

**“AMBASSADORS OF GOODWILL:” MEXICAN BRACERO WORKERS  
DURING WWII**

**U.S. History**

USH.5.4 - Explain the experiences of African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and women during World War II. (E)

USH.5.5 - Summarize the efforts the national government made to regulate production, labor, and prices during the war, and evaluate the success or failure of these efforts.

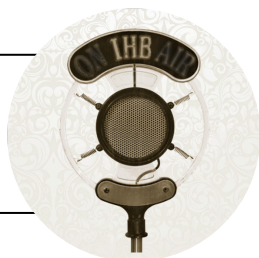
USH.5.6 - Explain the role of World War II as a catalyst for social change.

**Indiana Studies**

IS.1.21 - Explain the significance of the expansion of federal power during the New Deal Era in the areas of agriculture, money and banking, industry, labor, social welfare, and conservation.

IS.1.23 - Examine the causes and course of World War II, the effects of the war on Indiana’s society and culture, and the consequences of the war on United States involvement in world affairs.

IS.1.35 - Locate and analyze primary sources and secondary sources related to an event or issue of the past. Discover possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary opinions.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## **“AMBASSADORS OF GOODWILL:” MEXICAN BRACERO WORKERS DURING WWII**

**Student Directions:** Listen to the THH episode called “Ambassadors of Goodwill: Mexican Bracero Workers During WWII.” Answer the following questions in the box underneath the question. [Here](#) is a link to the transcript if you prefer to read the content or to follow along while listening.

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### **Quick Facts**

1. Why did the U.S. and Mexican governments create the Bracero Program?

2. What type of work did the Braceros do in Indiana?

3. What was the public reception of Braceros like in Indiana? Provide one example of Hoosiers’ reactions to the Braceros.

# TALKING HOOSIER HISTORY

in the classroom

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

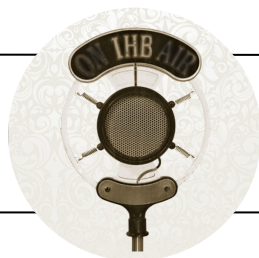
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## Dig Deeper

1. How did the Bracero program impact immigration patterns in Indiana and the nation? In what other ways did World War II lead to social and economic change in the country?

2. How did leading African American newspapers react to the Bracero Program? Why?

3. According to the podcast, what was “disappointing” about the sources used when studying the Bracero experiences? How did the podcasters/historians handle these limitations?



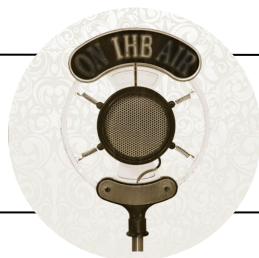
## **“AMBASSADORS OF GOODWILL:” MEXICAN BRACERO WORKERS DURING WWII**

Want to get even more use out of the podcast? These quick exercises can get your students engaged with the topic in different ways.

**Exercise 1:** Have students form small groups and respond to the following prompt: “Imagine you are interviewing a former Bracero worker from Indiana. What questions would you ask them about their experience?”

**Exercise 2:** After listening to the podcast, students will create a poster “advertising” the Bracero program, trying to garner support from local Indiana communities. Include details about the type of work Braceros conducted, who enacted the Braceros program, and where the Braceros would work. Be sure to highlight how the program potentially would benefit the American war effort.

**Exercise 3:** Have students look at the four attached photos depicting the Bracero program and workers. After examining the photos, have the students discuss what information can be gleaned about the experiences of the Braceros. How might Braceros’ experiences in places like California differ than those who worked in Indiana? What other primary sources might be useful to better understand their experiences in the Hoosier state?



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Photo 1: John Vachon, “Wheat,” photograph, 1941, Farm Security Administration Photographs, [IUPUI University Library](#)



Photo 2: Dorothea Lange, “Braceros,” ca. 1942, photograph, Oakland Museum of California, accessed [Online Archive of California](#).



Photo 3: “Jobs in California,” Greencastle Daily Banner, October 12, 1942, accessed via [reimaginingmigration.org](#).



Photo 4: Marjory Collins, “Stockton (vicinity), California. Mexican agricultural laborer topping sugar beets,” photograph, 1943, Farm Security Administration- Office of War Information photograph collection, [Library of Congress](#).



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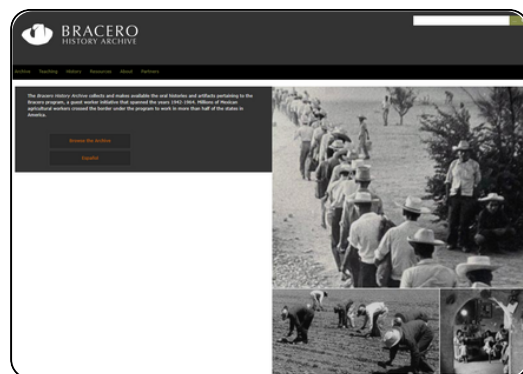
Learn more about the Bracero Program with these IHB historian-reviewed primary and secondary sources.

### Primary Sources



#### Midwest Chicano Latino Activism Collection

Contains a wide selection of digitized materials from the José F. Treviño Chicano/Latino Activism Collection held at [MSU Special Collections](#).



#### Bracero History Archive

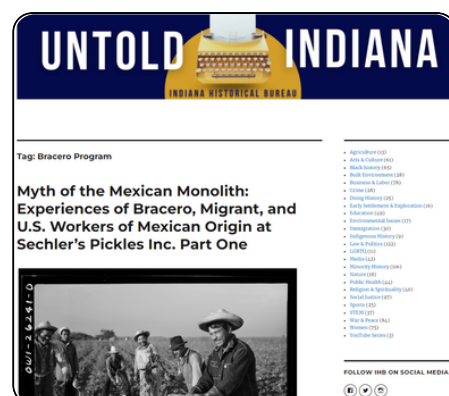
A digitized collection of oral histories and artifacts pertaining to the Bracero Program.

### Secondary Sources



#### Braceros in the Corn Belt: Part One

From IHB’s blog Untold Indiana, this piece provides background information on the labor shortage in U.S. Agriculture and the work of Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard.



#### Braceros in the Corn Belt: Part Two

The second part of the Untold Indiana blog article explores the Bracero Program in Indiana and Hoosiers’ mixed reactions to the arrival of Braceros.