



Grade Level

5

Class Periods

3-5

## Goals/Objectives/Student Outcomes:

### Students will:

- Indicate knowledge of Hispanic involvement in Iowa by making a timeline.
- Identify Latin American countries in the Western Hemisphere.
- Identify notable Hispanics and discuss their contributions to Iowa and the U.S.

### Materials:

- Map of Iowa
- Iowa map showing 1990 census data
- Map of Western Hemisphere
- Photos, newspaper and magazine articles, and other sources that portray Hispanics in the U.S.

### Background:

(Excerpts taken from *Conocerme En Iowa*, the official report of the Governor's Spanish Speaking Task Force, submitted to Governor Robert D. Ray and the 66th General Assembly.)

#### Vocabulary

Chicano

La Raza

migrants

Anglo

Third or fourth generation

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

phenomenon

Christened

Mestizaje

Mexican-American War

Empire

census

settlement

consciousness

ethnic groups

Our Lady of Guadalupe

land grants

Anglo Iowans have several ideas about Chicano Iowans. First, many Anglo Iowans see all Chicanos in Iowa as migrant workers, people that move from one place to another. Secondly, they often view Chicanos as quaint little foreigners with heavy Spanish accents. And finally, they see them as a "problem population," as nonwhite, poor, and uneducated people who are on welfare. All these are false impressions, the third resulting from a misinterpretation of history.

The majority of Chicanos in Iowa are permanent residents, many of them third or fourth generation Iowans. Areas that have the highest concentration of Chicanos include Des Moines, Davenport, Bettendorf, Fort Madison, Burlington, Mason City, Cedar Rapids, Sioux City, Council Bluffs, and Muscatine. However, more recent Chicano immigrants to Iowa have settled in rural communities such as West Liberty, Columbus Junction, Conesville, Reinbeck, and Shenandoah.

Approximately 3,000 Chicano migrant workers pass through Iowa annually. They work in the tomato and onion fields in southeast Iowa and the sugar beet and asparagus fields in the north central part of the state. Their contribution to the agricultural output of the state is important. These migratory workers suffer the same problems and indignities as migrant workers nationally.

Low wages, inadequate housing and health services, back-breaking work, long hours, unpredictable weather, lack of legislated housing and health services, lack of legal protection, and discriminatory practices all plague the Iowa migrant worker. The Migrant Action Program in Mason City with auxiliary offices in other cities and the Muscatine Migrant Center have led the struggle to improve the migrant's life.

Settlement of Chicanos in Iowa, however, is not recent. The Chicano Mestizo roots in Iowa go further back in Iowa history than often has been acknowledged. The Chicano presence in Iowa reaches back to a time long before Iowa was a state. Few historians examine the fact that what is now Iowa was once owned and settled by Spain. From 1770

until the sale of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Spain enlarged her empire into this area. Many Chicanos are proud of the fact that they are products of the late 18th century merging (or *Mestizaje*) of Indian, European, and African peoples and cultures. In Western Iowa, for example, a Spaniard named Manuel Lisa conducted a fur-trapping business in the 1780s. Lisa married a Sioux Indian woman and lived among her people. It is very difficult to determine how many more Manuel Lisas were in Iowa during the late 1700s. It is interesting to note that when the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory, Manuel Lisa became a U.S. citizen.

Spanish land grants were given to Spanish citizens in the area that we now call Iowa. The first European settlement in Iowa was founded by a Spaniard named Julian Dubuque. Even though some Iowa historians stress that Dubuque was French Canadian, the fact remains that Dubuque was a Spanish citizen and that the lead mines he operated were officially named "Las Minas Espanolas" (The Spanish Mines).

Many Anglo historians writing about Chicano history in Iowa date the initial coming of Hispanics to the 1920s. They have consistently argued that not until the railroads and farms began to hire Mexican labor in the 1920s did Chicanos set foot in the Midwest. The fact is that Chicanos migrated to Iowa long before 1920.

In Iowa, for example, the first Mexican immigrant arrived in 1856 when he or she settled in northwestern Iowa's Lyon County. This Mexican's trek to Iowa in 1856 occurred only eight years after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican American War. Iowa had been a state for only ten years.

About the same time, several Iowa counties were christened with Mexican names—such as Cerro Gordo and Buena Vista—that honored U.S. victories in the Mexican American War.

The U.S. Federal Census of 1860 recorded six Mexicans in Iowa. In 1880 the Census takers counted 18 Chicanos in Iowa. The Iowa Census of 1895 place the number of Chicanos in Iowa at 30.

By 1915, the Chicano population in Iowa had increased to 616. In 1925, as a result of the pull from railroads and farm interests, the Iowa Chicano population grew to 2,597. The coming of the Depression in 1929 slowed the trek of Mexicans northward as jobs became scarce.

World War II and Korea created a demand for Mexican labor and Chicanos began to be pulled to Iowa by the same economic interests that had historically brought them before the Depression. Many Iowa Chicanos were drafted during the war and served courageously overseas. Some like Lando Valadez of Des Moines were highly decorated. Valadez was one of the few Iowans who received the Silver Star during World War II.

Following World War II, Chicano churches sprang up in various cities. Our Lady of Guadalupe in Des Moines is one example. Built in 1948 Guadalupe Chapel is still the center of activity for many Des Moines Chicanos.

The migration of more Chicanos during the 1950s and the 1970s has served to reinforce the Spanish language and Chicano culture in Iowa. The Spanish language is the second major language used in the State on an everyday basis. Chicano customs thrive in many cities of the state as do Mexican baptisms, weddings, funerals, confirmations, *compadrazgo's*, and various occasions for dances, fiestas, and soul searching. In all of this and more Chicanos continue to contribute to what in our time is called Iowa.

**From this brief review of the Chicano experience in Iowa students will learn:**

- That Chicanos in Iowa are not and have not been a population that

moves from one place to another. They have long-standing roots in state and they form a stable population that is growing. The 1970 census recorded just under 18,000 Chicanos in Iowa. Today that figure is close to 30,000.

- That Chicanos have been and continue to be victims of a racist system that takes advantage of them economically by paying minimal wages. Some Anglo Iowans continue to cast Chicanos in stereotypical roles perceiving them as lowly laborers rather than citizens, migrant workers rather than permanent community residents, backward and dependent people rather than "ambitious" and "hardworking," foreigners rather than Americans, Catholic rather than Protestant, "colored" rather than white.
- That despite the difficulties encountered by Chicano Immigrants to Iowa, they have survived and their culture is still alive.

## Procedure:

1. Have students fill out the "What Do You Know about Mexicans and Mexican Americans?" worksheet (see attachment). Have them compare their results.
2. Using the attached map of North and South America, demonstrate the proximity of Mexico and Central America to the U.S.A.; point out the locations of other Latin American countries. Have students do research to distinguish among these various terms: Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, Mexican American.
3. Using the attached 1990 census of Hispanics in Iowa, have students analyze the map and discuss why they think Hispanic populations are larger in some counties than in others.
4. Share with students the background information listed above, and ask them how this information changes what they know or think about Mexico and Mexican Americans. Ask them to change or add to their responses to the "What Do You Know about Mexicans and Mexican Americans?" worksheet.
5. Find photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements, TV programs, etc. that portray Hispanics. Discuss with the class the impressions they get from these various media and how they feel the media portrays Hispanics.
6. Show students how to make a timeline. Based on the background information, have students develop a timeline tracing the Hispanic presence in Iowa.

## Assessment of Outcomes:

Students will:

Be able to explain the meanings of the terms Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, and Mexican American.

1. Identify on a map the countries of Mexico, Central America, and the United States.
2. Produce a timeline representing important events of Hispanics in Iowa based on the lesson plan's background information.
3. Be able to add something new to their responses to the "What Do You Know about Mexicans and Mexican Americans?" worksheet.

## Extensions and Adaptations:

The project could continue by having students list influences of Hispanics in Iowa. (They could list restaurants, acquaintances, cultural aspects, churches, local centers, festivals celebrated here, or anything pertaining to the Hispanic culture.)

Students could make a of list famous people in the United States that are Hispanic, such as Gloria Estefan, Raul Julia, Cesar Chavez, Linda Ronstadt, Roberto Clemente, Lee Trevino, Jamie Escalante, Antonia Novello, and Rita Moreno, Joan Baez, and Luis Valdez.

Students could make a piñata, bring food of the Hispanic culture; or do bark painting for a fun culmination to this lesson. (Pre-made piñatas can be bought and then filled with candy; students can break the piñata as kids do in Mexico for fiestas.)

Have students explore the issue of discrimination faced by Mexican Americans, and the efforts of both individuals and organizations to work for more political and civil rights for Mexican Americans. Students can focus on the Zoot Suit Riots in Los Angeles or Cesar Chavez's work in organizing migrant farm workers. Discuss in what ways these two events might have influenced Hispanics in Iowa.

For more information, contact: Iowa Department of Human Rights, Division of Latino Affairs, Lucas Building, Capitol Complex, Des Moines, IA 50319; 515-281-4080.

## Resources:

*Maps-Globes-Graphs: An Interactive Program* (Level C), Steck-Vaughn Company.

*The Student's Illustrated Activity Atlas*, Steck-Vaughn Company.

Alexandra Bandon. *Mexican Americans: Footsteps to America*. New York: New Discovery Books, 1993.

## What Do You Know About Mexico and Mexican Americans

Think of the things you know about Mexico and Mexican Americans and list them under each heading. In the column next to it list how you know each thing.

What I Know About Mexico and Mexican Americans	How I Know It



Source: U.S. Department of State

## NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA



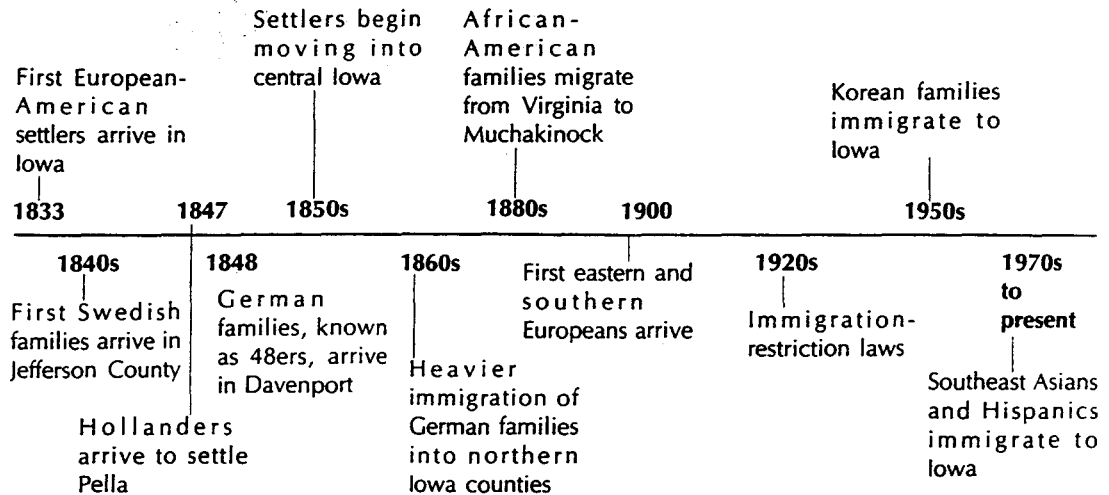
# Wild Rosie's Timeline



Native Americans such as the Mesquakie and Omaha Indians lived in Iowa before European-American settlers arrived. As the territory opened up to settlement in the 19th century, people from all over the United States and the world moved to Iowa. Even today

people such as Southeast Asians are still immigrating to Iowa.

Can you do this pop quiz? Look at the timeline. Answer the following questions by filling in the blanks after the questions. (Answers on page 30.)



1. When did the first European-Americans arrive in Iowa?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Where did the first 48ers live?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Where did African-American families come from?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Which ethnic group came to Iowa first—Germans or Hispanics?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. When did a large number of Southeast Asians immigrate to Iowa?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Exploring Ethnic Traditions

What ethnic group do you belong to? What does that mean to you? To find out more about your ethnic past, you can have fun doing the following detective work.

## Supplies:

index cards  
pencil or pen

**Mission:** Ask a family member or friend who can tell you stories about your past or give you leads to other sources of information.

**Assignment:** On the top of an index card, write down the date and the person's name, address, phone number, date of birth, birthplace, and relationship to you. You'll probably need a number of index cards for each interview.

Information to gather from the person you are interviewing:

1. What are your parents' names?
2. What are their ethnic origins?
3. What languages do you speak? What languages do/did your parents speak?
4. What is your occupation? What were your parents' occupations?
5. What is your religion? What were your parents' religions?
6. What do you know about the origin of your last name? Do you know what it means? Did it undergo changes coming from another country to the United States?

7. What expressions or nicknames are used in your family? How did they get started?

8. What stories have come down to you about your parents? Your grandparents? Distant relatives?

9. What have you learned from your family about their childhood, schooling, jobs, and recreation?

10. What customs surround these events in your family: baptisms, bar or bat mitzvahs, courting, marriage, or raising children?

11. Can you suggest any other people I can talk to to find out more about my ethnic past? ✿

*An Italian family from Des Moines poses for a portrait. What kind of clothing are they wearing?*

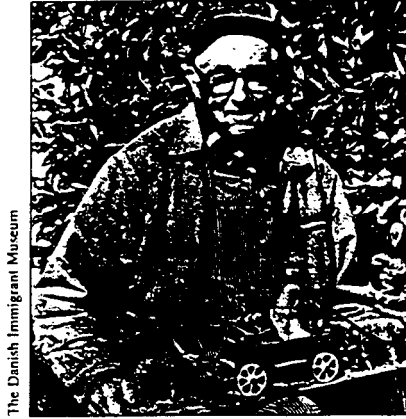


SISI, Des Moines

# Tradition-Bearers

LOOK AT THE photographs below. These folks are tradition-bearers—people who know a lot about the old, or traditional ways of

doing things. What ethnic indicators are shown in the pictures? Do you see any clues that reveal what ethnic group each person belongs to?



What is she making?

What is he holding?

What is she wearing?

Members of your family such as a parent or grandparent are also tradition-bearers. They hold many of the secret stories of your ethnic past in the form of memories. Older people you know often have vivid memories. Many people who are the age of your parents or grandparents like to remember their lives—where they grew up, where they went to school, the jobs they held, their adventures. Besides stories, tradition-bearers may also hold the secrets to making things, recipes, or ways of celebrating holidays.

In the past, storytelling often took place at work, the dinner table, ethnic clubs, churches, and synagogues. Today, young people learn about their histories at schools, festivals, and

museums. Festivals such as the Nordic F Decorah celebrates Norwegian traditions.

Why is it important for tradition-bearers to share on their memories of family history? One Hmong woman, in sewing a story cloth for her child, wrote a poem explaining why:

*“And they will think of me, my sewing  
And I will put my name,  
I will put the letters in Hmong, in English, in Laotian,  
in Thai.  
And it will say,  
‘Don’t forget your culture!  
All your whole life,  
and your children’s life,  
and your grandchildren’s life!’”*