

1. Introduction

The Texas War for Independence and the Mexican- American War in the 1840s had a lasting effect on the people of the Southwest. Spanish-speaking people had made their homes in the region since the days of the conquistadors in the 1500s. By 1848, from 80,000 to 100,000 Mexicanos, or Mexican citizens, lived in the territories given up by Mexico in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Most of these people remained in the Southwest and became U.S. citizens.

The treaty with Mexico promised Mexican Americans full citizenship rights, the right to keep their property, and the right to use their language. These promises were not kept. Armed with the belief that they were a superior people, white settlers pushed Mexicanos off their land. Whites also made it illegal for Mexicano children to speak Spanish in schools. They found ways to keep Mexicanos from exercising their right to vote.

Mexicanos protested each of these assaults on their rights. But the government did little to protect them. Before long, Mexican Americans found themselves, in the words of one historian, “foreigners in their native land.”

The problems of prejudice, poverty, and lack of political power persisted well into the 20th century. Despite much progress, many of these problems are still with us today.

Yet, Mexican Americans also had a deep influence on their new country. Even though most white settlers had little respect for Mexican Americans, they freely borrowed much that was useful from them. Spanish words and Mexican foods, laws, technology, and architecture all became a lasting part of the Southwest culture. In this chapter, you will learn about many contributions Mexicanos made to American life.

2. Mining

Mining in the West developed in three waves—gold, silver, and copper. Each wave depended on the contribution of Mexican miners. **Mexicanos [Mexicanos: Spanish-speaking people who, in the 1800s, lived in parts of the United States that previously belonged to Mexico] came to the Southwest with a rich mining tradition [tradition: an inherited or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior] .** They knew where to look for precious metals and how to get them out of the ground.

Gold Mining The Americans who rushed to California in 1849 had many skills. But they knew nothing about mining. Mexicanos introduced them to the *batea* (bah-TAY-ah), or gold pan. Miners scooped up mud from streambeds with the batea. Then they swished it around to wash away the lightweight sand. The heavier flakes of gold sank to the bottom of the pan.

Mexicanos also brought the riffle box to the goldfields. The bottom of this long box was crossed with pieces of wood called riffles. As mud washed through the box, the heavy gold sank and was trapped behind the riffles. The riffle box was used extensively by both American and Chinese miners.

Before long, miners discovered that the gold they were picking up in streams came from veins of quartz rock in the Sierra Nevada. Quartz mining was a mystery to Americans, but it was familiar to Mexicanos. Mexicanos taught other miners how to dig the quartz out of mountains. They also showed miners how to use a simple *arrastra* (ar-RAS-trah), or grinding mill, to crush the rock so they could easily remove the gold.

Silver and Copper Mining A Mexicano miner sparked the West’s first big silver strike. In 1859, a prospector named Henry Comstock was looking for gold in Nevada. Much to his annoyance, his gold was mixed with a lot of worthless “blue stuff.” One day, a Mexicano miner looked at the blue stuff and started shouting, “*Mucha plata! Mucha plata!*” (“Much silver!”) In its first 20 years, the Comstock Lode yielded over \$300 million in silver and gold.

Mexicanos discovered copper in the Southwest in the early 1800s. When Americans began to mine copper in Arizona, they turned to Mexican miners for help. By 1940, Arizona mines had produced \$3 billion worth of copper—copper that carried electricity and telephone calls to millions of homes across America.

3. Cattle Ranching

Cattle ranching in the West was built on traditions brought north from Mexico. Spanish colonists imported the first cattle to the Americas. The animals adapted well to the dry conditions of Mexico and the American Southwest. In time, millions of Spanish cattle ran wild in Texas and California.

Spanish cattle were thin, wiry creatures with long, wide-spreading horns. They moved quickly and were dangerous. *Californios* (Mexicanos in California) often found themselves dodging behind trees or diving into ditches to escape the charge of an angry longhorn.



With cattle so abundant, Californios and Tejanos found ranching to be a good business. So did the Americans who learned the cattle business from Mexican *rancheros*, or ranchers.

The Rancho Western cattle ranching was nothing like dairy farming in the East. Eastern dairy farms were small family businesses that produced mostly milk, butter, and cheese. By comparison, western ranchos were huge. In the arid Southwest, large grants of land were needed to provide enough food and water for cattle herds. Instead of dairy products, the main products of ranchos were meat, hides, and tallow (fat).

Ranch life followed traditions that had been developed in Spain and perfected in Mexico. Rancheros spent most of their day on horseback, overseeing their land and herds. Caring for the cattle was the work of hired *vaqueros* (vah-KAIR-ohs), or cowboys.

The Roundup Among the *vaqueros*' most important jobs were the *rodeo*, or roundup, and branding. Branding, or using a hot iron to burn a mark into the hide of cattle, was essential because herds belonging to different owners mixed together on unfenced grasslands. To avoid conflicts, every owner had to mark his cattle with a distinctive brand.

During the *rodeo*, *vaqueros* drove unbranded calves to a roundup area. There, the calves were branded with the brand their mothers bore.

As Americans took up ranching, they adopted the *rancheros*' practice of branding cattle. Along with cowboys and the roundup, cattle brands are still part of ranch life in the West.

4. The Cowboy

Hollywood movies make it seem that nothing is more American than the western cowboy. Cowboys, however, learned their job from the Mexican *vaquero*. Across the Southwest, *vaqueros* were admired for their skill at riding, roping, and handling cattle. American cowboys adopted the *vaqueros*' clothes and gear, as well as much of their language.

Cowboy Clothes and Gear From head to toe, cowboys dressed in clothing borrowed from the *vaqueros*. For example, the cowboys' "tengallon hats," which shaded their eyes and sometimes served as a water pail or a pillow, came from the *vaqueros*' wide-brimmed *sombreros* (sohm-BRER-ohs). The leather chaps that protected the cowboys' legs from cacti and sagebrush were modeled on the *vaqueros*' *chaparreras* (chap-ar-REHR-ahs). The high-heeled, pointed-toe boots that slipped so easily into the cowboys' stirrups were based on the *vaqueros*' *botas* (BO-tas). Even the *poncho* that protected cowboys from cold and rain was borrowed from the *vaqueros*.

Mexicanos also invented the western, or cowboy, saddle, with its useful horn. The saddles brought to America from Europe did not have horns. When a *vaquero* on a European saddle roped a steer, he had to tie his rope to the horse's tail to keep it anchored. This method was hard on both the horse and the rider. By adding a horn to the saddle, *vaqueros* made their job easier—and their horses' job as well.

Cowboys borrowed another essential piece of gear from the *vaqueros*: *la riata* (la ree-AH-tah), or the lariat. *Vaqueros* were masters of the art of throwing a 60-foot rope great distances with amazing accuracy. This skill was especially useful for roping calves during a roundup. In a remarkable display of roping skill, a *vaquero* named José Romero once roped a full-grown eagle right out of the sky.

Cowboy Lingo American cowboys borrowed or adapted many ranching words from the *vaqueros* as well. The terms *bronco*, *stampede*, *corral*, *lasso*, *burro*, *buckaroo*, and *vamoose* all come from Spanish-Mexican words. So do *mesa*,

canyon, mesquite, chaparral, and other terms used to describe the southwestern landscape. The cowboy slang word for jail, *hoosegow*, came from the Spanish *juzgado* (hooz-GA-doh). And of course, the terms ranch and rancher came from *ranch* and *ranchero*.

5. Sheep Raising

In New Mexico, the most important industry was sheep raising. From the founding of the territory up to the Mexican Cession, sheep fed, clothed, and supported Spanish and Mexican settlers.

The Spanish brought a long tradition of sheep raising to the Americas. Two kinds of sheep were raised in Spain: the *merinos* (meh-REE-nohs) with their fine wool and the *churros* (CHURrohs) with their coarse wool. The Spanish brought the scrawny churro to New Mexico, and for good reason. This tough little sheep knew how to survive in a dry environment like that of the Southwest.

The Spanish Sheep-Raising System When Americans came to New Mexico, they did not think of sheep raising as a business. In the East, a farmer might raise a few sheep as a sideline, but not large herds. Once they saw the Spanish sheep-raising system in New Mexico, however, some Americans changed their minds.

Under the Spanish system, sheep raising was a large and well-organized business. The Spanish governor of New Mexico, for example, once owned 2 million sheep and employed 2,700 workers.

At the top of this business stood the *patron* (pah-TROHN), or owner of the herds. Below him were several layers of managers. These supervisors and range bosses spent their days on horseback, checking range conditions and the health of the sheep.

The lowest-level worker was the *pastor* (pahs-TOHR), or herder. Each pastor was responsible for 1,500 to 2,000 sheep. A pastor stayed with his flock night and day, slowly guiding it from place to place so that the sheep could graze as they moved. During spring lambing season, the pastor assisted with difficult births, cared for orphaned lambs, and helped the newborns survive. One pastor described this busy time as a “month-long hell of worry and toil.”

Americans Adopt the Spanish System Americans soon adopted the Spanish system as their own. Large-scale sheep raising spread from New Mexico across the Southwest. In California, the churro was crossed with the merino to produce a sheep with far better wool. As a result, between 1862 and 1880, U.S. wool production soared from 5 million to 22 million pounds a year.

6. Irrigated Farming

Americans coming to the Southwest knew as little about irrigated farming as they did about mining, cattle ranching, and sheep raising. In the East, enough rain fell year-round to water a farmer’s crops. **Irrigation [Irrigation: a system for bringing water to farmland by artificial means, such as using a dam to trap water and ditches to channel it to fields]** was unnecessary and unknown. But in the Southwest, where six months could go by with no rain, irrigation was essential.

Mexicano settlers in the Southwest brought with them irrigation techniques that had been developed centuries earlier in Spain and North Africa. They borrowed other techniques from the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico. When the settlers first arrived, the Pueblos were irrigating from 15,000 to 25,000 acres of cropland in the arid Rio Grande Valley.

The Mexican System of Irrigation Bringing water to fields involved an enormous amount of work. First, farmers had to redirect water from local streams to their fields. They began by building a dam of rocks, earth, and brush across the stream. The water that backed up behind the dam was brought to the fields by irrigation ditches.

To keep from wasting this precious water, Mexicanos carefully leveled their fields. Then they divided the fields into squares. Each square was marked off by a wall of earth high enough to hold in water. When one square had been soaked with water, farmers made a hole in its wall. The water then flowed to the next square. The farmers continued in this way until the entire field was soaked. This method of irrigation was known as the Mexican system.

America’s Fruit Basket Using crops introduced by Mexicanos and the Mexican system of irrigation, American settlers turned the Southwest into America’s “fruit basket.” Among the many fruits brought by Mexicanos to the Southwest were

grapes, dates, olives, apples, walnuts, pears, plums, peaches, apricots, and quinces. Mexicano settlers also brought the first citrus fruits—lemons, limes, and oranges—to the region. Many of these fruits were unknown in the East, where the climate was too cold for them to grow. But they thrived in sunny Arizona and California. With the help of Mexicano farmworkers, American farmers transformed dry deserts into irrigated fruit orchards and citrus groves.

7. Food

In 1835, William Heath Davis became one of the first Americans to settle in California. There he got his first taste of Mexican food. Davis later wrote of the Californios,

Their tables were frugally [simply] furnished, the food clean and inviting, consisting mainly of good beef broiled on an iron rod, or steaks with onions, also mutton [sheep], chicken, eggs . . . The bread was tortillas; sometimes made with yeast. Beans were a staple dish . . . Their meat stews were excellent when not too highly seasoned with red pepper.

Davis may not have known it, but the food he was enjoying in California brought together the best of two worlds.

A Food Revolution The Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1521 began one of the great food revolutions in history. The Spanish came to Mexico in search of gold, but the greatest treasures they found were Indian foods unknown in Europe. These foods included corn, tomatoes, chocolate, peanuts, vanilla, beans, squash, avocados, coconuts, sunflower seeds, and chili peppers.

The Spanish shipped these new foods back to Spain. From there, they spread throughout Europe, greatly expanding people's food choices.

In turn, the Spanish brought the foods of Europe to Mexico. They introduced meats such as pork, beef, lamb, chicken, and goat. They brought nuts and grains such as almonds, walnuts, rice, wheat, and barley. They planted fruits and vegetables such as apples, oranges, grapes, olives, lettuce, carrots, sugarcane, and potatoes (which they discovered in Peru). And they introduced herbs and spices such as cinnamon, parsley, coriander, oregano, and black pepper.

A New Style of Cooking Mexican cooks combined these foods of diverse origins to create a rich and flavorful style of cooking that was neither Indian nor Spanish. It was distinctly Mexican.

As Americans settled the Southwest, they were introduced to Mexican food. Many of them liked the new tastes, and they borrowed recipes from Mexicano cooks. In Texas, the mingling of Mexican and American dishes resulted in a style of cooking known as Tex-Mex. Across America, a spicy stew of beef and beans known simply as chili became as American as apple pie.

8. Architecture



Throughout the Southwest, the Mexicano contribution to architecture is easy to see. Many buildings can be found with the thick walls, red-tile roofs, rounded arches, and courtyards that are typical of Spanish architecture.

Spanish-style architecture took root in Mexico during the colonial period. Mexican settlers brought their knowledge of this tradition to the Southwest. Their missions, homes, and other structures were simple and attractive. They were ideally suited to the hot, dry climate of the Southwest.

Adobe Buildings Since wood was scarce in the Southwest, Mexicanos used adobe (ah-DOH-beh) bricks as their main building material. Adobe is a mixture of earth, grass, and water that is shaped into bricks and baked in the sun. Mexicanos covered their adobe homes with colorful red clay tiles. Besides being attractive and fireproof, a tile roof kept the adobe walls from being washed away during heavy rains.

Many adobe buildings featured patios and verandas. A *patio* is a roofless inner courtyard, often located at the center of a home. A *veranda* is a roofed porch or balcony extending along the outside of a building. Patios and verandas allowed Mexicanos to spend much of their time outdoors while still protected from the hot sun and dry desert winds.

Newcomers Adopt the Spanish Style Americans moving to the Southwest quickly saw the advantages of building with adobe. Because of their thick walls, adobe structures stayed cooler in summer and warmer in winter than the wood buildings that Americans from the East were used to. Adobe structures could also be easily constructed from locally available materials.

American settlers used adobe to build not only homes, but also courthouses, trading posts, post offices, and other buildings. Later, builders adapted Spanish architecture to new materials such as concrete and stucco. By the 1930s, nearly a million Spanish-style homes had been built in California. “Who would live in a structure of wood and brick if they could get a palace of mud?” wrote an admiring easterner. “The adobes [make] the most picturesque and comfortable [homes] . . . and harmonize . . . with the whole nature of the landscape.”

9. Laws

The Mexicanos of the Southwest were used to being governed by Mexican laws. These laws often differed from American laws. For example, Mexico had outlawed slavery in 1829. Slaves from the American South sometimes ran away to find freedom in Mexican settlements. (Recall that Mexico’s abolition of slavery was one of the issues that led Texans to fight for their independence from Mexico.)

In time, both Mexican and American legal traditions would shape laws in the West. Particularly important were Mexicano laws governing mining, water, and community property.

Mining Law Before the discovery of gold in California, there was so little mining in the United States that Americans had no mining law. Once in the goldfields, the forty-niners desperately needed rules to keep order.

With the help of Mexicano miners, Americans developed a “law of the mines” based on Mexican mining law. California miners later carried this law of the mines to other parts of the Southwest.

Water Law The water law brought west by Americans worked well enough in the East, where rainfall was abundant. Under American law, water flowing across a field or farm belonged to the owner of that land. Landowners could use their water in whatever ways they wanted.

This principle did not work well in the West, where water was scarce and precious. Disputes over who controlled streams led to endless legal conflicts and even water wars.

To end these conflicts, settlers wrote new laws based on Mexican “pueblo law.” Pueblo law said that water was too valuable to be owned or controlled by any one person. Instead, water belonged to an entire community and should be used for the benefit of all.

Community Property Law For women, the most important legal principle borrowed from Mexican law was the idea of community property. In eastern states, married women had few property rights. Any property acquired by a married couple—such as a home, farm, or business—belonged solely to the husband.

In contrast, Mexican law said that all property acquired during a marriage was “community property.” If a couple separated, half of that property belonged to the wife, half to the husband.

American settlers liked the idea of sharing the gains of marriage between husband and wife. Today, Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, Wisconsin, and Louisiana are all community property states.

Section 10 - Entertainment

The Californios, observed William Heath Davis, “were about the happiest and most contented people I ever saw.” Californios worked hard. But they also knew how to entertain themselves with music, dance, and fiestas (celebrations). Americans settling the Southwest shared in these entertainments.

Music and Dancing Mexicano music greatly influenced country and western music in the Southwest. The most important contribution was the *corridor* (kor-REE-doh), or folk ballad. A corrido is a dramatic story sung to the **accompaniment** [**accompaniment: a musical or vocal background that supports a piece of music**] of guitars. The subjects of corridos ranged from exciting tales of heroes and bandits to sad songs of love and betrayal.

American settlers admired the color and energy of traditional Mexicano dance. Dancing was an important part of any Mexicano fiesta. Favorite dances included the *jota* (HOH-tah), the *fandango*, and *la bamba*. The last of these, the bamba, was danced by a young woman balancing a full glass of water on her head. Generations of schoolchildren learned another popular dance, the *jarabe tapatio* (hah-RAH-beh tah-pah-TEE-oh), or “Mexican hat dance,” as part of their southwestern cultural heritage.



Fiestas and Rodeos Throughout the year, Mexicanos held a variety of religious fiestas. One of the most important honored Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. In San Antonio, Texas, Tejanos marked this day (December 12) with an elaborate **procession** [**procession: a group of people moving in an slow, orderly way**] to the cathedral. After attending church services, the Tejanos danced all night long in their homes.

Today, the most widely celebrated Mexicano holiday is *El Cinco de Mayo* (el SEEN-koh day MY-oh), which means the Fifth of May. This holiday commemorates an important victory in Mexico’s fight for independence from French rule in 1862. Cinco de Mayo fiestas bring together Mexican and non-Mexican Americans to enjoy Mexicano music, dance, and food.

For millions of Americans, rodeo is an exciting professional sport. Rodeo’s roots go back to cattle roundups on Mexicano ranchos. During these get-togethers, Mexicano cowboys competed with each other in events such as calf roping, bull riding, and bronco busting. American cowboys joined in these contests, and soon rodeos became annual events in western cities. To its many fans, the rodeo, with its mixed Mexicano and American heritage, represents the best of the West.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned about Mexicano contributions to the Southwest and how they have influenced life in the United States.

Mining Mexicano knowledge, skills, and techniques advanced the development of mining in the Southwest. These contributions helped build the gold, silver, and copper mining industries.

Cattle, Cowboys, and Sheep American settlers learned about cattle ranching, cowboy life, and sheep raising from Mexicanos. They adopted Mexicano traditions for raising cattle and sheep. The American cowboy’s language was enriched by Spanish-Mexican words like burro, rodeo, and lasso.

Farming and Food White settlers in the Southwest adopted irrigation techniques that had been pioneered by Mexicanos and Pueblo Indians. They also learned to appreciate Mexicano food.

Architecture, Laws, and Entertainment Today, Mexicano culture survives in such American adaptations as Spanish-style homes and buildings as well as legal traditions regarding mining, water, and community property. Millions of Americans enjoy music, dances, festivals, and rodeos that come from Mexicano traditions.

Create a collage of Mexicano contributions that are found in your community. The items must come from at least three sections of the chapter. Your collage must include:

- 1) at least three or more colorful drawings
- 2) a label for each drawing that includes the name of the contribution and the chapter section it relates to; for example, *Patio: Architecture*.
- 3) one or two paragraphs that explain how these items have influenced or enhanced your life or the lives of Americans today.

Reading Further - Mexicano Culture Today

Just as Mexicanos influenced life in the United States in the 1800s, they influence American life today. In the arts, Mexicanos create beauty as they tell their stories. Through performances and festivals, they share their cultural heritage.



The mural called *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* is half a mile long. It is painted on a concrete wall. In lively pictures, it tells California's history. Images at one end show people who lived in the area long, long ago. Images at the other end show Los Angeles life in the 1950s.

Judith Baca, a Mexican American artist, designed the wall. Neighborhood kids and teenagers painted it. Baca, the director of the Social and Public Art Resource Center in Venice, California, said,

When I first saw the [blank] wall I envisioned a long narrative of another history of California; one which included ethnic peoples, women and minorities . . . The discovery of the history of California's multi-cultured peoples was a revelation to me as well as to the members of my teams.

One panel, for example, shows a scene from the Chavez Ravine neighborhood of Los Angeles. In the late 1950s, the city evicted the area's residents. The city government wanted to use the space to build Dodger Stadium. But at least one resident refused to leave. The mural shows a police officer taking away Aurora Archega. She wears a red dress and clenches her fist. Dodger Stadium looms behind her. This story and others reveal a past that many people do not know about. It is a past that means a lot to the local residents.

The process of making the *Great Wall* has been as important to the local Mexicano community as the wall's content. Between 1974 and 1983, more than 400 young people have contributed to the wall. They were joined by many artists and historians. The wall has truly been a community effort.

Murals Showcase Community

Mural making became important in Mexico about 100 years ago. Murals there taught history to people who could not read. As Mexicans immigrated to the United States, they brought the mural-making tradition with them.

Murals by Mexican Americans now adorn walls in cities beyond Los Angeles and states beyond California. They are part of American culture, and they are different from the art seen in museums. For one thing, they are in public places where everyone can view them without paying an entry fee—or even entering a building. For another, it is not just where they are shown that makes them unique. It is how they are made. Many are made by teams of people, rather than by individual artists.

While each Mexicano mural is unique, many express a neighborhood's identity. Take the "tattoo mural," for example. This mosaic is on a wall on 29th Street in South Tucson, Arizona. It is called the tattoo mural because Mexican American body art inspired many of its images.

"This mural was meant to honor everything that happens in South Tucson," said Alex Garza, one of the lead muralists for the project. That is why the mural overflows with imagery that is meaningful to the people of South Tucson.

Community members themselves produce many murals. As with *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*, young neighborhood residents made the tattoo mural. Garza and Lupe Ruiz oversaw the mural's production. The project was part of Las Artes, a youth development program. The muralists finished high school while they worked at Las Artes.

Murals serve many purposes. They beautify urban neighborhoods. They tell stories that have not been told. They express community pride, and they provide meaningful work for young people who need it. Any way you look at it, the murals are a success story.

Mexicano Theater

The time: 1965. The place: the back of a flatbed truck in the bean fields of California's Central Valley. On this day, the back of the truck serves as a stage. Amateur actors perform plays for Mexicano farmworkers. Based on the farmworkers' lives, the plays tell stories that are familiar to the audience. In fact, the actors are farmworkers themselves.

For years, farmworkers had labored in California's fields for long hours and low pay. In 1965, they formed a union, the United Farm Workers (UFW), to organize for their rights.

The theater in the bean fields was a way to tell the workers' stories. The *actos*, or plays, helped articulate the workers' concerns. The plays became an important part of the political work the UFW was doing.

The theater in the fields was called El Teatro Campesino—The Farmworkers' Theater—and it still exists today. Its performances do not take place in the bean fields any more. Now, El Teatro Campesino (ETC) has its own theater in a former packing plant in San Juan Bautista, California. And it is no longer part of the union. Now it is an independent theater company. But it still tells the stories of the lives of Mexicanos. It still gives voice to their concerns.

El Teatro Campesino has always had a two-part mission. Luis Valdez, the group's founder and artistic director, explained it this way:

Until we had the artists who could express what the people [farmworkers] were feeling and saying, we wouldn't really register politically. Art gives us the tools of that expression.

Today, ETC has spread far beyond the bean fields. The group has performed around the United States, Latin America, and Europe. Luis Valdez has also brought stories about Mexicanos to much larger audiences. *Zoot Suit*, his historically based play about a fight for justice in 1940s Los Angeles, became a Broadway show in 1979. It was made into a movie in 1982.

El Teatro Campesino sparked a Mexicano theater movement. Theater companies formed across the Southwest and in other parts of the country. Like ETC, they showcase Mexicano talent and tell Mexicano stories.

Charro Days and Ballet Folklórico



Mexicano culture is murals and theater, but it is a lot more, too. You can see the influence of Mexicano culture in many parts of American life today.

Once a year, for example, people gather on both sides of the border that separates the United States and Mexico to celebrate Charro Days. Street parties abound. There is food, music and dancing, costumes, and of course the *charros* (CHAR-rohs).

Charros are gentleman cowboys who are known for their brightly colored clothes and wide sombreros. They came from Spain to Mexico hundreds of years ago. Over time, they moved into the southwestern United States. Today, although there are few working cowboys left, people on both sides of

the border celebrate the charros.

Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Mexico—two cities connected by international bridges—hold joint Charro Day celebrations every year. “I believe this is the only parade that starts in one country and ends in another,” says Charro Days president John Patriarca.

You can also see Mexicano influence in the traditional dances called *ballet folklórico* (bahl-LAY fohk-LOHR-ee-koh). The women wear flowing skirts in splashy colors with ruffled blouses. The men wear black pants, waist-length jackets, and wide-brimmed hats.

Ballet folklórico is not one specific dance or even one specific kind of dance. Rather, the term refers to a lot of different dances. Some came from native people. Others came from the Spanish who ruled Mexico for hundreds of years. Still others celebrate Mexican independence. What the dances have in common is that they express the diversity of Mexican life—and Mexican American life.

Ballet folklórico troupes have sprung up across the United States, with many in areas where there is a large Mexicano population. The dance companies help audiences appreciate the heritage that Mexican immigrants brought with them to the United States.

Through the arts, Mexicanos have celebrated their culture and told their stories. Their efforts have inspired pride among Mexicanos and encouraged greater understanding of Mexicanos among other Americans. Their art has also made Mexicano culture a vibrant part of American culture.

Preparing to Write: Analyzing Purpose

An enormous project like The Great Wall of Los Angeles requires a lot of careful planning. This mural is divided into panels, each of which tells a story. The artists who created each panel had to decide the panel's purpose—the story they wanted to tell and why.

- 1) What was Judith Baca's purpose in designing the mural?
- 2) What story did she want to tell?
- 3) What purpose did the artists have in creating the Chavez Ravine panel?
- 4) What was the muralists' purpose in creating the "tattoo mural" in South Tucson, Arizona?

Writing a Design Proposal

Suppose you could help plan a mural like The Great Wall of Los Angeles. Think of a story you would like to tell about your community. You will have one panel in the mural for your story.

Write a design proposal for your mural panel. In your proposal, describe

- 1) the purpose of the mural.
- 2) the story you want to tell.
- 3) how you will show the story in the mural.

Use this rubric to evaluate your design proposal. Make changes in your proposal if you need to.

Score	Description
3	The design proposal clearly describes the purpose and the story. It has sufficient details on how the story will be shown. There are no spelling or grammar errors.
2	The design proposal describes the purpose and the story. It has some details on how the story will be shown. There are few spelling or grammar errors.
1	The design proposal does not describe the purpose and the story. It does not have sufficient details on how the story will be shown. There are many spelling or grammar errors.