

Topic: Learning Traits Passed on by Generations

Abstract: From nobody loving these old cars, to shiny new American muscle with the taste of a culture like no other, came out of my father's shop. My grandfather taught my father everything he knew about working on cars and my father did the same to me. In the 80's, Low Riders were at the heart of young Mexican men and women and my father built the best ones. My grandfather learned in Mexico and when he came to the United States, mechanical work was all he knew what to do. I met many different individuals, all who taught me a little bit of what they did. I even met clients of my father. As time passed my father grew to become a fan of Chevy Muscle Cars and pass the likening on to me. He taught me all I know about cars and one day hope to be as good as my grandfather was and my father is. When you don't have much money, there is no other option except do things for yourself because there isn't extra money for a mechanic. When I have children, I will give them the gift which my father gave me which is work on cars and I hope to keep this family trait alive in my future generations.

Key Words: Low Riders, Mexico, Traits, Father, Auto Shop, Paint Jobs, Cars, Shop, Family Business, Children, Teach, Owner.

Ethnic Designation: *Mexican American*

Cultural Category: Social Traits Practice

The Shop

I remember seeing years of weather beating on the paint job of some of the cars that came in the shop, fortunately my father who is a proud Mexican American business owner, had a great

team of helpers. My first memories take me back to about the age of 7. I think I was in 2nd grade about that time. I would sit so anxiously in Mrs. Griffin's classroom, I knew that right after class I was to walk to my father's Auto body Shop, which was only about 2 blocks away and stay there till about 6 when we would leave home. My mother and father were never married so technically you can say I'm a bastard child but to be honest with you I never had any issues with it. My parents got along just fine with each other and my father would drop me off at her house after we left the shop. This was in the late 80s, and in those days everything was about the Low Riders. Every day after school at my father shop, I would met a bunch of different types of people. He had all sorts of clients. Some were insurance jobs and small mechanical fixes, but most of the cars were low riders with were custom work and colorful paint jobs. My father had many helpers at the shop. I remember this guy by the name of Gene, he was a bit younger than all of the rest and he did whatever my father told him to do. There was the Painters Sosio and D-boy, these guys were so funny and the best in town at the time. David was the Master Mechanic and my father and grandfather were the Owners and Designer Quistian Auto.

One of the clients whom came by regularly was this young guy named Tony. I swear, this guy to me was the king of all king when it came to having the niciest Low Rider. I think he was about 25 years old and had over 10 cars. It felt like he was getting a car painted every week. Tony was good friends with my father. He would always swing by the shop and take me to get something to eat or buy my some new toys. I remember he had this car a 72 Monte Carlo with a T.V. and Nintendo inside of it and everything was platted or painted gold. This car was so awesome, it had something like a candy purple with blue and pink paint job on it. I know that sounds kind of weird but in those days that what you did to those low riders. It also had hydraulics and could bounce really high. At these show, which we would go to every weekend

they had this hopping contests and Tony would always win or come in 2nd. My father's car would always win. Most of the time he would win first place in his category and a lot of the time he would win best in show. In 89, one of my father's car was named Low Rider of the year and had this big spread in the Low Rider Magazine.

My father told me he bought his first car when his was only 14. He told me it took him nearly 2 years of working in the fields here in this Northern California to save up and buy that car. I guess from what he tells me, my grandfather was some type of a Master Mechanic in Mexico and my father learned everything he knew about cars from him. I remember seeing a picture a black and white picture of my father, he was dressed in dark clothes and you can see he has his belt buckle to the side... I don't know what the whole deal with that was, but when I ask him about it he tells me that in his "crew" in high school used to rock their belts buckles on the side. I guess it was some type of young hip thing to do but what stood out the most of this picture was a 1955 Chevy Bel-Air in the background. My father told me that he didn't have much money to get his car work on so the only way he could afford to have a car was by knowing how to do his own mechanical work. He had learned everything there was to know about a car from my grandfather and by the time he was in high school all of his buddies had cars but didn't really know how to work on them and this is when he first started working on cars for other people. I ask my father how he know so much now about cars and he tell me "From just doing the damn thing!"

Since young I have been working in my father's shop. I have learned how to paint, do body work and mechanical. My father's shop was a means of bringing food to the table but honestly for me, I do know I wasn't doing all the paper work and keeping tabs on spending, it was a really cool time. My father was always laughing and having fun while working. He

always had the music going, everyone that work there was always happy and like family. The Painters taught me how to spray cars and I think I was like 11 years old when I spayed my first car. My father knows how to paint as well but the shop was so busy he had other things to do and therefor hired Sosio and D-boy. Gene was always driving around to the bank, dropping off, picking up customers or picking up supplies for the shop. When I was really bored I would go with Gene and par take in all of “missions”. This guy was always slacking now that I think of it. At the time I didn’t think much of it because I was only 11 but now that I’m older and think about it, that guys was the biggest slacker. I am very grateful that I learned all that I did in my father shop. Working on cars was a trait my grandfather pass on to my father and it was something he passed on to me.

There something about the rumble in a big old engine that make me appreciate all the hard work that goes into building a nice old car. My father is much older now and no longer owns any Low Riders. I guess you can say he grew out of them because now he is totally in muscle cars. It funny how this whole car industry has its own cultures. You have many different style depending on where you come from or what era you grew up in. Some people like to tune up them Hondas and others like to keep it low on their low riders and old school. I personally like the muscle cars, I love the bright colors and laud engines old schools have. The smell of leather interior grows on to you. Working on cars was a cultural practice in my family which was passed on to my father by his grandfather and he passed on to me. In the future when I have kids I will pass on the same knowledge to my children. It is a hobby as well as a way of providing for the family. So you can take everything away everything from my but you can never stripped my knowledge and skills of working on car. As long as I have set of wrenches I have a means of survival.

