

Mexican-Americans Begin Civil Rights Fight

San Antonio, Tex. — In the past, some Texas restaurants put up signs that read: "No dogs or Mexicans allowed."

Things have changed 'now,' says Angela Castrejon, restaurant cashier in El Paso, Tex., "we are allowed in as waitresses and dishwashers."

An exaggeration of existing conditions, this view reflects a measure of the bitterness and frustration helping nourish a relatively new civil rights militancy among the 4,500,000 Americans with Spanish surnames.

A byproduct of Negro civil rights agitation, the new movement still lacks precise form and central organization. But what is of social and political significance are the first hard signs of unity at all levels, from chili picker to doctor, dentist, priest.

Cradle of the new militancy is the United States southwest, lusty 19th century frontier, fountainhead of vast modern fortunes in cattle and oil. But to the impoverished Mexican-Americans of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado and California, the vast area could qualify for U.S. foreign aid — if it were a foreign country.

Of this five-state area, Texas, one of the richest states in the U.S., has the most backward Mexican-American population. Fifty-two per cent of the Spanish-surnamed population has been classified as "functionally illiterate", a term applied by sociologists to those who have not completed four years of schooling. Twenty per cent of persons over 25 years of age in this same ethnic category have not completed more than one year of schooling.

The living conditions of the Spanish-surnamed population in the Southwest and other areas aroused protest movements shortly after the Second World War. Deprived of incentive by a post-war boom that left little to protest about they withered and lay dormant for more than a decade before surfacing anew in the early 1960's.

Affluent businessmen, professionals, college students, migrant laborers, white and

blue collar workers make up the ranks of the new militants. They come from an ethnic group whose ancestors were irrigating lands in what now is New Mexico before the first pilgrims from the Old World reached Plymouth Rock.

Striving for the kind of unity that will provide the most effective political pressures at state and national level, they are demanding first of all an end to what they feel are discriminatory practices in classrooms and jobs. They regard these as the main causes of backwardness among Americans of Spanish surnames.

Some leaders despair of ever achieving national unity because of the diversity of issues confronting the various groups regionally. The availability of substantial federal and private funds has encouraged a real effort at unity, but many feel this may be the source of serious discord among groups with different views on militancy.

At the moment the scene is one of apparent passivity, but there are signs of ill-concealed hostility among Anglo-Americans toward Mexican-Americans in areas of extremist militancy.

The Mexican-American movement is about where the Negro militancy was at the time of the Selma, Ala., march in 1964, says lawyer Albert A. Pena r., Behar (San Antonio, Tex.) County commissioner.

"At that time, the black man was telling the American people something, but they weren't listening and didn't act, the extremists moved in. I think that's the point at which we stand now."

Hole In The Head

According to the makers of Tinkertoy, a popular modern gift, Greek and Roman children of early Christian times were often given puppet-dolls. These dolls were cunningly made, with jointed movable wooden limbs—and a hole in the head. A string passed through this hole, and connected to the arms and legs, turned the doll into a marionette.

Candlemas Eve Is Favored As Time To Remove Green

When is the right time to take down the Christmas greens? Before they become a fire hazard, is the modern belief, and that usually means soon after Christmas Day.

In earlier times, however, the question was not so easily answered.

Some people believed that Epiphany, or Twelfth Day, January 6, was the proper time for removing all Christmas decorations. Others firmly contended that the greens should remain until Candlemas, February 2.

One of those favoring the

later date was, apparently, the poet Robert Herrick, who lived from 1591 to 1634. He wrote of taking down the greens in his poem, "Ceremonies for Candlemas Eve," but warned that the greens must be completely removed.

"For look how many leaves there be
Neglected there (maids trust to me)
So many goblins you shall see."

Exasperated dragon: "Mother said there would be knights like this."

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Once more we greet the glad Yuletide
With tinselled boughs and holly,
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With a New Year bright and jolly.

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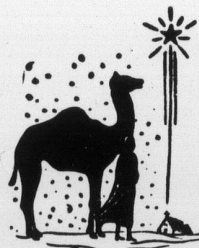
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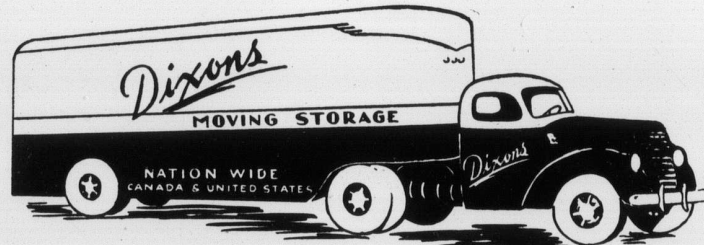
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