



The Non-Immigrant Immigrants: Puerto Ricans

Guide for Curriculum Unit 99.03.07
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Although high school students in Connecticut are required to take a United States history class that may have a few pages devoted to the Spanish-American War, there is little opportunity to learn more about Puerto Rico, the original people of that island the four hundred years of Spanish rule, and the hundred years as a colony of the United States. This seems an unfortunate omission, particularly in schools with increasing numbers of Puerto Rican students and in cities with large Puerto Rican populations.

The purpose of this unit is to present some of the ingredients that have gone into making the rich culture of Puerto Rico, the forces that have caused Puerto Ricans both to leave the island and to return to it, and the resiliency that Puerto Ricans must have to preserve their identity as a people. It is important for all of us, as U.S. citizens, to be aware that our nation still owns a large colony at a time when the United Nations has pressured other countries to give autonomy to their scattered colonies. We should know what it means when Puerto Rico hold a plebiscite to determine its future status, when even the Puerto Ricans themselves are unsure how they will be affected by the vote. Whether Puerto Rico becomes the fifty-first state, remains as some form of commonwealth, or opts for independence, we should be able to identify the forces exerted by the United States that have created the situation and the need for decision.

(Recommended for History, grades 11-12.)

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