

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

Part Five: *Community and Organization*

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 Brief Historical Chronology Poster
- Activities
- Recommended Readings

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.

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

The poster is a vertical timeline titled "BRIEF HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY OF PUERTO RICANS IN THE UNITED STATES (PART III)" with a sub-heading "THE GREAT MIGRATION YEARS (1940s - Mid-1960s)". It is produced by "The Center for Puerto Rican Studies" and "PUERTO RICAN HERITAGE POSTER SERIES". The timeline is marked with years from 1940 to 1964. Key events include: 1940 Census; 1941-1942 Migration; 1947 Migration Division; 1948 Commonwealth Office; 1952 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; 1958 Puerto Rican Day Parade; 1961 APRA; 1963 Puerto Rican Day Parade; and 1964 U.S. Congress. The poster includes numerous small images and text boxes providing context for each event.

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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 organizations founded during this period:

- Aspira
- Migration Division
- National Association for Puerto Rican Civil Rights
- Puerto Rican Forum
- Puerto Rican Day Parade

Discussion Questions for the Brief Historical Chronology Poster

- 1) What was the function of the Migration Division of the Department of Labor of Puerto Rico?
- 2) What groups worked with the New York Migration Division?
- 3) How did other organizations in New York responded to the community's urgent socio-economic needs?
- 4) How was the Puerto Rican Day Parade described?
- 5) What was the Puerto Rican Forum?
- 6) What is ASPIRA?

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

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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.
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- 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.
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- 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.
- Rodríguez Fraticelli, Carlos, ed. 2013. *Yo soy Gilberto Gerena Valentín: Memorias de un puertorriqueño en Nueva York*. New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños.
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- 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.

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- 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.