

**The Mexican**

**American**

**Experience in**

**Kansas**

**Traveling Resource Trunk**



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*The Mexican American Experience in Kansas* Traveling Resource Trunk  
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# Acknowledgements

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The mission of the Kansas State Historical Society is to identify, collect, preserve, and disseminate materials and information pertaining to Kansas history in order to assist the public in understanding and appreciating their Kansas heritage and how it relates to their lives.

Ramon Powers, Executive Director  
David Haury, Assistant Executive Director

# How to Use and Return this Trunk

## Curriculum

The curriculum is aimed at grades four, five, and six and is divided into twenty-three lessons. Each lesson is complete in itself and does not require knowledge learned from other lessons in the manual. Many of the lessons may be modified for use with any age level.

The manual is laid out so that all twenty-three lessons will provide a broad overview of the Mexican American heritage and the experience of this group in Kansas. Units in the manual explore the concepts of culture, the history of Mexico, immigration to Kansas, discrimination and prejudice, and ways in which the Mexican culture remains alive in Kansas.

This manual contains a variety of materials for your use. Each lesson contains objectives, historical background information, and a vocabulary list. The basic activities will meet the objectives of the lesson. Extended activities are provided for further study or to adjust the curriculum level for use with a variety of age groups. Worksheets and a media program are located at the back of the manual. The manual also includes a section on craft activities, Mexican recipes, and a bibliography.

## Create an Exhibit

The strength of a traveling trunk is the objects it contains, which makes it ideal when creating a small exhibit. When planning an exhibit look for a place where items will be secure and safe from theft or vandalism. Choose objects, photos, maps, etc. that will help people visualize the idea that is being explored. One example might be to use the sombrero, serape, tortilla press, and appropriate photos to explore the concept of the fiesta. Once items are chosen and arranged in an attractive format, labels should be added to help the visitor understand the concepts being discussed. Each label should be kept short - two to three short sentences. Don't try to tell the viewer everything about the objects, but rather use the objects to introduce a topic and create a sense of curiosity that will send the viewer looking for further information.

## Notes About Using This Trunk

- Please inventory the trunk when you receive it and before returning it. An inventory sheet is provided for this purpose. Return trunks in the same condition that you receive them.
- Objects and materials in the trunk are to be used as the instructor sees fit. Please keep in mind that many students will be using the trunk after you this year and in the years to come. Use is encouraged; overuse, damage, and mutilation are not.
- To assure that a trunk will reach its next destination on time please each trunk by its scheduled return date. Allow at least two days shipping time. If you have any questions or concerns contact the Education and Outreach Division of the Kansas State Historical Society at 6425 SW Sixth Avenue, Topeka, KS 66615-1099; 785-272-8681, ext. 414; Fax 785-272-8682; or [education@kshs.org](mailto:education@kshs.org).

# Introduction

In the early 1980s funding was obtained to produce traveling resource trunks. These trunks would provide materials for use in classrooms throughout Kansas. One of the five original trunks in the Traveling Resource Trunk program was titled "The Mexican-American Experience in Kansas." It explored the culture of this group of Kansans. Revisions to this trunk were made because of the importance of the history and culture of Mexicans who have made Kansas their home.

Culture is the arts, beliefs, and customs that make up a way of life for a group of people. We all consider ourselves to be unique individuals with a set of personal opinions, preferences, habits, and quirks. Yet we all share ideas and customs that make up the American culture.

Humans eat because they must, but what and when and how they eat is learned and varies from culture to culture. Children observe and copy behaviors from their parents and siblings, and later from friends, acquaintances, and the world around them. They gradually learn to live within the boundaries set by those within their environments.

Bicultural is when an individual or family incorporates the culture they live in as well as maintains the culture of their family of origin. Many Mexican Americans, as with other cultural groups, live within two cultures; these individuals are bicultural. Within the typical 'American' society of meat and potatoes or fast food, the English language, and television, they maintain their Mexican heritage in a variety of ways. This trunk explores the meanings of the words culture and bicultural and puts them into a context through an examination of various aspects of the Mexican American community in Kansas.

# Trunk Contents

- CD of power point presentation
- **28** Transparencies of power point presentation
- *The Handbook on The Hispanic Face of Kansas*
- *The Aztec Cosmos*
- *Traditions: Piñata*
- *Organization of American Historians: Magazine of History*
- 4 Kansas Road maps
- Recipes booklet
- Craft booklet
- Worksheets
- 32 Graphics (Please return in order)
- 8 Object Cards
- Calendar
- 2 Bolo toys
- Tortilla Press
- Mochete
- Serape
- Sombrero
- Blouse
- Mini Piñata
- Mexican Flag
- Timeline and timeline pieces
- 4 spinners
- Spanish Word Cards (30 language cards)

## **3 Videos**

- *The Hispanic Face of Kansas*
- *Hispanic Culture Series: Mexican People and Culture*
- *Cuentos (Stories)*

## **1 Audio cassette**

Pronunciation of Spanish Words

## **7 Books**

- *Nine Days to Christmas*
- *The Lady of Guadalupe*
- *In This Proud Land*
- *The Mexican Americans*
- *Generations United*
- *People of the Sun*
- *Smithsonian*

## **2 Posters**

- *Our Lady of Guadalupe*
- *Math of Mexico*