

# Chapter **11**

## **Who's Responsible for the Food on My Plate?**

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Figure 1. *Filipino Farmworker in Lettuce Field*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1939). *Filipino lettuce field laborer. Imperial Valley, California.* Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771735/>

Who's Responsible for the Food on My Plate?		
<b>C3 Disciplinary Focus</b> U.S. History & Geography	<b>C3 Inquiry Focus</b> Evaluating Sources & Taking Informed Action	<b>Content Topic</b> Farming & Labor Unions
<b>C3 Focus Indicators</b>  <b>D1:</b> Explain why compelling questions are important to others (e.g., peers, adults). (D1.1.3-5)  <b>D2:</b> Explain how human settlements and movements relate to the locations and use of various natural resources. (D2.Geo.8.3-5) Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past. (D2.His.10.3-5)  <b>D3:</b> Use evidence to develop claims in response to compelling questions (D3.4.3-5)  <b>D4:</b> Explain different strategies and approaches students and others could take in working alone and together to address local, regional, and global problems, and predict possible results of their actions. (D4.7.3-5)		
<b>Suggested Grade Levels</b> 3-6	<b>Resources</b> Cited throughout the chapter and in Appendices	<b>Required Time</b> Variable

Young children are often introduced to foodways through the classic image of an American farmer: a white man in overalls (often holding a pitchfork à la Grant Wood's famous *American Gothic* or atop a tractor) who, alongside his family, is responsible for a small, family farm. Foodways are defined as the cultural, social, and economic practices related to the production and consumption of food. Sometimes educators focus instead on a particular food item, such as apples, tracing them from seed to harvest and ending the unit with a taste test of apple varieties. These food items—as state standards often dictate—are usually associated with a specific region or a particular state, solidifying dominant narratives related to the geography of food. Textbooks might just hint at foodways, leaving the work up to students and teachers to discover them versus teaching them. For example, students are asked to conduct an Internet search to learn where the ingredients for a favorite cereal come from in a Michigan textbook for sixth graders. Though such educational units are designed to support young learners in learning about foodways, embedded in these lessons are antiquated notions of who owns farms, who does the labor on them, and where farms are located.

Today, family-owned farms are increasingly uncommon in an era of corporate farming, in which large-scale farms are owned by major corporations rather than individuals. For over a century, farm labor demographics have shifted dramatically from predominantly white, native-born family farmworkers to an ethnoracially diverse and mostly foreign-born hired workforce. In the [words of César Chávez](#) in 1968:

I think it's important to understand agriculture as it's practiced in California and the West Coast. To many of us when we speak of agriculture, we think of a small family plotting a small piece of land and making a living. And this is pretty much the history in the tradition of our country, in the history and tradition of many societies where land is used to derive an income to support a family. But in California and in the West Coast and in other areas of the country that is not the case. And this is I think one of the main reasons why farm workers find themselves in the conditions that they do today in America that the public really doesn't know what agriculture is today.

For example, according to the National Agricultural Workers Survey from 2015-2016, 69% of farmworkers were foreign-born and overwhelmingly from Mexico. Historically, Native, Black, and Asian laborers have also been part of the farming industry; these individuals, however, are often omitted when young children learn about farming, as the dominant narrative focuses on white laborers and farm owners.

**Figure 2.** *Japanese Farmworkers Packing Broccoli*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1937). *Japanese agricultural workers packing broccoli near Guadalupe, California*. [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769673/>

This chapter aims to disrupt the dominant and inaccurate narrative of farming as a white, family-owned industry composed of small family farms where the farmers labor in their own

fields. We aim to unravel the term “farmer” into “growers”—those who own the farms—and “farmworkers”—those hired for agricultural labor. This chapter also aims to disrupt the dominant geography narrative of farming that positions the midwestern region of the United States as the “breadbasket” of the country. More importantly, we aim to reveal stories of California farmworkers that are often untold to elementary students when learning about foodways. Through Library of Congress sources supplemented by children’s literature, we will illustrate an elementary classroom inquiry that centers farm labor and workers’ rights in this one area.

## **Rationale for Classroom Practice**

American history, elementary school curriculum, and popular culture are pervaded by what scholars refer to as dominant narratives. The dominant narrative presents the United States as a nation of immigrants built on freedom and constant progress (VanSledright, 2008). This idyllic vision of American exceptionalism is notorious for centering assimilation to white, middle-class, Protestant, cisgender, and heterosexual norms (Tschida et al., 2014), resulting in simplified stories of who is American and what Americans do and look like. In elementary school classrooms, simplified stories abound in the social studies, despite the fact that, too often, definitions of who is an American are narrow and often exclude People of Color and immigrants (Takaki, 2012).

Teaching about farming in ways that solely focus on white, family-owned farms and fruit/vegetable life cycles void of human interaction (i.e., a focus on the growth cycle) perpetuates and maintains a dominant narrative of farming in the elementary curriculum. In this chapter, we highlight a range of farming counter narratives, which highlight the voices and perspectives of diverse individuals/groups in an attempt to tell a more complex and complete story of the past. Social studies counter narratives often bring focus to marginalized groups within American society—either historically and/or presently (Adams & Busey, 2017; An, 2020; Demoiny & Ferraras-Stone, 2018; Falkner & Clark, 2017; Rodríguez, 2015, 2017; Sabzalian, 2019; Tirado, 2019; Tschida et al., 2014). Therefore, counter narratives provide elementary students with opportunities to grapple with concepts of social justice, fairness, and oppression in both historical and contemporary contexts (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The story of farming and farm workers, a topic often addressed multiple times during children’s elementary school careers, includes many such opportunities if you look beyond the dominant narrative.

**Figure 3. Mexican Farmworkers Topping Sugar Beets**



**Note.** Collins, M. (1943). *Stockton (vicinity), California. Mexican agricultural laborer topping sugar beets.* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017853213/>

Farmworkers are a diverse group of Americans. Many immigrated here, especially during the early 20th century, to farm. Therefore, the story of American agriculture is a story about Filipino Americans, Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans. Many of these farmworkers were migratory, regularly moving from one place to another based on which crops were in need of planting and harvesting each season. For the majority of these immigrants, their work experiences in farming frame their stories of belonging and the pursuit of the American dream. Specifically, farming encompasses the story of labor unions such as the Japanese Mexican Labor Association (JMLA), Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) made up of mostly Filipinos, and the predominantly Mexican American National Farmworkers Association (NFA). These labor unions highlight narratives of collective bargaining, protesting, and issues of fairness, such as livable wages, safe working conditions, child labor, and health care—worthy topics for elementary students (Libresco, 2015) given their emphasis on civic action and community. Therefore, going beyond the dominant narrative of farming and farmworkers to include counter narratives of diverse perspectives and labor unions allows rich curricular opportunities for elementary students to grapple with deeply rooted American democratic values.

# Heroification

When issues of labor unions or farmworkers' rights are present within the elementary curriculum, they are often told through the single story of César Chávez. Chávez, a Mexican American farmworker and labor organizer, is often credited as solely responsible for achievements in agricultural workers' rights. Loewen (2007) dubs this process *heroification*, when flesh-and-blood people are mythologized into perfect, larger-than-life heroes without conflicts, pain, or contradictions. These heroes are rarely portrayed in ways that reveal their very human flaws, such as the fact that founding fathers George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin enslaved African workers and considered them property (Kent, 1999). Such flawless narratives can have negative impacts on students' emerging understandings of what it means to work toward social change through civic action. For example, Woodson (2016) found that Black youth considered civil rights figures like Medgar Evers and Martin Luther King, Jr., to be morally exceptional, courageous, and perfect individuals who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the benefit of others. The immense risk that these leaders were willing to take, which is an essential part of their hero narratives, led the youth to believe that they were incapable of such civic agency as they were just ordinary people (Woodson, 2016). Moreover, forefronting the acts of a small number of individuals neglects to recognize collective efforts made by organizations and communities who were essential in effecting change on a wide scale.

While some argue that the pantheon of American heroes has become more diverse over time (Wineburg & Monte-Sano, 2008), the vast majority of individuals emphasized in U.S. history remain overwhelmingly white, male political leaders (Loewen, 2007; VanSledright, 2008; Vasquez Heilig et al., 2012). Those People of Color who have been incorporated into mainstream history curriculum often represent Communities of Color in ways that are tied to very specific periods of time, such as Africans and African Americans during enslavement and the Civil Rights Movement and Latinx solely in regard to immigration and agricultural history (Hilburn & Jaffee, 2016; Rodríguez & Ip, 2017; Wills, 1996). Such is the case with individuals like Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and César Chávez. Therefore, we sought to disrupt this individual focus on Chávez by centering stories of ethnoracially diverse farmworkers and labor organizers involved within the agricultural industry across the last century: (a) Dolores Huerta, (b) Larry Itliong, (c) the Japanese Mexican Labor Association, and (d) Emma Tenayuca. Coupled with a deeper examination of farming and farmworkers that extends to issues of labor rights and unions—as described above—this inquiry will engender elementary students with the civic knowledge and skills needed to promote a more just, democratic society in the future (Salinas & Blevins, 2014).

# Finding Sources and Stories to Tell

We took an inductive approach to setting up this inquiry. First, using the Library of Congress website, we searched for primary and secondary sources using keyword searches for general terms (e.g., agriculture, migrant farmers, farmer strikes), individual people or groups of people (e.g., Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, Emma Tenayuca, Filipino farmworkers, Mexican American farmworkers), and organizations (e.g., NFWA, AWOC). We catalogued the sources we found on a Word document. Once we had about fifty sources, we stopped locating sources and began the process of selecting sources that would help us tell a story. Through an iterative process of “noticing” and “grouping,” we uncovered stories based on the sources—not necessarily based on what we wanted to say but based on what evidence these sources provided us about the past. Next, we returned to the Library of Congress and other outside research sources to either corroborate or refute the stories about agriculture we identified. From this work we gleaned evidence (i.e., sources) that could describe who farmworkers were, what their work and lives were like, and how they resisted unfair working and living conditions. In sum, our process included locating sources, selecting sources, close reading sources to uncover the stories they tell, corroborating these stories with additional sources, and choosing a collection of sources that could tell the chosen stories from varied perspectives.

## Connections to the C3 Inquiry Arc

We utilized the four dimensions of the C3 Inquiry Framework—specifically the Inquiry Design Model (IDM) blueprint (Swan et al., 2018)—to frame our inquiry learning experience for elementary students. Dimension 1 focuses on developing questions and planning the inquiry, so we started here. We developed the following compelling question for our work: “Who’s responsible for the food on my plate?” By answering this question, elementary students will examine counter narratives of farming that will lead to a deeper analysis and an authentic questioning of foodways. And as Swan et al. (2018) describe, this combination of rigorous content approached in a relevant and relatable manner for elementary students makes this a compelling question—specifically a mystery-based question.

To support elementary students in learning the content needed to answer our compelling question, we developed three supporting questions that will sequence students’ learning across the content in coherent and digestible ways (Swan et al., 2018). The first two supporting questions focus on the *sacrifices* of those involved in farming during the early to mid-1900s: (a) “Who farmed during the 1900s and under what conditions?” and (b) “What were the living conditions like for the ethnoracially diverse farmworkers in California?” The third supporting question focuses on the achievements of those involved in farm labor during the 1900s: “How did farmworkers resist unfair labor practices?” We deliberately chose to emphasize the acts of particular individuals in order to direct attention to the societal



context and agency among both individuals and the collective during this time—a move that aimed to minimize heroification (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

For all three supporting questions, we present students with evidence (i.e., primary and secondary sources) primarily from the Library of Congress and engaging tasks that will elicit counter narratives about farmworkers and agriculture—Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework. By the end of the inquiry tasks completed within each supporting question, elementary students will be able to make an evidence-based claim that answers the compelling question—Dimension 3. This claim serves as a summative performance task in the IDM blueprint and is an integral component of assessment within the C3 Inquiry Framework.

Table 1. *Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Template*

Who's Responsible for the Food on My Plate?		
<b>Staging the Question</b>	Annotated Agriculture Illustration <i>Strawberry Fields Forever</i> Video	
<b>Supporting Question 1</b> <i>Sacrifices</i>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b> <i>Sacrifices</i>	<b>Supporting Question 3</b> <i>Achievements</i>
Who farmed during the 1900s and under what conditions?	What were the living conditions like for the ethnoracially diverse farmworkers in California?	How did farmworkers resist unfair labor practices?
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
Gallery Walk Photograph Close Read	Oral History Analysis Sheet Circle Map	Oxnard Beet Strike Task Card Pecan Shellers Strike Task Card Delano Grape Boycott Task Card
<b>Sources</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Sources A-R	Sources T-Y	Task Cards
<b>Summative Performance Task</b>	Students will construct an argument supported with evidence that addresses the compelling question in the form of a paragraph. To support this work, students can reconstruct their Annotated Agriculture Illustration by adding more to the picture and justifying their choices using evidence learned from the inquiry.	
<b>Taking Informed Action</b> <i>Legacy</i>	<p><b>Understand:</b> Students will discuss food pathways that they are interested in learning more about with regards to farmworkers and labor conditions. (Source Z)</p> <p><b>Assess:</b> Students will vote upon one food pathway they would like to take action on as a class.</p> <p><b>Act:</b> Students will develop a plan of action given their findings from researching the unjust labor practices involved with their chosen food.</p>	

**Note.** This table was adapted from the work of Swan et al. (2018).

While both the *sacrifices* and *achievements* of this work are crucial, they hold only two-thirds of the story. The last third entails the ongoing impact the farmworkers accomplished

for those within the agricultural and food industry today. And we examine this *legacy* through the Taking Informed Action segment of the IDM blueprint, which is Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework. In the IDM blueprint we used to organize this inquiry (Table 1), you will notice we included the interconnected concepts of *sacrifice*, *achievement*, and *legacy*—inspired by an exhibit at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights (Atlanta, GA) titled *The American Civil Rights*. With a focus on learning about individuals, these three concepts reminded us of the importance of connecting the past to the present—i.e., the relevance of our inquiry work. And as Swan et al. (2018) stated, we hoped to “crescendo these intellectual pursuits into opportunities for civic action” by the end of this inquiry (p. 129).

## Dimensions Two and Three of the Inquiry Arc

For this inquiry, we developed instructional strategies that ask students to comprehend, analyze, interpret, and corroborate sources in three rounds of inquiry work. Each round of inquiry corresponds with a supporting question. The rounds of inquiry provide opportunities to model, teach, and scaffold disciplinary literacy skills. By the end of all three rounds, students will be able to develop an evidence-based argument that thoroughly answers the compelling question—moving them into Dimension 4 of the C3 Inquiry Arc. Below we describe each round of inquiry, though we start with staging the question.

### Staging the Question

Before beginning the inquiry work, it is important to spark curiosity within elementary students and make them want to answer the compelling question. For this inquiry, we suggest two activities to engage students with the question and elicit their background knowledge.

The first is an arts-based activity that asks students to draw a picture of what comes to mind when they hear the word “farmer” or “farming” during the 1900s: *Annotated Agriculture Illustration*. In addition, students should caption their drawing and include several annotations to describe in words the visual elements they included. You can provide students an opportunity to complete a quick sketch and share out their thinking or you can provide enough time for students to draw a detailed picture. Beginning with this activity allows you to get a sense of what misconceptions they are starting with regarding growers, farmworkers, and farming.

The second activity serves to draw students’ attention and curiosity to the compelling question in a meaningful way using a short music video. The video presents La Santa Cecilia performing The Beatles’ song “[Strawberry Fields Forever](#)” to a cartoon depiction of a strawberry foodway. The video begins with a completed strawberry cake and then backtracks to show where the strawberries came from representing a market, factory, and labor workers

in the strawberry fields. The video offers an appropriate and relevant entrypoint to the inquiry that will provoke students in thinking critically about food pathways and set them up for the work they will accomplish during the unit. After viewing the video, ask students to reflect on the following: (a) “What does this video show?” (b) “Where did the strawberries come from that went into the cake?” (c) “Where were the strawberries before they arrived in the store?” (d) “Where were the strawberries before arriving in the factory?” and (e) “Who were the people in the truck and how would you describe them?”

At this point, you should introduce the compelling question and have it posted for students to view: “Who’s responsible for the food on my plate?” Provide a few minutes for students to come up with some types of food they eat that they would like to know more about, including the backstory of how that food gets to their plates. Have students discuss with each other or as a class a few chosen foods and hypothesize their backstory. At the end of this conversation, you can share with students that they will be delving into the world of farming in the 1900s, which will set them up for the first round of inquiry described below.

**Figure 4.** *Filipino Farmworkers Cutting Lettuce, Imperial Valley, California*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1937). *Lettuce cutting in the Imperial Valley, California. A Filipino crew of fifty-five boys, migrants.* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769731/>

## Supporting Question One and Tasks

In the first supporting question, students will answer the following: “Who farmed during the 1900s and under what conditions?” To answer the first part of this question, students will engage in a *Gallery Walk* using primary source photographs from the Library of Congress ([Sources A-R](#)). We have provided eighteen photographs, but you may choose to use only some depending on your context. We suggest printing out a copy of the photographs—labeling them as Source A, B, etc.—and posting them on the wall around the classroom. Include the photograph caption and date taken for each one. There are a variety of ways students could engage with these sources, but we suggest the following: Have students pick one image that sticks out to them and stand by it—or you could do this with pairs of students to support those who may need a partner to collaborate with on this analysis. Ask students to observe the photograph and make a list of everything they see within the photograph. Next, have them identify what the photograph makes them think, i.e., inferences they may draw from it. You may choose to model this process for students with one of the images first.

After students have finished their observations and inferences, have them share what they observed and are thinking from their photograph. Record these observations and allow other students to share their observations and inferences from their photos. Be sure to include the source of each student’s observations and inferences using a code such as Source A, B, etc. After all students have shared, direct students’ attention to any commonalities or patterns in their observations of inferences and write these under the heading “We All See/Think.” Record these statements only if they can be supported with three or more photographs—in other words they are well supported with evidence.

**Figure 5.** *Filipino Farmworkers Thinning Lettuce, Salinas, California*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1939). *Gang of Filipino boys thinning lettuce. Salinas, California.* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771822/>

Please note that we have carefully selected these photographs in hopes of drawing students' attention to three particular ideas. First, California had a huge agricultural industry supported by its fertile lands. Several of the photographs depict farming in the Imperial Valley, Salinas Valley, San Joaquin Valley, Santa Monica (near the San Fernando Valley), Stockton (within the San Joaquin Valley), and Guadalupe, California (near the Salinas Valley). Second, a variety of people worked as farm laborers. The photographs depict Filipino Americans, Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans, and Chinese Americans as we strive to disrupt dominant farming narratives by featuring Workers of Color who are typically not recognized in the curriculum. Third, a variety of common fruits and vegetables are farmed by these laborers, especially in California. The photographs illustrate lettuce, cauliflower, grapes, potatoes, broccoli, and sugar beets.

These three focal ideas use primary sources to teach geographic concepts related to natural resources. Crops are planted and harvested in particular areas at different times of the year, requiring the migration of farmworkers across the seasons. For example, grapes first begin to ripen in Southern California in the Coachella Valley, so workers begin the harvest there, then move to the San Joaquin Valley in the central part of the state as those grapes ripen next—this “California Grows” map by the California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom is a useful tool to make such geographic connections. Although specific examples are beyond the scope of this chapter, combining the study of plant life cycles, seasons, and landforms would be an excellent way to integrate the social studies content found in this chapter with science learning, as it would support students' understanding of workers' migration patterns during the year as workers.

**Figure 6.** *Filipino Farmworkers Cutting Lettuce, near Westmorland, Imperial Valley, California*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1939). *Near Westmorland, Imperial Valley. Filipinos cutting lettuce.* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771472/>

To differentiate for learners in your classroom who would benefit from a more open, multi-faceted, and complex process, we suggest a *Photograph Close Read*. Drawing from one of the three ideas that we know the photographs highlight with regards to farming (i.e., the geography or space where it occurs, the identity of the farmers pictured, or the types of fruits or vegetables farmed) assign students to one of these topics. Next, have students view all the photographs in order to make a claim related to their idea. They must support this claim with specific evidence found in the photographs. This strategy is quite different from the Gallery Walk, because it explicitly supports students' visual literacy by encouraging them to determine the importance of information found in the photographs in relation to their reading purpose, to synthesize the information found across photographs, and to critique and evaluate the photographs (Fisher & Frey, 2008). We have included a note catcher ([Appendix A](#)) that will aid students in corroborating evidence across multiple photographs—a historical literacy skill. Please note that an additional outside source has been provided on the note catcher to support the first idea if you choose to use it. This source provides a virtual tour of the Salinas, San Joaquin, and Imperial Valleys (numbers 4, 5, and 9 respectively on the virtual map)—all of which are pictured in the photographs.

**Figure 7.** *Filipino Farmworker thinning lettuce, Salinas Valley, California*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1939). *Filipino thinning lettuce. Salinas Valley, California*. [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771824/>

## Stoop Labor

For the second part of this supporting question, students will analyze sources to determine the conditions of some farm workers. We suggest having students reexamine several of the sources used above (Sources A-B, Figures 4–7) and ask them to identify what they have in common. Draw students’ attention to the position of the farmworkers, i.e., stooped or bent over working. Ask students the following: (a) “Why might farmworkers be in this position?” (b) “How might this position feel after an eight- to ten-hour workday?” and (c) “What might be the effects of working like this over the course of months and years?”

Introduce students to the short hoe, which was a farming tool with a short handle of 12 to 18 inches that was used to cultivate a variety of crops such as lettuce, strawberries, bell peppers, and sugar beets. The shortened handle caused less damage to the crops but at a painful cost to the farmworkers as they were stooped over all day long in the fields, causing short- and long-term pain and even body deformation. To introduce this topic, we suggest reading aloud a short text on the short hoe found [here](#). This text provides a short description of stoop labor including an image of a short hoe and a first-hand account of farmworkers’ perspectives on this form of labor. Please note that this source mentions Braceros, who were Mexicans—usually unemployed individuals from rural areas in Mexico—who came to work as legal, temporary farmworkers in California, Texas, and other states through formal agreements between Mexico and the United States. It is important to note this distinction with students as the Braceros were hired by the U.S. government to work temporarily and then returned home to Mexico. Stoop labor among the Braceros is widely documented as well as with other migrant American farmworkers.

**Figure 8.** *Migrant Mexican Children in Contractor’s Camp*



**Note.** Lange, D. (1935). *Migrant Mexican children in contractor’s camp at time of early pea harvest.* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017760267/>

Figure 9. *Group of Children Posing Under Sign*



**Note.** Hemmig, R. (1941). *Group of children posing under sign that reads "U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Security Administration Farm Workers Community."* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/toddbib000400/>

## Supporting Question Two and Tasks

Supporting question two focuses students' attention towards the living conditions of the farmworkers in California. To spark students' interest in the camp life of migrant farmworkers have students examine two photographs (Sources S and T, Figures 8 and 9). Both photographs depict children of Mexican migrant workers. Allow students to create a list of questions they would ask these children about their lives in the camps and their family's experience with working on farms. This will build curiosity among students and set the stage for learning from the next two sources.

Next, provide students with two oral histories (Sources U and V). In an interview format, they provide direct insight into the perspective of one Mexican migrant farm worker who was living in a Farm Security Administration (FSA) camp called El Rio in California in 1941. The first interview focuses on the interaction with folks outside the camp when it comes to schooling, attending movie theaters, and altercations with the police. The interviewee



makes the case for Mexican and Mexican American farmworkers to be treated like American citizens instead of as second-class citizens. The second interview focuses on the issue of striking, what this looks like, and reasons why. There is also a brief mention of the similarities between individuals in this camp and white, migrant farmers from Oklahoma that the interviewee refers to as “Okies.”

We suggest allowing students to work in pairs or small groups and assigning them one oral history. To differentiate the process for students we recommend two strategies. You could have students listen to the oral history twice and, on the second listen, have them jot down important statements the interviewee makes related to farming. Or you could use this [Oral History Analysis Sheet](#) that guides students in thinking through elements of the oral history from the speaker and the purpose behind the interview to the perspective provided from the interviewee on living conditions, which will make the activity more close-ended and simpler for those students who might need this level of support.

## ***What Happens When Farmworkers Get Older?***

Many migrant farmworkers, in the past and present, lack substantial access to health care and may not be able to save for their retirement given the low wages they earn. In order to address the retirement needs of a group of Filipino American farmworkers, the United Farm Workers (UFW) constructed Agbayani Village in Delano, California in 1974 (Arguelles, 2017) in honor of Filipino American contributions to the labor movement. Fred Abad, the last of the generation of Filipino American workers known as the *manongs*, died in Agbayani Village in 1997 (Lat, 1997). Today, mostly Mexican migrant workers live in Agbayani Village, but its history remains significant.

Provide two sources about the Agbayani Village farmworker retirement community (Sources [W](#) and [X](#)) for students to view and consider asking the following questions: (a) “What does this source tell us about farmworkers?” and (b) “What do you think happened to farmworkers once they were not able to work in the fields anymore?” Next, draw students’ attention to the resourcefulness of the Filipino American community in setting up this retirement village. Also, point out the sense of community involved in this endeavor and ask students how this notion of community was discussed in the oral histories. Create a *Circle Map* with students that elaborates on the concept of “community” as it relates to ethn racially diverse farmworkers. Place the word “community” in the center circle and then draw a larger circle around this term where students will add words/phrases that they think this term means. Then create a frame around this circle where you will write the resources from which students learned this information, which in this case will be the two sources provided. Finally, provide space for students to think through supporting question two with regards to these two additional sources: “What were the living conditions like for ethn racially diverse farmworkers in California?”

## Supporting Question Three and Tasks

Now that students have a beginning understanding of the various inhospitable conditions and dehumanizing treatment faced by farmworkers across the United States, they can start to consider ways in which farmworkers began to resist these conditions through civic and collective action using the third supporting question: “How did farmworkers resist unfair labor practices?” This supporting question centers on three examples of farmworker resistance that occurred in different geographic locations and during different periods of time to illustrate the ubiquity of such challenges; these examples allow students to apply the historical thinking skills they have developed thus far and engage in small group discussions. To bring the issue to the present, particularly with young learners, we recommend that educators either precede or follow the primary sources small group work with two picturebooks: the fictional *Click, Clack, Moo* (Cronin, 2000) and the realistic fiction *¡Sí se puede! Yes, We Can! The Janitor Strike in L.A.* (Cohn, 2005). Additionally, before students break into small group work, vocabulary about unions should be discussed (e.g., organizing, wages, strike, boycott).

Each small group will receive one of three task cards about the 1903 Oxnard Beet Strike in Oxnard, California (Appendix B); the 1938 Pecan-Shellers Strike in San Antonio, Texas (Appendix C); and the 1965 Grape Boycott in Delano, California (Appendix D). For young learners, you may choose how you want to provide access to these task cards for students. You could conduct shared readings of the task cards, have students work in pairs or individually to read them, or audio record the task cards so students may listen to them. Differentiating the process here will ensure all students have adequate access to the content. Each group will review the provided summary and discuss the primary sources included, then respond to the same set of discussion questions. After each small group has completed their task, come together in a larger group to summarize the different events and compare and contrast them.

## Dimension Four of the C3 Inquiry Arc

After these lessons, students should be ready to dispel the dominant and inaccurate narratives about the agricultural industry in the U.S. Specifically, students should realize the ethnoracially diverse group of people that were and are farmworkers today, the deplorable living and labor conditions they endured, and ways they collectively resisted these conditions and built a sense of community. These *sacrifices* and *achievements* make up the bulk of content knowledge students have learned within this inquiry. One way to assess this content knowledge would be to have students return to their *Annotated Agriculture* Illustration and re-

create an agricultural scene that more honestly depicts what farmworks and farming looked like in the 1900s. In fact, because they hold more content knowledge now, the students may create several scenes and make a poster that displays their knowledge visually and textually. Please be sure to focus on the annotations and/or captions as they represent claims students have made from the evidence presented across the inquiry. These annotations are a great scaffold to support students writing out an argument—in paragraph form—that answers the compelling question.

## Taking Informed Action

The examples found in this inquiry will demonstrate to young learners that the history of farmworkers is a complicated one, filled with stories of injustice and exploitation that continue today. Moreover, these examples, from grueling and damaging effects the short-handled hoe inflicted upon its users to the activism of Emma Tenayuca on behalf of pecan shellers, illustrate how notions of food being harvested by a family farmer and brought to a grocery store to end up on one’s plate are not only simplistic, but also hide the many struggles faced by hard workers whose humanity is often not valued. These stories bring into question issues of fair pay and reasonable working conditions that may have many local connections and applications in the present day.

To spark students’ interest in taking informed action, we suggest sharing the story of Dolores Huerta, who co-founded the National Farmworkers’ Association (NFWA) and helped lead the grape strike—mentioned in the third task card above. In a [Library of Congress blog post](#), which provides background information on Dolores’s life, there is a link to an interview with Dolores Huerta conducted by the Albuquerque mayor in April 2018 ([Source Y](#)). The interview demonstrates that the content learned within this inquiry is relevant because farmworkers continue to resist labor conditions and low wages presently. Have students watch a short interview clip (6:45–10:25) where Dolores Huerta describes her foundation and the grassroots work she does. In the clip, she describes this work in four steps: (a) organizing a meeting of people in a community and helping them determine the issues of inequity they face, (b) helping the people decide what they would like to improve, (c) creating an action plan with the community, and (d) organizing community volunteers to enact the plan. Discuss with students the legacy of the farmworkers’ story and how Dolores Huerta is not only a part of the historical narrative but also a part of the ongoing legacy work that continues today. Invite students to think about how they might collectively take informed action based on what they learned within this inquiry about farming, farmworkers, and foodways. Using Dimension 4 of the C3 Inquiry Arc, share with students that they will be responsible to better *understand*, *assess*, and *take action* on an issue of their choosing. Similar to the work of Dolores Huerta, announce that they, too, can be a part of “democracy in action” (Huerta, 2018).

To develop a deeper *understanding* of the agricultural industry and the unjust labor practices within this industry, ask students to make a list of foodways they would like to know more about based on what they eat at home. They might be inquisitive about tea, chocolate, tomatoes, cashews, or garlic—all of which have been linked to harmful labor practices. Based on this conversation, work with students to research some of the foods and allow space for students to share their learning at, perhaps, a morning meeting. Geography can easily be integrated to examine migratory labor patterns, and small groups can explore economics through prices, wages, and work demands for different crops in ways that allow them to compare and contrast their findings. During sharing time, have students assess the findings of their classmates and vote on one food they want to know more about as well as take some form of action.

An example you might share with students could be the [Coalition for Immokalee Workers](#), which is a worker-based human rights organization, that recently led a successful boycott against fast-food chain Wendy's because of their use of tomatoes purchased from Mexico under deplorable labor conditions. Wendy's has since shifted to tomatoes purchased in the U.S. or Canada. This example provides a sense of the *legacy* from the three forms of resistance students explored in this inquiry and demonstrates that the same tactics are still needed today in order to abolish unjust labor conditions and human rights violations that occur within the agricultural industry. Additional resources for groups not detailed in this inquiry can be found in (see the chapter by Amanda Vickery, "Is food a political weapon? Using inquiry to explore the history of African American Farmers") and the Recommended Resources list below.

Once students have chosen an issue and developed a deeper understanding of it, the time should come for students to *take action*. This might entail creating public service announcements (PSAs) for their local community or writing song lyrics and then performing them in a digital format. If you choose to use song lyrics, you could have students rewatch the *Strawberry Fields Forever* video and discuss how song lyrics can be used to teach people about foodways and expose unfair labor practices used within them. "Day-O (Banana Boat Song)" is a powerful example of how music can communicate injustice. Play the song and review the lyrics with students, which reveal how dock workers on banana plantations labored all night long and ached to go home by daylight (Harris, 2019). The mainstream success of this song in particular illustrates how music can be a means to raise awareness about an issue. Thus, writing song lyrics could be a powerful literacy medium for empowering elementary students to affect change in their own context.

Another idea is for students to ask to meet with the food management services and develop questions regarding the sourcing of the food they eat in the school cafeteria—bringing attention to this issue within their own school community. Though this may be challenging, it has been done—just see what these elementary students did to change their district salad options ([Serriere et al., 2010](#)). Finally, students can view images of farmworkers

on social media by searching for #WeFeedYou, a hashtag that went viral in the fall of 2020 when the UFW used it as part of a campaign to spread awareness about the dire situation of farmworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic and California wildfires (Zuluaga, 2020). Many of these images were taken directly in the fields by farmworkers themselves, offering students a rare firsthand glimpse into this important but often unappreciated work.

## Conclusion

No matter the action taken, the point is for students to grapple with the complexity of foodways and farming and arrive at more honest and diverse narratives behind the food on their plates. These narratives will honor the *legacy* of the ethnoracially diverse farmworkers. In addition, you will plant seeds of critical consciousness that, over time, will provide students with the foundation to become informed and active democratic citizens.

# Recommended Children's Literature

- Adler, D., & Adler, M. (2010). *A picture book of Cesar Chavez* (M. Olofsdotter, Illus.). Holiday House.
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- Warren, S. (2012). *Dolores Huerta: A hero to migrant workers* (R. Casilla, Illus.). Marshall Cavendish.

## Recommended Resources

- Viva la Causa* (film available for free to educators from the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance program)
- Meet the Manongs* by Noreen N. Rodríguez: <http://naseemrdz.com/site/assets/files/1034/meetthemanongsfarmworkerbiographies.pdf>
- "Profits Enslave the World" Poem by Philip Vera Cruz <https://filipinostudies.wordpress.com/2012/04/23/profits-enslave-the-world-by-philip-vera-cruz/>
- Filipino Americans Workers Timeline: [https://archive.advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/ESUSHELAPVC%20Filipino\\_Am\\_Farm\\_Worker\\_History\\_Timeline.pdf](https://archive.advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/ESUSHELAPVC%20Filipino_Am_Farm_Worker_History_Timeline.pdf)
- Little Manila: Filipinos in California's Heartland (video about Stockton, CA): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNCZ8sGJs8I>
- Dolores Huerta materials: <https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/women-in-labor-history/>
- To pursue an inquiry on Jewish farmers: <https://jwa.org/teach/livingthelegacy/jews-and-farming-in-america>
- To pursue an inquiry on Black farmers: See chapter by Amanda Vickery, "Is food a political weapon? Using inquiry to explore the history of African American Farmers" and visit <http://www.nationalblackfarmersassociation.org>
- #WeFeedYou on Twitter and Instagram

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# Appendix A

Photograph Close Read Note Catcher	
The Geography of Farming	
CLAIM	EVIDENCE
	Check out the virtual tour of California's agricultural valleys and determine how this information can support your claims above. <a href="https://vric.ucdavis.edu/main/virtual_tour.htm">https://vric.ucdavis.edu/main/virtual_tour.htm</a>
The Identity of the Farmworkers Pictured	
CLAIM	EVIDENCE
The Types of Fruits & Vegetables Farmed	
CLAIM	EVIDENCE

# Appendix B

## 1903 Oxnard Beet Strike

### Task Card: 1903 Oxnard Beet Strike

Japanese and Mexican sugar beet workers formed the first union in California's fields in Oxnard in 1903.

### Educator Summary

Although most of the world's sugar comes from sugar cane, in the United States, nearly as much sugar comes from sugar beets as it does from cane; sugar beets dominated much of the agricultural land in California and were a highly lucrative crop. Sugar beet labor was intense and required workers to stoop close to the ground with a short-handled hoe for many hours; the difficult nature of the work made it hard for growers to recruit white laborers, so farmers often relied on contractors who supplied seasonal immigrant laborers (Glass, 2016).

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Japanese began immigrating to the U.S. mainland, with their population concentrated in Pacific Coast states. Many worked in agriculture and had been farmers in Japan and dreamed of becoming farmers in the United States. In 1899, the first Japanese farmworkers began working in the sugar beet industry in Oxnard, California (Takaki, 1998). Japanese farmworkers were hired through several different Japanese labor contractors in Oxnard.

In 1902, the Western Agricultural Contracting Company (WACC) was formed in an effort to lower piece rates for beet thinning by half and to force independent Japanese and Mexican contractors out of business. In February 1903, in response to WACC and wage cuts, 1,000 Japanese and 200 Mexican agricultural laborers organized the Japanese Mexican Labor Association (JMLA) and went on strike a month later. The JMLA held trilingual meetings in English, Spanish, and Japanese every night and had as their symbol a pair of clasped hands across a red rising sun. The strike was successful, and on March 30 growers agreed to restore the original arrangements, resulting in a significant increase in pay rate per acre (Almaguer, 1995; Glass, 2016).

After their victory, the leaders of the JMLA petitioned the American Federation of Labor to charter their organization as the Sugar Beet Farm Laborer's Union of Oxnard (SBFLU). However, leader Samuel Gompers was only willing to extend membership to the Mexican sugar beet workers, not the Japanese. The American Federation of Labor had a long history of opposition to Chinese labor, and broadened their position to include Japanese laborers, hoping they would be excluded from entry to the United States as well (Almaguer, 1995). Due to their alliance, the JMLA withdrew their application; unfortunately, soon afterward, the farmworker union fell apart (Street, 1998). Despite its short existence, the JMLA was important for several reasons. The union was one of the first agricultural worker organizations on the Pacific Coast, and the 1903 beet strike was one of the first major agricultural strikes in California and the first to be successful (Almaguer, 1995). Finally, the JMLA was the first known instance of two racially minoritized groups forming a labor union in California, which is particularly significant given that major unions like the American Federation of Labor refused to allow Asian membership (Takaki, 1998).

## Upper Elementary-Level Summary

Although most of the world's sugar comes from sugar cane, in the United States, nearly as much sugar comes from sugar beets as it does from cane. Sugar beets grew widely in California and growers could earn a great deal of money with them. The work that went into growing and harvesting sugar beets was intense and required workers to stoop close to the ground with a short-handled hoe for many hours. The difficult nature of the work made it hard for growers to recruit white laborers, so farmers often relied on contractors, or individuals who supplied seasonal immigrant laborers to different farms.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Japanese began immigrating to the U.S. mainland, especially to states on the West Coast. Many worked in agriculture and had been farmers in Japan and dreamed of becoming farmers in the United States. In 1899, the first Japanese farmworkers began working in the sugar beet industry in Oxnard, California. Japanese farmworkers were hired through several different Japanese labor contractors in Oxnard.

In 1902, the growers formed the Western Agricultural Contracting Company (WACC) to make more money and to put Japanese and Mexican contractors out of business. Farmworkers were paid by each "piece" or individual crop that they harvested, which were then weighed in larger amounts. The WACC lowered the piece rate for beets by half, so workers suddenly made half of what they had earned before WACC was created. WACC also stopped using Japanese and Mexican contractors, who were paid to find workers and were able to communicate with farmworkers in their native language.

In February 1903, in response to the decreased money they were making because of the WACC, 1,000 Japanese and 200 Mexican agricultural laborers organized the Japanese Mexican Labor Association (JMLA). A month later, they went on strike. The JMLA held trilingual meetings in English, Spanish, and Japanese every night. Their symbol was a pair of clasped hands across a red rising sun. The strike was successful, and on March 30, growers agreed to restore the original arrangements, resulting in a piece rate increase.

It was important for organizations like the JMLA to become part of a recognized labor union. A labor union is an organization for workers that helps members earn fair wages and improves working conditions. The largest labor union in the United States at the time was the American Federation of Labor (AFL), and the JMLA applied to become a part of the AFL under a new name, the Sugar Beet Farm Laborer's Union of Oxnard. However, AFL leader Samuel Gompers was only willing to allow membership to the Mexican sugar beet workers, not the Japanese. The AFL had a long history of being opposed to allowing membership to workers who were not white, including Blacks and Chinese. They continued their racist attitude by excluding Japanese laborers, and like the Chinese the AFL hoped the Japanese would be excluded from entry to the United States as well.

Because the JMLA was an alliance between Mexican and Japanese workers, they withdrew their application; if not all members could be included, then no one would seek membership. Soon afterwards, the organization fell apart. Despite its short existence, the JMLA was important for several reasons. First, the JMLA was one of the first agricultural worker organizations on the West Coast. Second, the 1903 beet strike was one of the first major agricultural strikes in California and the first to be successful. Third, the JMLA was the first known instance of two groups of Color forming a labor union in California. Because major unions like the AFL refused to allow Asian membership, this last reason is especially important.

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# Appendix C

## 1938 Pecan-Shellers' Strike and Emma Tenayuca

### Task Card: 1938 Pecan-Shellers' Strike and Emma Tenayuca

Workers Alliance leader Emma Tenayuca, with clenched fist in the air, speaking to crowd outside San Antonio City Hall following a parade protesting scarcity of Works Progress Administration jobs. (1937, March 8). [Photograph]. San Antonio Light photograph collection, University of Texas at San Antonio. <https://digital.utsa.edu/digital/collection/p9020coll2/id/6107/rec/30>

### Educator Summary

In Texas in the 1930s, Jim Crow practices, rural culture, and migrant workers combined to create a dual-wage labor market of white and Spanish speaking workers in which Spanish-speaking workers had been denied equal pay for equal work for nearly fifty years. The Spanish-speaking workers were comprised of two groups: United States-born Tejanos of Mexican descent and Mexican nationals, who white people often misunderstood to be the same. Factories at the time had deplorable, sweatshop conditions (Sánchez-Walsh, 2016; Vargas, 2008).

In the city of San Antonio, Tejana women made up 79% of the low-paid garment, cigar, and pecan-shelling labor force. Emma Tenayuca was only sixteen when she first became active with labor organizing, joining several hundred women workers who walked out on their jobs at the Fink Cigar Company in 1933 to demand better pay, working conditions, and union recognition. The next year, she helped organize garment workers and quickly earned a reputation on San Antonio's West Side as a devoted organizer. By the time she was 20, Tenayuca was leading the Workers' Alliance of San Antonio, an organization with fifteen branches and 3,000 members (Vargas, 2008).

Tenayuca is best known for her leadership of the 1938 pecan sheller's strike, which is the subject of Tafolla and Tenayuca's (2008) children's book, *No es justo! That's not fair!* This book is an ideal resource to use in addition to or instead of the summary below. In the 1930s, 40% of the United States' pecans came from Texas and the San Antonio-based Southern Pecan Company (SPC) shelled fifteen million pounds of pecans annually. Despite the massive production at SPC, machine shelling was phased out in 1926 and replaced by less expensive hand work performed by Spanish-speaking laborers, approximately 12,000 of whom shelled pecans during the November through March season in dank, crowded, and poorly ventilated work sheds. Women made up over 90% of the work force and earned some of the lowest wages in the nation as they were often paid in food. After years of meager wages and unfair labor practices, Tenayuca organized a walkout with women forming the majority of strikers. Although a number of factors impacted the strike's success in the months that followed, Tenayuca was an important advocate of both women and Mexican nationals who inspired many laborers to create coalitions and demand justice (Sánchez-Walsh, 2016; Vargas, 2008).

## Upper-Elementary Level Summary

Jim Crow laws were state and local practices enacted after slavery across the Southern United States to enforce racial segregation. For example, you have probably heard of segregated schools and water fountains; these are examples of Jim Crow laws that impacted Black and white communities in very different and unfair ways. But Jim Crow laws also affected people who weren't Black. Jim Crow laws also segregated white people from those who spoke Spanish (even if they also spoke English) and were of Mexican origin. Sometimes, these laws designed to enforce racial segregation against Mexicans and Spanish-speakers were referred to as "Juan Crow" laws.

In Texas in the 1930s, Juan Crow laws deeply impacted Spanish-speaking workers, who had not received equal pay for equal work for nearly fifty years. The Spanish-speaking workers were made up of two groups: United States-born Tejanos of Mexican ancestry and people from Mexico. Yet white people often misunderstood these two groups to be the same. Both groups worked in factories with terrible conditions.

In the city of San Antonio, Tejana women made up 79% of the workers who made clothes (known as garment workers), cigars, and shelled pecans. Several hundred women workers walked out on their jobs at the Fink Cigar Company in 1933 to demand better pay and working conditions. They also wanted to become a part of the local union. Emma Tenayuca was only sixteen when she joined the women. The next year, she helped organize garment workers and quickly earned a reputation on San Antonio's West Side as a devoted organizer. By the time she was 20, Tenayuca was leading the Workers' Alliance of San Antonio, an organization with 3,000 members.

Tenayuca is best known for her leadership of the 1938 pecan sheller's strike. In the 1930s, 40% of the United States' pecans came from Texas. The San Antonio-based Southern Pecan Company (SPC) shelled 15,000,000 pounds of pecans annually. Despite the massive amount of pecans processed at SPC, the company stopped using machines in 1926. Instead, to save money, they replaced machines with Spanish-speaking laborers who did the work by hand and were paid very little.

About 12,000 Spanish-speaking workers shelled pecans from November through March in dark, crowded work sheds where they often became sick. Women made up over 90% of the work force and earned some of the lowest wages in the nation; often, instead of being paid money, they were paid in food. After years of terrible pay and unfair labor practices, Tenayuca organized a walkout of mostly women. Although several factors impacted the strike's success in the months that followed, Tenayuca was an important advocate of both women and Spanish-speaking workers. She inspired many laborers to create coalitions and demand justice.

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- Vargas, Z. (2008). *Labor rights are civil rights: Mexican American workers in twentieth-century America*. Princeton University Press.

# Discussion Questions:

- What problem were the workers facing?
- How did they try to bring attention to their problem?
- What collective action was taken?
- How did those in charge respond to the collective action?
- How does this particular example add to our developing knowledge about farmworkers, foodways, and justice? What connections can you make?
- What questions do you have about what you've learned?



# Appendix D

1965 Delano Grape Boycott	
Task Card: 1965 Delano Grape Boycott	
<p><i>Boycott Lettuce &amp; Grapes</i> poster</p>	<p>This poster calls for Americans to stop buying lettuce and grapes in support of the United Farm Workers (UFW).</p> <p><i>Boycott Lettuce &amp; Grapes</i>. (1978). [Photograph]. Library of Congress, <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/93505187/">https://www.loc.gov/item/93505187/</a>.</p> <p>Also available at <a href="http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/chavez/aa_chavez_huelga_2_e.html">http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/chavez/aa_chavez_huelga_2_e.html</a></p>
<p><i>1973 Grape Strike</i></p>	<p>This picture shows UFW members and supporters displaying Filipino, UFW, and Puerto Rican flags as part of the 1973 Grape Strike.</p> <p><i>1973 Grape Strike: Filipino, Mexican and Puerto Rican Flags</i>. (1973). [Photograph]. Welga Digital Archive. <a href="https://welgadigitalarchive.omeka.net/items/show/97">https://welgadigitalarchive.omeka.net/items/show/97</a></p>
<p><i>The Delano Grape Strike and Boycott</i> pamphlet</p>	<p>This pamphlet published by the United Farm Workers union publicized and sought support for a boycott of non-union table grapes. The pamphlet asks consumers to look for the iconic UFW union label before buying grapes.</p> <p><i>The Delano Grape Strike and Boycott</i>. (1970). [Pamphlet]. National Archives, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives. <a href="http://recordsofrights.org/records/135/the-delano-grape-strike-and-boycott">http://recordsofrights.org/records/135/the-delano-grape-strike-and-boycott</a></p>
<p>Andy Imutan, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and Robert Kennedy at UFW rally</p>	<p>Andy Imutan, Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and Senator Robert Kennedy participate in a rally in Delano, California before César Chávez breaks his 25-day fast.</p> <p>Darby, D. (1968, March 10). (319) <i>Sen. Robert Kennedy, Larry Itliong, Dolores Huerta, and Andy Imutan, Delano, California</i>. [Photograph]. United Farm Workers gallery, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University. <a href="https://reuther.wayne.edu/node/118">https://reuther.wayne.edu/node/118</a></p>

## Educator Summary

After the annexation of the Philippines by the United States in 1899, Filipino laborers began arriving on the U.S. mainland in large numbers in the 1920s, largely to replace Mexican workers who were being pushed out (McWilliams, 1939/1999). Like the Chinese and Japanese laborers who came before them, Filipinos faced racism and discrimination from white laborers and growers (McWilliams, 1939/1999). However, unlike other Asian groups, Filipinos were classified as nationals, not immigrants, due to their country of origin's status as a U.S. territory and were able to continue working in the United States after the Immigration Act of 1917 barred most immigration from the Asia-Pacific zone (Baldoz, 2011).

Filipino workers have a long history of organizing, beginning in the 1920s on plantations in Hawai'i and in Alaskan salmon canneries (Baldoz, 2011). In 1928, the first formal Filipino American organization was founded and the first Filipino strike occurred in Watsonville, California in 1930. Filipino laborers continued to organize for many decades, particularly on the West Coast. In 1959, the American Federation of Labor chartered the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), which heavily recruited Filipino laborers in Stockton, California. Two dedicated Filipino labor organizers, Rudy Delvo and Larry Itliong, were hired by AWOC and AWOC's membership became heavily Filipino, although it also included whites, Arabs, Blacks, and Mexicans (Mabalon, 2013). In late summer of 1965, Itliong and fellow Filipino organizer Pete Velasco successfully won a wage increase at \$1.40 an hour for Filipino grape workers in the Coachella Valley, in the southern part of the state where grapes ripen first and must be prepared for market quickly. They set their sights on doing the same in Delano, where the grape harvest occurred next (Glass, 2016).

The seasonal workers who had worked in the Coachella grape fields expected to be paid the same wage in Delano; however, they were not. On September 8, 1965, Filipino grape workers, all rank-and-file members of AWOC, went on strike at nine farms. They were met with brutality and violence by the growers, who shut off the gas, lights, and water in the labor camps where they lived and began to hire Mexican workers to replace them. A week later, Itliong persuaded César Chávez and Dolores Huerta's mostly Mexican National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) to join the strike; combined, their workers struck thirty farms and set up a system of roving pickets. Then Chávez and Huerta called on the public to stop buying grapes without a union label, initiating a national boycott on grapes and a secondary boycott on stores selling grapes (Glass, 2016).

In the midst of the Civil Rights Movement, the Filipino and Mexican farmworkers garnered widespread sympathy and support. In March 1966, the NFWA organized a historic, nearly 300-mile march from Delano to the state capital, Sacramento, putting the grape strike in the national spotlight and attracting the support of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. When the pilgrimage arrived in Sacramento on Easter morning, Chávez announced the good news that Huerta had negotiated an agreement between the growers and the union. In August 1966, members of AWOC joined with NFWA to create the United Farm Workers (UFW), and Filipino activists Larry Itliong, Philip Vera Cruz and Andy Imutan became prominent leaders in the UFW (Mabalon, 2013; Scharlin & Villanueva, 2000). In July 1967, two dozen Delano-area growers committed to \$1.80 an hour plus a 25% per piece increase, and the UFW soon developed a hiring hall, health services, a credit union, and community center for members (Glass, 2016).

## Upper Elementary Level Summary

In 1899, at the end of the Spanish-American War, the country of the Philippines was annexed by the United States. This meant that the United States had a large amount of control over the country, and allowed Filipino laborers to work in the United States. Filipinos began arriving on the West Coast in large numbers in the 1920s and many replaced the Mexican workers who were being pushed out of the country. Unlike other immigrant workers, most Filipinos were single, young men who moved from one area to another based on the growing season and did not stay at one farm for a long time. Like the Chinese and Japanese laborers who came before them, Filipinos faced racism and discrimination from white laborers and growers.

Filipino workers have a long history of organizing for fair treatment, beginning in the 1920s on plantations in Hawai'i and in Alaskan salmon canneries. In 1928, the first formal Filipino American labor organization was founded. The first Filipino strike occurred in Watsonville, California in 1930. Filipino laborers organized for many decades, particularly on the West Coast.

In 1959, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) was created and heavily recruited Filipino laborers in Stockton, California. Two dedicated Filipino labor organizers, Rudy Delvo and Larry Itliong, were hired by AWOC. Through Delvo and Itliong's work, AWOC's membership became heavily Filipino, although it also included whites, Arabs, Blacks, and Mexicans.

In California, the grape season begins in the southern part of the state, where grapes ripen first and must be prepared for market quickly. The Coachella Valley is the first area where farmworkers begin the grape harvest; afterwards, workers often moved north from one farm to the next as they followed the grapes for the rest of the season. In late summer of 1965, Itliong and fellow Filipino organizer Pete Velasco successfully won a wage increase at \$1.40 an hour for Filipino grape workers in the Coachella Valley. Knowing that Filipino farmworkers would be moving north for the next part of the grape harvest, they set their sights on winning the same wages for workers in Delano.

However, Delano growers refused to pay \$1.40 an hour. On September 8, 1965, Filipino grape workers, all members of AWOC, went on strike at nine farms. The growers fought them, and shut off the gas, lights, and water in the labor camps where they lived. The growers also began to hire Mexican workers to replace the Filipino laborers. A week later, Itliong persuaded César Chávez and Dolores Huerta's mostly Mexican National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) to join the strike; if Mexican workers were also striking, they could not replace the Filipino workers, and all could earn a better wage.

Together, their workers struck thirty farms and formed picket lines, protesting at different farms each day. Then Chávez and Huerta called on the public to stop buying grapes without a union label; this meant that if the grapes sold in stores did not prove that they were harvested by growers who paid a fair wage, people would not buy them. A boycott is when people refuse to buy a product because they do not support what the sellers are doing. AWOC and NFWA promoted a national boycott on grapes as well as a boycott for any stores that sold grapes without a union label.

These events happened in the middle of the famous Civil Rights Movement. As people learned about what was happening to Filipino and Mexican farmworkers, AWOC and NFWA gained support from people all over the United States. In March 1966, the NFWA organized a nearly 300-mile march from Delano to the state capital, Sacramento. This put the grape strike in the national spotlight and attracted the support of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. When the marchers arrived in Sacramento on Easter morning, Chávez announced the good news: NFWA leader Dolores Huerta had negotiated an agreement between the growers and the union. The strike was a success!

In August 1966, members of AWOC joined with NFWA to create the United Farm Workers (UFW), and Filipino activists Larry Itliong, Philip Vera Cruz and Andy Imutan became major leaders in the organization. In July 1967, two dozen Delano-area growers committed to \$1.80 an hour plus an increase in the amount farmworkers received for each crop they harvested. Soon, the UFW developed resources for members that included support for jobs, their health, money, and recreation.

## References

- Glass, F. (2016). *From mission to microchip: A history of the California labor movement*. University of California Press.
- Mabalon, D. B. (2013). *Little Manila is in the heart: The making of the Filipina/o American community in Stockton, California*. Duke University Press.
- McWilliams, C. (1939/1999). *Factories in the field: The story of migratory farm labor in California*. University of California Press.
- Scharlin, C., & Villanueva, L. V. (2000). *Philip Vera Cruz: A personal history of Filipino immigrants and the farmworkers movement*. University of Washington Press.
- Takaki, R. (1998). *A history of Asian Americans: Strangers from a different shore*. First Back Bay.

# Discussion Questions:

- What problem were the farmworkers facing?
- How did they try to bring attention to their problem?
- What collective action was taken?
- How did those in charge respond to the collective action?
- How does this particular example add to our developing knowledge about farmworkers, foodways, and justice? What connections can you make?
- What questions do you have about what you've learned?

# Appendix E

Primary Sources Used in This Inquiry			
Source	Resource	Source Citation and Link	Description
A	Filipino Farmworkers Cutting Lettuce, Imperial Valley, California	Lange, D. (1937). <i>Lettuce cutting in the Imperial Valley, California. A Filipino crew of fifty-five boys, migrants.</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769731/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769731/</a>	This photograph shows a crew of Filipino boys lettuce cutting in the Imperial Valley, CA.
B	Filipino Farmworkers Thinning Lettuce	Lange, D. (1939). <i>Gang of Filipino boys thinning lettuce. Salinas, California.</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771822/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771822/</a>	This photograph shows a gang of Filipino boys thinning lettuce in Salinas, CA.
C	Filipino Farmworkers Cutting Lettuce	Lange, D. (1939). <i>Near Westmorland, Imperial Valley. Filipinos cutting lettuce.</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771472/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771472/</a>	This photograph shows Filipino farmworkers cutting lettuce in the Imperial Valley, CA.
D	Filipino Farmworker thinning lettuce, Salinas Valley, California	Lange, D. (1939). <i>Filipino thinning lettuce. Salinas Valley, California.</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771824/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771824/</a>	This photograph shows a Filipino farmworker thinning lettuce in the Salinas Valley, CA.
E	Filipino Farmworker in Lettuce Field	Lange, D. (1939). <i>Filipino lettuce field laborer. Imperial Valley, California.</i> Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771735/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017771735/</a>	This photograph shows a Filipino lettuce field laborer in the Imperial Valley, CA.
F	Filipino boys cutting cauliflower, Santa Maria, California	Lange, D. (1937). <i>Filipino boys cutting cauliflower gang labor near Santa Maria, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769733/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769733/</a>	This photograph shows Filipino farmworkers cutting cauliflower near Santa Maria, CA.
G	Migrant agricultural worker picking grapes	Sklarewitz, N. (1973). <i>Migrant agricultural worker, possibly Mexican-American, picking grapes in a vineyard near Edison, San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633531/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633531/</a>	This photograph shows a migrant agricultural worker, possibly Mexican American, picking grapes in a vineyard near Edison, San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, CA (1973).

H	Migrant agricultural workers packing boxes of grapes	Sklarewitz, N. (1973). <i>Migrant agricultural workers, possibly Mexican-Americans, pack boxes of grapes, in a vineyard in near Edison, San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633528/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633528/</a>	This photograph shows migrant agricultural workers, possibly Mexican Americans, packing boxes of grapes, in a vineyard near the San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, CA (1973).
I	Migrant agricultural workers in truck in a grape vineyard	Sklarewitz, N. (1973). <i>Migrant agricultural workers, possibly Mexican-Americans, in truck in a grape vineyard in near Edison, San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633529/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633529/</a>	This photograph shows migrant agricultural workers, possibly Mexican Americans, in truck, in a grape vineyard in near San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, CA (1973, Aug.).
J	Migrant agricultural workers loading grape boxes	Sklarewitz, N. (1973). <i>Migrant agricultural workers, possibly Mexican-Americans, loading grape boxes on hand trucks and truck in a grape vineyard in near Edison, San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633530/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2019633530/</a>	This photograph shows migrant agricultural workers, possibly Mexican-Americans, loading grape boxes on a trunk in a grape vineyard in near San Joaquin Valley, Kern County, CA (1973, Aug.).
K	Chinese laborer in potato field	Rothstein, A. (1936). <i>Chinese laborer in potato field. Walla Walla, Washington</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017760823/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017760823/</a>	[Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017760823/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017760823/</a> This photograph shows a Chinese laborer in a potato field near Walla Walla, WA.
L	Japanese agricultural workers packing broccoli	Lange, D. (1937). <i>Japanese agricultural workers packing broccoli near Guadalupe, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769671/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769671/</a>	This photograph shows Japanese farmworkers packing broccoli near Guadalupe, CA.
M	Japanese Farmworkers Packing Broccoli	Lange, D. (1937). <i>Japanese agricultural workers packing broccoli near Guadalupe, California.</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769673/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769673/</a>	This photograph shows Japanese workers packing broccoli near Guadalupe, CA.

N	Mexican farmworker	Lange, D. (1935). <i>Mexican field worker, father of six. Imperial Valley, Riverside County, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017759521/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017759521/</a>	This photograph shows a Mexican farmworker in CA.
O	Mexican farmworker in a lettuce field	Lange, D. (1937). <i>One of a Mexican field gang of migratory laborers thinning and weeding cantaloupe plants. The young plants are "capped" with wax paper spread over a wire wicket to protect against cold and accelerate growth. The laborers' wages are thirty cents an hour. Imperial Valley, California</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769715/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017769715/</a>	This photograph shows a Mexican farmworker in a lettuce field in Imperial Valley, CA.
P	A truckload of Mexican and African American farmworkers	Vachon, J. (1943). <i>Corpus Christi, Texas. Truckload of Mexican and Negro farm laborers</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017856390/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017856390/</a>	This photograph shows a truckload of Mexican and African American farmworkers in Corpus Christi, TX.
Q	Mexican laborer topping beets	Collins, M. (1943). <i>Stockton vicinity, California. Mexican agricultural laborer topping sugar beets</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017853211/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017853211/</a>	This photograph shows a Mexican laborer topping beets, near Stockton, CA.
R	Mexican Farmworkers Topping Sugar Beets	Collins, M. (1943). <i>Stockton (vicinity), California. Mexican agricultural laborer topping sugar beets.</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017853213/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017853213/</a>	This photograph shows a Mexican farmworker topping beet, near Stockton.
S	Migrant Mexican Children in Contractor's Camp	Lange, D. (1935). <i>Migrant Mexican children in contractor's camp at time of early pea harvest.</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2017760267/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2017760267/</a>	This photograph shows Mexican children in a contractor's camp at the time of early pea harvest. Nipomo, CA.



T	Group of Children Posing Under Sign	Hemmig, R. (1941). <i>Group of children posing under sign that reads "U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Security Administration Farm Workers Community."</i> [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/toddbib000400/">https://www.loc.gov/item/toddbib000400/</a>	This photograph shows a group of children posing under a sign that reads "U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Security Administration Farm Workers Community" in an FSA Camp in El Rio CA (1941).
U	Interview with Jose Flores (part 1)	Todd, C. L., Sonkin, R., & Flores, J. (1941). <i>Interview about the Mexican family, discrimination against Mexicans, and life in the FSA camp</i> [Audio]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/toddbib000358/">https://www.loc.gov/item/toddbib000358/</a>	This is a clip of an interview with Jose Flores (20 years old), who was a Mexican farmworker living in a Farm Security Administration camp. He speaks about the Mexican family, discrimination against Mexicans, and daily life in the FSA camp.
V	Interview with Jose Flores (part 2)	Todd, C. L., Sonkin, R., & Flores, J. (1941). <i>Interview about FSA camp governance, camp work, non-FSA migrant camps, labor issues, attitude toward "Okies"</i> [Audio]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/toddbib000359/">https://www.loc.gov/item/toddbib000359/</a>	This is clip of an interview with Jose Flores (20 years old), who was a Mexican farmworker living in a Farm Security Administration camp. He speaks about FSA camp governance, camp work, and attitudes towards "Okies."
W	Floor Plan of the Paulo Agbayani Retirement Village	Historic American Buildings Survey, (1933). <i>Forty Acres, Paulo Agbayani Retirement Village, 10701 Mettler Avenue, Delano, Kern County, CA</i> [Drawing]. Library of Congress. <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/ca3947/">https://www.loc.gov/item/ca3947/</a>	This photograph shows a Floor Plan of the Paulo Agbayani Retirement Village, Kern County, CA.
X	Manongs at Agbayani Village	<i>The Manongs at Agbayani Village.</i> (ca. 1970). [Photograph]. Welga Digital Archive. <a href="https://welgadigitalarchive.omeka.net/items/show/75">https://welgadigitalarchive.omeka.net/items/show/75</a>	This photograph shows Manongs at Agbayani Village, circa 1970s.
Y	Interview with Dolores Huerta	Keller, T. (2018). <i>Mayor Tim Keller Sits with Labor Icon Dolores Huerta</i> [Interview]. <i>Office of Equity and Inclusion, City of Albuquerque.</i> <a href="https://www.cabq.gov/office-of-equity-inclusion/news/mayor-interviews-labor-icon-dolores-huerta">https://www.cabq.gov/office-of-equity-inclusion/news/mayor-interviews-labor-icon-dolores-huerta</a>	The Mayor of Albuquerque, NM, Tim Keller, interviews Dolores Huerta in 2018.