

Teaching Guide for The History of Puerto Ricans in the U.S.

Part Four: *The Great Migration at Mid-Century*

The use of the *Puerto Rican Heritage Poster Series* and this *Teaching Guide* complement the course *The History of Puerto Ricans in the U.S.* created by Dr. Virginia Sánchez-Korrol.

This guide includes:

- Discussion Questions for the Demographic Poster
- Discussion Questions for the Brief Historical Chronology Poster
- Activities
- Recommended Readings

Poster Series used: *Where Do Puerto Ricans Live?: Population by State in 2010*

This demographic map indicates the Puerto Rican population of each state and highlights (in darker blue) those states that had more than 100,000 Puerto Ricans in the year 2010. The poster also includes a section and chart on population growth, followed by a section on major facts about the U.S. Puerto Rican population based on U.S. Census 2010 data and more recent Current Population Survey (CPS) and American Community Survey (ACS) reports.

The most notable patterns found within the U.S. Puerto Rican population are:

- that the migration and population increases that characterized the 20th century continue into the present;
- that the increasing stateside Puerto Rican population (4.7 million) is now larger than the decreasing population of Puerto Rico (3.7 million);
- that there is more geographic dispersion away from the cities where Puerto Ricans traditionally have resided (e.g. New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Newark) into other larger and smaller cities (e.g. Orlando, FL; Springfield, MA; Hartford, CT).



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Discussion Questions for the *Where Do Puerto Ricans Live?: Population by State in 2010*

- 1) What was the socioeconomic profiles of migrant pioneers that came to the United States during 1898 to the early 1940s?
- 2) What was the socioeconomic profiles of migrant Migration during the post-World War II era (mid-1940s to early 1960s), known as the Great Migration?
- 3) What was the socioeconomic profiles of migrant from the 1970s to the 1990s?
- 4) Where were post-war Puerto Rican communities founded?
- 5) What are some of the implications of the significant population growth of the stateside Puerto Rican population for U.S. society and for Puerto Ricans?

Poster Series used: *Brief Historical Chronology of Puerto Ricans in the United States, Part III*

The Great Migration Years (1940s to Mid-1960s)

This poster emphasizes the airborne Puerto Rican mass migration that dominated the post-World War II years. As New York newspapers began to refer to the rapid influx of Puerto Ricans to the city as the “Puerto Rican problem” and spread negative stereotypes about the newcomers, Puerto Rico’s government created the Migration Division in 1948 (known as the Commonwealth Office after 1952). The creation of this unit was aimed at enabling and managing the large migration flows of Puerto Ricans to New York and other U.S. cities. Several Migration Division offices were established to assist migrants in seeking employment and other services that facilitated a smoother transition into U.S. society. The poster also focuses on the growth of Puerto Rican communities in various U.S. cities, Puerto Rican struggles for recognition, the founding of institutions and creation of new traditions, and the accomplishments of some prominent community members.

The poster is a vertical timeline titled "BRIEF HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY OF PUERTO RICANS IN THE UNITED STATES (PART III) THE GREAT MIGRATION YEARS (1940s - Mid-1960s)". It features a central vertical timeline with key events and dates from 1940 to 1964. The timeline is flanked by text boxes and small images. Key events include:

- 1940:** Puerto Rican journalist, researcher, and author, José Martí, publishes the first issue of the magazine *El Mundo* in New York City.
- 1941:** The Supreme Court in the U.S. sends back of Puerto Ricans, based on the U.S. government's World War II and to joining the Communist Party, to U.S. citizens, many Puerto Ricans are drafted and sent to the U.S. military where it organized their skills.
- 1942:** Puerto Rican poet, *Chicano* *Salvador*, writes in New York, a leading journal of a migrant poet movement in Puerto Rico in the late 1930s, who was sent to a Puerto Rican camp in the U.S. to be trained in the military.
- 1943:** Puerto Rican poet, *Chicano* *Salvador*, writes in New York, a leading journal of a migrant poet movement in Puerto Rico in the late 1930s, who was sent to a Puerto Rican camp in the U.S. to be trained in the military.
- 1944:** Antonio Ferrer, an elite Puerto Rican teacher, writes in New York, who working in education, who continued to advance for education in social and cultural life, who was sent to a Puerto Rican camp in the U.S. to be trained in the military.
- 1947:** In addition to the major influx of Puerto Ricans to New York, city newspapers begin to refer to the rapid influx of the city's newest residents as the "Puerto Rican problem" and spread negative stereotypes about the newcomers.
- 1948:** The Migration Division is established in Puerto Rico, known as the Commonwealth Office after 1952.
- 1950s-1960s:** Puerto Ricans settle in Washington Heights and the South Bronx in large numbers.
- 1952:** The Puerto Rican People's Party is founded in New York under the leadership of Roberto Penabaz.
- 1955:** The Puerto Rican People's Party is founded in New York under the leadership of Roberto Penabaz.
- 1957:** The Puerto Rican People's Party is founded in New York under the leadership of Roberto Penabaz.
- 1958:** The Puerto Rican People's Party is founded in New York under the leadership of Roberto Penabaz.
- 1961:** The Puerto Rican People's Party is founded in New York under the leadership of Roberto Penabaz.
- 1963:** The Puerto Rican People's Party is founded in New York under the leadership of Roberto Penabaz.
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Since the beginnings of labor migration to the United States, some Puerto Rican migrants saw their journey to the United States as a temporary stay that would allow them to find better employment and higher wages, send remittances to their families in Puerto Rico, and improve their own socioeconomic status. Even after many decades of living in the United States, the nostalgic dream of returning to Puerto Rico is very much alive, most notably among first generation migrants. Puerto Ricans are often described as “a commuter nation” or “a nation on the move,” which means that historically, there always has been a back and forth commuting pattern between the island and the United States, facilitated by the U.S. citizenship status of Puerto Ricans. Many first generation Puerto Rican migrants keep alive the option of eventually returning to Puerto Rico, even after decades of living in the United States. Some degree of return migration to the island continues to occur, although migrants also continue to arrive to old and new U.S. points of destination in much larger numbers than those returning to Puerto Rico.

Some of the most prominent community figures during the Great Migration period include:

- Herman Badillo
- Julia de Burgos
- Juan Antonio Corretjer
- Gilberto Gerena Valentín
- Evelina López Antonetty
- Antonia Pantoja
- Clemente Soto Vélez

Discussion Questions for the Brief Historical Chronology Poster

- 1) What are the specific contributions of the community figures mentioned above during the period of the Great Migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States?
- 2) What was Operation Bootstrap?
- 3) How were women involved in the labor force?

Activities

1) Brief Summaries: Ask students to summarize the poster’s major themes in a sentence or two and relate their view of how certain landmark events have influenced the Puerto Rican community in the United States.

2) Minute Paper: Ask students to respond to two questions: (a) What was the most significant thing you learned from this poster?; and (b) What questions remain in your mind after studying this poster?

3) The Muddiest Point: Ask students to identify any issues, concepts, or information that remain unclear to them after studying the poster. Then, to describe how they can

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find additional information from the Study Guide's recommended readings to enhance their knowledge and understanding.

4) Profiles of Notable Individuals: Ask students to write a brief, focused profile of an individual, a group, or an organization or institution highlighted in the poster whose values, goals, or actions the reader admires based on the provided poster content.

Recommended Readings

- Acosta-Belén, Edna and Carlos E. Santiago. 2006. *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Contemporary Portrait*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Acosta-Belén, Edna. 2006. "Julia de Burgos." *Latinas in the United States: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Vicki Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 193-194.
- Ayala, César and Rafael Bernabe. 2007. *Puerto Ricans in the American Century*. Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Badillo, Herman. 2006. *One Nation, One Standard*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Center for Puerto Rican Studies History Task Force. 1979. *Labor Migration Under Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
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- Cordero-Guzmán, Héctor. 2005. "Operation Bootstrap/Section 936." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*. Vol. 3. Suzanne Oboler and Deena González, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 304-308.
- Cruz, José E. 2005. "Puerto Rican Forum." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, Vol. 3. Suzanne Oboler and Deena González, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 490-492.
- Ennis, Sharon R., Merarys Ríos-Vargas, and Nora G. Albert. 2011. *The Hispanic Population 2010*. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau.
- La Fountain-Stokes, Lawrence. 2005. "Puerto Rican Day Parade." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*, Vol. 3. Suzanne Oboler and Deena González, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 489-490.
- López, Iris. 2005. "Borinkis and Chop Suey: Puerto Rican Identity in Hawaii, 1900-2000." In *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*, Carmen T. Whalen and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández, eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 43-67.
- Padilla, Elena. 1958. *Up From Puerto Rico*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Pantoja, Antonia. 2002. *Memoir of a Visionary: Antonia Pantoja*. Houston, TX: Arte Público Press.
- Pérez, Nélica. 2006. "Evelina López Antonetty." *Latinas in the United States: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Vicki Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 48-49.
- Rivera-Batiz, Francisco and Carlos E. Santiago. 1994. *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A Changing Reality*. Washington, DC: National Puerto Rican Coalition.

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- Rodríguez Fraticelli, Carlos, ed. 2013. *Yo soy Gilberto Gerena Valentín: Memorias de un puertorriqueño en Nueva York*. New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños.
- Sánchez Korrol, Virginia. 2006. "Antonia Pantoja." *Latinas in the United States: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Vicki Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 557-558.
- Santiago-Irizarry, Vilma. 2005. "Luis Muñoz Marín." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*. Vol. 3. Suzanne Oboler and Deena González, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 197-198.
- Senior, Clarence. 1965. *Puerto Ricans: Strangers—then Neighbors*. New York: Quadrangle Books.
- Silva, Milton and Blasé Camacho Souza. 1982. "The Puerto Ricans of Hawaii: On Becoming Hawaii's People," *Journal of Contemporary Puerto Rican Thought* 1 (1), 29-39.
- Torre, Carlos A., Hugo Rodríguez-Vechinni, and William Burgos, eds. 1994. *The Commuter Nation: Perspectives on Puerto Rican Migration*. Río Piedras, PR: Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico.
- Vicente, María del Carmen. 2005. "Julia de Burgos." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*. Vol. 1. Suzanne Oboler and Deena González, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 239-241.

Studies Focused on Different U.S. Puerto Rican Communities

- Cruz, José. 1998. *Identity and Power: Puerto Ricans and the Challenge of Ethnicity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Duany, Jorge and Félix V. Matos Rodríguez. 2006. *Puerto Ricans in Orlando and Central Florida*. New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños.
- Fernández, Lilia. 2012. *Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Glasser, Ruth. 1995. *My Music is my Flag: Puerto Rican Musicians and their New York Communities, 1917-1940*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Haslip-Viera, Gabriel, Angelo Falcón, and Félix Matos Rodríguez, eds. 2005. *Boricuas in Gotham: Puerto Ricans in the Making of New York City*. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers.
- Matos Rodríguez, Félix and Pedro Juan Hernández, eds. 2001. *Pioneros: Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1896-1948*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing.
- Meléndez, Miguel. 2003. *We Took the Streets: Fighting for Latino Rights with the Young Lords*. New York: St. Martin Press.
- Padilla, Félix. *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago*. 1985. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Pérez, Gina M. 2004. *The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ramos-Zayas, Ana V. 2003. *National Performances: The Politics of Class, Race, and Space in Puerto Rican Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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- Thomas, Lorrin. 2010. *Puerto Rican Citizen: History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Torres, Andrés, ed. 2006. *Latinos in New England*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Whalen, Carmen T. 2001. *Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Workers and Postwar Economies*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Whalen, Carmen T. and Víctor Vázquez-Hernández, eds. 2005. *The Puerto Rican Diaspora: Historical Perspectives*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.