American population that would spare only blacks, Asians and Native Americans.[2] Disturbances along the Rio Grande continued until well into the twenties; as late as March 1923, for instance, Mexican consuls visited Austin for 'a general discussion of border conditions' with Governor Pat Neff. When a further wave of revolutionary activity broke out in Mexico the same year, the *Austin American* took the precaution of inquiring into the sympathies of local Mexicans. 'All of the residents of Austin's "Little Mexico",' the white community were reassured, 'expressed themselves as peaceable . . . and well content with conditions here.'[3] Nonetheless, Mexicans were often characterised by the local press as having 'ingrown revolutionary tendencies.'[4]

According to Austin newspapers, another source of subversive influences in the postwar years was certain 'negro publications' from the North. Chief among these as regards the derision heaped upon it by local

editorials was the NAACP's official organ, *The Crisis*. In July 1919, noting with abhorrence that the offending journal supported policies that were 'steps towards removing "distinctions of color",' the *Austin Statesman* accused its editors of being 'active promoters of discontent - and worse.' Ironically, although the *Statesman* concluded that *Crisis* was 'a publication happily rarely seen in this section,' within weeks of this article appearing Austin was the scene of a controversial and highly publicised incident involving one of the NAACP's leading officials.[5]

On 22 August 1919, John R. Shillady, an executive secretary of the NAACP, was attacked by a group of local whites - including a constable and a county judge - when visiting Austin on official business. Shillady journeyed to Austin following a request for assistance from members of the local NAACP. Two weeks before his arrival, the president and secretary of the Austin branch had been haled before a county court and interrogated by Justice of the Peace M. M. Johnson, and were later taken before the adjutant general and the commander of the Texas Rangers. The branch representatives offered their full cooperation and tried to convince the authorities of the NAACP's 'legal and peaceful nature,' but state officials ordered the local organisation to be immediately disbanded, on the grounds that it had no permit to operate in Texas. The purpose of Shillady's visit was to first ascertain the details of the case from local branch members and then to

consult with the relevant state departments in order to discover why a state permit was being denied. Significantly, Shillady had telegraphed both the attorney general, C. M. Cureton, and M. M. Johnson of his intentions before leaving for Austin and impressed upon them that he 'would hold or address no meetings.' Nonetheless, Shillady's mission was in vain and state officials showed no inclination to relent in the suppression of the NAACP in Texas.[6]

Above all, this episode is indicative of the white community's increasingly reactionary disposition and their propensity for recourse to repressive measures. After leaving the state offices, Shillady was called before a secret 'court of inquiry' composed mostly of local officials, who proceeded to hurl insults at him, and generally denounce the activities and objectives of the NAACP.[7] Similarly, far from condemning the violent assault on Shillady, the local white press praised his attackers as heroes. 'SHILLADY GETS SEVERE BEATING,' boasted the *Statesman*, in an article commending Judge Dave Pickle and Constable Charles Hamby for the vigorous manner in which they chased their victim out of the city; the *Austin American* was just as congratulatory.[8] The incident was also given ample coverage in national newspapers and journals, which were highly critical of the way Shillady was treated in Austin; the NAACP even appealed to President Wilson for federal action.[9]

Despite this general disapprobation, neither state

nor local officials showed any sign of remorse or regret for their actions. In a letter to Mary White Ovington, vice president of the NAACP, M. M. Johnson declared:

> I do not think your association understands the situation and conditions that prevail in the South, and in my judgement the propaganda you are scattering . . . is doing more to create strife and discord among the races than it is to uplift the negro. . . . As I told Mr. Shillady, I think if the people of the North will attend to their own affairs and not try to regulate the white people of the South, both will get along better, and we will be able to handle the situation at this end of the line.[10]

According to Austin's white newspapers, the whole affair grew out a general unrest that had existed among certain elements of the city's black community for some time. Local blacks were even accused of storing up firearms in preparation for a general uprising. Shillady's visit, therefore, was presented as part of a movement to incite the black population into action. For instance, immediately prior to Shillady's assault, when he was returning from a brief conference with a black member of the local NAACP, Constable Hamby accused him of 'stirring up more trouble than Austin citizens will be able to get rid of in ten years.'[11]

The Shillady incident triggered off a general

campaign to suppress NAACP branches in Texas. In various parts of the state, the authorities used intimidation to disband local branches and leading black activists were regularly forced into exile. This strategy proved highly effective. Of the thirty-five NAACP branches existing in Texas at the end of 1919, only eight were still active by 1926; the rest had either been disbanded or become 'dormant.' In Austin, this process was set in motion within days of Shillady's departure. Dr. E. W. D. Abner, a black physician and chief officer of the local branch, was arrested by Hamby and dragged before Justice Johnson on the spurious charge of practising medicine without having registered with the authorities in the proper manner. Despairing of any improvement in conditions for their race and fearing further reprisals, many local African-Americans immediately departed for less intolerant region's of the country. In the early 1920s, Abner himself decided to leave Austin and moved to Denver, Colorado. This combination of white oppression and an exodus of local talent had a severe impact on the Austin branch of the NAACP, which remained moribund until the 1940s.[12]

The white press also set the Shillady incident within the context of growing radicalism. On 24 August 1919, an article appearing in the *Austin Statesman* described the NAACP's publications as 'Bolshevik literature . . . intended to secure the help of the colored people to overthrow the government' and claimed that 'the same influences' were being extended to local

Mexicans.[13] Indeed, an essential ingredient of Red Scare journalism among Austin papers was the linking of both African-Americans and Mexicans with subversive tendencies. 'Reds' were portrayed as particularly adept at carrying 'agitation among the NEGRO workers' and attracting 'ignorant foreigners by instituting their anarchistic doctrines.' Newspaper editorials urged every local citizen, 'as a staunch individual unit of this government, to resist AT ALL TIMES even the slightest approach or suggestion of . . . red radicalism.' It was impressed upon readers that subversive doctrines threatened not only the existing system of government, but their families and the entire American way of life. Choosing a very personalised and emotive mode of expression, the *Austin American* asked: 'ARE YOU GOING TO STAND FOR THAT OR ARE YOU GOING TO AMERICANIZE AMERICA?'[14] Clearly, by the time the Ku Klux Klan made its first appearance in Austin, in June 1921, the local press had already gone a long way to making the white citizenry receptive to that organisation's appeal.[15]

Before considering any influence the Klan may have had upon the political scene in Austin, it is worth considering the actual size of its support and charting its fluctuating fortunes. On a September evening in 1921, thousands of onlookers witnessed Austin's first mass rally by the Klan, when hundreds of hooded and costumed klansmen paraded along Congress Avenue and brought the downtown area to a standstill.[16] During

1921-23, membership of Capital City Klan No. 81 rose from a few hundred to several thousand; although it is difficult to be precise about numbers, at the peak of its influence, in 1924, the local Klan had between 3,000-5,000 members. Recruitment was fairly steady and continuous, with new members sometimes being initiated in groups of three to five hundred at a time in large open-air rallies, lit by burning crosses, and usually held at some remote location a few miles beyond the city limits.[17] By 1923-24, these rallies were already becoming less frequent and throughout 1925 the local Klan kept an extremely low profile. In 1926, when Klan activities were suddenly revived in Austin, after 'more than a year of silence,' it was evident that the organisation's membership had been severely depleted during the intervening period. A Ku Klux Klan rally held in June was poorly attended, with only three hundred sympathisers present, which was a far cry from the crowd of four thousand who crammed into Wooldridge Park to hear speeches by Klan officials in April 1922.[18]

As far as local African-Americans and Mexicans were concerned, the Klan's presence in Austin could only bode ill for their hopes of greater toleration and acted as one more check upon nonwhite activities in the political arena. Klan mistreatment of blacks has already been demonstrated in the previous chapter, but its attitude towards Mexicans was no less malevolent. Describing itself as 'an organization of native-born white American

citizens,' Capital City Klan stood for white supremacy, 100 per cent Americanism, and the restriction of foreign immigration.[19] Such a message had dire implications for the city's Mexican community, which was largely composed of nonwhite, unnaturalised, and unacculturated immigrants.

Despite the level of its support among Austin's white population, the Ku Klux Klan was not without its critics, several of whom were quite vociferous. Local opposition to the Klan was led by Judge James R. Hamilton, who as early as June 1921 empaneled a special grand jury to investigate into its activities. Hamilton declared that

> no clandestine organization of masked men has a right to . . . take the law in their own hands and act as sheriff, judge, jury and lord high executioner, and in that mode mete out punishment to any private citizen.

He warned, with some justification as it turned out, that if the Klan was not 'checked' it would 'shock the foundation of this government from center to circumference.' Hamilton said his investigations into and actions against the Klan would not cease 'until this illegal, erratic, silly, nonesensical foolishness is stopped.'[20] Another notable opponent of the Klan was the attorney John E. Shelton, who, along with Constable Hamby, used to wait outside a building owned by the Klan

and list the names of all persons attending meetings there. On one occasion, Shelton - who the local Klan threatened to kill if he continued his activities - witnessed the fatal shooting of a man named Peeler Clayton just outside of 'Klan Hall.' When the Austin Police Department displayed a reluctance to respond, Shelton took it upon himself to instigate the proceedings by which nineteen suspects, including Chief of Detectives E. L. Young and a city patrolman, were charged with the murder of Clayton.[21]

Austin's nonwhite leaderships appear to have been slightly more muted in their response to the Klan's presence, realising that if they were to openly criticise the organisation it would not be so easily tolerated as the utterances of prominent whites like Hamilton and Shelton. Nonetheless, the leaders of the local Mexican community gave notice of where their sympathies lay by including John Shelton among the guests of honour at the annual celebrations of Mexican Independence in September 1922.[22] In contrast, the deeds and words of Lee L. Campbell can only be said to have endorsed the principles, if not the tactics, of the Ku Klux Klan. On several occasions, Campbell found himself in the embarassing position of leading proceedings - one of which was a concert given by the Ebenezer Jubilee Singers before the Texas House of Representatives - that were interrupted by robed klansmen who then proceeded to make a donation, usually of about $25, to one of the black leader's many

charitable activities. While white politicians like Lieutenant Governor T. Whitfield Davidson could safely condemn the appearance of seventy klansmen in the Capitol, Campbell probably exceeded the bounds of propriety when he thanked his hooded benefactors and told them that their 'best friend was the negro of the south.'[23] In October 1921, Campbell even said that if the object of the Ku Klux Klan was 'to prevent any further increase of illegitimate mulattos,' then it deserved the 'unqualified support of all good citizens.'[24] However, not all blacks in Austin were convinced by Campbell's attitude and responses to the Klan. In July 1921, a group known as the 'Black Diamond' stated that they had been 'organized to combat the Ku Klux Klan' and were issuing 'a warning to employers that some morning a clerk would be gone and to wives that a husband might not come home some night, and to the Klan to beware.'[25]

Undeniably, the Ku Klux Klan, whether through active participation in politics or the influence it exerted on certain politicians, had a significant impact on the political scene in Austin. As already noted, the Travis County Sheriff's Office and to an even greater extent the Austin Police Department were dominated by the Klan (see Chapter 4). Although John D. Copeland was the only high-ranking city official suspected of Klan membership, the local administration - which up until 1926 was composed largely of career politicians, who were afraid of alienating a large portion of the electorate - made

no attempt to counter or condemn the activities of the Klan in Austin. Mayor W. D. Yett, for instance, supported Commissioner Copeland in resisting calls to suspend from duty either of the two policemen implicated in the murder of Peeler Clayton.[26] Klan support for the Yett administration was illustrated in December 1923, when an election was held to sanction a proposed bond issue that would fund various civic improvements. 'One of the silent factors in the success of the bond issue,' reported the *American*, 'was the work of the Austin chapter of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.' After a meeting of 500 klansmen agreed to support the campaign, teams were 'organised to push the work for the bonds and in response to a last-minute call many supplied their cars and services to carry voters to the polls.'[27]

On other occasions, the Klan played a far more formative role in politics. In July 1922, for example, 20,000 copies of a list naming candidates backed by the Klan were circulated throughout Travis County, in an attempt to influence upcoming state and local elections.[28] These forays into politics, however, turned out to be the undoing of the Klan, which began to rapidly lose support after the state elections of 1924. In June 1926, a gathering of Austin klansmen heard one speaker admit that the organisation had witnessed a 'setback' two years earlier because 'when men found that they could not ride the crest of the Klan wave into office, they quit it.' 'We are not in politics,'

declared Dr. J. E. Howze, a local physician and leading klansman, 'but the Klan will support only good, clean men.'[29] The reactionary impulses which had influenced Austin's politics since the close of World War I, therefore, seemed to have peaked in the mid-twenties. Nonetheless, after more than half a decade of white supremacist and anti-immigrant agitation, there was little evidence of more conducive conditions for black and Mexican political activity appearing overnight.

B. Barriers to Political Participation

'This is a white man's government way down here in Texas,' asserted a 1927 *Austin Statesman* editorial, making no pretence of the fact that it thought African-Americans and Mexicans should be excluded from political power. One of the principal means of achieving this aim was the poll tax, which discouraged nonwhites from voting and thereby reduced the already remote possibility of either black or Mexican candidates standing for and being elected to office. While no apology was made for upholding the supremacy of the white race, attempts were made to give a veneer of legality to the exclusion of nonwhites from politics. As the editorial already quoted above contended: 'Texas election laws . . . are not drawn along racial lines.' It pointed out that there was 'no grandfather's clause' and 'no property disqualification,' but there was, of

course, 'a poll tax imposition.' Moreover, the article and countless others like it, tried to give the impression that blacks and Mexicans had no interest in politics anyway and would not even bother to vote if all franchise qualifications were removed.[30]

In reality, the poll tax was an effective bar to African-American and Mexican political participation and as the period 1917-1929 progressed efforts were made to increase this trend. To qualify as a voter in Texas a person had to be a U.S. citizen; have resided in the state for at least one year preceding an election and the district or county in which they intended to vote for six months; and to have paid their annual poll tax or been exempted. According to state law, no person was to be permitted to vote who could not produce either an official poll tax receipt or exemption certificate.[31] The poll tax was not the heaviest of taxes, but it could only be paid within a specific four month period and payment had to be in full. Moreover, at $1.75, it amounted to from a half to a full day's wages for the average labourer and was thereby likely to discourage more blacks and Mexicans - who undeniably were lower down on the economic scale (see Chapter 1) - than whites from paying it.[32]

Although the poll tax acted as a hindrance, it did not lead to the disfranchisement of all African-Americans and Mexicans in Austin; not least, because the leaderships of both groups actively encouraged voter registration. In June 1918, as preparation for the

coming of woman suffrage, the Austin Colored Welfare Board initiated a movement to 'enlighten the Colored women who are eligible to vote, on the question of registration . . . for actual franchise.'[33] Similarly, in January 1926, a committee of Austin Mexican leaders, headed by Dr. Alberto G. Garcia, began a campaign to encourage payment of the poll tax by local Mexicans. As Garcia informed his audience, theoretically payment of the poll tax did not necessarily qualify Mexicans to vote, because many of them were not American citizens.[34] In practice, however, election officials often overlooked this impediment to voting. One reason for this was the fact that, until 1929, poll tax receipts and exemption certificates did not state whether the bearer was native born or a naturalised citizen.[35] Consequently, a large number of ineligible Mexicans were often able to vote. During a 1924 local election, for instance, Austin officials announced the qualifications for voting to be possession of a poll tax receipt or exemption certificate and residence in Austin for at least six months. While the city attorney stated that all blacks and Mexicans meeting these requirements would also be eligible to participate in the ballot, he made no stipulation about citizenship being a prerequisite for voting.[36]

In a November 1917 ballot on prohibition, so many unqualified voters were allowed to take part that the courts ordered a repeat referendum for January 1918.

Five Mexicans were arrested for election fraud and another forty-seven were known to have voted without having paid their poll tax. Significantly, the matter only came to light after the losing side - those who favoured prohibition - initiated an investigation into the conduct of the referendum. As a result of this controversy, some of the racist and nativist sentiments that lay at the bottom of opposition to nonwhite voting also came to the surface. A. D. Rogers, a white supporter of both prohibition and woman's suffrage, informed an Austin audience that he was horrified by the 'idea of a beautiful woman, a mother or a sister, having to step back and an alien Mexican to step up and vote.'[37] Not long after, the *Austin Statesman* opposed Negro suffrage for similar reasons, arguing that black participation in politics 'complicates the so-called "race problem" and . . . has been the greatest factor in creating and keeping it alive.'[38]

Despite such strong opposition, African-Americans and Mexicans in Austin continued to exercise their right to vote, although not in the same proportions as whites. In 1926, while nineteen percent of the city's total population was African-American, this group made up only 7.9% of qualified voters. As mentioned above, compilers of the poll tax roll did not take note of nationality until 1929, so there are no figures indicating the voting strength of the local Mexican community during the 1920s. For the purposes of comparison, therefore, the most accurate guide available is Roscoe C. Martin's

study of Austin voting patterns in 1933. By that time, as Table 20 shows, blacks made up an even smaller proportion of the city's actual electorate (i.e. qualified voters) than in 1926, but this relative decline was mostly attributable to increasing levels of voter registration among Mexicans during the intervening period. However, this growth of the Mexican electorate was not significant enough to shed doubt over Martin's observation that 'whites dominate the electorate, and by a larger majority than one would expect from a study of the population and the potential electorate.'[39]

In the case of Mexicans, the size of the potential electorate - that is, persons who would qualify to vote if they paid their poll taxes - was unlikely to match the group's relative position within the population as a whole, because many were not naturalised citizens. More importantly, the effectiveness of the poll tax as a deterrent to voting is illustrated by the fact that blacks and Mexicans, who combined had the potential to make up more than a quarter of the total electorate, actually accounted for less than a tenth. As a result, the impact that either African-American or Mexican voters as a group could have upon local elections was severely diminished, because nine out of ten voters were white. While nonwhite voting was tolerated, therefore, it was sufficiently discouraged to ensure that real political power remained in the hands of whites.

Along with the rest of the so-called 'Solid South,' the control of state and local offices in Texas rested

firmly with the state Democratic party, which considered itself the bastion of white rule. While the Republicans certainly made inroads into the support of the Democrats during the 1920s - principally by turning themselves into a white supremacist, 'Lily White' party - at the end of the day, the surest way to secure office in Texas was to be victorious in a Democratic primary, because general elections were usually just a formality. For local blacks or Mexicans, therefore, the prospects of becoming involved in politics at this level were bleak; not only was their participation actively discouraged, by the end of the twenties they were being systematically excluded from both of the two main political parties.

The most important check upon the influence of nonwhite groups in party politics was the white man's primary. The function of the primary ballot was to allow party memberships to select official candidates for local, state and national elections. In Texas, which was almost a one-party state and had been dominated by the Democrats since the end of Reconstruction, the Democratic primaries were the true arbiter of who would be elected to office. After 1923, despite numerous legal challenges of the practice, state laws permitted the exclusion of blacks from Democratic primaries in Texas. Although Travis County Democrats were diligent in complying with this party ruling, there is no evidence that - as occurred in parts of South Texas - any attempt was made to exclude Mexicans as well

as African-Americans from voting in primaries.[40]

In reality, as Austin Democrats frequently admitted, the white man's primary was largely unnecessary, because the party gained little, if any, support from among local blacks and Mexicans, and it was definitely in no danger of being controlled by either group.[41] For one thing, both black and Mexican voters in Austin were upset by the racist views of James E. Ferguson, who, with varying degrees of success, dominated the state Democratic party and Texas politics from 1915 to 1935. In *The Herald*, Ferguson was accused of referring to 'our women as NIGGER WENCHES and to the men of our race as BUCK NIGGERS,' and blacks were urged not to vote for or side with him in any political issue.[42] Ferguson was able to alienate Mexican support by intimating that they were deserving of a lower social status than the Negro; a statement that his political opponents had translated into Spanish and circulated throughout the state.[43] Nonetheless, the debate over the relationship between the Democrats and nonwhite voters is largely academic, because contemporary observers suggested that blacks and Mexicans in Travis County were almost entirely Republican in sympathy.[44]

In return for their traditional allegiance to the Republicans, blacks in Travis County could not only expect to hold party offices and have influence within the state organisation (both of which were denied them by the Democrats), but they also gained access to the federal patronage system. Whenever the Republicans were

in power at the national level, it was possible for black members of the local party to secure comparatively renumerative and status-conferring federal posts. Two of Austin's most assertive black leaders, L. M. Mitchell and L. D. Lyons, had both used employment with the federal mail service as a springboard for their careers. Mitchell was a founder member of the local NAACP branch, while Lyons became a highly successful merchant and secretary of the county Republican party, which held its meetings in one of his properties. As late as 1930, about eight percent of postal employees in Austin were African-Americans, which was above average for the public service sector.[45]

After 1920, however, the personnel and character of the Travis County Republican organisation underwent a major transformation, reflecting a change in the leadership of the party at state level. The 'Black and Tan' faction - headed by William White and L. D. Lyons - which hitherto had been in control of the local party, were ousted from power by a 'Lily White' group, composed of men like Dr. E. P. Wilmot, Dr. George C. Butte and Frederick C. von Rosenberg. Wilmot and Butte, both Austin men, immediately rose to positions of prominence within the party; the latter even made a bid for governor in 1924. Although unsuccessful, Butte attracted over 300,000 votes and as a sign of recognition was made attorney-general of Puerto Rico.[46]

Under its new masters, the county Republican

organisation was run along entirely different lines. In 1924, George Butte provided an assembly of Austin voters with an insight into the principles of the 'Lily White' leadership when he declared: 'I believe unreservedly in the political and social supremacy of the white race.'[47] Accordingly, blacks were excluded from the patronage system operated by the local party. For instance, when a vacancy for postmaster in the Austin post office came up in 1926, former county chairman, Frederick von Rosenberg, was nominated for the position. Similarly, only white delegates were sent to state and national party conventions.[48] These changes were mirrored throughout Texas, where by 1925 the last 'Black and Tan' leadership of a county Republican party had been eliminated.[49]

This rapid transition had all been masterminded by R. B. Creager, chairman of the state Republican party. 'Neither the republican nor any other party,' announced Creager in December 1921, 'can work successfully with any other than white leadership.'[50] By the late 1920s, observed the *Statesman*, a black member of the state Republican party was reduced to the role of a 'silent observer.' In June 1927, the *Austin American* remarked:

> As for the republican party of Texas, its leaders are of the lily white variety and they do their level best to bar negroes from their primaries and after[wards] they do their level best to get the

> brother in black to go to the polls and vote the straight republican ticket.[51]

Actually, while the Republicans attracted a large number of whites who had formerly voted Democrat, they lost support among African-American voters in Austin. In the 1928 presidential election, when Austin along with the state as a whole abandoned the Democratic candidate and voted for the Republican Herbert Hoover, the local black electorate did completely the reverse. Al Smith, snubbed by white Texans as much for his Catholicism and opposition to the Klan as for anything else, carried only five out of fourteen electoral wards in Austin, but gained his largest margin of support in the predominantly black, sixth ward (see Map 9). It is ironic that only four months prior to the election the *Sunday American-Statesman* said in reference to the Hoover-Smith contest: 'the southern democracy would rather lose with only white votes than win with colored help.'[52]

Voters in Austin's 'Little Mexico' (Ward 2A) were evenly split between support for Hoover and Smith, but this ward had the lowest turn-out in the city, indicating that it is important not to overestimate the interest shown by local Mexicans in party politics.[53] Despite its obvious exaggeration, there was an element of truth to a 1927 *Austin Statesman* editorial claiming that Mexicans 'never participate in primary elections nor do they go to the polls on general election

day.'[54] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that neither the Travis County Democrats nor Republicans saw the need to take steps to exclude this group from their party officiations. As a matter of fact, local Mexicans were more preoccupied with political developments below the Rio Grande than above it. In part, this was due to the persistence of a sojourner mentality; in their loyalties and affinities, they were still more Mexican than Texan or American. As the *Club Anahuac*, a local Mexican society, asserted in the official programme for the 1929 Mexican Independence celebrations: 'La Colonia Mexicana de Austin, siempre ha estado en PRIMERA FILA al tratarse de la PATRIA Y DE LA RAZA.'[55] Similarly, the principal reason why so many Mexicans in Austin were reluctant to pay their poll tax was a fear that doing so might affect or nullify their Mexican citizenship.[56]

Another factor drawing the attention of Mexican immigrants towards Mexico was the changeable and often explosive nature of politics in that country during the 1910s and 1920s. Many of Austin's Mexican community had actually fled north of the Rio Grande in order to escape the turmoil existing in their homeland, and most were concerned to see peace restored. The administration of President Alvaro Obregón (1920-24), which gave a semblance of stability to conditions in Mexico, was welcomed by local Mexicans, who hoped that U.S. recognition of his government would be forthcoming. In December 1923, therefore, when news of a revolt led by Adolfo de la Huerta was received in Austin, the *American*

reported that 'considerable excitement was apparent . . . in local Mexican circles,' where sympathy was generally on the side of Obregón.[57] The leaders of Austin's Mexican community felt a moral obligation to act as ambassadors of Mexico and to try to improve relations between their homeland and her northern neighbour. For instance, as well as bringing to Austin 'the carnival atmosphere and spirit peculiar to the Latin-American people,' an express purpose of the annual Mexican Independence celebrations was to foster 'friendship between the United States, Texas and Mexico.'[58] Political discussion on these occasions, moreover, usually centred around the state of relations between the United States and Mexico, as opposed to issues of immediate concern to Mexicans living in Austin. In September 1924, the guest speaker at the celebrations was Texas Secretary of State Jeff Strickland, who had long agitated for U.S. recognition of the Obregón government. Before an audience of over five thousand Mexicans from Austin and the surrounding area, Strickland reiterated the state administration's support of Obregón and 'urged the continuance of friendly relations between the United States and Mexico.'[59]

It is plausible that, had local Mexicans shown greater interest in politics, they might have been able to play an active role in one or other of the two main parties. In retrospect, however, it seems highly unlikely that the white leaderships of the Democratic

and Republican county organisations, after having expended a great deal of time and energy on excluding blacks from their ministrations, would then be inclined to relinquish a degree of control to another nonwhite group. By the end of the 1920s, the Democrats and Republicans both laid claim to being a 'white man's party,' and the consequences for Mexicans and African-Americans were the same; as party members they were expected to be 'silent observers,' but whenever possible the county organisations excluded them altogether.

C. Courting the Nonwhite Vote

In the realm of municipal politics, local African-Americans and Mexicans enjoyed greater influence than they did in the state and county party organisations. While still excluded from office, the support of Austin's nonwhite electors was actively courted by members of the white élite and their votes often proved decisive. Nonetheless, this activity all took place within the boundaries set by prevailing racial attitudes. The same white politicians that sought after nonwhite votes, for instance, were not averse to appealing simultaneously to the racist sentiments of whites in order to ensure success at the polls.

In September 1919, Alexander P. Wooldridge, who had recently retired as mayor, gave his response to the Shillady controversy and in doing so outlined the basis

on which political domination by whites in Austin rested. Making no attempt to disguise the menacing content of his message, Wooldridge informed an assembly of the St. John's Association:

> The white man outnumbers you 9 to 1 and is the stronger race. He knows his power and will not hesitate to use it if he must. . . . The white race is not in danger from the agitation spread by those who have the misdirected idea of social equality. The negro race is and can only suffer from such a course. What chance have you got to enforce such views with the power of the white man against them?

In the last resort, therefore, the supremacy of whites in the political arena depended upon force. Having made it clear that Austin's existing Jim Crow practices were not negotiable, Wooldridge also warned local blacks to 'keep out of politics.' His audience took this statement to mean two things: first, that black voters should only address the issues presented to them by local white politicians; and, second, that black aspirations of holding local office would not be tolerated (although African-Americans had previously won election to the city council, none had served on it since the mid-1880s). The Negro, resolved the St. John's Association, needed to resist efforts to 'force him into political positions, except where such is mutual on the part of both races.' 'Conditions in the

South do not at this time justify such a course,' concluded the organisation's spokesmen, who feared that agitation for social and political equality was 'laying the foundation for race riots and bloodshed.'[60]

Similar opposition was expressed to the idea of Mexicans holding political office. In November 1920, at the height of the Red Scare, an *Austin American* editorial attacking conditions in Bolshevik Russia claimed that 'the Russain peasant is no more capable of self government than are the thousands of IGNORANT Mexicans.' Moreover, in an attempt to portray the dire consequences that Leninist doctrines would have if introduced in Texas, the paper offered 'the illustration of a Mexican laborer, as commonly seen on the streets of Austin, being placed in the City Hall of our own city with [the] title of MAYOR.'[61] The *American* expected its readers to be struck as much by the undesirability of this scenario as they were by its apparent improbability.

Realising the limited room for manoeuvre afforded by their situation, nonwhite leaders were determined to hold on to the few political rights remaining to them, particularly exercise of the franchise. In April 1918, when it was rumoured that alterations might be made to the city charter, *The Herald* declared:

> We do not know what parts of Austin's city charter the revisionists want changed, but we want it clearly understood that if any efforts are made to

> tamper with the negroes' voting privileges, business is sure to pick up. We are not asleep, but wide awake - on the job. Nuff sed now![62]

Local Mexican leaders, like Alberto Garcia, who organised campaigns to promote payment of the poll tax by members of their community, were also keen to ensure that the right to vote did not lapse.[63] Nonetheless, by the early 1930s, only about 10% of all blacks and 14% of all Mexicans old enough to vote were actually qualified electors, compared with 45% of whites.[64] To a certain extent, this relative deficiency in voting strength was compensated for by the geographic concentration of African-American and Mexican electors in Austin. In 1926, over two-thirds of all blacks qualified to vote were situated in Wards 6 (49.7%) and 5A (17.9%); while in the former electoral unit they could definitely muster an overall majority, their numbers were still sufficient to cast a deciding vote in the latter. Outside of East Austin, the largest other voting blocs were in South Austin (Ward 1B) and Clarksville (about evenly split between Wards 2B and 3A), which contained 5.3% and 6.6% of the city's black electorate, respectively. At the same time, the vast majority (no precise figures are available, but one estimate for 1928 suggests at least 60%) of Mexican electors were located in Ward 2A, because their presence in East Austin only became significant at the very end of the 1920s.[65]

Writing in 1913, William B. Hamilton had said of the African-American and Mexican members of Austin's electorate: 'Their vote is a distinct factor in municipal politics, and one sought diligently by every candidate for office.'[66] Hamilton's statement was equally true for the period 1917-1929, and for the same reasons: first, a number of elections were so hotly contested that white politicians ignored the nonwhite vote at their peril; and, secondly, in order to combat the general lack of interest shown in referendums to sanction spending on civic improvements, successive city administrations attempted to activate all elements of the electorate, including blacks and Mexicans. The battle for political control in Austin was basically between two main interests; namely, the Progressive and the Zilker factions of the white élite. The former were represented, in the first instance, by A. P. Wooldridge, whose ten-year stint as mayor ended in 1919. Basically, Wooldridge stood for administrative efficiency and accountability, the expansion of municipal services, and public control over the major utilities. From 1926 to 1933, the Progressive tradition was continued by Mayor P. W. McFadden and other leaders of the local business community, who ushered in the city manager form of government. The aim of this new system was to place an expert in control of public services, which it was hoped would eliminate the waste and corruption that often took place under career politicians. On the opposing side were a group dominated by one of Austin's wealthiest

citizens, Colonel Andrew J. Zilker. From 1919-1926, Zilker - who never held civic office himself - was the real power behind the administration of Mayor W. D. Yett.[67]

In their struggle for ascendency, the two factions competed with each other for the support of black and Mexican electors, whose votes often proved decisive. Local politicians used a number of means to ingratiate themselves with nonwhite - although particularly black - voters. Preceding a municipal election, it was customary for all of the candidates for office to address a rally of black voters in the sixth ward.[68] Another way of appealing to voters was through paid advertising in the local black press. In the pivotal election of 1919, when the Zilker faction gained control of the city council, *The Herald* carried advertisements from the incumbent commissioners informing blacks that their 'vote and influence' was 'most cordially solicited.' Even A. P. Wooldridge was not above making similar appeals to black voters.[69] It was also advantageous for office holders to maintain a high profile by attending the major annual events of the black and Mexican communities. Mayor Yett, who never missed an opportunity to address gatherings of either blacks or Mexicans, was particularly attuned to the idea of turning this kind of popular appeal into solid votes. In contrast, the business leadership headed by Mayor McFadden generally displayed a disliking for actively courting the votes of African-American or Mexican

electors; consequently, they were rarely able to retain the support of either group for long.[70]

While the political rivalries of Austin's white élite meant that there was often intense competition for black and Mexican votes during local elections, the involvement of nonwhite groups was encouraged to an even greater extent during a series of bond issue campaigns. In 1923, for instance, the Yett administration proposed a $850,000 bond issue to raise funds for much needed civic improvements, while under Mayor McFadden a package worth $4,250,000 was put before the voters in 1928. On both occasions, the necessity of activating African-American and Mexican voters was demonstrated by the low turn-out at an earlier referendum. During the month-long run-up to the 1928 ballot, leaders of the 'Onward Austin' movement were unceasing in their canvassing of black and Mexican support. Members of the city council and other prominent whites addressed at least ten mass rallies of black voters, urging them to sanction the bond issue. No section of the city was ignored; packed audiences attended meetings in Clarksville and South Austin, in addition to the east of the city. At one neighbourhood rally, a group of more than 350 Mexicans listened to pro-bond speeches given in both Spanish and English. By promising the black and Mexican communities that they would be provided with paved streets, sewers, parks, and better schools, the bond promoters were able to win over the vast majority of nonwhite voters.[71] As a result, however, blacks and, to a lesser extent,

Mexicans had acquired an awareness of the decisive role their bloc vote could play in local elections and were also conditioned to be more politically active than in the past.

Significantly, white politicians only introduced the issue of race into a campaign, or played on nativist sentiments, when it seemed that all other tactics had failed to whip up enough support among the voters. In this respect, the debate over the 1924 city manager referendum represented a low point in Austin politics. The chief opponents of the new form of government were the mayor and city commissioners, who feared they might soon be out of a job. In their efforts to defeat the proposed change, they deliberately appealed to each group of voters' most sensitive point. On one hand, they told white voters that there was 'a nigger in the woodpile somewhere,' and on the other warned blacks that they would be disfranchised under the new scheme. Under the city manager system, declared Commissioner Harry L. Haynes, 'the average citizen of Austin will have about as little to say about the conduct of this city as the negroes have to say about the conduct of the democratic party' and 'some so-called efficiency expert . . . will import a hundred or so Mexican laborers from the border to take the places of white men' on the city payroll. Through political advertising appearing in *The People's Advocate*, a local black newspaper, Commissioner C. N. Avery informed readers: 'The only weapon the colored citizen has is his poll tax and the right to vote on

questions affecting his interests.' Intimating that their 'political freedom' would disappear if the city manager plan was accepted, Avery ended his appeal to local blacks by saying: 'don't vote away your right to vote.' Above all, this episode displays the potency of race and nativity as political issues. By pitting working-class whites against Mexicans and blacks, while at the same time arousing African-Americans' fears of disfranchisement, the Zilker faction was able to bring a whole range of racial sensibilities into play during the campaign. Although the use of such tactics was not sufficient to defeat the city manager proposition, it did turn the referendum into an extremely close run event.[72]

D. Ethnic Leaderships: African-Americans

Conditions in Austin may have facilitated a degree of African-American and Mexican involvement in local electoral politics, but any material benefits derived from the situation depended as much upon each group's bargaining power as it did on the favour of white politicians. During the period 1917-1929, the city's black élite was still in the process of discarding and finding a viable alternative to accommodationism as the best policy for furthering their community's interests. For a long time, moreover, the emergence of a unified and effective leadership was hampered by deep internal

divisions. However, simultaneous to the change in form and personnel of the city government, a transformation in the style and tactics of local black leaders also occurred. Almost overnight, radical and conservative tendencies were reconciled and forged into a moderate, yet more coherent and relatively assertive race leadership.

To a large degree, the divisions within the black community were drawn along religious, as well as political lines. In Austin, mirroring the position in the state as a whole, Baptists were by far the largest black denomination, although the various branches of Methodism were also well represented.[73] In political matters, therefore, Baptist leaders wielded greater influence and their apparent suzerainty over the black community was given due recognition by the white élite. Consequently, the man perceived by whites as the official spokesman of all African-Americans in Austin - regardless of their religious affiliations - was the Baptist preacher Lee L. Campbell. As pastor of Austin's largest black congregation, founder of the St. John's Orphanage, and president or leading official of a number of state and national organisations, Campbell was unquestionably the pre-eminent member of his race in the city. According to the *Austin Statesman*, he was 'regarded not only as the spiritual advisor of his flock but also their political counselor [sic.].'[74] Nonetheless, Campbell's leadership did not go unchallenged and was even a major source of disunity

within the city's black community.

Partly motivated by personal and denominational differences, the most significant element of the opposition to Campbell was clearly political. Basically, the Baptists tended to be conservative and accommodationist, as opposed to the various Methodist denominations, whose leaders were more inclined to adopt a radical stance over race issues. For example, L. M. Mitchell and E. W. D. Abner, both members of the Methodist Episcopal church, had been instrumental in establishing the Austin branch of the NAACP.[75] Baptist leaders, however, described the organisation as being composed of 'agitators who sought to stir up strife between the races by the preaching of social equality.'[76] Similarly, commenting upon the beating of John R. Shillady in August 1919, Campbell said that the NAACP official's assailants 'were indeed wise' and had taken 'necessary precaution to prevent a clash . . . between black men and white men.'[77]

Despite the risk of incurring the wrath of the white establishment, Campbell's detractors openly criticised his assessment of the Shillady incident. In a letter to the *Austin American*, P. E. Womack, a pastor with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, argued that Campbell's comments were 'absolutely unwarranted.' Womack was concerned that the activities of the local NAACP should not be misinterpreted and, while rejecting Campbell's accommodationism, he gave assurance that the cause of racial justice was in no way subversive or un-

American: 'We don't belong to nor believe in the bolsheviki; all close observing Americans know that. We love and are willing to die for the constitution of the U.S.A.' Most importantly, Womack challenged Campbell's right to act as official spokesman for local blacks. 'The colored people as a majority have not given out their opinion for publication as regards the treatment of Mr. Shillady,' he asserted, adding that Campbell was 'not big enough to speak for all of us.'[78]

Although many local blacks were clearly dissatisfied with Campbell's leadership, he remained the dominant figure in Austin's African-American community until his death in 1927. Campbell's stature and influence were acknowledged by black and white alike. His funeral received ample coverage in the local press and was attended by over 5,000 people, including Mayor McFadden, city councillors and numerous other prominent whites. Paying tribute to Campbell, the Mayor said: 'His citizenship was of a high order, noble in principle, righteous in character, and practical in its service to others.'[79] Campbell's popularity with whites was a key element of his style of leadership; over the years he established cordial relations with most of Austin's leading white citizens and almost monopolised their patronage. Although Campbell attempted to maintain a non-partisan position in municipal politics, he tended to side with the Progressive faction and had close ties with both the Wooldridge and McFadden administrations. Through these connections, Campbell was able to further

his own projects - such as the St. John's Orphanage - by attracting the financial backing of local whites, but this was often at the expense of the black community as a whole. During 1920-21, for instance, L. D. Lyons, a black merchant and prominent Methodist, urged the city council on various occasions to provide local blacks with a cemetery and more adequate hospital facilities. Lyons was unable to get the council to act and it was some years before either of these issues was addressed - 1926 in the case of the cemetery and 1928 the hospital. However, at the same time as municipal commissioners were ignoring the petitions of Lyons, at Campbell's request they granted numerous favours to the St. John's Orphanage, such as concessions on public utilities and road improvements.[80]

Campbell believed that local blacks could only make progress if they had the support and protection of their 'white friends.'[81] Rejecting the NAACP's more assertive strategy of demanding immediate social and political equality, he was wedded to the ideas of Booker T. Washington, believing in advancement through gradual economic and educational self-improvement. 'The troubles of our race are from within,' he declared in July 1923, claiming that it was not organisations like the Ku Klux Klan but the 'ignorance, superstition and sin' of blacks themselves that hindered the progress of the race. 'It is going to take time and patience,' he told a predominantly black audience, 'for us to reach our goal, but it will be worth all we sacrifice in order

to accomplish it.'[82]

In Campbell's opinion, black assertiveness was counter-productive, because it alienated the support of influential whites. In 1919, after accusing Shillady and the NAACP of souring black-white relations in Austin, he lamented: 'I am awfully sick of this scarecrow of social equality and negro domination terms coined by cheap politicians.'[83] Campbell's own words were consistently accommodationist in tone and he took pains to placate the white community. Above all, he sought to convince whites that local blacks were content with conditions in Austin and had no desire to overturn existing racial demarcations. 'The races are getting along smoothly,' asserted Campbell, who could see 'no just grounds for complaint.'[84]

To a certain extent, Campbell's accommodationism was moderated by the activities of his more outspoken lieutenants. W. H. Crawford, for instance, acted as chief negotiator with the city council and was mildly insistent that local blacks be dealt with 'fairly and justly.'[85] Similarly, M. M. Haynes, as editor of *The Herald*, regularly spoke out against the 'unjust discrimination' experienced by local blacks.[86] Significantly, neither Crawford nor Haynes, both of whom were prominent Baptists, ever seriously contradicted Campbell's accommodationist approach, because they were only voicing concerns that the latter - for fear of offending his white patrons - could not himself express publicly.[87] Nonetheless, Campbell refused to tolerate

any real opposition to either his aims or his leadership. Long after the Shillady incident, for example, he was still warning blacks not to listen to 'agitators.' In 1923, he announced: 'the conservatives among us are trying to hold in check the radicals and irreconcilables, and we are succeeding to a good degree in Texas.'[88]

Clearly, Campbell showed no inclination to heal the denominational and ideological divisions that plagued the black community. For most of the period 1917-1929, therefore, Austin's black leadership was separated into two distinct and opposing camps: one was mostly Baptist in composition, pursued a policy of accommodationism and enjoyed the patronage of the white élite; the other was Methodist, more radical in outlook and - as a result of its involvement in organisations like the NAACP - considered highly suspect by the local establishment. Despite the apparently entrenched position of both groups, during 1926-1928 a transformation in local conditions effected a reconciliation of these divergent tendencies and the city's black leadership became more effective at promoting the interests of all African-Americans in Austin. Thereafter, noted a group of local black historians in 1940, there was a relative 'absence of church fights' and black leaders were able to 'overcome the smallness that formerly existd [sic.].' Begun in the late twenties, it was observed, the process of ameliorating the black community's internal divisions proved highly successful, 'so that today Austin Negroes

present almost a solid front in things pertaining to race welfare.'[89]

There were two main factors which facilitated this realignment of forces within Austin's black leadership: firstly, after 1926 there was a broadening of opportunities for African-Americans under the newly established city manager form of municipal government; secondly, the death of L. L. Campbell in 1927 freed the more broad-minded Baptist leaders to work towards establishing a consensus with local blacks of other religious and political persuasions.

In the 1924 referendum, Austin's black voters had been about evenly split between support for or opposition to the city manager system, and following its acceptance they continued to view this form of government and the city's new political leaders with a critical eye.[90] As Dudley R. Woodard, a local black businessman and community leader, informed Mayor McFadden and the members of his administration in May 1927: 'The negroes are watching every movement made at the city hall.' According to Woodard, the new system had so far met with the approval of local blacks, who were 'keenly alive to the progress being made by our municipal government.' Of greatest interest to Woodard and other local blacks were the new administration's rumoured plans for a $2,000,000 bond issue to fund a whole range of public works. According to Woodard, ninety-five percent of the city's black population would support such a bond issue, even if it meant higher

taxes, in order 'to get better streets and better service facilities.'[91]

In many respects, the relationship between local blacks and the city council was transformed during the first few years of the city manager system of government. The municipal authorities began to take more notice of the needs of local blacks and, compared with the recent past, 'were fairer and more just in their dealings with Negroes.'[92] Prominent African-Americans were quick to respond to these more propitious circumstances. Realising how important it was to present a united front on issues relating to the general welfare of the local black community, they endeavoured to overcome their internal differences. During the bond issue campaign of 1928, this more cohesive and representative style of black leadership finally emerged. The new approach was instigated not by new personalities, but veteran leaders, like M. M. Haynes, whose talents had largely been held in check under L. L. Campbell. In April 1928, Haynes took charge of the campaign to promote the city council's proposed $4,250,000 bond issue. Not long after the McFadden administration had made public its programme of civic improvements, Haynes organised a meeting - 'restricted to the colored population' - to consider how the bond issues might benefit local blacks.[93] Haynes guaranteed an open and frank discussion:

> In this meeting the pending bond issue will be discussed from every angle . . . and every citizen will be permitted to express his views freely and unhampered. All the facts will be brought out and voters will be intelligently informed to the end that we may unite on the best course to pursue for the common good.[94]

The new unity of purpose among Austin's black leadership had already been in evidence a few days earlier, when over four hundred black voters attended a rally at the Metropolitan AME church. Setting a pattern that continued throughout the campaign, the meeting was presided over by a multi-denominational group of black leaders, which included figures like L. H. Richardson, a Methodist preacher, and W. H. Fuller, a prominent local Baptist.[95] As a result of this rally, Dr. E. H. Givens soon emerged as the most active member of the city's African-American élite, presiding over similar meetings held in every black neighbourhood of the city.[96] Givens's style of leadership was entirely different to that of L. L. Campbell. During the 1923 bond issue, for instance, Campbell had urged African-American voters to pledge their support, but he did not pressure white politicians to say what the local black community would get in return.[97] In contrast, Givens was sceptical of the promises made by members of the white establishment. At the Metropolitan rally, he informed Adam R. Johnson, the city manager, and A. N.

McCallum, head of the local school board, that black support for the bond issue was not unconditional. Givens said that black voters wanted their 'dollar's worth of value' and requested that in future more African-Americans were taken onto the city payroll, including the provision of additional black policemen. Echoing the sentiments of Givens, the Reverend Richardson declared: 'every negro in this meeting will shoulder his responsibility by voting for the bonds, but we want fair and square play.'[98]

By presenting a united front and demonstrating their capacity to deliver the black vote *en bloc*, Austin's African-American leaders were able to extract numerous concessions from white politicians. More importantly, they made it clear that they would withhold their support from programmes which did not directly benefit local blacks. In order to win the approval of black voters, therefore, Mayor McFadden and other members of his administration pledged that, amongst other things, the 1928 bond issue would be used to provide the black community with its first municipal recreation ground; a public swimming pool; a junior high school and possibly another elementary school for black pupils; an entirely new unit at the city hospital; and a black health nurse would be hired by the council. As well as benefiting from the better fire protection and street paving that were planned for the whole city, City Manager Johnson said that 'most of the sanitary sewer construction' would take place in East Austin, where there were a

large number of black neighbourhoods.[99] Nonetheless, many black voters remained unconvinced and were influenced by rumours that the school board would renege on its promise to build a junior high school for blacks. To a large extent, these suspicions grew out of a mistrust of A. N. McCallum, the superintendent of schools. Aware of his unpopularity among local blacks, McCallum declared at the outset of the 1928 campaign: 'The man who votes against the bonds because he dislikes me or any other member of the school board is an enemy to the colored boys and girls of this city.'[100] Despite McCallum's exhortations, the doubts of African-American voters were not finally dispelled until, on the eve of the referendum, J. Harris Gardener, a school board trustee, gave his assurance that blacks would receive 'equitable treatment . . . in regard to the construction of schools.'[101]

In electoral terms, the success of the new style African-American leadership was demonstrated by its ability to deliver the black vote to whichever political faction offered the best deal. Traditionally, the majority of black voters in Austin tended to support candidates of the Zilker faction, like W. D. Yett and Harry L. Haynes, but these loyalties were gradually eroded during the period 1926–1928. As already noted, in 1924 the city manager scheme – opposed by Yett and Haynes – was defeated by only a handful of votes in the predominantly black sixth ward. In 1927, having benefited under the first nine months of the McFadden

administration and been promised greater advantages in the future, black voters totally abandoned the anti-manager forces, led by Yett, which ran in the municipal elections of that year.[102] Acting upon these changing allegiances, leaders of the African-American community used the 1928 campaign to forge the city's black electors into a single voting bloc. This strategy met with immediate success, as is illustrated by the fact that the sixth ward passed the bond issue with the greatest majority in the city.[103] The greater cohesion of the black vote made it a more potent force in municipal politics than previously and black leaders were placed in a stronger bargaining position *vis-a-vis* the white élite. Most importantly, this enhanced political influence was immediately translated into new and better public services, because the Johnson-McFadden administration was punctilious in providing local blacks with the sewers, parks, schools and other facilities it had promised them. This pattern of voting *en masse* in local elections was continued by African-American voters during the 1930s, who switched allegiance to Mayor Tom Miller (a protégé of Colonel Zilker) when it seemed that his policies would do most to further the interests of the black community.[104]

By the late twenties, therefore, white politicians ignored Austin's black electorate at their peril; 'its political importance,' noted a group of social scientists, 'is far greater than its numbers would indicate.'[105] Nonetheless, there was a limit to what

this political influence could achieve. Admittedly, it was possible for African-American leaders to demand and receive better public services for the black community, which represented a real improvement in local conditions, but they were in no position to challenge the segregated nature of the facilities that would be provided. Even the McFadden administration, which benefited blacks in more ways than many of its predecessors, was pledged to upholding segregation where it already existed, especially in places like the city hospital where observance of Jim Crow conventions had grown lax. In 1927, on a tour of the hospital, Mayor McFadden and two city councillors had been shocked to find that 'white and negro patients are required to sit in the same reception room while awaiting treatment.'[106] Subsequently, the council made plans that were designed to avoid this kind of interaction between the races.[107] In fact, by providing blacks with their own parks, playgrounds and swimming pool for the first time, the city council extended segregation into new areas and made it more firmly entrenched. As black leaders realised, the choice was between segregated facilities or none at all, and they chose the former. Similarly, no attempt was made to put forward black candidates for municipal office, because – as the suppression of the NAACP in Austin had demonstrated – such a move would undoubtedly have aroused the hostility of local whites. The new style black leadership, therefore, was both moderate and pragmatic. Based upon

a compromise between radical and conservative tendencies, it was nonetheless more effective at promoting the interests of the black community as a whole than the undiluted form of accommodationism practiced by L. L. Campbell.

E. Ethnic Leaderships: Mexicans

When it came to dealing with the local white élite and extracting concessions from the city council, the leaders of Austin's Mexican community were not as successful as their African-American counterparts. On first analysis, the reasons for this poor performance seem obvious: firstly, African-American electors still outnumbered Mexicans by at least two to one by the early thirties, which was significant in a city where votes meant influence. Secondly, Mexican leaders, like the vast majority of their constituents, were comparative newcomers to Austin and had not yet acquired either the organisational skills or the political experience of the city's black leadership. However, Mexicans possessed one advantage which should at the very least have counter-balanced these handicaps. Unlike blacks, if local Mexican leaders were unable to gain satisfaction from the American authorities, whether at municipal, state or national levels, they could always appeal to an influential external ally - the Mexican Government - to act on their behalf. The main question that needs to be

addressed, therefore, is why the relationship between Austin Mexicans and the Mexican consular service (which maintained a fairly high profile in Texas) was not productive of a more effective community leadership.

Before considering the relative strengths and weaknesses of Austin's Mexican leadership, it is worth examining the role that the consuls played in the affairs of the local community. Mexican immigrants in the United States were afforded both assistance and protection by the Mexican Government, which - through a network of consuls and vice-consuls - took a keen interest in their welfare. In 1927, demonstrating the attitude of Mexico towards its expatriot citizens, a special attorney for the Calles administration informed Texas officials that the 300,000 or more Mexicans residing in the state were considered to be 'still under the jurisdiction of the Mexican government.'[108]

During the early twenties, Mexican Consul-General Eduardo Ruiz, whose headquarters were in San Francisco, was a regular visitor to Austin and met with Governor Pat M. Neff on numerous occasions to discuss ways of 'bettering conditions' for Mexicans in Texas.[109] By the latter half of the decade, consulate officials were increasingly preoccupied with matters arising from the day-to-day problems encountered by the state's growing Mexican population. Particular concern was expressed over the activities of labour agents operating in Texas, who were accused of abuses ranging from depriving Mexican labourers of their wages to abandoning them in

remote parts of the state. In July 1926, Consul-General Alejandro P. Carrillo, based at San Antonio, declared:

> Hundreds of complaints from these unfortunate Mexicans have reached my office. There is never a day when a complaint is not received. All ask for justice and tell in a pathetic way the miseries and hardships they have been forced to endure.

Carrillo was awaiting only the completion of an official investigation before presenting the cases to the state authorities with a request that legal proceedings be started against the labour agents concerned.[110] By 1929, the American authorities themselves were the object of criticism. Following a U.S. Immigration Service campaign against illegal immigrants (see Chapter 1), Consul-General Santa Bañez – who was also stationed at San Antonio – complained to the federal government over the 'ruthlessness with which Mexican nationals are being deported from Texas.'[111]

In 1921, the Mexican Government took steps to relieve the workload of the already overstretched consular service in the United States. Wherever a large community of Mexicans had come into existence, local leaders were encouraged to establish an organisation known as *La Comisión Honorífica*. Organised in April 1921, Austin's *Comisión Honorífica* was one of the first to be set up in Texas.[112] At a ceremony attended by Governor Neff, Mayor Yett, members of the Austin Chamber

of Commerce and about six hundred local Mexicans, Consul-General Ruiz said that the purpose of the new body was 'to look after the interests of the Mexicans in the vicinity of Austin and to form a connecting link between them and the Mexican Government.'[113] 'All grievances that members of the local Mexican colony may have,' Ruiz informed his audience, 'will be referred to this commission for adjustment.' Austin's *Comisión Honorífica* was to be 'under the jurisdiction' of the consulate at San Antonio, which would deal with all cases that could not be handled at the local level.[114] Incidentally, although numerous Texas cities – such as El Paso, San Antonio and Laredo, among others – had Mexican consuls or vice consuls, it was not until February 1940 that a consulate was established in Austin. As the *Austin Statesman* noted, the Mexican Government's decision to locate a representative in the state capital meant that the Mexican flag would officially fly there for the first time since the Battle of San Jacinto.[115]

As a result of the close ties maintained with the consulate at San Antonio, the leaders of the Mexican community in Austin were far more independent of the city's white élite – and thereby operated under fewer constraints – than their African-American counterparts. As Governor Neff realised, the *Comisión Honorífica* had an important function, because it encouraged Mexicans 'to organize for their own betterment.' Although the organisation was set up by and had the backing of the

Mexican consular service, its membership was drawn from and partly selected by the local Mexican community.[116] In contrast, Austin's Colored Welfare Board was called into being (in May 1918) by a white city council and its members appointed by A. P. Wooldridge, a white mayor.[117]

Nonetheless, the advantages Austin's Mexican leadership enjoyed over the local African-American élite were more apparent than real. Membership of *La Comisión Honorífica* may have conferred greater authority upon the city's Mexican leadership, but it also encouraged them to avoid dealings with the municipal authorities and rely upon the Mexican consulate to promote their interests. Only on rare occasions, for instance, did a delegation of Austin Mexicans appear before the city council. Even then, it was invariably to request permission for or assistance with some cultural activity and never to petition for the provision of better public services.[118] Moreover, because contact between themselves and the white élite was so limited, Mexican leaders were afforded little opportunity to develop the skills and experience necessary to become effective political negotiators. A further weakness of the *Comisión Honorífica* was the restricted scope of its activities. According to Consul-General Ruiz, the organisation's chief concerns were to be 'finding employment for those who are out of work, caring for indigent Mexican families and other forms of welfare work.'[119] The potential of this body, therefore, was

not fully realised, because it had no mandate to bargain with the city council for improvements in local conditions for Mexicans and showed no inclination to take on such a role.

The relatively poor performance of Austin's Mexican leaders during the 1920s, however, cannot be entirely blamed upon the shortcomings of the *Comisión Honorífica*, but rather on factors that were more intrinsic to the character and composition of the local Mexican community. For one thing, the vast majority of the Mexican population in Austin were newly-arrived immigrants, more than half of whom had entered Texas since 1910, and it was from this group that the city's Mexican leadership was largely drawn.[120] Dr. Alberto Garcia and Eustasio Cepeda, for example, who by 1930 were two of Austin's most prominent and definitely most energetic Mexican leaders, had settled in the city in 1915 and 1926, respectively; the latter, in fact, had only been in the United States since 1920.[121] Moreover, having witnessed a tenfold increase in size between 1910 and 1930, during which time it grew from only 516 to over five thousand persons (see Table 8), the Mexican community was still in the process of developing a leadership structure.

Admittedly, a network of Mexican organisations soon appeared in Austin, but their memberships were small and they played little or no part in local politics. A women's organisation, *La Cruz Azul*, was established at the same time as the *Comisión Honorífica*, but its

activities were entirely confined to charitable work and organising social events to raise funds for helping out the needy among the local Mexican community.[122] Along with the *Comisión Honorífica* and the *Cruz Azul*, a variety of Mexican fraternal lodges and *mutualistas* were established in Austin. Some of these bodies were exact replicas of American institutions, such as Mexican branches of the Woodmen of the World; others, like the *mutualistas*, were transplants from Mexico.[123] There was a considerable amount of cooperation between the *Comisión Honorífica*, the *Cruz Azul* and the various lodges. Up until 1928, these three combined forces each year and appointed a committee to organise the city's Mexican Independence celebrations, although after 1929 *Club Anahuac* began to perform this function.[124] Dr. Garcia personified the close ties maintained between these organisations; he belonged to numerous lodges and in 1921 played a pivotal role in setting up the *Comisión Honorífica*.[125] Similarly, Eustasio Cepeda, as well as being a founder member of *Club Anahuac*, was president of the *Sociedad Funeraria de Agricultores* (also known as 'Mariano Escobedo'), a Mexican mutual-aid society. Organised in 1921, by the early thirties this *mutualista* had over a dozen branches scattered throughout Travis County and a membership of more than five hundred. In addition to maintaining a funeral fund, it aimed to give assistance to all members or other Mexicans that were either sick or in 'constraining circumstances.'[126] Nonetheless, Garcia and Cepeda were not typical of

Austin's Mexican inhabitants, four-fifths of whom, according to Earl Connell, did not belong to a club, lodge or any other form of social organisation.[127]

Although the emergence of an effective political leadership among Austin Mexicans was clearly retarded by their general lack of interest in becoming organised, this factor was more a symptom than the cause of the problem. Essentially, in terms of educational attainments, economic class and social status, the Mexican population was fairly homogeneous and did not possess the same pool of professionals and businessmen from which both the white and black communities drew their leaderships. As has already been illustrated, the city's most prominent African-American leaders all came from the black middle class: they were either clergymen, like L. L. Campbell, M. M. Haynes and L. H. Richardson; school teachers, like L. C. Anderson; physicians, such as W. H. Crawford and E. W. D. Abner; or successful businessmen, like L. D. Lyons, who was a prosperous merchant, and Dudley R. Woodard, a leading undertaker.[128] The Mexican community, however, had not yet acquired the economic and educational base necessary to foster such a large professional class. To illustrate this, it is worth noting that Alberto Garcia became Austin's first Mexican physician when he moved to the city in 1915.[129] Similarly, in 1929 the Austin school board employed more than fifty African-American teachers, six of them as principals, but only one Mexican school teacher, Consuela Herrera, who taught

first-grade Mexican children at Comal Street School.[130]

The Mexican community, moreover, was unable to produce a religious leader whose authority and influence was comparable to that of the black minister, Lee L. Campbell. In fact, there were just four Mexican church pastors in 1929, compared with over two dozen African-American clerics. Significantly, the patrons of the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe - who made up at least four-fifths of Austin's Mexican church-goers - were not even ministered over by a member of their own ethnic group, but an Irish-American or other non-Mexican priest.[131]

Apart from Dr. Alberto Garcia, therefore, there was a dearth of local Mexicans possessing the professional credentials, political motivation and organisational skills necessary for the task of leadership. Even Garcia was handicapped by the fact that - as a Methodist and, after 1921, a naturalised U.S. citizen - he was less representative of local Mexicans than Campbell was of his race. Illustrating the difficulties Garcia initially encountered in attempting to provide the Mexican community with more effective leadership, the Spanish-language newspaper he established in 1920, entitled *La Vanguardia*, had foundered by 1921.[132] Despite his links with the *Comisión Honorífica* and other organisations, Garcia usually had to act individually and on his own initiative, such as in 1928, when he persuaded the city council to launch a health programme

for local Mexican families.[133]

During the 1920s, the small size of the Mexican middle class in Austin was compensated for in two ways: first, Mexican students attending the University of Texas played an active part in promoting the interests of the local community; secondly, leadership roles were performed by individuals who, by American standards, came from relatively low-status occupations and possessed few, if any, formal qualifications.

A high level of student involvement in community affairs became a permanent feature after the Austin *Comisión Honorífica* was set up in 1921. Consul-General Ruiz decreed that, whereas in other parts of Texas the organisation usually had twelve members, the Austin branch would have only eight because 'prominent Mexican students at the University' would be appointed to make up the numbers.[134] In addition to planning and participating in cultural events, Mexican students took an interest in municipal affairs and encouraged local Mexicans to become more actively involved in politics. In 1928, Mexican students took the lead in supporting the city council's bond issue campaign, by organising rallies of Mexican voters. Esteban Garza, who was attending the University of Texas, informed a meeting attended by over 350 Mexicans of the benefits that would be derived from the planned programme of civic improvements.[135]

One example of a working- or lower middle-class Mexican rising to a position of leadership was Jose N.

Acevedo. From 1920-1922, Acevedo was chief organiser of the annual Mexican Independence celebrations, but in 1921 his standing within the Mexican community was enhanced even more when he secured employment with the Austin Police Department as a patrolman. In 1926, along with Dr. Garcia and Mexican consular officials, he played a prominent part in the campaign to encourage poll tax payment and voter registration among Austin Mexicans. Acevedo displayed a talent for establishing links with white journalists and ensuring that important events involving local Mexicans received newspaper coverage. Despite his relatively humble origins therefore, Acevedo - who had been a driver before joining the police force - rose to prominence as one of the Mexican community's leading spokesmen.[136] While Acevedo's success was partly attributable to his achieving white-collar status, the members of *Club Anahuac* were only differentiated from the vast majority of local Mexicans by the fact that they were in skilled, as opposed to unskilled, manual occupations. Included among the organisation's eleven members in 1929, there were two cooks (the club president and secretary), two mechanics, one truck driver, a jewellery maker and a waiter.[137]

Regardless of whether or not they were from a blue-collar or white-collar background, the main objective of Austin's Mexican leaders during the period 1917-1929 was to gain acceptance from the white community. Above all, they wanted to prevent any hostile reaction among local

whites to the sudden growth of the city's Mexican population. Mexican consular officials shared this concern and their principal reason for establishing the *Comisión Honorífica* was to 'foster and cement friendship relations between American citizens and the Mexican people in Texas.'[138] This explains why the celebrations of Mexican Independence and *Cinco de Mayo* were given such a high profile; leaders like Acevedo and Cepeda believed that they were nurturing a 'spirit of understanding' by encouraging the 'American' community to participate in these cultural festivities.[139] The white élite was not unresponsive to these gestures and city councillors invariably accepted invitations to attend local Mexican festivals.[140] On these occasions, Mexican leaders found that the Austin Chamber of Commerce was particularly forthcoming in its willingness to render assistance. As well as helping Mexican organisers obtain permission from the city council for the staging of cultural celebrations, the Chamber actually gave its financial support to such events. This cooperation was given in an 'effort to maintain pleasant relations with and among Mexican citizens' in Austin, who by the early 1920s had become an essential element of the local workforce. Largely as a result of this kind of activity, the ties between local Mexican organisations and the Chamber of Commerce were strengthened as the decade progressed.[141]

Nonetheless, by channelling its energies into cultural activities and seeking to gain white

acceptance, rather than pressuring for improved local conditions, the political effectiveness of Austin's Mexican leadership was severely hampered. The League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC), a statewide Mexican-American organisation formed in 1929, believed that one way of gaining the respect of whites was through 'a complete avoidance of the appearance of trafficking in votes.' According to O. Douglas Weeks, a fundamental aim of LULAC was 'the creation of voters who are intelligent and independent.'[142] Although the Austin branch of LULAC was not formed until 1935, during the 1920s local leaders evidently conformed to its views and made no attempt to create a Mexican voting bloc similar to the one organised among black voters. As the political scientist Harold A. Stone and his associates discovered, this lack of organisation proved to be a serious disadvantage for Mexican voters. 'Their influence is negligible,' it was noted: 'Political leaders in Austin tend to leave them alone . . . since they listen, accept favors, and then vote independently.'[143] Mexicans were also ignored by white politicians for another reason; they participated in local politics far less than their numbers justified.[144] This is illustrated by the fact that during the 1928 bond issue campaign only one mass rally of Mexicans took place, while there were no less than nine held by blacks.[145]

To a certain extent, this lack of interest in municipal politics was attributable to the persistence

of a sojourner mentality among the majority of Mexicans residing in Austin. They wanted to be accepted by American society, but not necessarily to become a part of it; even leaders of the Mexican community, like Eustasio Cepeda, displayed such an attitude. Unlike Alberto Garcia, who became an American citizen six years after settling in Austin, Cepeda's loyalties and affections always belonged with his 'beloved Mexico,' and in this respect the latter was probably more typical of his fellow expatriots than the former.[146] Moreover, as long as local Mexicans maintained such close ties with and considered themselves under the protection of the Mexican Government, via the *Comisión Honorífica* and the consular service, they were likely to continue in this allegiance to their former homeland. Believing either that they would one day return to Mexico or that their interests were being taken care of by the Mexican consuls, Mexicans lacked the motivation to make an impression upon the local political scene. As Roscoe C. Martin concluded, following his study of voting patterns in Austin: 'the Mexican elector is notoriously delinquent in the matter of voting.' Martin found that among qualified electors only sixteen percent of Mexicans actually bothered to vote in municipal elections, compared with 53.6% of whites and 45.4% of blacks.[147]

During the 1920s, therefore, Austin's Mexican leadership was either unwilling or unable to exercise control over an ethnic voting bloc and this had dire

consequences for local Mexicans, whose interests and votes could safely be ignored by white politicians. Consequently, Mexican leaders lacked even the political leverage of their black counterparts. This is demonstrated by the fact that they were unable to prevent successive city administrations from providing segregated facilities for Mexicans in a wide range of public services. By 1928, segregation in Austin's public schools and city hospital was as firmly established for Mexicans as it was for blacks, and under Mayor McFadden's programme of civic improvements this practice was about to be extended to the area of public recreation. In the final analysis, the creation and expansion of this three-way system of segregation was largely attributable to the relative powerlessness of Austin's Mexican leadership.

Summary

Significantly, although nonwhites were often perceived as posing a collective threat to white supremacy and the political *status quo* - such as during the Red Scare and by the revived Ku Klux Klan - there is no evidence of Austin's African-American and Mexican leaderships expressing a community of interest, let alone cooperating with each other, in order to challenge and overturn the Jim Crow institutions which affected both communities. In part, the reasons why such an alliance

was never formed during the period 1917-1929 can be deduced by reflecting upon issues already dealt with above.

Even though the city's black community was served by a fairly unified and formidable leadership group by the end of the 1920s, for most of the decade its leaders had been squabbling amongst themselves over various denominational, political and sometimes intensely personal differences. For blacks, therefore, the healing of these internal divisions had to take precedence over and was a prerequisite of establishing ties with Mexican leaders. Moreover, by the time such a position had been reached, African-American leaders - who by 1928 wielded control over a sizeable bloc vote in municipal elections and consequently enjoyed a considerable degree of political leverage - probably felt that few advantages could be derived from joining forces with their weaker and less influential Mexican opposite numbers.

Similarly, leading Mexicans never seem to have entertained the thought of forming a political alliance with local African-Americans. As already noted, Austin's Mexican community was still in the process of establishing itself and its leaders - conscious of the anti-immigrant feelings prevalent at the time - gave priority to gaining white acceptance. Consequently, they tried to avoid any kind of activity that might be construed as political agitation and likely to activate nativist hostility. In fact, despite the rapid

emergence of a leadership structure - which centred around the *Comisión Honorífica*, the *Cruz Azul*, and various clubs, fraternal organisations and *mutualistas* - Mexicans remained very much a silent minority and did not make their presence felt in the local political arena. The low-profile maintained by Mexicans, therefore, precluded the formation of a political partnership with African-Americans.

However, in the final analysis, the role played by African-American and Mexican leaders in politics was not determined by themselves, but by whites. If anything, nonwhite leaders - particularly blacks - were fighting a rear-guard action in trying to hold on to what was left of their political influence and few remaining rights. While the appearance of the Ku Klux Klan demonstrated that white supremacy was still firmly entrenched in Austin, the Travis County Democratic and Republican parties - either by discouraging or prohibiting nonwhite participation - reminded blacks and Mexicans alike that their involvement in politics was not welcomed and would be resisted. Not only were nonwhites excluded from office, their electoral strength was diminished as a result of the poll tax, which effectively disfranchised large numbers of African-Americans and Mexicans. Moreover, as was illustrated by the swift suppression of the NAACP in Austin, expressions of nonwhite assertiveness were not tolerated by the white establishment. Indeed, whites were prepared to resort to force in order to retain political control and

perpetuate the subordination of nonwhites.

Bearing in mind the reactionary mood of the immediate postwar period and early 1920s, therefore, it is hardly surprising that the principle objectives of the city's nonwhite leaderships were to mitigate racial animosities and guard against the possibility of latent white hostility becoming manifest in a violent form. Admittedly, Austin's political climate became calmer and more tolerant (or, rather, less intolerant) as the decade progressed, but the options available to African-American and Mexican leaders remained limited and fixed. While it was acceptable for nonwhite leaderships to petition for the provision of better schools, health care, recreational facilities and other public services, white politicians would countenance no discussion or criticism of Jim Crow institutions. And as long as blacks and Mexicans were excluded from political office, they remained powerless to challenge either the preservation or extension of segregation practices.

Chapter Six

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

6. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

A major function of Austin's education system during the period 1917-1929 was to perpetuate the social domination of whites and the subordination, to varying degrees, of both African-Americans and Mexicans. Segregation was the principal means of effecting this differentiation, followed by a unfair distribution of funds and resources to the 'superior' and 'inferior' tiers of the public education system. The aim of this chapter will be to document the inequalities faced by nonwhites in the field of education, as well as to consider the variations in experience or opportunity between African-American and Mexican school children.

A. Evolution of a Segregated School System

In 1905, the education system in Texas was totally reorganised, with far-reaching consequences for both the African-American and Mexican communities of the state. Although new laws required that separate schools should be maintained for 'white' and 'colored' children (terms which, as will be shown, were open to broad interpretation as far as Mexicans were concerned), the reorganisation still constituted a major advance for

nonwhite groups because it became mandatory for local education authorities to provide them with free public schooling. Under the previous system, each local community had been able to choose for itself whether or not to maintain free public schools. However, in a large number of cases whites were so opposed to the idea of blacks receiving education - not to mention having to incur taxation for such purposes - that they preferred to do without free education altogether rather than support facilities for both races.[1]

Such sentiments continued to shape white attitudes towards education for blacks, as well as Mexicans, well into the 1920s. As late as 1916, there is evidence of whites in rural parts of Travis County protesting against the adoption of a local school tax mainly because they resented 'paying out money for educating negro and Mexican children.'[2] Nonetheless, as the educationalist William R. Davis noted in 1934, this 'antagonistic attitude toward Negro education' in Texas had since 1905 been 'superseded, to a degree, by an attitude of indifference.'[3]

In Austin, African-Americans were provided with free public schools much earlier than in most other parts of Texas. The first locally-funded elementary school for black children opened in 1881, within a year of the public school system being created. In 1919, reflecting upon the city's record on educational provision for blacks, the *Statesman* claimed: 'Austin white men led in fighting for free schools in Texas, and the public

schools for negroes here are among the best in the State.'[4] Despite the segregated nature of the school system in Austin, the *American* believed that far from having anything to complain about the Negro ought to be grateful for the fact that 'the white people have paid for the education of his children.'[5] The parents of Austin's 'Mexican school children' were expected to be equally as appreciative. According to the *Statesman*, the city was able to offer 'these immigrants . . . far better school privileges than prevail in the country of their origin.'[6]

The 1905 law establishing *de jure* segregation in the Texas public schools formed part of a body of Jim Crow legislation aimed specifically at the state's African-American population and, despite later developments, was not originally intended to apply to Mexicans or any other nonwhite group (see Chapter 4). For Austin's African-American pupils, school segregation meant that they attended separate schools to white children, were taught by African-American teachers and, in the sphere of education at least, rarely came into contact with members of any other race but their own. The black public schools were organised along the same lines as those for whites, with each of the principal African-American neighbourhoods being served by one or more elementary school and the city as a whole by Anderson High School. In addition to the public schools, there were a number of private educational institutions in Austin which catered entirely for blacks.[7]

The relationship of Mexican school children to this bilateral education system was, initially at least, ambiguous and always complex. There was some confusion, for instance, over the exact status of Austin's first 'Mexican' elementary school. Set up in 1916, West Avenue School was listed under the heading of 'Colored Public Schools' in the that year's city directory, but from 1918 onwards - along with subsequent Mexican elementaries - came under the category of white schools.[8] After 1922, the school board also provided an elementary school for Mexican children living in the east of the city; at first they were housed in temporary accommodation on East Avenue, then at a purpose-built site on Comal Street.[9] Although school board officials contended that West Avenue, East Avenue and Comal Street were 'schools for non-English-speaking children,' Mexicans made up at least ninety-five percent of those in attendance.[10] Not surprisingly, therefore, these schools were regularly referred to in the local white press and city directories as being 'Mexican' or 'for Mexicans.'[11] Segregation also existed in the parochial schools maintained by the Catholic Church in Austin, which usually catered for about one half of the city's Mexican school children. St. Mary's School was for white children, while only Mexicans attended the parochial school of Our Lady of Guadalupe (which, along with the church of that name, was moved during the mid-twenties from its original site in the west of the city and relocated in East

Austin).[12]

In any analysis of the reasoning behind efforts to segregate Mexican school children, the role of racial prejudice immediately presents itself as one of the first factors to be considered. In 1916, E. E. Davis expressed views that were fairly representative of most whites when he wrote:

> . . . where the Mexicans and the white children attend school together, there are such differences of race, language, and character, that there is a serious lack of congeniality among the pupils. For this reason separate schools for the Mexican children are preferred at times by the Mexicans as well as the whites. While this may not be true in portions of Southwest Texas, where the Mexicans have been established for so many years, it is decidedly true in Travis County.[13]

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, school districts throughout Texas began segregating Mexican school children on account of their race. In 1928, this practice was challenged in the state courts, which eventually ruled that it was not within the power of the educational authorities 'to arbitrarily segregate Mexican children, assign them to separate schools, and exclude them from schools maintained for children of other white races, merely or solely because they are Mexicans.'[14] In other words, the 1905 law requiring

school segregation could not be interpreted as applying to Mexicans. Although the State Department of Education accepted this ruling, district trustees were informed that it was still permissible for them to 'designate separate schools for English speaking races and Mexican children where the latter are handicapped by language difficulties.'[15]

In 1925, the Texas Educational Survey Commission (TESC), under the direction of George A. Works, conducted an intensive study of conditions for Mexican school children and, more importantly, laid down guidelines for their future treatment. Acknowledging the fact that separate schools were maintained for Mexicans in various parts of the state, Works remarked:

> On pedagogical grounds a very good argument can be made for segregation in the early grades. In the opinion of the Survey Staff, it is wise to segregate, if it is done on educational grounds, and results in distinct efforts to provide the non-English speaking pupils with specially trained teachers and the necessary special training resources.

Nonetheless, Works offered this advice 'with reluctance,' because he realised that it was open to misinterpretation and abuse. 'No community,' he urged, '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.'[16]

By the end of the 1920s, educationalists in Texas, California and other parts of the Southwest had reached a consensus over the question of segregating Mexican school children. It was generally agreed, even by observers who as a rule were opposed to any form of segregation for Mexicans, that - at least in the first few grades of school - Mexican pupils actually benefited from being kept apart from white children. The segregated schools acted as a protective environment in which they could gain confidence in themselves by learning the English language, and basic reading and writing skills at their own pace, before having to cope with the more competitive atmosphere of the white schools.[17]

It was to this point of view that Austin's educational policy makers claimed to subscribe. In 1916, the school board established a programme whereby all 'non English speaking' children were taken out of the white elementaries and placed in the 'special school' at West Avenue. 'When these children reach the fourth grade,' announced a spokesman for the public schools in 1920, 'they can speak English fluently . . . and they are then put in ward schools of the city.' The school for non-English-speaking children was deliberately situated in close proximity to the old Mexican district, from where most of its pupils were expected to originate.[18] During 1922-23, it was

decided to build another non-English-speaking school, this time in East Austin, where three white elementaries were having to accommodate for the large number of Mexicans rapidly moving into that section of the city.[19] The local educational authorities were particularly concerned to demonstrate that Mexican school children were not being discriminated against when required to attend separate schools to whites. As Katie M. Le Tulle, who was attached to the social science department of the Austin public schools, explained in August 1927:

> Two schools are maintained for the Mexican children alone, where children from grade one up through grade three are taught to speak and understand the English language, before entering the regular ward schools. The purpose of this work is not to segregate, but to further the progress of these pupils in education.[20]

Nonetheless, as we shall see, few of the children in these schools ever got beyond the third grade or qualified for transfer to a white elementary. In Austin's public schools, therefore, *de facto* segregation was as much a reality for Mexicans as it was for blacks, but with one important difference: while, theoretically, it would have been possible for a gifted or academically accomplished Mexican pupil to eventually attend the same school as whites, for black pupils this eventuality was

completely ruled out by the bilateral nature of the city's education system.

B. Schools for Nonwhites: Separate But Not Equal

Texas law required that in the field of education 'impartial provisions shall be made for both races,' but at a 1925 Commission on Interracial Cooperation conference held at Dallas, high-ranking state officials 'plainly admitted that negro education is neglected and that negroes do not have equal educational opportunities with whites.'[21] In 1926, the Texas State Department of Education reported on the conditions prevailing in the segregated public schools maintained for blacks:

> Their terms are too short for efficient work; classrooms are overcrowded and woefully lacking in essential equipment and supplies; and many of the schools are housed in buildings wholly unsuited to successful school work.[22]

Consequently, William R. Davis concluded that 'the Texas educational system has been a dual system in name only' and 'is essentially a white system with Negro education incidental to it.'[23] The same thing might have been said about education for Mexicans, as is evidenced by the findings of the TESC: 'In some instances segregation has been used for the purpose of giving the Mexican

children a shorter school year, inferior buildings and equipment, and poorly paid teachers.' The survey staff condemned such practices as being 'unwise and unjustified,' but admitted that the authorities were generally allowing each community to 'meet the problem as it pleases.'[24]

In Austin, greater provision for African-American and Mexican pupils was made than in many other parts of the state, but a disproportionate amount of local funds was still allocated to the white schools. A. N. McCallum, head of the city's education system since 1903, liked to boast - with some justification - that 'the Austin public schools have the reputation of accomplishing more with less money than any other schools in the state.'[25] As an examination of capital investment and annual expenditure will demonstrate, McCallum's words were especially applicable to the schools maintained for blacks and Mexicans. In 1915, the amount of money invested in school property per pupil in Austin was $166.86 for whites and $30.04 for blacks (no figure exists for Mexican children, because West Avenue 'Mexican' school was only set up in 1916).[26] Ten years later, in February 1925, the 'educational plants and equipment' of Austin's white schools were valued at $183.49 per child, compared with $84.07 for blacks and $65.31 for Mexicans. Consequently, while whites made up 75.4% of all enrolled pupils in 1925, blacks 21.6% and Mexicans 3.0%, the proportion of total investment in school buildings

utilised by each group was 87.3%, 11.4%, and 1.2%, respectively.[27]

Despite the fact that during the 1920s three separate civic bond issues, worth $950,000 in total, were voted for the specific purpose of improving school sites, no attempt was made to redress the difference between the amount of money invested in facilities for whites and nonwhites. In fact, from the money raised by the 1923 and 1926 bond issues, the city education authorities actually spent less on black and Mexican schools, and more on white schools, than they had originally proposed. Up to 1926, white schools benefited from over ninety percent of the total bond issue expenditure of $615,300, compared with $51,020 (8.3%) being spent on black schools and only $5,640 (0.9%) on Mexican schools.[28] Moreover, had the urgent need for a school in East Austin not arisen, it is unlikely that any of the bond issue money would have been expended on facilities for Mexicans. In 1928, the Mexican schools were not allocated any of the funds from the proposed bond issue of $300,000, although Superintendent McCallum indicated that 18.5% - which was still less than a proportionate amount - of the total sum would be spent on school buildings for blacks.[29] Clearly, as long as the lion's share of investment in educational sites and facilities went to the white schools, the black and Mexican schools would remain their poorer relations.

Not surprisingly, the school buildings used by

African-American and Mexican pupils were not of the highest standard, and compared unfavourably with those maintained for whites. The capacity of black and Mexican schools was invariably inadequate and overcrowding was always a serious problem. Of the black elementaries, Gregory and Olive Street in East Austin suffered from particularly congested conditions; by 1929, these two schools were having to accommodate over 400 and 300 pupils, respectively. Since 1926, the school board had been promising the erection of a small school for black children in the Glenwood district, which would have eased the burden on Gregory School, but this provision had still not been made by the end of the twenties. In 1928, A. N. McCallum proposed the construction of a junior high school for blacks to 'relieve [the] congestion complained about in colored elementary schools,' while the overcrowding at Anderson High was said to be 'hindering the best work and some relief is needed.'[30]

Similarly, the local education authorities displayed a tendency to house Mexican pupils in inadequate and often makeshift quarters. In March 1922, a Mexican school was hastily set up on East Avenue, where more than one hundred children were to be huddled into a three-room frame structure rented from a local Baptist missionary organisation.[31] By November 1923, the school board admitted the urgent need for a much larger, purpose-built elementary for Mexicans in East Austin and requested $15,000 to build it.[32] Comal Street School,

the replacement for East Avenue, finally came into operation during the academic year 1924-25, but had been constructed at the cut-price amount of $5,640; a sum considerably lower than the cost of improvements made at various white elementaries during the same period.[33] By 1929, as a result of heavily increased enrollment among Mexican children in East Austin, the small school at Comal Street was itself experiencing crowded conditions and having to cope with attendance levels in excess of its capacity.[34]

Overcrowding was not the only factor which rendered African-American and Mexican schools less than conducive educational environments. Until the mid-twenties, Austin's principal black schools were lacking in both adequate fire protection and proper heating facilties.[35] Moreover, the school authorities often presented a misleading picture of conditions prevailing in nonwhite schools. 'With the exception of two or three units,' reported Katie M. Le Tulle in August 1927, each of Austin's public schools 'is conducted in a well-built, modern, adequate, sanitary, fire-proof building.'[36] The exceptions, which Mrs. Le Tulle neglected to name, would have included Wheatville School for blacks and Comal Street Mexican school (these were, respectively, the least and second least valuable educational sites in Austin), as well as any one of a number of other poorly endowed nonwhite elementaries.[37] Likewise, although Le Tulle claimed that each school had 'its own good library, hot-lunch

room [and] auditorium,' at the time she was writing both Gregory and Olive Street schools - the city's two largest elementaries for blacks - were without dining areas of any description. The authorities tried to conceal the generally run-down condition of black elementaries by drawing attention to the facilities provided at Anderson High, the showpiece of the black public schools. Of brick construction, Anderson High was amply equipped with a playground, lunch-room and new heating system, but bore little resemblance to the ward schools attended by most nonwhite children.[38]

When it came to expenditure on teaching provision, the Austin school board pursued the same policy of disbursing a disproportionate share of its funds on the education of white children, at the expense of African-American and Mexican pupils. The annual income of the Austin Independent School District was derived from state, county and city funding, which in 1924-25 made up 41.1%, 1.1% and 58.8%, respectively, of the local school board's available resources of just over $400,000. The bulk ($144,000) of the state money was an apportionment of fourteen dollars for every school-aged child - officially referred to as a 'scholastic' - resident in the school district, of whom 72% were white (this figure includes Mexicans) and 28% black. As already noted, local school boards were required by law to make 'impartial provision' for white and black pupils, which, as regards to financial matters, one might expect to mean a distribution of funds according to the numbers of

each race. Conscious of their legal obligations, the school authorities in Austin made an effort to comply with the letter of the law, while falling foul of the spirit of it. To illustrate this, it is worth examining expenditure on teachers' salaries, which consumed over nine-tenths of the school board's annual income. Significantly, the total amount spent on the salaries of black teachers ($36,000) was easily offset by the state allocation intended for black scholastics ($40,000), while the white apportionment ($103,000) only covered just over a third of the sum dispensed on salaries for white teachers. In other words, the school authorities were fulfilling their duty of sharing out the state apportionment fairly between black and white schools, but diverted the vast majority of locally raised funds - which many black tax-payers had contributed to - into the education of white pupils.[39] There was little substance, therefore, to the argument that Austin whites were paying for the education of the city's black children; actually, it was the other way round, with African-Americans paying local school taxes that were largely used to subsidise the education of whites.

The true extent of the difference in educational provision made for whites and nonwhites becomes apparent when the local school board's annual expenditure per pupil is considered. In 1928-29, there were 7,272 children enrolled in the public schools for whites, 2,118 in those for blacks and 431 in the two Mexican elementaries (as will be shown later, a few other

Mexican children may have attended white schools, but there is no available data showing their precise number). The average amount spent on teacher salaries per pupil was $49.17 in the white schools, $19.91 in the black and $22.40 in the Mexican. These figures, moreover, only relate to pupils actually enrolled in the public schools. If expenditure on teacher salaries is calculated for each child of scholastic age residing in the Austin school district - of which there were approximately 6,900 whites, 800 Mexicans and 3,000 African-Americans - then both nonwhite groups appear to fair even worse. In fact, expenditure per school-aged child for blacks ($14.00) and Mexicans ($11.62) fell below the minimum state apportionment of $15.00 for each scholastic, whereas whites ($48.64) still received more than three times this sum.[40]

As a result of the school board's discriminatory fiscal policy, African-American and Mexican schools were usually short-staffed and not always provided with properly qualified teachers. Teacher/pupil ratios, it is worth noting, were significantly higher for blacks and Mexicans than for whites. In 1924-25 and again in 1928-29, there was on average one teacher to every 28 children in the white schools; in the black schools the ratio fell from 1:42 in 1924-25 to 1:40 in 1928-29, while in the Mexican it rose from 1:41 to 1:54 during the same period.[41] The teacher/pupil ratio at the Mexican elementaries was, as a result of irregular attendance levels, far more variable than at the white

schools. For instance, in September 1920 only ten pupils were enrolled at West Avenue and one of the school's two teachers was allocated to a white elementary until attendance picked up. In contrast, by the end of the 1921-22 academic year the teacher/pupil ratio at East Avenue Mexican school was as high as 1:62 - a level that was repeated at both West Avenue and Comal schools during 1929-30.[42]

The combination of poor facilities, overcrowding and underpaid teachers, had a detrimental effect upon the quality of teaching received by nonwhite pupils. By the end of the 1920s, eight teachers worked in Austin's Mexican schools, all of whom were - with the exception of Miss Consuela Herrera, the first Mexican teacher to be employed by the public schools - white women. Although special training was required for the teaching of non-English-speaking children, teachers at Mexican schools were given less recognition than those at white elementaries and (partly, but not entirely, as a result of pay differentials for men and women, which operated to the disadvantage of the latter) generally earned lower salaries than other white teachers. As long as such circumstances pertained, concluded George A. Works, 'Capable men and women will not prepare themselves for a service in communities where that service is regarded as being of a distinctly inferior character.'[43]

The problems of poor pay and low morale were equally as pronounced in the black public schools, but existed on a much greater scale. 'Why is it,' lamented *The*

Herald in September 1918, 'that Austin's colored teachers receive such small salaries?' 'Convict guards,' it was noted with irony, 'get better pay than our teachers.'[44] The African-American newspaper regularly drew attention to the 'starvation salaries' black teachers had to rely on and declared: 'Those who are shaping the destiny of the future men and women of the race are entitled to good living salaries.'[45] This issue long remained a cause of contention and in April 1928 a delegation of local African-American leaders petitioned the school board to raise the salaries of black teachers. According to the *Austin American*, the request 'was acknowledged as "fair," but declared impossible of realization because of the "lamentably low" wages Austin sees fit to pay all of its teachers.'[46] Admittedly, teachers' salaries were lower in Austin than cities like Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, but the crux of the matter was the difference in pay between black and white teachers. In 1928-29, the average salary for white teachers was $1,852 for men and $1,207 for women, while male and female African-American teachers received $1,027 and $742, respectively. Moreover, four-fifths of all black teachers were women, whose salaries were barely more than half that of their counterparts in the white schools.[47] Clearly, the school board's attitude towards African-American teachers was to employ them at the cheapest possible rate. The implications of such a policy were deeply resented by local blacks. As *The*

Herald complained, 'This way of filling Austin schools with inexperienced school girls who have made no special preparation for the work they are supposed to be doing is not satisfactory.'[48]

As well as ensuring an equitable distribution of funds, local school boards in Texas were required by a 1919 ruling of the state attorney general to 'maintain white and negro schools for the same length of school year.'[49] In 1925, TESC investigators reported that in many parts of the state the public schools still had shorter terms for African-Americans and Mexicans than they did for whites. Although Austin was among the cities in which white, black and Mexican schools were open for the recommended (though not obligatory) minimum period of nine months per year,[50] the school board's resources were usually stretched to the limit to maintain this position. In October 1929, Superintendent A. N. McCallum remarked,

> Some smaller cities have been able to relieve crowded conditions in their school systems for short periods by half-day programs, but Austin - long-noted as an educational center and a city whose public school system is ranked with the best - cannot afford to pursue such methods.[51]

However, at the time of McCallum's statement half-day sessions were actually necessary for some classes at Olive Street and Gregory schools - the two largest black

elementaries in the city - and had been in operation since at least the beginning of 1928.[52] Evidently, the school authorities adhered to a double standard, whereby exigent measures considered unacceptable for white schools were permissible in black schools.

In truth, neither the trustees of Austin's school board - all of whom were white - nor Superintendent McCallum were properly informed about conditions in the schools for nonwhites. The school board employed a team of special supervisors whose task was to monitor the work carried out in the city's schools, but they seldom if ever visited the black or Mexican schools. On account of such practices, observed Leo M. Favrot of the TESC, 'help is not provided where it is most needed.' Writing in 1925, Favrot recommended that city school systems employ at least one black supervisor, as was beginning to happen in other parts of the South. However, such a move was not forthcoming on the part of the Austin school board during the 1920s and it would have been impossible to hire a supervisor for the Mexican schools without formally conceding that these formed - like the black schools - a separate stratum of the education system.[53]

By most indices, therefore, the difference between educational provision for African-American and Mexican pupils was negligible compared with the huge difference in capital investment, expenditure on teachers' salaries and teacher/pupil ratios at nonwhite and the much better endowed white schools. Clearly, as far as schools for

blacks and Mexicans were concerned, separate was invariably and glaringly inferior.

C. Segregation and Educational Performance

One of the chief obstacles to better school provision for Mexican and especially African-American pupils was the view that these two groups did not possess the same mental capacity as whites and therefore little was to be gained from educating them. As Charles S. Johnson discovered, most American psychologists during the 1920s regarded the relatively poor performance of nonwhites on various intelligence tests as a sign of 'innate mental inferiority,' and the importance of such factors as regional influences, socio-economic grouping and linguistic handicaps were either overlooked or dismissed. Moreover, when examining conditions in Texas and other parts the South, researchers showed a reluctance to consider the possibility of a connection between the low achievement of nonwhite pupils and the fact that they attended segregated and invariably second-rate schools.[54] For instance, even after concluding that the public schools for blacks in Texas were generally 'undertaking the impossible' and 'greatly in need of help,' Leo M. Favrot still attributed the fact that 'negro pupils, as a whole, progress at a slower rate than the white pupils' to 'racial differences.'[55]

For the period 1917-1929, the foremost investigation of educational achievement among racial groups in Texas was made by Helen L. Koch and Rietta Simmons, which was published as part of the 1925 TESC report. Koch and Simmons based their findings on the scores children obtained in a series of standard intelligence tests; included in the sample were representative groups of Anglo-American, African-American and Mexican school children from the cities of Austin, San Antonio and El Paso, as well as subjects from six rural districts. The results showed that whether compared by age or grade, Anglo-Americans reacted more successfully to the tests than Mexicans. However, on a number of tests Mexican pupils attending urban schools scored higher than Anglo-Americans from rural districts, clearly indicating that as far as mental capacity was concerned Mexicans were not innately inferior to whites. In contrast, Koch and Simmons found that the 'scores made by whites surpassed those made by negroes in all comparisons,' which tended to the reinforce the myth of white superiority over blacks in matters of intellect. While Mexican pupils encountered difficulties with distinctly linguistic tests, they tended to perform as well as or better than African-American pupils of the same grade. When urban-based groups were compared by age, it was found that the younger blacks excelled the Mexicans on all tests, but the reverse was true for the older groups.[56] This suggests that once Mexican children had mastered the English language or, as in the case of Austin, had been

promoted from a Mexican school to a white elementary, they benefited from the better educational provision available in the white schools and eventually reached standards that pupils of the same grade in the less well-endowed black schools found it difficult to achieve.

Nonetheless, studies of the kind conducted by Koch and Simmons only provide a partial insight into how African-American and Mexican children fared under Austin's education system. The intelligence tests, after all, were only carried out on pupils actually in attendance at school and can tell us nothing about the children who were either absent or not even enrolled. For a more representative analysis of educational achievement, therefore, it is necessary to examine and compare the rates of enrollment, attendance and performance among white and nonwhite children.

In Austin, higher proportions of African-American and Mexican than white children dropped out of education before reaching high school. The city's public school system was divided into eleven teaching levels, or grades as they were referred to; grades one to six, inclusive, were taught in the elementary schools, and grades seven and above at the high schools. Only a small minority of either African-American or Mexican pupils usually got beyond the fourth grade.[57] During 1924-25, 19.0% of black pupils were enrolled in high school, compared with 27.5% of whites (no individual figure for Mexicans was available, because for

statistical purposes the school authorities always counted them as white). In fact, these figures are misleading, because pupils enrolled in the white schools made up 95.6% of Austin Independent School District's white scholastic population, whereas only 69.2% of school-age blacks were enrolled in school. Accordingly, the proportion of scholastics - as opposed to total enrolled pupils - attending high school was 26.3% for whites, but as little as 13.1% for blacks.[58] In 1925, Earl Connell surveyed a group of Mexican pupils (who constituted about six to eight percent of Mexican children enrolled in Austin schools at the time) and found that less than three percent had reached high school, while none had progressed beyond the eighth grade.[59]

As far as Mexican pupils are concerned, the main question which needs to be addressed is whether or not - and in what proportions - they were transferred from the 'special schools' for non-English-speaking children to white elementaries. Austin's Mexican schools only taught up to the third grade, after which pupils were expected to enter the fourth grade of their local white elementary and progress through the education system in the usual manner. This programme first came into operation in 1916, but the number of Mexican children entering white schools was no more than a handful each year.[60] Moreover, most Mexican school children were enrolled in - and in many cases never got beyond - the first grade. For most Mexican children, the chief

obstacle to an easy progression through the grades was their scant knowledge of the English language. Numerous children could not even speak - let alone read or write - a word of English when they first enrolled in school, including on one occasion a fourteen-year-old Mexican girl. In 1920, at least seventy percent of West Avenue pupils were in the first grade.[61] Five years later, Earl Connell said that Mexican pupils 'make rather slow progress,' only a few having gone beyond the second grade. More than half (54.3%) of the group sampled by Connell were enrolled in the first grade, while only 11.4% were in the fourth grade or above (and therefore no longer attended one of the Mexican schools).[62] Even at the end of the 1920s, three-quarters of the teaching conducted at both West Avenue and Comal schools was still to first-grade pupils.[63]

Similarly, Koch and Simmons discovered that, while African-American pupils were younger per grade than Mexican pupils, white pupils were younger per grade than both nonwhite groups.[64] This is partly explained by the fact that a large proportion of nonwhite pupils failed to gain promotion from one school grade to another. As it has already been shown, between eighty and ninety percent of Austin's Mexican school children remained in the third grade or below. Although there was a more even distribution of African-American pupils across the grades, sometimes as many as two-fifths of blacks enrolled in elementary schools and a quarter of those in high school were not promoted to the next grade

at the end of each academic year.[65] Likewise, black and especially Mexican children often entered school at a later age than white children. For example, it was not unusual for children aged eleven or twelve - and on one occasion a girl of fourteen - to enrol at West Avenue School who appeared to have received no previous formal education.[66]

Daily attendance rates were significantly lower at nonwhite than white schools in Austin, with the pattern at Mexican schools being particularly unpredictable. During the academic year 1928-29, the average number of days attended by each pupil in the public schools was 135 for whites (Mexicans included) and 122 for blacks. Moreover, thirty percent of African-American scholastics covered by the Austin school district were not even enrolled and failed to attend school at all.[67] No precise figures are available for Mexican enrollment or attendance rates in the city during the 1920s, though George A. Works remarked that in most parts of Texas 'the Mexicans are lax in sending their children to school.'[68] In 1920, only about a quarter of the Mexican - compared with nearly three-fifths of the total - population aged 5 to 20 in Texas actually attended school, although the proportion enrolled was probably higher in Austin.[69]

The principal factor contributing to low attendance rates among African-American and Mexican children was the same for both groups. In the case of Mexicans, Max Handman asserted that the cause of truancy was 'usually

the poverty of the parents,' whose 'interest in schooling usually gives way as soon as the child is able to add to family income.' 'The Mexicans,' continued Handman, 'do not exploit their children, but they cannot see any use for more than a little education when the making of a living is so hard a task.'[70] Significantly, the levels of attendance at nonwhite schools in Austin were closely related to the cycles of demand for seasonal labourers in agriculture; it was quite common for blacks and particularly Mexicans to do field work in family units - men, women and children, included (see Chapter 1). While most white children were enrolled in school by the end of September for the commencement of each new academic year, the black and Mexican schools were rarely catering to their full capacity before December. During the first few months of school, the local education authorities regularly reported that attendance was low because 'many Mexican and negro students have not entered the schools due to cotton picking.'[71] This irregular pattern of attendance was particularly pronounced in the Mexican schools. In 1920, teachers at West Avenue School noted how the Mexican children seemed to 'come and go,' with new pupils enrolling at all times of the year. Although full attendance had only been achieved in January, the *Austin American* reported at the end of February: 'the teachers are "making hay while the sun shines," for they know that some of these boys and girls will have to cut spinach and do other farm work soon.' In total, over

eighty children passed through the school during 1919–20, but when the new term began in September 1920 enrollment was down to ten pupils.[72] As long as all school-age children had enrolled by December – when, under state law, the period of compulsory attendance began – the education authorities in Austin were not overly concerned that the majority of black and Mexican pupils received at least two months less schooling per year than most white pupils.[73]

In the absence of further state legislation and the necessary executive action to enforce regular school attendance among blacks and Mexicans, there was only a remote possibility of enrollment levels increasing for either group. To make matters worse, educationalists could not agree upon a standard policy for combating low attendance rates and contributors to the 1925 TESC report even put forward contradictory strategies. Leo Favrot intimated that school attendance laws needed to be strengthened and more vigorously enforced if the high drop-out rate among black pupils was to be reversed. In contrast, George Works favoured a more cautious approach to the problem and – when discussing Mexicans – agreed with a 1923 University of Texas study, which concluded: 'The enforcement of Mexican school attendance must be sane and reasonable. It is not an undertaking for the fanatic nor the extremist. It must be developed gradually.' Works was keenly aware of the level of opposition that existed to education for Mexicans in many parts of the state and wanted to avoid creating a

controversy. Above all, he recognised that reform would necessarily have to proceed at a slow pace if it was to proceed at all, concluding that a desire to improve attendance rates for Mexicans should be 'expressed in legislation where practicable and in public sentiment when legislation is not feasible.'[74]

When left to themselves, local school boards often failed to ensure that Mexican children went to school in compliance with state compulsory attendance laws. Writing in 1916, E. E. Davis described how in many rural districts of Travis County the Mexican children of school age were 'running at large over the community and not one of them reported as having attended school a single day the past school year.' Commenting on an abuse that was common to many parts of Texas, Davis added:

> The most attention ever given by local school authorities to the transient element of the Mexican children is during the week when the scholastic census is being taken. Then it is that they are diligently sought out by the census enumerators, [so] that their annual pro rata from the State may be claimed for maintaining the schools in the district where they may chance to be sojourning.[75]

In Austin, members of the educational establishment prided themselves on having a more enlightened attitude towards the education of Mexicans than prevailed in

other parts of the state. As one West Avenue School teacher remarked in February 1920:

> We are inclined to believe that Austin is more conscientious about the education of her Mexican population and the enforcement of the compulsory school attendance law than some of the other cities [in Texas]. If a Mexican child is in Austin a few days it must go to school those days; if it has not suitable clothes, as often happens, clothes are obtained in some way. We have had pupils go to San Antonio and Houston and be gone for several months, and not see a school house.[76]

However, as the 1920s progressed, the school authorities in Austin had to cope with even greater proportions of Mexican children and found it increasingly difficult to live up to their own publicity. Inevitably, numerous children were able to evade the social workers and various officials whose job it was to ensure observation of the compulsory attendance laws. In 1921, for instance, a group of Austin citizens complained that many young Mexican boys were employed 'selling newspapers on the streets at noon time' and urged the city council to 'require them to attend school.'[77]

Significantly, studies of education made during the 1920s showed that there was a direct link between both the poor academic performance and low school attendance record of children, and high illiteracy rates among

adults. Most evidence suggested that children of illiterate parents tended to attend school less regularly and stood less chance of learning to read and write themselves.[78] In Austin, illiteracy rates were declining but they were much higher among blacks and Mexicans than whites. In 1910, for example, 2.6% of native whites aged ten years or over were illiterate, which fell to 1.8% in 1920; over the same period the illiteracy rate among blacks fell from 18.8% to 14.1%. While there are no exact figures available for Mexicans, the proportion of foreign-born whites that were illiterate was 14.8% in 1910 and 19.1% in 1920 (in these years, Mexicans made up 21.1% and 35.3%, respectively, of the group classed as 'foreign-born white'). If, as seems likely, the rising level of illiteracy among foreign-born whites was largely attributable to the sudden growth of the Mexican population in Austin, then the proportion of Mexicans that could not read or write may have been anything from one-fifth to one-half.[79] Clearly, until adult illiteracy rates were considerably reduced among blacks and Mexicans, nonwhite pupils would have to compete with another handicap in their efforts to reach the educational standards attained by whites.

Although African-American and Mexican children in Austin during the 1920s lagged behind whites in terms of educational achievement, white commentators were clearly expressing their own prejudices - rather than making impartial observations - when they blamed such variations in performance on innate racial differences.

Any unbiased inquiry would have revealed and focused upon the host of socio-economic factors which not only operated in such a way as to make educational progress for nonwhite children a more difficult and arduous task, but often prevented them from attending school at all. Nonetheless, the problems arising from the impoverished background of many African-American and Mexican children (as well as the language difficulties experienced by the latter) were compounded by what might be termed the benign neglect of the school authorities in Austin. Though white contemporaries generally preferred to believe otherwise, the comparatively poor performance of pupils in black and Mexican schools was mostly attributable to a combination of inadequate funding, cramped and overcrowded conditions, higher pupil/teacher ratios and facilities that were generally inferior to those provided for white pupils.

D. Raising Standards in Black and Mexican Schools

Educationalists in Texas were aware of the inequalities existing between the schools provided for white children and those for nonwhites, but state and local officials were only half-hearted in their commitment to raising educational standards for African-American and Mexican pupils. The State Department of Education played lip-service to the principle of 'impartial provision' and in its report for 1918-1922 declared: 'Schools for negroes

and Mexicans have been greatly improved.'[80] Even so, no evidence was offered to support this claim and in 1925 the TESC revealed that conditions in black and Mexican schools were still grossly inferior to those for whites.[81] Similarly, William Davis found that the black schools he visited in East Texas were in a 'worse condition than official reports sometimes indicate.'[82] In 1926, state officials confessed: 'while it is true that the colored schools of the state have been improved during recent years, there is much to be done to bring them up to a satisfactory standard of efficient service.'[83]

In 1919, Miss Annie Webb Blanton, the state superintendent of public instruction, informed an African-American audience in Austin that the poor performance of black pupils was attributable to the fact that 'most negro schools had poor teachers.'[84] This complaint was reiterated by *The Herald*, which demanded that black children should be 'given every opportunity to come up to the highest standard of efficiency, which can only be done by placing the very best instructors in charge.'[85] Compared with other southern states black teachers in Texas were above average in terms of qualifications and training, but in 1925 Leo M. Favrot estimated that 'more than 50 per cent are still short of standard requirements.'[86] During the latter part of the 1920s, the state education authorities made a more concerted effort to improve the standard of instruction for black pupils, largely by requiring African-American

teachers to attend training schools during the summer and showing preference to applicants who were college graduates when making appointments. In 1925–26, more than a third (34.1%) of all black teachers in the Texas public school system had not even graduated from high school, while only one-seventh (14.3%) had a college or university degree. By 1929–30, considerable progress had been made towards reversing these proportions, with 12.2% being graduates of no school and 22.9% college graduates.[87] In 1928, A. N. McCallum asserted that the 'negro schools of Austin have a higher standard than those of any city in the state and . . . every negro teacher holds at least a first grade [state] teachers' certificate.'[88]

Regardless of the criticism often hurled at them, African-American teachers in Austin were vociferous both in defence of their own position and the promotion of better educational provision for black pupils. The city's black teachers often played a leading role in organising members of their profession. In 1884, L. C. Anderson (who served as principal of Austin's black high school from 1896 to 1929) was a founder member and first president of the Texas Colored Teachers' State Association. Similarly, the city's black teachers invited their rural counterparts to join the Travis County Negro Teachers' Institute, which after 1917 met annually at Austin to discuss matters relating to the education of local blacks.[89] In 1928, after a brief period of reorganisation for the Colored Teachers' State

Association, Austin was chosen to host one of the organisation's first annual conventions, which was attended by nearly two thousand black teachers from all over Texas.[90] More importantly, Austin's black teachers constantly put pressure on the local school board to improve the standard of educational provision for black pupils. At the beginning of the academic year 1923-24, the 'problems of the negro schools were thrashed out' at a meeting between Superintendent McCallum and African-American school principals; top of the agenda, as usual, was the issue of overcrowding in many of the black schools.[91] On other occasions, black teachers drew attention to the disparity between facilities at white and black schools. In March 1928, W. H. Passon, principal of Olive Street, complained that his school - the second-largest black elementary in the city - was in dire need of a lunch room for pupils; in contrast, all of Austin's white and Mexican schools were fitted with kitchens and dining areas where hot meals were available.[92]

Although the segregated nature of the public school system was never challenged during the period 1917-1929, Austin's African-American community did demand 'equal' consideration from the school board. Local blacks displayed a keen interest in educational matters and, as *The Herald* declared in 1919, many believed that the black schools had 'played second fiddle long enough.' In 1926, nearly two hundred local black citizens and teachers joined forces and successfully petitioned for

the establishment of a night school at Anderson High, to match the one that had been in operation for whites (including Mexicans) since about 1910.[93] Likewise, when the school board announced its plans for a massive $300,000 bond issue in 1928, local African-Americans were determined to ensure that the black schools received 'a fair proportion' of the total sum. On 10 April 1928, a delegation of African-American leaders presented their case to a meeting of the school board trustees and the following day A. N. McCallum announced that a decision had been made to build a $55,000 junior high school for black pupils. McCallum laid emphasis upon the fact that 18.5% - which was about the proportion African-Americans made up of Austin's total (though not scholastic) population - of the bond issue money was thereby allocated to the city's black schools. The purpose of the new junior high was to relieve congested conditions in the black elementaries (some of which were having to hold half-day classes) and Anderson High School. According to William P. Gaines, a spokesman for the school board, the junior high school 'would be one of the finest institutions of its kind in the south' and was 'something every negro man and woman in the city should go to the polls and vote for, and that every leader of the race should commend.'[94] Consequently, Austin's black educationalists gave their full support to the proposed bond issue and L. C. Anderson told black voters that it was 'vital to the welfare of the children of colored parents in this

city.'[95]

From 1928 onwards, the school authorities in Austin (influenced, in part, by the McFadden-Johnson city administration) were more conscientious in making provisions for the black public schools. Indeed, as soon as the 1928 bond issue was accepted by Austin voters, the school board announced that the first phase of its building programme would begin with construction of the junior high school for blacks.[96] The school - named Kealing Junior High at its dedication ceremony in February 1930 - was eventually built, furnished and equipped for the sum of $65,000.[97] Similarly, the black and Mexican schools were included in the city's programme of playground development (with the exception of Wheatville and Clarksville schools, which were deliberately deprived of such facilities in the hope that West Austin blacks would thereby be encouraged to move to the east of the city: see Chapter 3). In 1928, the Austin City Plan Commission recommended that 'the negro schools . . . be provided with ample and adequate playground space and facilities similar to the white schools of the city.'[98] West Avenue and Comal Mexican schools also stood to benefit from the proposed playground scheme and the first acquisitions of property for this purpose were made in June 1928.[99]

Another area in which the school board focused upon the needs of African-Americans and Mexicans was in its campaign to eradicate illiteracy in the city. The principal means of reducing illiteracy rates among

adults was the establishment of special night school classes. In January 1929, A. N. McCallum announced that, as a 'step aimed to eliminate illiteracy among the negroes of Austin,' special evening classes had been set-up at Anderson High School and local blacks were urged to 'take advantage of [the] instructions in primary and grade work that will be provided.'[100] For adult Mexicans, such facilities had existed at least since 1920 in the form of the night school Americanisation classes, in which, above all, foreigners (ninety-five percent of whom were Mexican) were taught basic reading and writing skills.[101]

During the 1920s, Austin's Mexican community was generally appreciative of the educational provision made by the local school board. In spite of the fact that their children were usually required to attend segregated schools, where the facilities and conditions compared unfavourably with those in the white schools, local Mexicans recognised the opportunities afforded by free public education. When Earl Connell questioned Mexican men and women about the amount of schooling they had received, the usual reply was 'Pococito' ('very little'); in fact, almost three-fifths of those surveyed had no formal education whatsoever. Nonetheless, numerous Mexican parents had actually moved to Austin from other parts of Texas in order to take advantage of the city's educational facilities.[102] In 1926, Alberto Garcia, Jose Acevedo and other community leaders informed local Mexicans that they owed a 'moral

obligation to the city and the state' to pay their taxes, which were used for the upkeep of the public schools. These leaders were responding to an appeal made by the Mexican consul at San Antonio, who had declared that 'as the Mexicans residing in Texas educate their children here, it is no more than fair that they should share the expense with other residents.'[103]

To a large extent, such remarks were aimed at the relatively transitory type of immigrants or those who had only recently decided to settle down in one place. The more well-established elements of Austin's Mexican community had from an early stage displayed an interest in and commitment to the city's public schools. In October 1922, for example, a group of seventy-five local Mexicans launched a campaign to provide West Avenue School with a playground; this movement, it is interesting to note, anticipated the municipal government's plans for a city-wide network of school playgrounds by four years. Initially, it proved difficult to raise enough money, but the organisers persevered and as late as 1927 were still holding fund-raising events, which by that time were for the benefit of providing both West Avenue and Comal schools with playground and recreational facilties.[104]

Moreover, as the 1920s progressed, some Mexican children gradually worked their way through either West Avenue or Comal and the white elementary schools, and were finally entering the white high schools. Admittedly, there was only a handful of such children at

first and they usually came from Mexican families that had been living in Austin for some years, but their presence indicates that local Mexicans were prepared to make full use of the public schools. Nonetheless, most of Austin's Mexican pupils never even gained entry to one of the white elementaries, let alone the high schools. During the academic year 1924–25, probably fewer than forty Mexican children attended a white elementary school and less than ten got as far as junior high. Such a small number of Mexican pupils was not enough to disturb white supremacy in the public schools, where the ratio of Anglos to Mexicans exceeded 100: 1 in the white elementaries and was closer to 200: 1 in the high schools.[105] By the late twenties, Mexican leaders throughout Texas were beginning to speak out against school segregation, although largely on the grounds that schools for Mexicans were generally inferior to those for whites. In 1929, the founders of LULAC both reflected and shaped the opinion of Mexicans in the state when they publicly announced that the organisation would 'oppose any tendency to separate our children in the schools of this country.'[106]

From a comparison of the conditions so far described as prevailing in Austin's nonwhite schools, it might be supposed that local Mexicans had as much reason as African-Americans to request 'impartial provision' in the area of education, but such a strategy would have been counter-productive. Although African-Americans may not have been content with a segregated school system,

which clearly operated to the detriment of black pupils, they recognised that whites would not countenance the idea of racially integrated educational establishments. Consequently, when black leaders demanded that 'separate' school facilities ought to be in fact - as well as principle - 'equal,' they took the only practical option available to them. In contrast, the Mexican schools were partially integrated with the white sector of the education system, because an outlet existed whereby Mexican pupils could enter and progress through white elementary schools once they had reached the fourth grade. Therefore, despite the fact that most Mexican pupils failed to get beyond the third grade, it was still worth tolerating crowded conditions and inferior facilities at schools like West Avenue and Comal if the more accomplished pupils (who were, albeit slowly, increasing in number) would eventually be transferred to the well-equipped, adequately staffed and more commodious white schools. This attitude, if it existed, may explain why Mexicans maintained a silence over the issue of 'impartial provision,' but were beginning to express their strong opposition to school segregation being anything more than a temporary measure for handling Mexican children with language difficulties.

E. Education and Socialisation

Upon an examination of the opportunities existing for either African-American or Mexican pupils to progress to college or university, it becomes apparent that the school authorities in Austin never intended education for nonwhites to be equal to or even the same in content as that for whites. White pupils in Austin's public schools were generally encouraged to aspire towards a place at college or university, while it was impressed upon blacks and Mexicans that they needed to lower their sights and concentrate upon acquiring the basic skills that would enable them to perform a useful - though necessarily subordinate - role in society. Indeed, as far as nonwhite pupils were concerned, the principal function of the public schools was not education but socialisation.

In 1925, the attitude of most white Texans toward education for African-Americans was expressed by the TESC, when it reported: 'The present conditions under which negroes live justify very particular attention in the schools to their health needs, and to their needs for vocational training, especially training for the occupations which they are likely to pursue.'[107] The TESC's recommendations clearly intimated that the education system should prepare African-Americans for the manual and often unskilled occupations that they were usually employed in and not to instill in black pupils a desire for social and economic advancement. In

1927, the local school board claimed that Austin's public schools for blacks were 'operated on precisely the same principles and requirements as the white schools,' but in the former far greater emphasis was laid upon 'manual training' than in the latter. In the black public schools, instruction in practical subjects like woodwork for boys and home economics or domestic science for girls - which were taught in white schools, but usually as subsidiary courses - took precedence over 'regular academic work.' Moreover, the vocational training offered to black pupils was far more limited in its scope. In 1919, for example, subjects related to business and commerce were already a well-established part of the curriculum at the white high schools, but at Anderson High School the introduction of 'an elementary business course' was still at the planning stage in 1927.[108]

Influenced by the philosophy of Booker T. Washington, many of Austin's leading African-American educators actually believed that there was a need for increased emphasis upon vocational and manual training in the black schools. In 1924, William B. Campbell, principal of St. John's Industrial Institute and Orphanage, said that black schools ought to provide the 'fundamentals in education, rather than so much top work.'[109] Indeed, it was characteristic of charitable educational institutions like St. John's Orphanage to specialise in 'training in agricultural and industrial arts.' Also situated in Austin was the Eliza Dee

Industrial Home, which described itself as a 'boarding school of domestic science for colored girls' and was supported by the Women's Home Mission Society of Cincinnati.[110] In 1929, W. B. Campbell became virtual head of the black public schools when he took over from L. C. Anderson as principal of Anderson High School, indicating that for most of the city's black pupils vocational and manual training would continue to form a major ingredient of their education.[111]

In Austin's Mexican schools, there was little room for anything else than the teaching of reading and writing in English, plus a little basic arithmetic, in the curriculum. Nonetheless, one of the principal tasks of these schools - which, in many ways, took precedence over purely educational work - was the socialisation and, to be more precise, Americanisation of Mexican children. As already noted, Mexicans in Austin - even ones that had lived in the city for many years - tended to retain a strong sense of allegiance to Mexico and rarely became naturalised U.S. citizens. However, during the 1920s white Austinites were highly suspicious of such divided loyalties and resolved to prevent these sentiments being passed on to the younger generation of Mexicans. In accordance with state laws, all lessons at the Mexican schools were conducted in the English language; there was at least one daily instruction in patriotism - naturally, of the American, not the Mexican, variety; and a weekly lesson in Texas history, which, to be sure, paid little heed to the Mexican

interpretation of events.[112] Moreover, the insistence upon classes being conducted in English proved a major handicap to Mexican pupils. As the educationalist Herschel T. Manuel, of the University of Texas, observed in the early 1930s:

> According to prevailing methods of instruction in the public schools, they [Mexican pupils] are instructed almost wholly in English, and are given no introduction to the written forms of their native language until they reach the high school. This almost complete dependence upon a foreign language from the beginning of their school work places a special burden on the elementary grades and raises certain serious questions regarding the effect of this treatment upon their school progress and even their mental growth.

Manuel found that, because Mexicans were instructed in English and not Spanish, they progressed through the grades at a much slower rate than whites, which consequently reduced their chances of being transferred to a white elementary and made school segregation more firmly entrenched. Moreover, even Mexican pupils that reached the higher grades of the public school system continued to suffer as a result of what Manuel termed a 'persistent language handicap.'[113] In other words, Americanisation took place at the expense of Mexican pupils' educational achievement.

According to a West Avenue teacher in 1920, one of the main aims of the school was to turn its pupils into 'good useful citizens.' Consequently, Mexicans had to 'speak English fluently, know American traditions [and] respect the constitution' before they were allowed to transfer to a white school, for fear that they might be carriers of subversive or un-American influences. Considering that most Mexican children failed to get beyond the third grade and remained in one of the segregated schools, the emphasis placed on Americanisation formed an integral part of their education. The nearly two hundred Mexican children attending the Catholic school of Our Lady of Guadalupe were expected to salute the American flag twice a day and 'taught to love the United States.'[114] By 1929, the enrollment at Our Lady of Guadalupe School had risen to over four hundred, but as the Catholic Home Mission Guild reported: 'The Americanisation part of the school work is never lost sight of by the Sisters of the Holy Cross who are the teachers.'[115]

In contrast with the schools maintained for African-Americans and for Mexicans, the white schools were geared to achieving a high standard of academic attainment. As the *Austin Statesman* remarked in August 1919: 'It is a fortunate thing for children who live in this city to be able to begin in the kindergarten, proceed through the elementary and high school and finish their education at the University of Texas.'[116] During the 1920s, it would have been impossible for an

African-American child and - although not entirely out of the question - highly unusual for a Mexican child to follow the path sketched out by the *Statesman*. (For one thing, neither the Mexican nor the black public schools were provided with kindergartens, despite the fact that this facility had been introduced at most of the white elementaries between 1919 and 1929.[117]) African-Americans were not admitted to the University of Texas and, although legal provision for a state university for blacks had been made in the 1880s, Texas State University for Negroes was not established until 1947. Admittedly, there were numerous colleges for blacks in Texas which offered undergraduate courses, but the facilities and standards were hardly comparable to the University of Texas. In consequence, local African-Americans wishing to pursue graduate studies or professional training invariably had to leave the state to do so.[118]

Austin's African-American community was served by two black colleges, Tillotson and Samuel Huston, founded in 1881 and 1900, respectively. The 1920s was a crucial period in the development of both these institutions, which, with varying degrees of success, sought state accreditation for their courses. Between 1923 and 1927, Samuel Huston underwent a major transformation, dropping much of the non-college level teaching it had previously undertaken and increasing the number of students working towards bachelor's degrees from 59 to 201. The institution also conferred state teachers' certificates

and in 1925 was awarded senior college status by the State Department of Education. Although some vocational training was offered, Samuel Huston's curriculum was concentrated around the liberal arts and specifically geared towards teacher training. By the late twenties, the college was attracting students from a broad area within Central Texas and completion rates on degree courses were steadily increasing, from only four in 1923 to twenty-two in 1927. Nonetheless, under one-fifth of college entrants graduated and honours degrees were a rarity. At Tillotson College, the transition from multipurpose to mainly college-level instruction proceeded more falteringly. Although junior college status was granted in September 1926, almost eighty-five percent of the institution's 126 students were enrolled in its elementary and high school departments. Moreover, nearly all of the twenty junior-college students were residents of Austin and on teacher-training courses.[119]

Separate colleges for Mexicans did not exist in Austin and, unlike blacks, they were not denied access to the University of Texas. In 1922, the Austin YWCA considered the possibility of organising a college for Mexican girls in the city, but these plans failed to materialise.[120] Moreover, by the late 1920s, a handful of local Mexican pupils had already worked their way up through the public schools and secured a place at the state university. However, as late as 1929 a large (possibly the greater) proportion of Mexicans attending

either the University of Texas or St. Edward's University (a Catholic college situated in Austin) were not students from Austin or other parts of Texas, but the offspring of wealthy and influential families from below the Rio Grande.[121] In fact, the University of Texas offered annual scholarships in an effort to attract more students from Mexico and, without exception, these were awarded to the children of highly-placed Mexican government officials.[122] During the 1920s, organised efforts to provide talented young Mexicans with the financial support necessary to enter higher education were still in their infancy and as long as such a large percentage of Austin's Mexican pupils dropped-out of education before reaching high school, the number progressing to university or college would remain relatively small.[123]

Summary

Clearly, an examination of Austin's education system between 1917 and 1929 reveals a great deal about the experiences of the local African-American and Mexican populations, emphasising not only the similarities but also some important differences. Although *de jure* segregation only applied to blacks, in the public schools *de facto* segregation was almost as complete for Mexicans as it was for African-Americans. The local school board justified the maintenance of separate

schools for Mexicans on pedagogical grounds, claiming that non-English-speaking children required special preparation before being transferred to the regular white elementaries. Nonetheless, this practice effectively prevented at least four-fifths of all Mexican pupils entering the mainstream white school system. Furthermore, the schools maintained for Mexicans bore a grim resemblance to the black public schools; they were poorly financed, understaffed and overcrowded. Similarly, per capita expenditure on the education of Mexican pupils, like blacks, was much lower than for whites. In the face of such evidence, therefore, the credibility of the school board's assertion that Mexican pupils were not segregated on account of their race or nationality is clearly undermined.

Fundamentally, education for whites and nonwhites was not meant to be equal. Indeed, as far as financial matters were concerned, the school board barely kept up the pretence of making 'impartial provision' for white and nonwhite schools. Primarily, the purpose of the public schools was to socialise nonwhite children and prepare them for a subordinate economic and social status in adulthood. For black pupils, this meant laying emphasis upon vocational and particularly manual training, to ensure that they did not entertain aspirations above their station; while Mexican pupils were Americanised to the extent that they could speak and understand English, and owed allegiance more to the

United States and Texas than to Mexico, their ancestral homeland. However, the school authorities were not particularly bothered if attendance or enrollment rates were relatively lower for nonwhites than whites, or that only a minority of Mexicans or African-Americans got beyond the fourth grade, let alone graduated from high school.

Nonetheless, there was one essential difference between the opportunities available to Mexican and African-American children. The black and white education systems were, to all intents, totally separate and it was impossible for a black pupil to attend a white school, or *vice versa*. For Mexicans, however, education proved a means to achieving integration into 'white' society. If they advanced beyond the third grade and were transferred from a Mexican to a white school, then it was possible for Mexican pupils to progress through Austin's highly reputed education system and even secure a place at college or university. Admittedly, this was a route that only a handful of Austin Mexicans pursued during the 1920s, but it was a path not open to blacks and one that greater proportions of local Mexicans were bound to follow in the future. In education, as in other areas, therefore, it was possible for a minority of Mexicans (usually the more educated and Americanised ones) to cross the racial divide between themselves and whites, but for blacks – no matter how educated or talented they were – the divide was unbreachable.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Between World War I and the onset of the Great Depression, the ethnic landscape of Austin underwent a major transformation. During this period of intense social and demographic upheaval, the city changed from being an essentially biracial into a clearly tri-ethnic community. The main cause of this rapid transition was a massive influx of Mexican immigrants, who joined the white majority and the black minority as one of the city's three main ethnic groups. Moreover, the increased Mexican presence had a dramatic impact on race relations and forced a fundamental realignment in ethnic stratification, which, in turn, formed the basis for a three-way pattern of segregation. Indeed, by 1930 a high level of separation was maintained between whites, blacks and Mexicans in most areas of life, including housing, education, health care and recreation.

During the 1920s, Austin witnessed a more than fivefold increase in the number of its Mexican inhabitants, while at the same time the size of both the white and black populations grew by only two-fifths (see Tables 8 and 10). By 1930, Mexicans made up almost ten percent of the total population and were well established as the city's second largest ethnic minority. The shifting configurations of the ethnic

landscape did not go unnoticed by contemporaries and white Austinites soon began to speculate over the implications for local race relations. Essentially, whites wanted to protect existing racial demarcations, which since the late nineteenth century had operated to maintain a strict separation between whites and blacks. Because the mostly brown-skinned Mexicans were clearly neither black nor white and even displayed an ability to traverse the 'color line' with impunity, the increased Mexican presence generated fears among whites that racial distinctions would eventually become blurred. Consequently, these concerns initiated a public debate over the status to be accorded Mexicans in what was already a highly stratified society.

The final outcome of this issue was that Mexicans lost all claim to racial equality with whites and were assigned to a caste status similar to that of African-Americans. Moreover, the local practice of categorising Mexicans as a distinct racial group - for the subsequent purpose of segregating them from whites - was eventually given federal sanction in 1930, when the U.S. Census Bureau for the first (and only) time decided to classify Mexicans as a nonwhite race. This realignment in ethnic stratification had far-reaching consequences, not least because it provided whites with an ideological justification for surrounding Mexicans with an array of social proscriptions usually reserved only for blacks. After 1916, Mexicans in Austin were provided with segregated public schools, a practice that had been

official policy for African-Americans since the 1880s. Similarly, at the end of the 1920s, the municipal authorities extended this three-way pattern of segregation to the realm of leisure activity by providing the white, black and Mexican communities with separate recreational facilities. However, at the city hospital no attempt was made to distinguish between black and Mexican patients, both of whom were housed in a separate building to whites.

In order to explain the loss of status suffered by Mexicans in Austin by the late 1920s, a number of factors need to be taken into consideration. First, the sudden growth of the city's Mexican population (which witnessed a tenfold increase in size between 1910 and 1930) was bound to attract the attention of and even be a cause of alarm to local whites. Second, the Mexican influx coincided with a period of heightened ethnic tensions in Austin and the rest of Texas. World War I and the post-war Red Scare had generated a high level of anti-foreigner and anti-immigrant sentiment, which came to full expression during the early twenties with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan. Fears of African-American assertiveness (whether real or imagined) had also intensified anxiety over the preservation of white supremacy. This adverse climate was compounded by a further factor, the apparent unassimilability of the Mexican immigrants themselves. Not only were the Mexicans' Indian ancestry, Catholicism and inability to speak English perceived as incompatible with 'One

Hundred Percent Americanism,' but the vast majority of immigrants from below the Rio Grande showed no interest in becoming assimilated or seeking U.S. citizenship. Moreover, Mexican immigrants suffered more noticeably from the problems of poverty, illiteracy and disease than even the despised and oppressed African-Americans, which most whites saw as confirmation of the Mexicans' racial inferiority.

Despite the striking similarities between conditions for African-Americans and Mexicans in Austin, there were some important differences. Admittedly, first impressions suggest that by 1930 segregation was as extensive for Mexicans as it was for blacks. The Mexican population was, at the very least, equally as concentrated in distinct ethnic neighbourhoods as the African-American population, while the white, black and Mexican communities each had their own separate schools, churches and recreational centres. Nonetheless, Jim Crow proscriptions were less rigidly applied to Mexicans than to African-Americans. For instance, whereas levels of *de facto* segregation were similar for both blacks and Mexicans, *de jure* segregation - such as on streetcars and the railroads - was aimed solely at African-Americans.

The fundamental difference between the black and Mexican experiences in Austin is best illustrated by examining the educational opportunities for both groups. Although the local school board discriminated against black and Mexican schools alike, after the third grade

Mexican children (albeit a very small minority in practice) were able to transfer to and progress through the well-endowed white school system. In contrast, all African-American pupils were confined to segregated and under-funded educational sites for the duration of their schooling in Austin. Moreover, in spite of the fact that the proportion of high school graduates was higher among blacks than Mexicans, the former were excluded from the state-funded University of Texas while the latter could study alongside white students.

Residential patterns also reflected the gradations of racial separation. Whereas ethnic clustering was more pronounced among Mexicans than African-Americans, Mexican neighbourhoods - such as the one that formed in East Austin during the 1920s - often formed a contiguity between white and black districts. Consequently, the Mexican presence actually enhanced the degree of separation between whites and blacks. For most Mexicans, however, their relationship with the dominant society did not extend beyond this role as a convenient interface between the white and black worlds. Indeed, rising levels of segregation during the 1920s actually accentuated the polarisation between Austin's three main ethnic groups.

Racial demarcations might have been less severely drawn for Mexicans than for African-Americans, but whites were determined to perpetuate the social subordination of both groups. Nonwhites were denied access to positions of influence and Austin's white

establishment used a variety of means, including force, to maintain the *status quo*. In fact, a primary function of the law enforcement agencies was to act as guardians of white supremacy. This is evidenced by the swift suppression of the NAACP in Austin during 1919, following reports that the organisation was encouraging local blacks to agitate for 'social equality.' By the late 1920s, nonwhites enjoyed limited scope for activity in the political arena. The Democratic and Republican county organisations both excluded nonwhites from positions of influence and generally discouraged their involvement in party officiations. A further impediment to nonwhite participation in politics was the poll tax, which effectively disfranchised a large proportion of potential black and Mexican voters.

Nonetheless, nonwhite voting was not eliminated altogether and African-American electors, in particular, often played a decisive role in municipal elections. Indeed, white candidates for local office ignored the city's African-American voting bloc at their peril, a situation which provided the black community's leaders with a considerable amount of political leverage. In contrast, the Mexican population - which contained relatively few qualified voters and only a small pool of individuals able to take on leadership roles - failed to make a significant impact on the local political scene during the 1920s. The absence of an effective Mexican political leadership partly explains the ease with which white officials were able to implement a policy of

segregation for Mexicans in the public schools, the city hospital, and municipal parks and playgrounds.

The three-way pattern of segregation which became established in Austin during the period 1917-1929 survived until the 1960s. Its demise came about partly as a result of federal initiatives, but mostly through the concerted efforts of the local African-American and Mexican-American communities. During the 1970s, the increased political awareness of these two groups came to fruition when first a black and then a Hispanic candidate were elected onto the previously all-white city council. Another factor which helped undermine segregation practices in Austin was further spates of Mexican immigration. By 1960, Mexican-Americans had finally displaced African-Americans as the city's largest nonwhite ethnic minority. By the mid-1970s, significant proportions of the former group resided in most areas of Austin, having overcome fifty-year-old patterns of residential segregation.[1]

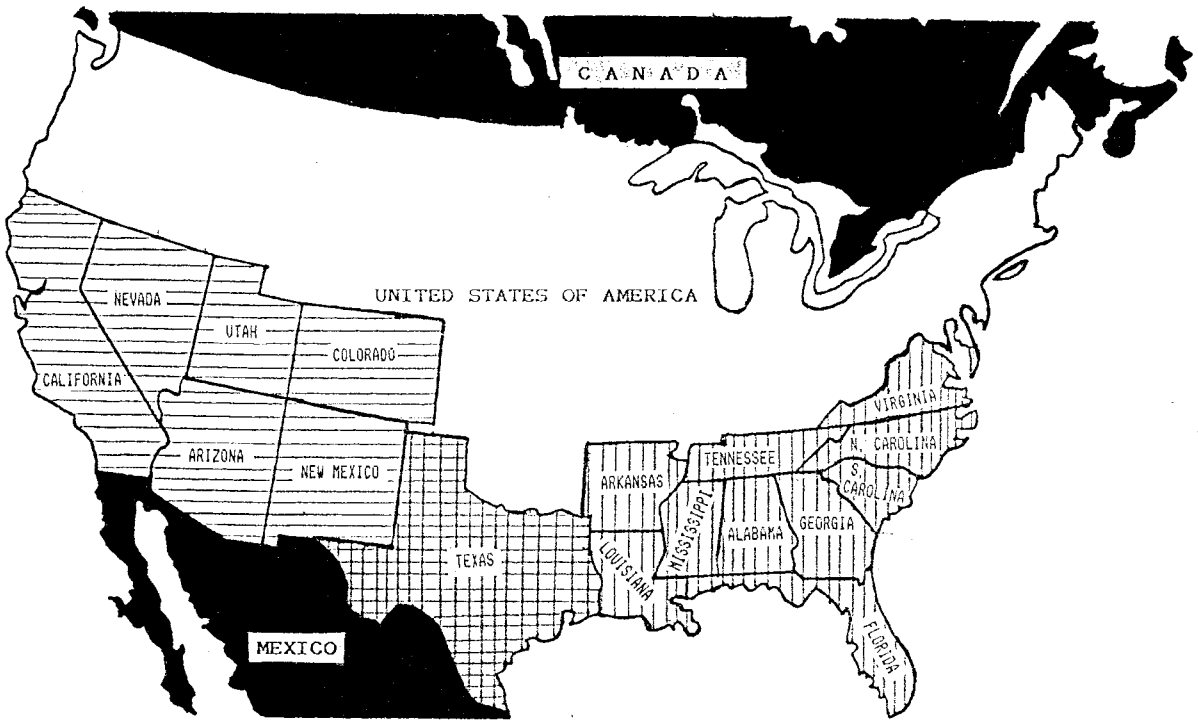
Despite the pace with which racial demarcations have been eroded in recent decades, many legacies of the segregation era remain. Nowhere is this more manifest than in the continued existence of two large and relatively deprived inner-city ethnic enclaves - one composed almost entirely of African-Americans, the other of Mexican-Americans. These neighbourhoods are located adjacent to each other in the district known as 'East Austin,' a term which has long since lost most of its topographical qualities. Conforming to a pattern

replicated throughout Texas and the United States, the East Austin ghetto is a living testimony to the marginalised position within American society still occupied by substantial elements of both the African-American and Mexican-American populations.

Appendix I

MAPS

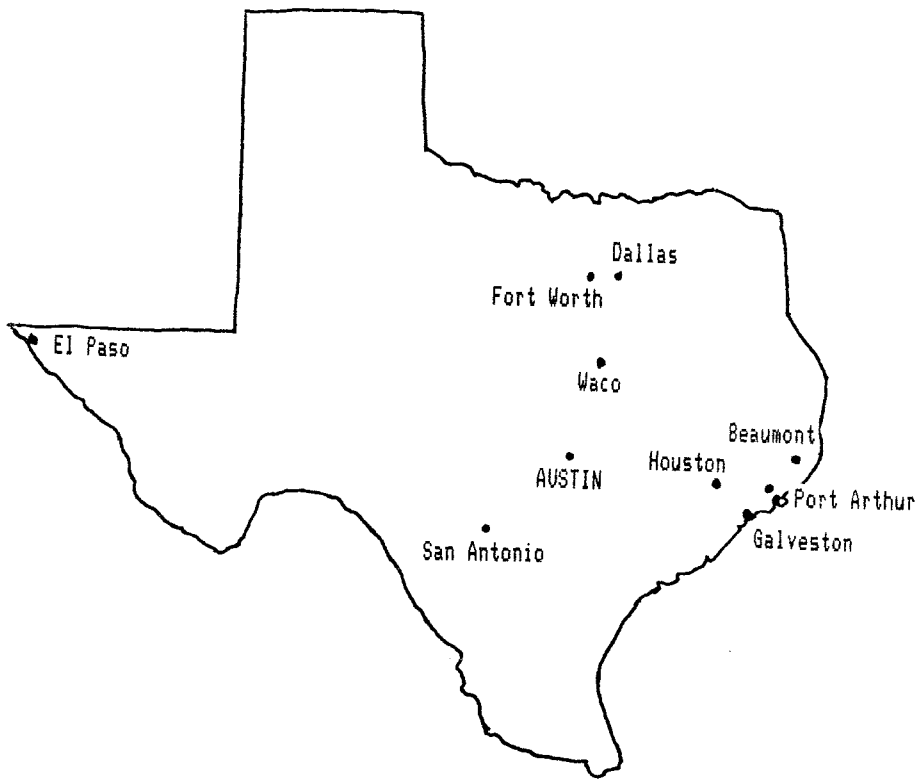
MAP 1. Texas and Its Neighbours



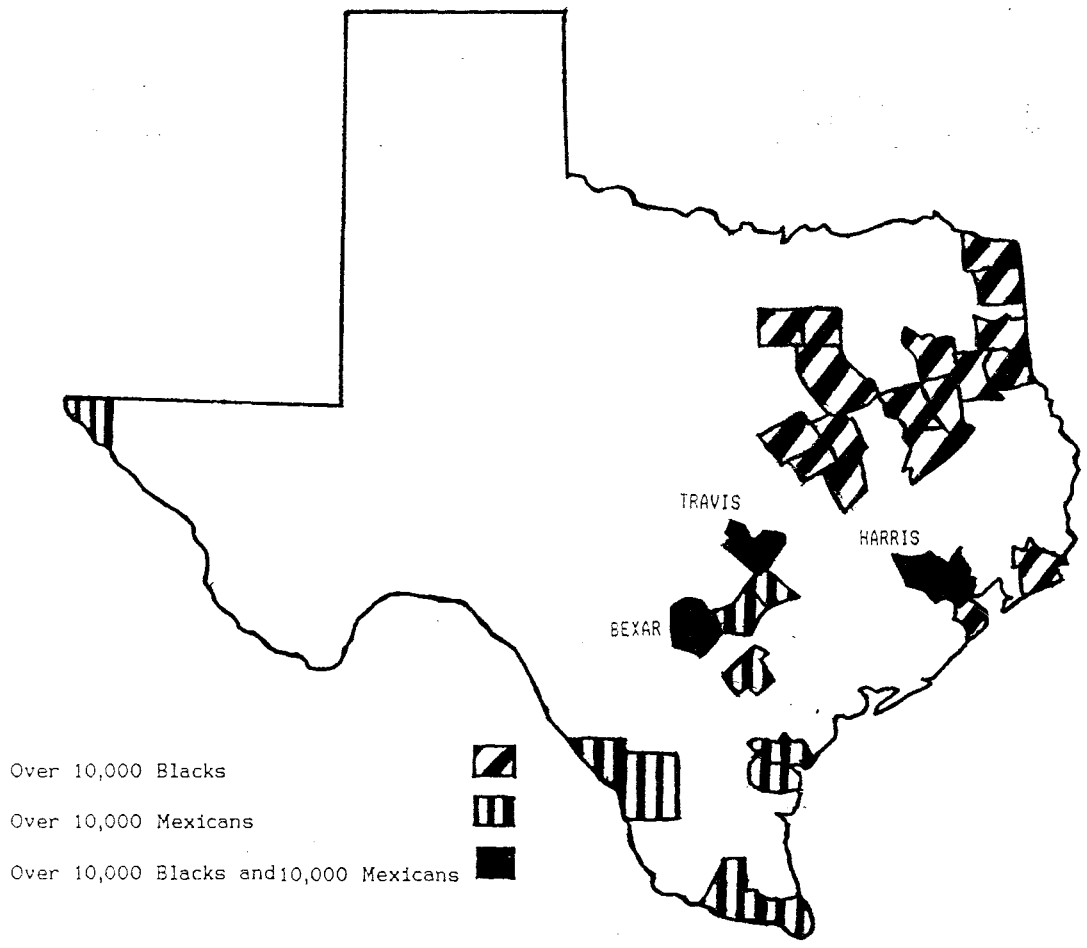
States composed largely of lands acquired from Mexico during the period 1845-1853

States that seceded from the Union during the Civil War

MAP 2. Principal Urban Centres of Texas

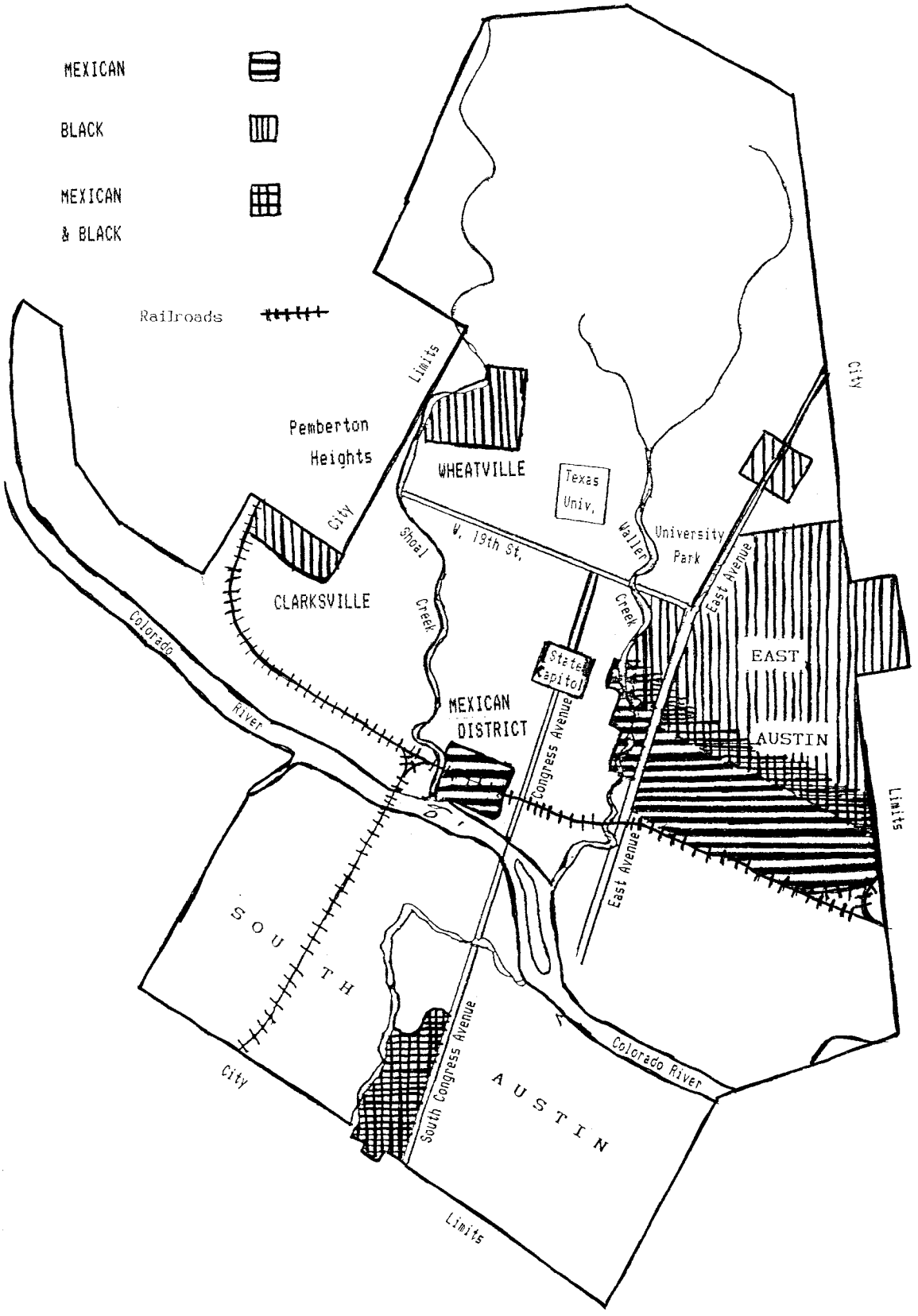


MAP 3. Texas Counties With Over 10,000 Blacks and/or 10,000 Mexicans in the Population, 1930

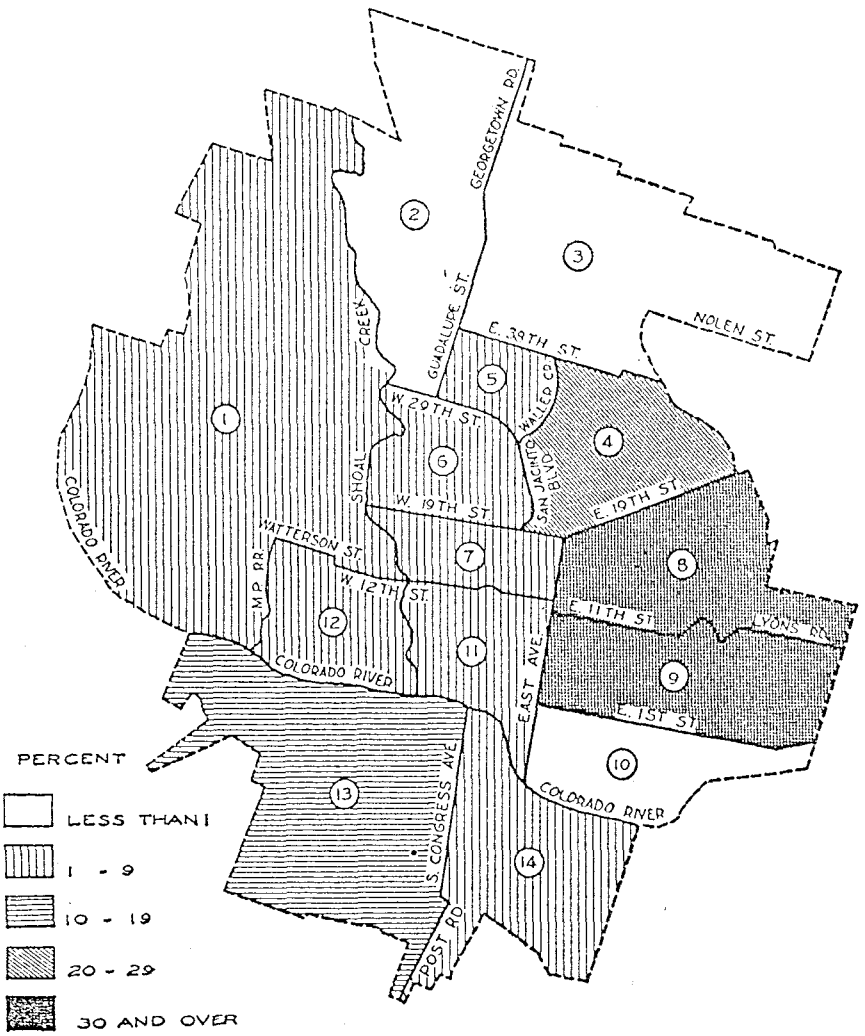


Source: H. T. Manuel, 'The Mexican Population of Texas,' *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, XV (June 1934), pp. 38-42

MAP 4. Principal Ethnic Clusters of Austin, Texas, 1929

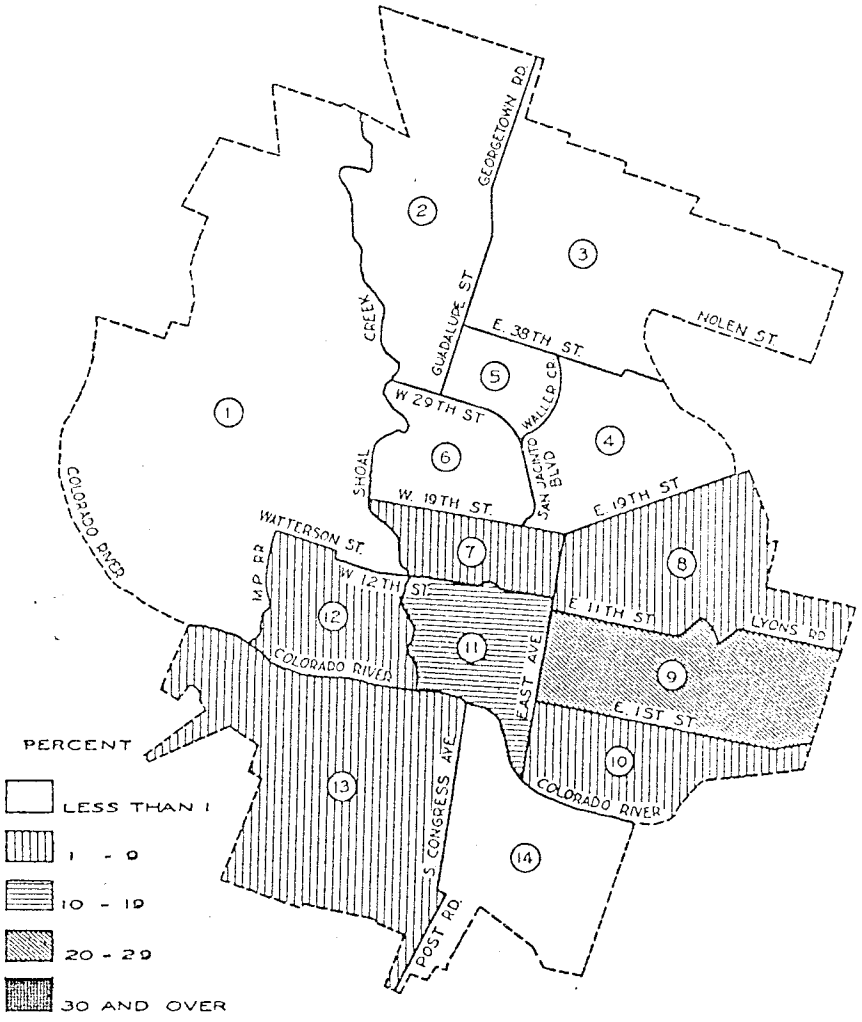


MAP 5. Distribution of the Black Population in Austin, Texas, 1929-31



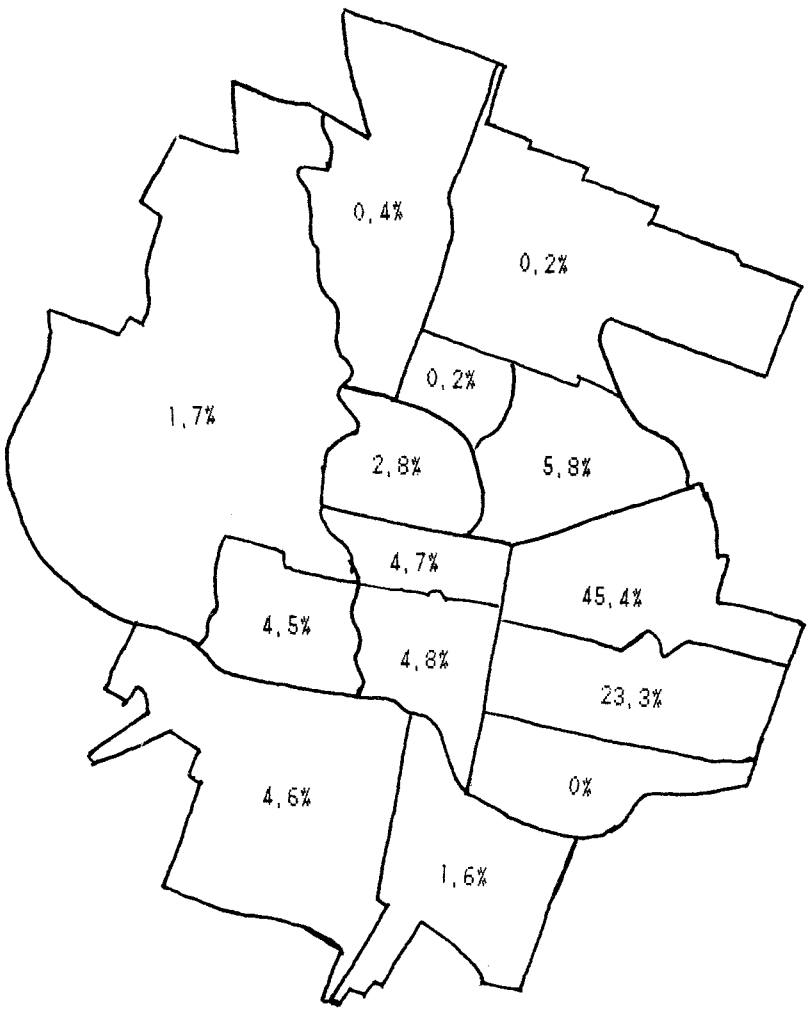
Source: Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, *Population Mobility in Austin, Texas, 1929-1931*, University of Texas Bulletin No. 4127 (Austin, Texas, 1941), p. 56.

MAP 6. Distribution of the Mexican Population in Austin, Texas, 1929-31

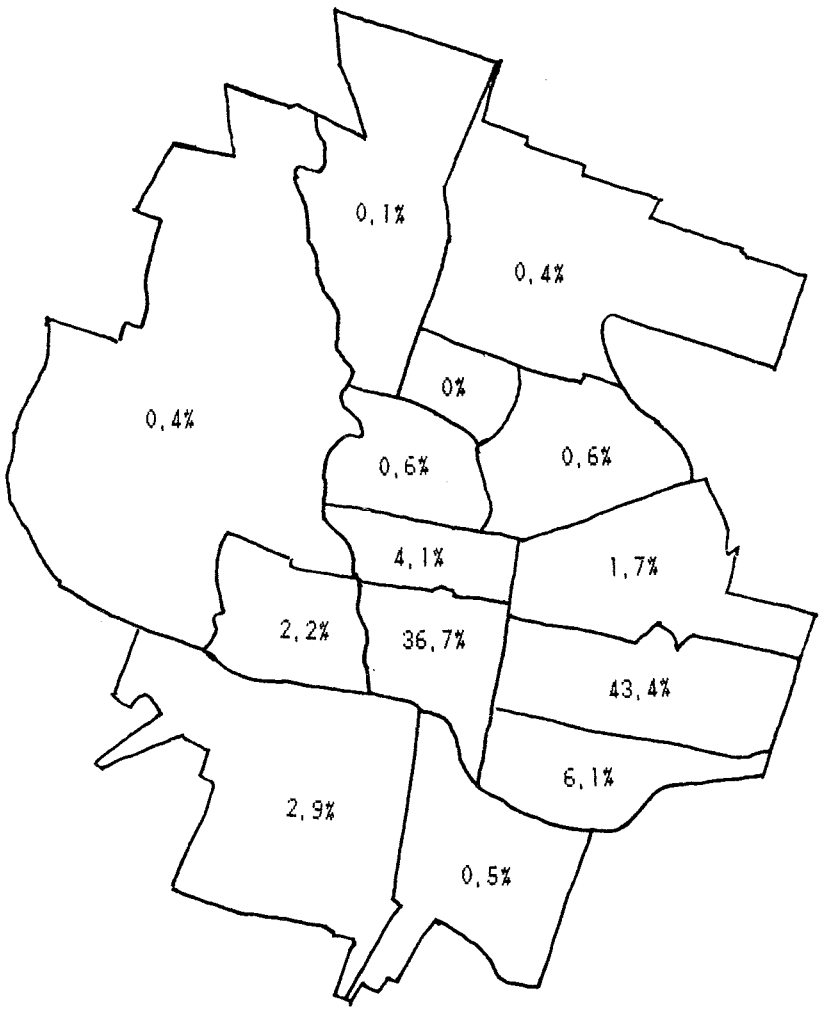


Source: Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, *Population Mobility in Austin, Texas, 1929-1931*, University of Texas Bulletin No. 4127 (Austin, Texas, 1941), p. 55.

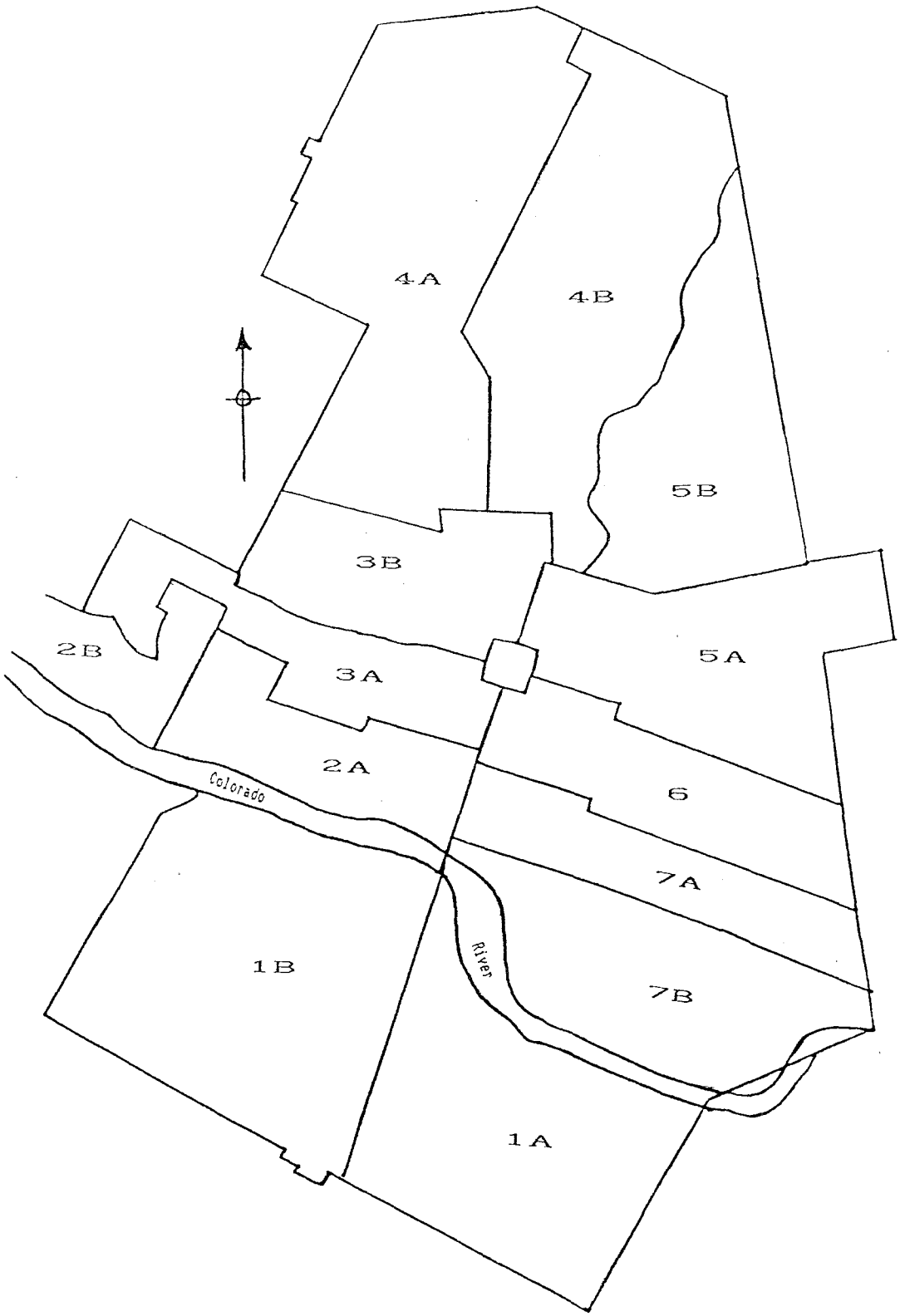
MAP 7. Percentage of the Total Black Population Residing in Each Census Tract of Austin, Texas, 1929



MAP 8. Percentage of the Total Mexican Population Residing in Each Census Tract of Austin, Texas, 1929



MAP 9. Election Wards of Austin, Texas, 1924



Appendix II

TABLES

TABLE 1. Black and Mexican Populations of Texas Cities With Over 50,000 Inhabitants, 1930

	Black	Mexican
Houston	63,337	14,149
Dallas	38,742	5,901
San Antonio	17,978	82,373
Fort Worth	22,234	3,955
El Paso	1,855	58,291
Beaumont	18,551	646
Austin	9,868	5,014
Galveston	13,226	2,538
Waco	9,370	1,692
Port Arthur	10,003	1,906

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population*, Vol. III, Part 2 (Washington D.C., 1932), pp. 1015, 1082-1083.

TABLE 2. Mexican Immigration to the United States, 1901–1940

1901–1910	49,642
1911–1920	219,004
1921–1930	459,287
1931–1940	22,319

Source: Lyle Saunders, 'The Spanish-Speaking Population of Texas,' in Carlos E. Cortés, ed., *The Mexican Experience in Texas* (New York, 1976), p. 16.

TABLE 3. Year of Immigration of the Foreign-Born Population of Texas, 1901-1919

1901-1905	22,588
1906-1910	40,948
1911-1915	77,845
1916-1917	34,366
1918-1919	46,127

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States; State Compendium, Texas* (Washington D.C., 1925), p. 84.

TABLE 4. Mexicans and Blacks as a Percentage of the Total Workforce in Two Steel Plants of the Chicago-Gary Region, 1917-1928

Year	Mexicans	Blacks	Total Workforce
1917	0.1	5.5	23,140
1918	0.5	6.7	23,073
1919	0.7	13.4	20,112
1920	1.3	12.1	21,365
1921	0.4	10.0	13,780
1922	1.6	15.0	19,043
1923	6.0	13.8	19,985
1924	7.9	15.5	22,118
1925	8.5	14.1	22,052
1926	9.1	12.9	20,762
1927	8.8	12.4	20,723
1928	9.4	12.3	22,061

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 'Increase of Mexican Labor in Certain Industries in the United States,' *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXII (January 1931), p. 83.

TABLE 5. Percentage of the Total Black Population of Texas Residing in Urban Districts, 1890-1930

1890	16.3
1900	19.2
1910	25.9
1920	30.1
1930	38.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, Supplement for Texas* (Washington D.C., 1913), p. 597; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population*, Volume III, Part 2 (Washington D.C., 1932), p. 941.

TABLE 6. State of Birth of Blacks Living in Texas, 1910–1920

	1910	1920
Arkansas	6,328	6,386
Louisiana	19,703	34,342
Oklahoma	1,032	2,324
All other states (except Texas)	59,134	42,045

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, Supplement for Texas* (Washington D.C., 1913), p. 597; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States; State Compendium, Texas* (Washington D.C., 1925), p. 84.

TABLE 7. Population Movement In and Out of Austin, 1929-1931

	Arrivals[a]	Departures[b]
Black	36.0%	28.7%
Mexican	54.6%	44.2%
White	30.3%	22.8%

Notes

a. Persons listed in the 1931 city directory, but absent from the 1929 issue, are treated as new arrivals to Austin. However, it is admitted that this figure may include eighteen-year-olds being listed in the directory for the first time and persons inadvertently missed out from the earlier edition.

b. This figure represents the percentage of the 1929 directory population not appearing in the 1931 issue.

Source: Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, *Population Mobility in Austin, Texas, 1929-1931*, University of Texas Publication No. 4127 (Austin, Texas, 1941), pp. 25-27, 35, 41.

TABLE 8. Racial Composition of the Population of Austin, 1890-1930

			Nonwhite Groups[a]			
	White		Black		Mexican	
Year	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1890	10,956	75.2	3,610	24.8	–	–
1900	16,414	73.7	5,822	26.2	–	–
1910	21,850	73.2	7,478	25.0	516	1.7
1920	27,029	77.5	6,921	19.9	899	2.6
1930	38,209	71.9	9,868	18.6	5,014	9.4

Notes

a. This category does not include Native Americans, Chinese, Japanese and other nonwhite groups, because these groups combined never made up more than 0.1% of the total population in Austin during 1910-1930.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, Supplement for Texas* (Washington D.C., 1913), p. 650; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Volume III, Population* (Washington D.C., 1923), p. 1015, 1024; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population*, Volume III, Part 2 (Washington D.C., 1932), p. 1015, 1019, 1023, 1082.

TABLE 9. Black Population of Austin, 1910-1920

Year	Number
1910	7,478
1913	8,055
1914	8,230
1915	8,406
1916	8,579
1920	6,921

Source: C.E. Terry and F. Schneider, *Social Survey of the City of Austin, Texas* (Austin, Texas, 1917), p. 4; Table 8 above.

TABLE 10. Decennial Growth of the Population of Austin, 1910–1930

	Percentage increase		
	White	Black	Mexican
1910–1920	23.7	−7.4	74.2
1920–1930	41.4	42.6	457.7

Source: See Table 8.

TABLE 11. Registered Births in Austin, Texas, 1916, 1928, and 1929

	Percentage of all births		
	White	Black	Mexican
Year			
1916	67.3	8.2	24.5
1928	66.7	19.2	14.2
1929	62.6	18.4	19.0

Source: C.E. Terry and F. Schneider, *Social Survey of the City of Austin, Texas* (Austin, Texas, 1917), p. 37; *Report of the City Manager of the City of Austin for the Year 1928* (Austin, Texas, 1928), p. 68; *Report of the City Manager of the City of Austin for the Year 1929* (Austin, Texas, 1929), p. 53.

TABLE 12. Racial Composition of the Population of Texas, 1900-1930

	White		Black		Mexican[a]	
Year	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1900	2,176,252	77.3	620,722	20.4	70,417	2.3
1910	3,080,610	79.0	690,049	17.7	124,238	3.2
1920	3,668,513	78.6	741,694	15.9	249,652	5.4
1930	4,283,491	73.5	854,964	14.7	683,681	11.7

Notes

a. This figure represents all foreign-born whites from Mexico for the years 1900-1920, and all persons classed as 'Mexican' under the 'other races' category in 1930. In 1910 and 1920 there were an additional 108,682 and 149,886 persons respectively in Texas that were native-white of Mexican parentage. If added to the figures above this would make the Mexican proportion of the total population 7.6% in 1910 and 8.6% in 1920. The problem arises of knowing what proportion of the Mexican population in 1930 was foreign-born and my own guess is that it was between seventy and ninety percent.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, Supplement for Texas* (Washington D.C., 1913), p. 597; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, State Compendium, Texas* (Washington D.C., 1923), p. 38, 84; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population*, Volume III, Part 2 (Washington D.C.), 1932, p. 941; Elizabeth Broadbent, 'The Distribution of Mexican Population in the United States,' PhD. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1941, p. 8.

TABLE 13. Black and Mexican Populations in Selected Cities of Texas, 1910-1930

	Black		Mexican	
	Number	%	Number	%
Houston				
1910	23,929	30.4	476	0.6
1920	33,960	24.6	3,946	2.9
1930	63,337	21.7	14,149	4.8
San Antonio				
1910	10,716	11.1	9,906	10.3
1920	14,341	8.9	28,444	17.6
1930	17,978	7.8	82,373	35.6
Dallas				
1910	18,024	19.6	127	0.1
1920	24,023	15.1	2,278	1.4
1930	38,742	14.9	5,901	2.3
El Paso				
1910	1,452	3.7	12,297	31.3
1920	1,330	1.7	30,589	39.4
1930	1,855	1.8	58,291	56.9

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, Supplement for Texas* (Washington D.C., 1913), p. 650; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, Volume III, Population* (Washington D.C., 1923), p. 1015, 1024; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, Population*, Volume III, Part 2 (Washington D.C., 1932), p. 1015, 1082.

TABLE 14. Racial Composition of the Population of Austin by Tracts, 1929

	White		Black		Mexican	
Tract	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	1,255	92.0	100	7.3	9	0.7
2	1,494	98.4	22	1.4	2	0.1
3	2,421	99.2	11	0.5	9	0.4
4	951	73.3	333	25.7	13	1.0
5	1,214	98.9	12	1.0	1	0.1
6	3,000	94.5	160	5.0	13	0.4
7	3,163	90.0	270	7.7	83	2.4
8	642	19.6	2,599	79.4	34	1.1
9	1,517	40.7	1,335	35.9	871	23.4
10	1,862	93.9	0	0.0	122	6.2
11	3,493	77.6	273	6.1	737	16.4
12	2,548	89.5	255	9.0	44	1.5
13	1,188	78.6	265	17.5	58	3.9
14	1,004	91.0	89	8.1	10	0.9
Total	25,752	76.9	5,724	17.1	2,006	6.0

Source: Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, *Population Mobility in Austin, Texas, 1929-1931*, University of Texas Publication No. 4127 (Austin, Texas, 1941), p. 30.

TABLE 15. Racial Composition of the Population of Austin by Tracts, 1931

	White		Black		Mexican	
Tract	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1	1,442	92.0	114	7.3	11	0.7
2	1,687	99.3	10	0.6	2	0.1
3	2,674	99.6	10	0.4	1	0.0
4	1,107	76.4	332	22.9	10	0.7
5	1,332	98.6	17	1.3	2	0.1
6	3,136	94.7	152	4.6	23	0.7
7	3,475	90.6	278	7.2	83	2.2
8	661	18.3	2,916	80.6	39	1.1
9	1,660	38.8	1,429	33.4	1,190	27.8
10	2,131	93.3	1	0.0	151	6.6
11	3,593	78.0	274	5.9	741	16.1
12	2,693	89.4	265	8.8	54	1.8
13	1,268	78.2	266	16.4	87	5.4
14	1,124	91.6	94	7.7	9	0.7
Total	27,983	76.6	6,158	16.9	2,403	6.6

Source: Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, *Population Mobility in Austin, Texas, 1929-1931*, University of Texas Publication No. 4127 (Austin, Texas, 1941), p. 31.

TABLE 16. Population Movement Into Austin: New Arrivals by Tracts, 1929-1931

Tract	White		Black		Mexican	
	Number of new arrivals	% of race total	Number of new arrivals	% of race total	Number of new arrivals	% of race total
1	468	5.5	59	2.7	5	0.4
2	533	6.3	2	0.1	0	0.0
3	686	8.1	4	0.2	1	0.1
4	346	4.1	104	4.7	2	0.2
5	327	3.9	9	0.4	1	0.1
6	987	11.7	56	2.5	16	1.2
7	1,179	13.9	125	5.6	49	3.7
8	190	2.2	1,042	46.9	18	1.4
9	483	5.7	509	22.9	710	54.2
10	712	8.4	1	0.0	64	4.9
11	1,185	14.0	115	5.2	362	27.6
12	618	7.3	81	3.6	26	2.0
13	415	4.9	77	3.5	55	4.2
14	341	4.0	38	1.7	2	0.2
Total	8,470	100.0	2,222	100.0	1,311	100.2

Source: Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, *Population Mobility in Austin, Texas, 1929-1931*, University of Texas Publication No. 4127 (Austin, Texas, 1941), pp. 34-35.

TABLE 17. Inter-Tract Mobility in Austin, Texas

Percentage of the population moving between tracts, 1929-1931

White	Black	Mexicans	Total
21.1	15.9	14.9	19.2

Source: Bureau of Research in the Social Sciences, *Population Mobility in Austin, Texas, 1929-1931*, University of Texas Publication No. 4127 (Austin, Texas, 1941), pp. 46-47.

TABLE 18. Indexes of Residential Segregation for Blacks[a] in Austin, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, 1940, 1950, 1960[b]

	1940	1950	1960
Austin	84.8	92.0	93.1
Dallas	80.2	88.4	94.6
Houston	84.5	91.5	93.7
San Antonio	79.6	88.3	90.1

Notes

a. The entire category of 'nonwhite' population is taken in this instance to mean blacks, because the number of other nonwhite groups (with the exception of Mexicans) in these cities was negligible and Mexicans, as from 1940 onwards, were no longer classified as 'nonwhite.'

b. These figures, computed from the U.S. Census information relating to the racial composition of city blocks, represent the differential between the percentage of nonwhites in the total city population and their even distribution throughout all of the city blocks. A value of zero, therefore, would indicate no segregation and a value of 100 total segregation.

Source: Karl E. Taeuber and Alma F. Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change* (Chicago, Illinois, 1965), pp. 40-41.

TABLE 19. Index of Residential Dissimilarity[a] Between Whites, Blacks and Mexicans[b] in Four Cities of Texas, 1960

	White vs. Black	White vs. Mexican	Black vs. Mexican
Austin	72.1	63.3	66.1
Dallas	90.2	66.8	76.1
Houston	81.2	65.2	70.9
San Antonio	84.5	63.6	77.4

Notes

a. These figures work upon the same premise as those in Table 18, except that they represent the level of separation between three groups instead of two. Here also, a value of zero would indicate no segregation and a value of 100 total segregation.

b. This represents all persons with a Spanish surname, the vast majority of whom it can safely be assumed were either Mexican or of Mexican descent.

Source: Leo Grebler, Joan W. Moore and Ralph C. Guzmán, *The Mexican-American People: The Nation's Second Largest Minority* (New York, 1970), p. 275.

TABLE 20. Racial Composition of the Population, Potential Electorate and Actual Electorate in Austin, Texas, 1933

	White %	Black %	Mexican %
Total population	71.9	18.6	9.5
Potential electorate	74.8	18.6	6.6
Actual electorate	91.9	5.5	2.6

Source: Roscoe C. Martin, 'The Municipal Electorate: A Case Study,' *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, XIV (December 1933), p. 229.

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143. *Austin American*, 12 January 1915.
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148. Johnson, 'American Migrant,' p. 556.
149. *Austin American*, 4 August 1924; *Sunday American-Statesman*, 25 March 1928; *San Antonio Inquirer*, 27 July 1918; City of Austin, Minute Book 9, 29 January 1926, p. 517 (Austin City Clerk's Office); Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 51; Handman, 'Economic Reasons for the Coming of the Mexican,' p. 609.
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154. *Austin American*, 15 September 1920.
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157. *Austin American*, 11 January, 5 February 1921; *Austin Statesman*, 28 May 1917.
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163. Clark, 'Mexican Labor,' p. 500; Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin,* p. 59; Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' pp. 44-46, 52; *Austin American,* 16 November 1926; Holmes, 'Perils of the Mexican Invasion,' p. 618.
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171. *Austin American,* 4, 5, 6 August 1924; *Austin Statesman,* 9 August 1924.
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173. Louie W. White, *A Pictorial History of Black Policemen Who Have Served in the Austin Police Department* (Austin, Texas, 1982), pp. 3, 40; *Austin City Directory, 1916* (Houston, Texas, 1916), p. 407; *Austin City Directory, 1920* (Houston, Texas, 1920), pp. 52B, 395; *Austin City Directory, 1922* (Houston, Texas, 1922), p. 317; *Austin City Directory, 1927,* p. 326; *Austin City Directory, 1929,* p. 473; Austin Police Department, 'Police Calls,' 28 September 1920; *Austin American,* 27 June 1925.
174. *Austin American,* 10 August, 8 September 1921, 28 July 1925; *Austin Statesman,* 24 July 1924; City of Austin, Minute Book 8, 2 July 1921, p. 474; Texas Writers' Program, *Guide to the Lone Star State,* p. 166; Brewer, *Negro in Travis County,* p. 77; Humphrey, *Austin,* p. 176.
175. Brewer, *Negro in Travis County,* pp. 74-77.

176. *The Herald*, 25 May 1918.
177. Monroe N. Work, ed., *Negro Year Book, 1921-1922* (Tuskegee, Alabama, 1922), p. 348; Johnson, *Negro in American Civilization*, p. 102.
178. Monroe N. Work, ed., *Negro Year Book, 1925-1926* (Tuskegee, Alabama, 1925), p. 395; *Austin American*, 18 May, 10 June 1923.
179. Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' pp. 6, 9, 11, 16, 23, 26-28.
180. Ibid., p. 45; Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, p. 59; *Austin American*, 28 August 1921, 11 December 1925.
181. *Austin Statesman*, 27 April, 20 July 1929.
182. Ibid., 20 July 1929; Humphrey, *Austin*, pp. 179-180.
183. *Austin American*, 24 September 1928; *Austin Statesman*, 27 April 1929; *Austin City Directory, 1918* (Houston, Texas, 1918), p. 238; *Austin City Directory, 1922*, p. 237; *Austin City Directory, 1924* (Houston, Texas, 1924), p. 235; *Austin City Directory, 1927*, p. 244; *Austin City Directory, 1929*, p. 249.
184. Brewer, *Negro in Travis County*, pp. 34, 74-77; Humphrey, *Austin*, p. 180.
185. Austin Chamber of Commerce, *Annual Report for 1921* (Austin, Texas, 1922), p. 2; Austin Chamber of Commerce, *Annual Report for 1927* (Austin, Texas, 1928), pp. 20-21; Austin Chamber of Commerce, *Annual Report for 1929* (Austin, Texas, 1930), pp. 42-43. A thorough examination of the Austin Chamber of Commerce's annual reports for the period 1917-1929 (held at the Austin History Center), showed no evidence of either African-Americans or Mexicans being admitted to membership. Needless to say, the officers and directors of the organisation were all prominent members of the local white business community.
186. BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin*, pp. 24-26, 30-31, 39, 45. This information is derived from a study that used city directories as a source of information. Consequently, a large, but unquantifiable proportion of individuals classed as having 'no occupation' were either housewives or persons who neglected to provide directory compilers with the necessary information. While this data tends to exaggerate the actual number of persons out of work, therefore, it is still useful as a guide to whether levels of unemployment were increasing or decreasing in different areas of the city. Moreover, it is no coincidence that of the fourteen census tracts that Austin was divided into for the purpose of this study, four out of the five tracts showing the highest percentages of persons with no occupation together contained over three-quarters of the total nonwhite population, while the fifth was the city's main white working-class district. Indeed, these five tracts were described as being the most economically and socially deprived in the city; in other words, the kinds of

areas that one might expect to be first and worst affected by rising unemployment.

Chapter Two

1. *Austin American*, 6 April 1917.
2. Ibid.
3. *The Herald*, 9 March 1918.
4. *Austin Statesman*, 5 May 1918.
5. *Austin American*, 4 June 1917.
6. *Austin Statesman*, 4, 5 June 1917.
7. Ibid., 4 May 1918.
8. Ibid., 12 November 1918.
9. Ibid., 13 September 1918.
10. Ibid., 20 June 1918.
11. *San Antonio Inquirer*, 10 August 1918.
12. *Austin Statesman*, 6 January 1918; *Austin American*, 7 February 1924.
13. Barr, *Black Texans*, p. 115.
14. *Austin Statesman*, 12 November 1918.
15. *Austin American*, 16 May 1919.
16. *The Herald*, 21 April 1917. For fuller accounts of the disturbances at Houston, see: Martha Gruening, 'Houston: An NAACP Investigation,' *Crisis*, 15 (November 1917), pp. 14-19; Robert V. Haynes, *A Night of Violence: The Houston Riot of 1917* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1976).
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18. *Austin Statesman*, 28 August 1917.
19. *Austin American*, 14 October 1917.
20. *Austin Statesman*, 28 August 1917.
21. Ibid., 29 August 1919.
22. Ibid., 5 November 1917.
23. Barr, *Black Texans*, pp. 138-139; *Austin Statesman*, 29 July 1919.
24. *Austin Statesman*, 22 August 1919; *Austin American*, 30 August 1919.
25. *San Antonio Inquirer*, 20 July 1918.
26. *Austin Statesman*, 5 May 1918.
27. Ibid., 16 September 1917.
28. Ibid., 22 July 1919.
29. *The Herald*, 25 May 1918.
30. *Austin Statesman*, 24 May 1917; Carole E. Christian, 'Joining the American Mainstream: Texas's Mexican Americans During World War I,' *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 92 (April 1989), p. 572.
31. *Austin American*, 27 May 1917; *Austin Statesman*, 24 May 1917.
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33. *Austin Statesman*, 25 May 1917.

34. Ibid., 4 June 1917.
35. Dr. S. A. Woolsey to Hon. W. B. Anthony, 6 June 1917, City Health Officer File (Austin-Travis County Collection, Austin History Center).
36. *Austin American,* 4 June 1917.
37. *Austin Statesman,* 26 May 1917.
38. Ibid., 5 June 1917.
39. Ibid., 6 June 1917.
40. *Austin American,* 13 July 1918.
41. *Austin Statesman,* 6 January 1918.
42. Ibid., 13 September 1918.
43. Ibid., 6 January 1918, 2 October 1917.
44. Ibid., 13 September 1918; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States,* Vol. III (Washington, D.C., 1923), pp. 1015, 1024; *Austin American,* 13 November 1923.
45. *Austin Statesman,* 27 August 1917.
46. Ibid., 6 May 1918.
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48. *Austin American,* 25 January 1920.
49. *Austin Statesman,* 1 February 1920.
50. Ibid., 30 January 1927.
51. *Austin American,* 13 June 1921, 2 May 1923; *Austin Statesman,* 1 February 1920.
52. *Austin American,* 10 September 1924, 13 March 1927.
53. *Austin Statesman,* 30 January 1927; *Austin American,* 12 April 1925.
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61. *Austin Statesman,* 26 October 1921.
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66. Foerster, *Racial Problems Involved in Immigration,* p. 57.
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Annual Report for 1921, p. 2; Chamber of Commerce, *Annual Report for 1929*, p. 41.
73. *Austin American*, 7 February 1928.
74. Ibid., 10 August 1923.
75. Ibid., 14 July 1918.
76. Davis, *Rural Schools in Travis County*, p. 12.
77. Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, p. 54.
78. *Austin American*, 20 June 1928.
79. Ibid., 24 December 1928.
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81. *Austin Statesman*, 25 July 1919.
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85. *Austin American*, 12 August 1922.
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87. *Austin American*, 10 August 1923.
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89. *Austin American*, 22 July 1923; *Austin Statesman*, 30 August 1919.
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94. *Austin American*, 13 June 1926.
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96. Holmes, 'Perils of the Mexican Invasion,' pp. 617, 620, 622.
97. Bogardus, *Immigration and Race Attitudes*, pp. 20, 163.
98. Weeks, 'League of United Latin-American Citizens,' p. 257.
99. *Austin American*, 16 January 1923.
100. *Austin Statesman*, 26 February 1927.
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102. *Austin American*, 25 January 1920.
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104. Weeks, 'League of United Latin-American Citizens,' p. 278.
105. *Austin Statesman*, 1 February 1920.
106. Clark, 'Mexican Labor,' p. 511.
107. *Austin Statesman*, 1 February 1920.
108. *Austin American*, 12 April 1925.
109. *Austin Statesman*, 1 February 1920.
110. Ibid., 30 January 1927; *Austin American*, 31 May 1929; City of Austin, Minute Book 11, 30 May 1929, p. 264. In 1929, for example, local Methodist groups petitioned the city council not to locate a proposed municipal playground for Mexican children on a site donated by the Catholic Church, on the grounds that the latter denomination would then be placed in a privileged position as regards to carrying out missionary work among local Mexicans.

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117. Ibid., 21 November 1920, 18 October 1923, 3 January, 29 December 1924.
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119. Chamber of Commerce, *Annual Report for 1919*, p. 6.
120. *Austin Statesman*, 1 February 1920.
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133. Bogardus, 'Mexican Immigrant and Segregation,' p. 77.
134. *Austin Statesman*, 1 February 1920.
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138. *Austin American*, 16 November 1926.
139. Bogardus, 'Mexican Immigrant and Segregation,' p. 76.
140. *Austin American*, 1 February, 23 May, 1 October 1925, 26 January, 17 August 1926, 11 June 1929.
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149. *Austin American*, 12 August 1922.
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151. *Austin Statesman,* 30 August 1919.
152. Clark, 'Mexican Labor,' p. 512.
153. Ibid.
154. See Table 12.
155. Handman, 'Mexican Immigrant in Texas,' p. 37.
156. Handman, 'Economic Reasons for the Coming of the Mexican,' p. 609.
157. Handman, 'Mexican Immigrant in Texas,' p. 38.
158. Clark, 'Mexican Labor,' p. 512.
159. Bogardus, 'Mexican Immigrant and Segregation,' p. 80.
160. Handman, 'Mexican Immigrant in Texas,' p. 40.
161. *Sunday American-Statesman,* 25 March 1928.
162. *Austin American,* 16 November 1926.
163. Weeks, 'League of United Latin-American Citizens,' p. 259.
164. Bogardus, *Immigration and Race Attitudes,* p. 163.
165. Davis, *Rural Schools in Travis County,* pp. 9, 12.
166. *Austin American,* 24 November 1922.
167. Handman, 'Mexican Immigrant in Texas,' p. 40.
168. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census,* Vol. II, pp. 25, 27.
169. Ibid., p. 27; Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census,* Vol. III, p. 1024; Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census,* Vol. III, Part 2, p. 1019. Also see Table 8.
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171. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census,* Vol. II, p. 25; Lyle Saunders, 'The Spanish-Speaking Population of Texas,' in Carlos E. Cortés, ed., *The Mexican Experience in Texas* (New York, 1976), p. 8.
172. David George Steinicke, 'Population Characteristics of Dallas by Census Tracts,' Master's thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1938, p. 272.

Chapter Three

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3. Human Relations Commission, *Housing Patterns Study of Austin,* pp. 7-11.
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6. Taeuber and Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities,* p. 31.
7. BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin,* pp. 13-14.
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9. Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 1; Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, p. 57.
10. BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin*, p. 22; Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' pp. 1-3; Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, pp. 52, 57.
11. Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' pp. 3, 14.
12. BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin*, p. 21.
13. Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 23; *Austin American*, 2 May 1923; *Austin Statesman*, 1 February 1920; Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census*, Vol. III, p. 1024, *Fifteenth Census*, Vol. III, Part 2, p. 1023.
14. BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin*, pp. 23-24.
15. *Austin Statesman*, 14 August 1915; Jackson, 'East Austin,' p. 63.
16. *Austin American*, 10 July 1926, 4 March 1927; *Sunday American-Statesman*, 3 March 1929; Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 35.
17. Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 34.
18. Jackson, 'East Austin,' pp. 57, 60, 66, 67.
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21. Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 34.
22. Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, pp. 59-60.
23. Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 6.
24. Emory S. Bogardus, 'The Mexican Immigrant and Segregation,' *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXVI (July 1930), p. 79.
25. Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, pp. 54-55; *Austin American*, 17 May 1928; Jackson, 'East Austin,' p. 61.
26. BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin*, p. 21; Jackson, 'East Austin,' pp. 66-67.
27. Texas Writers' Program, *Guide to the Lone Star State*, p. 168.
28. *Austin City Directory, 1916*, p. 52.
29. Brewer, *Negro in Travis County*, pp. 52-54.
30. *Austin American*, 10 August 1921; Brewer, *Negro in Travis County*, pp. 34, 74, 76; Texas Writers' Program, *Guide to the Lone Star State*, pp. 167-8.
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33. *Austin City Directory, 1920*, p. 395; *Austin City Directory, 1922*, pp. 7, 317, 388; *Austin City Directory, 1924*, pp. 186, 382; *Austin City Directory, 1927*, pp. 326, 400; *Austin City Directory, 1929*, pp. 335, 413, 473; Brewer, *Negro in Travis County*, pp. 76-77; Texas Writers'

Program, *Guide to the Lone Star State*, pp. 167–168; BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin*, p. 21; Humphrey, *Austin*, pp. 176, 177.
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36. *Austin American*, 25 April, 18 June, 21 July 1921, 18 February, 13 July 1922; *Austin Statesman*, 24 April 1921; Acuña, *Occupied America*, p. 174.
37. *Austin American*, 6 June 1920.
38. Ibid., 15 September 1920; Austin Police Department, 'Police Calls,' 15 September 1920.
39. Austin Police Department, 'Police Calls,' June 1919 to May 1922, passim.
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41. *Austin American*, 1 April 1924.
42. Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, p. 57; David C. Humphrey, 'Prostitution and Public Policy in Austin, Texas, 1870–1915,' *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 86 (April 1983), pp. 473–516.
43. *Austin American*, 4 April 1924.
44. Handman, 'Economic Reasons for the Coming of the Mexican,' p. 611.
45. C. E. Terry and F. Schneider, *Social Survey of the City of Austin, Texas* (Austin, Texas, 1917), pp. 27–29, 31; Jackson, 'East Austin,' p. 63; Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, pp. 53, 56, 58–59.
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49. Ibid., pp. 52–53.
50. T. J. Woofter, *Negro Problems in Cities* (New York, 1928), p. 74.
51. *Austin Statesman*, 14 August 1915; Jackson, 'East Austin,' p. 63.
52. BRSS, *Population Mobility in Austin*, pp. 24, 46.
53. *Austin American*, 5 July 1927; Connell, 'Mexican Population of Austin,' p. 5.
54. *Austin American*, 5 July 1927.
55. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York, 1944), p. 621; Johnson, *Negro in American Civilization*, p. 203.
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57. Hamilton, *Social Survey of Austin*, pp. 54, 57; *Austin American*, 17 May 1928; Jackson, 'East Austin,' p. 61.
58. Bogardus, 'Mexican Immigrant and Segregation,' p. 76.
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60. *Austin Statesman*, 30 August 1919.
61. Ibid., 26 February 1927.
62. Bogardus, 'Mexican Immigrant and Segregation,' pp. 74-75.
63. Ibid., p. 79.
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68. Ibid., 19 February, 14 March 1927.
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72. NAACP, *Eighteenth Annual Report*, p. 8.
73. *Austin American*, 16 March 1927.
74. NAACP, *Seventeenth Annual Report* (New York, 1927), p. 10.
75. *Austin American*, 28 November 1929.
76. 'City Plan Supplement,' *Sunday Morning News* (Austin), 12 February 1928, p. 14.
77. *Austin American*, 14 April 1927.
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Chapter Four

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4. Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York, 1986), pp. 177-178, 198.
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7. *Austin American-Statesman*, 13 January 1929.
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24. *Austin Statesman*, 24 August 1925; *Austin American*, 25 August 1925.
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27. *Austin Statesman*, 19 July 1929.
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32. Williamson, *Rage for Order*, pp. 152-205.
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34. Barr, *Black Texans*, p. 82.
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50. *Revised Ordinances*, op. cit., p. 186.
51. Pickens, 'Jim Crow in Texas,' p. 155.
52. *Austin American*, 20 June 1925.
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54. *Austin American*, 9 February 1926; Handman, 'Mexican Immigrant in Texas,' p. 38.
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70. *The Herald*, 19 January 1918.
71. Weeks, 'League of United Latin-American Citizens,' p. 277.
72. Emory S. Bogardus, 'Second Generation Mexicans,' *Sociology and Social Research*, 13 (January 1929), p. 277.
73. *The Herald*, 19 January 1918.
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75. *Austin Statesman*, 20 December 1921.
76. Ibid., 21, 29 March 1922.
77. *Austin American*, 17 December 1921, 22 March 1922.
78. Ibid., 10 August 1921; *Austin Statesman*, 10 August 1921; City of Austin, Minute Book 8, 11 August 1921, p. 485.
79. *Austin City Directory, 1922*, pp. 114, 128; *Austin City Directory, 1924*, p. 356; *Austin City Directory, 1927*, p. 288; *Austin City Directory, 1929*, p. 295; *Austin American*, 2 June 1920, 5 October 1923; City of Austin, Minute Book 9, 13 September 1922, 4 October 1923, 13 December 1923, pp. 51, 193, 216.
80. Austin Police Department, 'Police Calls,' 27 August, 3, 20 October, 15, 22 December 1921.
81. *Austin American*, 3 September 1924.
82. Ibid., 11, 12 September 1924; *Austin Statesman*, 11

September 1924, 2 March 1925.
83. Roscoe C. Martin, *The Defendant and Criminal Justice,* University of Texas Bulletin No. 3437 (Austin, Texas, 1934), pp. 25, 32-34.
84. Ibid., pp. 36-38. Martin's use of the term 'Anglo-American' refers to native-born whites and excludes foreign-born whites, which he classed as 'Others.' Composed of 10 Germans, 7 Slavs, 3 Frenchmen, 3 Italians, 2 Jews, 1 Englishman, 1 Greek, 1 Indian, and 1 Scandanavian, the 'Others' group made up only 3.1% of the total number of defendants covered by the survey. Consequently, it has been decided to use solely the data relating to Anglo-Americans in comparisons with African-Americans and Mexicans.
85. Johnson, *Negro in American Civilization,* p. 316.
86. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice,* p. 41.
87. Ibid., p. 46.
88. Ibid., p. 55.
89. *Austin American,* 15 May 1922.
90. Ibid., 8 December 1923.
91. *Austin Statesman,* 5 April 1920; *Austin American,* 20 June 1922.
92. *Austin Statesman,* 21 October 1921, 26 February 1927; Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice,* p. 41.
93. *Austin American,* 13 September 1923.
94. Ibid., 4 April 1924, 27 February 1926.
95. Ibid., 14 December 1928.
96. Ibid., 2 August 1926. The slow response of the police to calls from nonwhite neighbourhoods is demonstrated by the case of a black male who on a night in August 1926 was able to terrorise a large section of East Austin. Despite three calls for assistance from local residents, it was over half an hour before an officer arrived on the scene. When the police finally turned up, they found that local black residents had taken it upon themselves to apprehend and detain the offender.
97. Ibid., 19 February 1922, 1 April 1924; City of Austin, Minute Book 7, 2 May 1918, p. 264; Austin Colored Welfare Board, 'Report to the Mayor and City Commissioners,' 6 June 1918 (Typescript: Austin-Travis County Collection, Austin History Center), pp. 3-4; Colored Welfare Board, 'Report to the Mayor,' [July 1918], p. 3; Austin Police Department, 'Police Calls,' 28 July 1921. In 1918, the Colored Welfare Board was able to obtain the assistance of the local police in closing down some of East Austin's more notorious speakeasies and brothels, but this was a relatively isolated incidence of cooperation between the local authorities and leaders of the black community, and police reports suggest that by the early twenties many of the old problems had resurfaced. One of the ways in which the black community attempted to combat immorality and crime itself was to organise intensive religious revivals, which were targeted at the most run-down areas and worst offenders. In

1922 and 1924, for instance, L. L. Campbell organised two such revivals.
98. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice*, p. 54.
99. *Austin American*, 6 April 1927.
100. Ibid., 23 April 1925; Handman, 'Nationality and Delinquency,' p. 141.
101. *Austin American*, 15 February 1922.
102. Ibid., 21, 22 October 1921.
103. Ibid., 25 October 1921.
104. Ibid., 21 February, 20 May, 15 November 1922.
105. Ibid., 20 May 1922, 6 November 1923; *The Herald*, 26 April 1919.
106. *Austin American*, 20 May 1922.
107. Ibid., 14, 15 November 1923.
108. Stowell, 'Danger of Unrestricted Mexican Immigration,' p. 764; Weeks, 'League of United Latin-American Citizens,' p. 277.
109. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice*, p. 38.
110. Ibid., pp. 39, 41.
111. *Austin American*, 14, 16, 17, 27 February, 9, 16, 20, 21, 25 March, 1, 10 April, 2 December 1923.
112. Ibid., 27 February, 9, 11, 18 March, 31 July, 9 August 1923, 8 February 1927.
113. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice*, p. 8.
114. Ibid., pp. 45–47.
115. Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies in American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York, 1975), pp. 286, 296.
116. *Austin American*, 30 September, 22 October, 23 November 1924.
117. Carl M. Rosenquist, 'Differential Responses of Texas Convicts,' *American Journal of Sociology*, 38 (July 1932), pp. 18–19.
118. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice*, p. 49.
119. *Austin American*, 13 December 1921, 19 May 1922.
120. Ibid., 15 February, 29 September 1922, 14 February 1923.
121. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice*, p. 54.
122. *Austin Statesman*, 24 August 1919.
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124. *San Antonio Inquirer*, 27 July 1918; NAACP, *Eighth and Ninth Annual Reports*, pp. 23, 86; NAACP, *Tenth Annual Report*, pp. 33, 75, 77; Ovington, 'Mob Violence,' p. 320; *Austin Statesman*, 22 August 1919; NAACP, *Mobbing of John R. Shillady*, pp. 5, 9.
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126. *Austin American*, 27 May 1922.
127. Ibid., 13 August 1921; Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug*, p. 67.
128. *Austin Statesman*, 25 July 1919.
129. *Austin American*, 30 August 1919.
130. Ibid., 31 August 1919.
131. Ibid., 14 August 1920.
132. Ibid., 5 March 1920.
133. Ibid., 26 September 1926.
134. Ibid., 6 March 1929.
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138. *Austin American*, 2 November 1921.
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140. *Austin American*, 24 November 1922.
141. *Austin Statesman*, 3 July 1917.
142. Ibid., 22 July 1919.
143. Ibid., 24 July 1919.
144. Ibid., 21 October 1921.
145. *Austin American*, 10 January, 20 December 1926.
146. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice*, p. 46.
147. *The Herald*, 9 March 1918.
148. Chapman, 'Lynching in Texas,' pp. 95-96.
149. *Austin American*, 13 December 1921; *Austin Statesman*, 13 December 1921.
150. NAACP, *Eleventh Annual Report*, p. 42, *Fifteenth Annual Report*, p. 35.
151. *Austin American*, 20 December 1926.
152. *Austin Statesman*, 28 August 1917.
153. Johnson, *Negro in American Civilization*, p. 354.
154. Arthur Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1933), p. 19, cited in George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865-1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule and 'Legal Lynchings'* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1990), p. 12.
155. Martin, *Defendant and Criminal Justice*, pp. 49-50.

Chapter Five

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3. *Austin American*, 27 March, 9 December 1923.
4. Ibid., 16 May 1922.
5. *Austin Statesman*, 22 July 1919.
6. NAACP, *Mobbing of John R. Shillady*, pp. 2-5; Ovington, 'Mob Violence,' p. 320; *Austin Statesman*, 22 August 1919; *Austin American*, 23 August 1919.
7. NAACP, *Mobbing of John R. Shillady*, pp. 8-9.
8. *Austin Statesman*, 22 August 1919; *Austin American*, 23 August 1919.
9. Ovington, 'Mob Violence,' p. 20; *New York Times*, 23-25, 30 August 1919; *Austin Statesman*, 27 August 1919.
10. *Austin Statesman*, 23 August 1919.
11. Ibid., 22 August 1919; NAACP, *Mobbing of John R. Shillady*, p. 4.
12. NAACP, *Tenth Annual Report*, pp. 7, 40; NAACP, *Seventeenth Annual Report*, p. 38; NAACP, *Twentieth Annual Report* (New York, 1930), pp. 44-45; *Austin*

Statesman, 24 August 1919; *Austin American*, 14 August 1920; *Austin City Directory, 1918*, p. 134; *Austin City Directory, 1920*, p. 106; *Austin City Directory, 1922*, p. 7; Work, *Negro Year Book, 1925-1926*, p. 464; Michael L. Gillette, 'The Rise of the NAACP in Texas,' *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 81 (April 1978), pp. 393, 395.

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19. Ibid., 3 September 1921, 12 April 1926.
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33. Colored Welfare Board, 'To the Mayor and City Commissioners of the City of Austin' [July 1918], p. 4.
34. *Austin American*, 25 January 1926.
35. Ibid., 4 October 1929; *Revised Civil Statutes*, op. cit., p. 819.
36. *Austin Statesman*, 7 August 1924.
37. *The Herald*, 19 January 1918; *Austin Facts*, 17 January 1918.
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40. *Sunday American-Statesman*, 17 June 1928; Barr, *Black Texans*, pp. 133-136; Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, pp. 143-145; Hine, *Black Victory*.

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42. *The Herald,* 17 May 1919.
43. *Austin American,* 3 September 1922.
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57. Ibid., 9 December 1923.
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68. *Austin American,* 29 March 1923.
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al., *City Manager Government*, pp. 17–18.
73. *Austin City Directory, 1916*, pp. 51–52; *Austin City Directory, 1918*, pp. 55–56; *Austin City Directory, 1920*, pp. 47–48; *Austin City Directory, 1922*, pp. 45–46; *Austin City Directory, 1924*, pp. 41–42; *Austin City Directory, 1927*, p. 37; *Austin City Directory, 1929*, pp. 41–42; Hall, *Negroes in the United States*, p. 549.
74. *Austin Statesman*, 10 August 1927.
75. Ibid., 16 September 1917, 24 August 1919; *San Antonio Inquirer*, 27 July 1918.
76. *Austin Statesman*, 1 September 1919.
77. *Austin American*, 30 August 1919.
78. Ibid., 31 August 1919.
79. *Austin Statesman*, 10, 15 August 1927.
80. Ibid., 30 July 1917, 10 August 1927; *Austin American*, 4 August 1926; City of Austin, Minute Book 8, 29 April, 30 December 1920, 7 July 1921, pp. 339, 397, 475; City of Austin, Minute Book 9, 1 December 1925, 7 January 1926, pp. 492–493, 510; City of Austin, Minute Book 10, 30 August 1928, p. 57.
81. *Austin Statesman*, 30 July 1917, 1 September 1919, 15 August 1927.
82. *Austin American*, 22 July 1923.
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84. Ibid.
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97. Ibid., 23, 25 November 1923; *Austin Statesman*, 23 November 1923.
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103. *Austin American*, 19 May 1928; Stone, et al., *City Manager Government*, pp. 20, 91.
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91; City of Austin, Minute Book 10, 12 July, 30 August 1928, pp. 484, 527; City of Austin, Minute Book 11, 20 June, 1 August 1929, 20, 27 February 1930, pp. 289, 326, 568, 583; *Report of the City Manager of the City of Austin, Texas, for the Year 1929*, p. 52; *Report of the City Manager of the City of Austin, Texas, for the Year 1931*, p. 50; Austin Public Schools, 'Scrap Book, 1923-1934' (Austin-Travis County Collection, Austin History Center).

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City Directory, 1922, p. 317; *Austin City Directory, 1924*, pp. 186, 474; *Austin City Directory, 1927*, pp. 326, 402.
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134. *Austin Statesman*, 24 April 1921.
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