

# Immigration

## Lesson #8: IMMIGRATION TO KANSAS: A RESEARCH EXERCISE

### NOTE:

- A) Choose the track best suited for your students: This lesson is written to be taught on two levels or tracks. The first is less difficult than the second. Choose the track that works best for your students.

When worksheets are required they will be listed for both tracks as less difficult/more difficult (example: #10/#11). The less difficult worksheet is a narrative written from information compiled from the sources provided. Students need to review the sources provided to enable them to fill in the blanks in the narrative. The more difficult worksheet contains questions to help students organize information they find in the sources provided; it is an aid for students but not essential for them to complete their assignments. Students need to compile information from the sources, evaluate this information, and organize it. See step #4 in the activity section of this lesson for more information on the two tracks available.

- B) Group size: This lesson is designed for three groups of approximately six to eight students per group.
- C) Packet Options: This lesson utilizes resource packets: *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker*, *Senate Bill 987*, and *Win An Oscar Production Company*. Each has been designed to require approximately the same proficiency for completion. Because of the topics being explored, *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker* is based on the more factual, nuts and bolts type of information, and *Win An Oscar Production Company* is based on more theoretical or abstract concepts.

### TIME

Two sessions of 50 minutes each. Additional time may be useful for the more difficult track.

### MATERIALS FROM TRUNK

For the group assigned to *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker*

Object - Packet, *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker*

Graphics - #16-22

Worksheets - #9, 10/11, and 12

For the groups assigned to *Senate Bill 987*

Object - Packet, *Senate Bill 987*

Worksheets - #13, 14/15

For the group assigned to *Win An Oscar Production Company*

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Object - Packet, *Win An Oscar Production Company*  
Worksheets - #16, 17/18  
Graphics - #23, 24  
Book - *Generations United*

## **TEACHER PREPARATION**

- Review the historical background material.
- Decide on which track to use for your class (see the note at the beginning of this lesson). Read through the lesson plan to decide whether to use the regular or advanced track. Worksheet #10 is easier than worksheet #11, #14 is easier than #15, and #17 is easier than #18.
- You may want to decide ahead of time which packet to assign to which group. Reading the assignment sheets (#9, 13, 16) and answer sheets to the less difficult track worksheets (#10, 14, 17) will help with this decision.
- For each group copy one worksheet per student.
- Copy answer sheets for yourself. Answer sheets are located on the back of the worksheet originals.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to:

- 1) name two types of work that brought Mexican immigrants to Kansas
- 2) exercise critical thinking skills using primary and statistical sources
- 3) organize and communicate their research to the class

## **PRIMARY SOURCES**

Historians use documents to investigate the past and gather evidence for their hypotheses. Primary sources are to the historian what the laboratory is to the scientist. Sources such as diaries and drawings, photographs, and passenger lists are the contents of the historian's laboratory. When students are asked to make assumptions about people's behavior based on such evidence, their own conclusions reveal the subjective and interpretive nature of historical inquiry. Working with documents, students can exercise critical thinking skills: recall, interpretation, analysis, inductive and deductive reasoning, and evaluation.

Adapted from: Beth C. Haverkamp's "Hands-on History: Using Primary Sources in the Elementary Classroom." *History Matters*. National Council for History Education, Inc., vol.4, no. 1, September 1993.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Mexican Americans in the United States are not a homogeneous group; they are not all alike. They are a heterogeneous group with differences determined by the length of time they have been in the United States, the strength of their ties to Mexico, and the degree to which they have been able to integrate themselves into the dominant American culture. The Mexican

American population in the United States actually can be broken into two separate and distinct groups: those living in areas taken over by the United States and those immigrating to the United States.

**United States Acquires Citizens** - The first Mexicans to become citizens of the United States did not acquire citizenship; the United States acquired them. After the Spanish had conquered the Aztecs and other Indian tribes in Mexico they began to move northward into areas that are now part of the United States. Over a period of time much of this land became part of the United States.

**Immigration To the United States** - The second and more recent way in which Mexicans became part of the population of the United States is through immigration. This movement northward focused mainly on a search for higher salaries and economic improvement. It took place in waves through the years. Many of those immigrating to the U.S. felt that their immigration was a "returning to" rather than a movement into a new area. This feeling is a reflection of the fact that the involvement of Mexicans in the Southwest goes back much farther than that of the "dominant" American culture.

The United States has not always had immigration laws. Prior to 1875 anyone who wanted to come to this country could do so. Exclusion of certain groups became law in 1875. During the early twentieth century, Congress expanded its control over immigration policy by introducing the first numerical restrictions on immigration. Measures passed in 1921, 1924, and 1929 were designed not only to restrict overall immigration but also to limit immigration from certain areas. One effect of these "national-origin quotas," combined with the Mexican Revolution in 1910, was to intensify illegal migration.

From the 1860s to the early 1900s the political situation in Mexico vacillated between revolution and stability. This fluctuation affected not only the region's economy but also the number of its citizens that moved to the United States. The majority of Mexicans that moved northward took jobs in agriculture or labor-intensive industries such as the railroad.

Some estimates show that between 1900 and 1920 the number of Mexicans entering the U.S. was roughly equivalent to one-tenth of the population of Mexico. The reasons included poor economic conditions in northern Mexico and internal upheaval caused by the Mexican Revolution, rapid economic growth in the United States, and a need for Mexican labor in the United States due to growing immigration restrictions for certain groups. During World War I most immigration from Europe was halted, which created an increasing demand for laborers.

Although immigrants to Kansas came from virtually every state in northern and central Mexico, the majority came from Guanajuato and Michoacan. When the Mexican Central Railway opened large areas of the central highland states of Mexico (Michoacan, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Jalisco) many people from this area began to immigrate to the United States. People from the same village or region often settled together in Kansas. This helped create a sense of community identity and culture in an otherwise alien environment. By 1930 the Mexican American population of Kansas was the seventh largest Mexican ancestral group in the United States, and comprised the second largest population in the

state, after Germans.

The stock market crash of 1929 marked the beginning of a new wave of fluctuation in Mexican immigration. With the coming of the 1930s depression many Mexican Americans, like other Americans, found themselves unemployed and dependant upon government aid. The U.S. and Mexican governments worked together to repatriate Mexican Americans to Mexico. This influx of workers into the Mexican economy caused a rise in unemployment there, and the repatriation effort dropped off. Between 1930 and 1940 the number of Mexican residents in Kansas dropped 54 percent.

During World War II workers were once again needed in the U.S. to fill jobs left empty by U.S. servicemen. Thus began the Bracero Program, a program instituted through bilateral agreements with Mexico, Barbados, Jamaica, and British Honduras. Through the Bracero program temporary workers, mainly Mexicans, came to work in the U.S. on temporary visas. Once there many workers became U.S. citizens. This program operated on a formal basis from 1942 to 1947 and on an informal basis from 1947 to 1964. Problems with the Bracero Program included displacing Mexican Americans already in the U.S. with those in the Bracero Program, receiving meager wages, and living in substandard housing.

Today the United States is once again the destination for Mexican American immigrants. Between 1820 and 1960 83 percent of all immigrants came from Europe. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 altered restriction policies favoring immigrants from northern and western Europe. It raised the ceiling on the number of immigrants allowed to enter, revised geographic and national limits, and based preference for admission largely on family reunification. The Immigration Control and Reform Act of 1986 offered amnesty and citizenship to illegal immigrants who qualified under its provisions. The Immigration Act of 1990 increased the level of immigration, provided easier access to those seeking permanent residency, further removed barriers to family reunification, increased admissions for highly skilled workers and those with jobs waiting for them, and created "investor visas" for people starting a business in the United States. These laws responded to changes both at home and abroad, and they set in motion another surge of immigration to the United States.

While the majority of Mexican immigrants settled in the Southwest and Colorado, the Mexican population in the Great Plains increased significantly as well. This is especially true in Kansas. Hispanics are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in Kansas today. The state's population increased by 5 percent between 1970 and 1980. The Hispanic population, largely of Mexican ancestry, increased by 35 percent during the same decade. Between 1980 and 1990 Kansas's Hispanic population grew by 48 percent. By the year 2010 it is estimated that Hispanics will move past African Americans to become this country's largest minority group.

**Sugar Beet Cultivation in Kansas** - See the "*Background Information about Sugar Beet Cultivation*" located on the Assignment Sheet in the student packet.

Sugar beet cultivation in Kansas began declining after World War II and relocated from the southwest to the northwest part of the state. Production ended in the mid-1980s. Sugar beet acreage declined from 41,800 in 1970 to 7,800 in 1984, and the harvest dropped from 200,000 tons in 1980 to 122,000 tons in 1984. By the mid-1960s only 2.7 man-hours were required to produce a ton of beets in contrast to 11.2 man-hours during World War I.

By 1969 almost all migrant workers in Kansas came from Texas. Many families moved on shortly after work in the beet fields was completed while some remained through fall for the harvest. Until the late 1950s much of the seasonal labor force in western Kansas came from the U.S. government's Bracero Program. This involved Mexican Nationals entering the U.S. on a yearly basis to work.

As late as 1967 a survey done by the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor showed that the average income for migrant workers in the U.S. was \$1,307. This averages approximately \$3,000 per family. The migrant's life expectancy was forty-nine years. Infant and maternal mortality was 125 percent higher than the national average, and death rates from infectious diseases was 200 percent to 206 percent higher.

Although sugar beet cultivation no longer takes place in Kansas many crops remain that use migrant labor. Mexican American workers are an important source of migrant labor. Many believe that the day of the migrant will disappear as machinery and herbicides replace hand tools and manual labor.

**Railroad Work in Kansas** - At a time when life was becoming harder for workers in Mexico, the economy of the western United States was growing. There the chronic shortages of labor for mining, agriculture, and railroads served to provide Mexicans with a favorable destination. At first the greatest number came to work as railroad laborers, with many being employed by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. Most of these men were hired to work from May until October. The majority then returned to their homes and families in Mexico during the off season. Some, however, remained in the United States throughout the year where they found employment as agricultural workers to supplement their railroad contracts.

When many of the first Mexicans came to the U.S. they were given shelter in temporary camps. These camps consisted of sheds, tents, and old railroad cars. Housing provided by railroads prior to World War I was deteriorated structures made of scrap and second-hand materials. The materials used were sawed or hewn railroad ties, old rails for rafters, sheet metal for roofs, and mud or concrete used to fill the holes. Little protected the people in these buildings from the cold of winter and heat of summer.

In time Mexican immigrants began to move into the railroad shops and acquire jobs with a greater degree of permanence. This benefitted workers who wanted to bring their families to the United States and establish a more permanent residence. Mexican labor gangs at

roundhouses and shops (equipment, repair, or construction points) were common in Kansas by 1910. World War II was a watershed for the Mexican population in Kansas. Employment previously denied to this group began to open up, and action was taken against discrimination.

Many Mexican Americans resided in urban areas. Mexican "colonias" or "barrios" formed in the main commercial centers along the rail lines or at the locations of rail yards, shops, and roundhouses. The largest colonias were in Kansas City, Topeka, Emporia, Wichita, and Garden City.

#### Sources

Oppenheimer, Robert. "Acculturation or Assimilation: Mexican Immigrants in Kansas, 1900 to World War II." *The Western Historical Quarterly* (October 1985): 429-48.

Stull, Donald D. "*I Born Again in America*" *Observations on a More Diverse Nation*. (Finney County Historical Society, Inc., Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas Humanities Council).

"...we are People of the Sun, La Bella Raza De Bronce, we are more than Being...", Special Report (Topeka: Kansas Advisory Committee on Mexican-American Affairs, 1981).

#### VOCABULARY

- **Barrio** = A Spanish speaking neighborhood in a city or town in the United States.
- **Boxcar** = A roofed freight car usually with sliding doors on the side.
- **Colonia** = A neighborhood made up of mainly Spanish speaking residents.
- **Commissary** = A store for equipment, groceries, and other provisions run specifically for railroad employees.
- **Enganchistas** = See Renganches.
- **El Paso, Texas** = The principal center for recruiting and distributing Mexican immigrant labor in the United States.
- **Gandies** = Railroad section gang workers.
- **Heterogeneous** = Consisting of dissimilar parts or constituencies.
- **Homogeneous** = Of the same or a similar kind or nature.
- **Immigration** = The act of coming to a new country to make one's home.
- **Machete** = A large heavy knife used for cutting underbrush and crops such as sugar beets.
- **Median** = Average.
- **Mexican** = A person who was born in Mexico or is a citizen of Mexico.
- **Mexican American** = A person of Mexican descent living in the United States.
- **Mexican Revolution** = Mexico's fight for independence from Spain, 1810-1821. Similar to the Revolutionary War of 1776 in the United States.
- **Pancho Villa** = A bandit figure in the Mexican Revolution fighting to overthrow the rule of Porfirio.
- **Per capita** = By or for each person. (example: The per capita income of the United States is the average income earned by each individual working in the United States.)
- **Porfirato** = The rule of Mexico's Don Porfirio, 1870s-1911. A time during which foreigners and a few favored Mexicans reaped benefits at the expense of the masses.
- **Renganches (Ranganchie)** = Recruiters located at the United States/Mexican border offering lodging and transportation to a place of employment.

- **Roadmaster** = The man in charge of railroad building. A division officer responsible for keeping his division of track in good repair.
- **Roundhouse** = A circular building housing idle locomotives and those needing repair. On the outside front is a turntable to move locomotives in and out on the proper track.
- **Section Gang** = A crew of track workers employed to keep a section of track in good condition. They also weed the right of way, replace rotted ties, reballast, raise the track if necessary, fill in sags, and resurface. They rest while a train passes.
- **Sugar beet** = A white-rooted beet grown for the sugar in its root.
- **Tariff** = A duty or tax imposed by a government on imported and sometimes exported goods.
- **Ton** = A unit of measure equaling 2,000 pounds.

### ACTIVITY

- 1) Introduce the lesson by talking with the class about immigration. The following questions may be used as a basis for this discussion. Ask the class if they know what immigration means.

***The act of coming to a new country to make one's home.***

How does immigration pertain to the United States?

***The United States is a nation primarily composed of immigrants. The only people who did not move or immigrate to the New World, or later the United States, are Native Americans or American Indians.***

Why do people immigrate?

***They are looking for ways to improve their lives. Often immigrants come in search of work, a place where they can own land, and a chance for a better future for their children. Many times they also come to escape hardships in their homeland such as persecution, warfare, famine, and poverty.***

Explain to the class that they will be learning about the immigration of Mexicans to Kansas and two types of work that drew these people here: sugar beet cultivation and jobs with a railway company. Mexicans worked in a variety of other jobs including meat packing and mining, but only sugar beet cultivation and railroad work will be examined in this lesson.

- 2) Tell the class that they will learn about Mexican immigration, sugar beet cultivation, and railroad-related work by doing research. Ask the class where information is found when doing research.

***The answers will probably include books, the library, movies, encyclopedias, etc.***

Tell the class that there are MANY places to find information, and you will refer to these places as sources.

***For the purpose of this lesson a source is a person or object***

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*(photograph, tool, piece of clothing, book, magazine, diary, etc.)  
that supplies information.*

Research sources usually fall into one of two categories. Expand on the definition of sources by explaining the difference between primary and secondary sources.

*Secondary sources are informational materials produced after an event took place. The information compiled in these is often based on information found in primary sources.*

*Primary sources are materials directly related to a topic by time or participation. These materials include letters, speeches, diaries, oral history interviews and reminiscences, government records, photographs, artifacts, business records, or anything else that provides first-hand accounts about a person or event. These sources are very important because they give insight into the point of view of an event at the time it occurred.*

Ask the class to name some examples of secondary sources.

*Books, movies, magazine or periodical articles, and encyclopedias.*

Ask the class to name some items that would be considered primary sources.

*Letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles from the time, photographs, original film footage, documents, etc.*

3) Explain to the class that they will be:

- examining a variety of sources
- interpreting and evaluating the information they find
- arriving at conclusions based on this information

Briefly review how to find information from the sources provided.

**Photographs** - Learn to "read" this visual material as you would read a book. Start at the top left and move your eyes to the right. Then move your eyes down and repeat a left to right look at the next part until all areas of the photograph or illustration have been covered. Look at equipment, clothing, housing, working conditions, etc. Look over the photograph or illustration twice in this manner trying each time to see some details you missed the first time.

Read the caption if any.

- Is a date given, a place designated, or people or places identified?
- Are people in the photo? Are they posed or candid?
- Are animals pictured? If so, what kind?
- Are any machines or tools pictured? If so, what kind?
- Are buildings or other structures pictured? Read all lettering on buildings, signs, etc.
- What is happening in the photograph or illustration? What do you think happened just before the image was recorded? Just after?
- What is your immediate impression of the photograph or illustration? What is most

memorable?

- Do you like the photograph or illustration? Why or why not?

**Manuscript Items** - Look the item over carefully and try to determine what type of object it is. Is it a letter, part of a diary or journal, a newspaper clipping, a bill of sale, etc.? Once you determine this think about the purpose of this type of item. Letters usually were written to communicate information to another person while many diaries or journals were meant only for personal use. A bill of sale documents an actual sale while an advertisement records the availability of an item or items for sale. This difference becomes important when you consider that some advertisements are created to stimulate interest in items for which there seems to be no demand. The purpose of a manuscript influences the information included in it.

- Is a date given?
- Is a signature found on the item?
- If a letter, to whom is it written?
- Is a location given?
- Does it contain unfamiliar words?
- Can you read the handwriting?
- What is the purpose of the item?

**Oral History** - For research purposes transcripts, typed copies of the interview tapes, are usually used. Transcripts make the information available on a tape more accessible and easier to use. Read each transcript completely through before pulling information from it. At times it is necessary to refer to earlier passages. Inconsistencies may occur for many reasons including poor memories, unclear tapes that were difficult to transcribe, or the speaker's terminology that is unfamiliar to the interviewer or transcriber.

- 4) Divide the class into three groups. Assign one group to *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker*, one to *Win An Oscar Production Company*, and the other group to *Senate Bill 987*. Give the appropriate packet, graphics, and worksheets to each group as well as a brief introduction to their assignment. Each group will find more detailed instructions in their packet and on their worksheets.

Each packet contains sources from which the group will find information pertaining to their topic and assignment. Each group will be responsible for reviewing their sources, compiling the information needed to complete their assignment, and reporting their findings to the class.

**GROUP #1: *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker***

**Assignment:** This group represents the ABC Detective Agency and is responsible for solving *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker*. Maria Lopez has hired the ABC Detective Agency to locate information about the life of the typical sugar beet worker in Kansas in the 1920s and 1930s. See [worksheet #9, ABC Detective Agency Assignment Sheet](#), for more details.

This group should receive the packet labeled *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker*, graphics #16-#22, and a copy of the following worksheets: #9, #10 or #11, and #12. Included in the packet is a listing of the sources located by the detectives of the ABC Detective Agency. These are the sources available for the group to review.

- a) Worksheet #9, Assignment Sheet - This sheet contains specific information about the client, the case and assignment, and on sugar beet cultivation in general.
- b) Worksheets #10/11, Narrative of Case Findings/Case Findings - With this worksheet the class will be able to take the less difficult track (#10) or the more difficult track (#11).
  - Worksheet #10, Narrative of Case Findings - This worksheet is the less difficult of the two because it requires that the students merely retrieve information from the sources. The worksheet itself compiles and assembles the retrieved information into a usable format. **(An answer sheet is located on the back of the original copy of the worksheet.)**
  - Worksheet #11, Case Findings - This worksheet is designed to help students compile and organize the information they find in the sources. This worksheet is more difficult than #10 because it requires that the group retrieve information from the sources, analyze and evaluate it, and then interpret their findings. **(An answer sheet is located on the back of the original copy of the worksheet. Note that it is very possible the group will find information not assembled on the answer sheet. This sheet is just a guide to get the group started.)**
- c) Worksheet #12, map of Kansas showing counties is provided for the students to use when working with the sources. Some of the sources provided refer to specific areas in Kansas by county.

#### GROUP #2: *Senate Bill 987*

**Assignment:** This group represents a research team working for Senator Doright. This team has been assigned to research Mexican immigration during the first half of the twentieth century in preparation for Senator Doright's work on Senate Bill 987. See worksheet #13, Memo to Research Team #1 from Senator Sam Doright, for more details.

This group should receive the packet labeled *Senate Bill 987* and a copy of the following worksheets: #13 and #14 or #15. Included in the packet is a listing of the sources located by research team #1. These are the sources available for the group to review.

- a) Worksheet #13, Memo - This sheet contains specific information about Senate Bill 987, the assignment, and historical background on Mexican immigration to the United States.
- b) Worksheets #14/15, Narrative of Mexican Immigration/Issues in Mexican Immigration - Using this worksheet the group will be able to take the less difficult track (#14) or the more advanced track (#15).
  - Worksheet #14, Narrative of Mexican Immigration - This worksheet is the less difficult of the two because it requires that the students merely retrieve information from the sources. The worksheet itself compiles and assembles the retrieved information into a usable format. **(An answer sheet is located on the back of the original copy of the worksheet.)**
  - Worksheet #15, Issues in Mexican Immigration - This worksheet is designed to

help students compile and organize information they may locate in the sources. This worksheet is more difficult than #14 because it requires that the group retrieve information from the sources, analyze and evaluate it, and then interpret their findings. **(An answer sheet is located on the back of the original copy of the worksheet. Note that it is very possible the group will find information not assembled on the answer sheet. This sheet is just a guide to get the group started.)**

**GROUP #3: *Win An Oscar Production Company***

**Assignment:** This group represents a private research company, We'll Find It Research Company, which is working on a project for the Win An Oscar Production Company. The production company is going to be filming a movie involving railroad workers in Kansas during the first half of the twentieth century. A short segment of this film will take place in a community of Mexican railroad workers. The research company is responsible for finding out some details about the setting where this segment of the film will be shot. See worksheet #16, letter from the *Win An Oscar Production Company*, for more details.

This group should receive the packet labeled *Win An Oscar Production Company*, graphics #23 and #24 and a copy of the following worksheets: #16 and #17 or #18. Included in the packet is a listing of the sources located by the We'll Find It Research Company. These are the sources available for the group to review.

- a) Worksheet #16 is a letter from the Win An Oscar Production Company to the We'll Find It Research Company outlining the project, some introductory historical information, and the type of information needed to be reported to the production company.
- b) Worksheets #17/18, Narrative of Mexican Railroad Communities in Kansas/Research Findings on Mexican Railroad Communities in Kansas - Using one of these worksheets the class will be able to take the less difficult track (#17) or the more difficult track (#18).
  - Worksheet #17, Narrative of Mexican Railroad Communities in Kansas - This worksheet is the less difficult of the two because it requires that the students merely retrieve information from the sources. The worksheet itself compiles and assembles the retrieved information into a usable format. **(An answer sheet is located on the back of the original copy of the worksheet.)**
  - Worksheet #18, Research Findings on Mexican Railroad Communities in Kansas - This worksheet is designed to help students compile and organize information they may locate in the sources. This worksheet is more difficult than #17 because it requires that the group retrieve information from the sources, analyze and evaluate it, and then interpret their findings. **(An answer sheet is located on the back of the original copy of the worksheet. Note that it is very possible the group will find information not assembled on the answer sheet. This sheet is just a guide to get the group started.)**

- 5) Use two 45-50 minute class sessions for the students to review the materials, compile the information gathered from the sources, and form conclusions based on their assignments. Worksheets #10/11 for *The Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker*, #14/15 for *Senate Bill 987*, and #17/18 for *Win An Oscar Movie Production Company* will be useful tools for compiling information and forming conclusions.
- 6) Once the groups have reviewed the materials and can complete their assignments have one or two representatives from each group briefly describe their assignment and findings to the class. If they wish they may use materials from their packets, such as photos and maps, as visual aids.

Each report should include information on the assignment, the types of sources the group had available to review, and the conclusions or decisions they made based on their review of these sources. Have each group briefly discuss any problems they had and suggest other types of sources or information that would help them more fully understand the topic they explored.

- 7) Following each report use the information below and the historical background information at the beginning of this lesson to bring the class up-to-date on their topics.

#### **Case of the Unknown Sugar Beet Worker**

- *Cultivation of sugar beets in Kansas began to decline after World War II and ended in the mid-1980s. Between 1970 and 1984 acreage planted in sugar beets dropped from 41,800 to 7,800 acres.*
- *Cultivation of sugar beets became more mechanized during this same time period. By the mid-1960s only 2.7 man-hours per ton were required compared with 11.2 during World War I.*
- *During the war years until the late 1950s most of the seasonal labor in Kansas came from the Bracero program.*
- *In 1967 a survey showed that the average income for migrant workers (this includes all migrant labor) was \$1,307 (compare with a \$3,099 average per capita personal income for Kansas). Average income for migrant families was \$3,000. This figure is not per capita. It includes wages earned by the entire family.*
- *In 1967 the life expectancy for migrant workers was forty-nine years. Infant and maternal mortality was 125 percent higher than the national average. Death rates from infectious diseases was 200 percent-206 percent higher.*
- *Mexicans and Mexican Americans remain an important source for migrant work in Kansas today.*

#### **Senate Bill 987**

- *The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) passed in 1952 reflected the concern about immigration and illegal aliens. This law reaffirmed the national origins system and established a preference system for skilled workers and for relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens.*
- *By 1954 the illegal alien problem was seen as so serious that the U.S.*

*Border Patrol launched "Operation Wetback" through which undocumented Mexican workers and some U.S. citizens were rounded up and deported back to Mexico.*

*- The Bracero program was terminated in 1964 in the face of public opposition to conditions under which migrant workers lived, the influence of the U.S. civil rights movement, and the effective lobbying of labor, church, and ethnic groups. The end of this program marked an acceleration in illegal immigration in part because those accustomed to coming to the U.S. to work no longer had legal means of doing so.*

*- Amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 abolished the national origins quota system and set up a seven-category system for allocating immigrant visas. These categories include favoring close relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens, those with needed occupational skills, and refugees.*

*- The number of illegal aliens in the U.S. continues to rise annually, and immigration continues to be a "hot" topic in state and federal politics. California's Proposition 187 is one example of an anti-immigrant mood in the U.S.*

*- In 1995 the Census Bureau reported that the percentage of the U.S.'s population that is foreign born is at its highest level since World War II and is accelerating at a record pace. This report sparked work on immigration legislation in Congress in 1996 and made the topic an important one in the 1996 federal elections.*

*- In Kansas the Hispanic population is one of the fastest growing ethnic groups today. The state's population increased by 5 percent between 1980 and 1990 while the state's Hispanic population, largely of Mexican ancestry, increased by 35 percent during the same decade.*

#### **Win An Oscar Production Company**

*- In the 1950s and 1960s railroads discontinued operations on nearly all lines. Many small towns declined rapidly, and thousands of Mexican families were forced to leave the insular railroad camps. Although the movement was painful and disrupted Hispanic cultural ties, it was positive in that it forced interaction between Mexican and Anglo communities within the same town. Until the camps were gone many Mexicans did not fully understand the importance of the camps in maintaining their culture in rural Kansas.*

*- In some areas people moved out of railroad communities, such as those in the Topeka and Dodge City Santa Fe yards, and either bought or built homes nearby. In some cases this fractured communities. Ties with the local parish maintained ties in some instances, in others the bond found within the colonia became lost to future generations.*

*- In many cases younger generations of Mexican Americans are no longer part of bicultural communities. They often do not speak Spanish or practice Mexican cultural traditions in their daily lives. However, special traditional activities such as fiestas, wedding ceremonies, etc. may still be*

*part of their lives.*

## **EXTENDED ACTIVITIES**

- 1) After completing this lesson have the class discuss the value of the sources they used.
  - They may want to look at individual sources or evaluate types of sources, such as photos, charts, or newspaper accounts, in relation to the subject being researched.
  - Some sources were used by more than one group. These can be compared for their usefulness with each research assignment.
  - Ask the class to consider the reliability of various types of sources. Are any of them biased? If so, what makes them appear this way? Was any of the information dated and therefore perhaps contained inaccuracies? Did any of the information appear to be inaccurate? What else should be considered when choosing sources?

***Primary sources often are biased because they contain no research to support them. These items cannot be used in isolation, they need additional research to place them in their proper perspective and in relationship to other types of information. Newspapers are known for their inaccuracies. This is mainly due to the purpose and function of a newspaper. They get news out fast, and at times only part of a story will appear in any one article as the story unfolds throughout time.***
  - What other types of sources would be helpful in researching the topics assigned to the groups?
  - What were the advantages and disadvantages of using primary sources? Of various types of sources (photos, interviews, charts, text books, newspaper articles, etc.)? Did the class like using these types of materials? Did they find the assignment interesting, boring, etc.? There are no right or wrong answers. Each source is different and must be judged on its own merit and in relation to the topic being researched.
- 2) Have the class write a fictional story about a typical day as a sugar beet or railroad worker using the information they have found.
- 3) Have the class do more in-depth research about Mexican immigration, the sugar beet industry in Kansas, or the railroad in Kansas. They can use the information provided in this lesson's packets as a starting point. If sugar beets were grown in your county have students look for primary sources to research this crop and the use of migrant labor in growing and harvesting this crop.
- 4) Have the class learn more about the lives of migrant workers through books such as *A Migrant Family* by Larry Dane Brimner, *Radio Man: A Story in English and Spanish* by Arthur Dorros, and *Amelia's Road* by Linda Jacob Altman.

- 5) See the complementary lessons in this manual: "Is Kansas in Mexico?" and "The Hispanic Face of Kansas."