Welcome to the Fall issue of *Digging up the Past*. Each Fall, as students return to Washington State University, I find much to celebrate and much history to dig up. On campus, students are settling into their classes, and the staff and students of the Chicanx/Latinx center are gearing up for a month of heritage celebration and education. Many freshmen are getting their first taste of doing primary research in their history 105 courses—enjoying the fact that they get to pick a topic that interests them, but perhaps a big worried about mastering the art of Chicago citations. Hopefully, they are also discovering our campus libraries, where they can find more information on the topics they find in this issue, vol. 3, no. 1 of *Digging*. Wherever you are, we encourage you to also visit your library to do more digging, and to find an event where you can join in the celebration of Latinx Heritage Month.

Because September 15 through October 16th is Latinx Heritage month, this issue includes an essay on Dolores Huerta, one of the cofounders of the United Farm Worker movement (and union). While history celebrations often speak of the important work of César Chávez, they often fail to mention that Dolores Huerta was also critical to the founding of the organization. In relation, they fail to note that it was Larry Itliong, a Filipino organizer, who three years after the union’s founding, bought Chávez and Huerta and Mexican American farm workers into the now famous grape strike of 1965-1970. It was Dolores Huerta who came up with the slogan “Sí se puede!”—which means “Yes we can!” Keep in mind that if you forget the accent mark on “Sí,” then is just means “if we can.” Ooops. Huerta went on to work for a number of critical human rights issues, and in 2012, then President Barak Obama awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom. You can read more about Dolores Huerta in the closing article of this issue.

While September and October are the months when Latinx people throughout the hemisphere fought for independence, we were not alone in our struggles for justice. As noted in our section, “This Day in History,” W.E.B. DuBois founded the *Crisis* in November of 1910. In charge of publications for the NAACP (of which he was a cofounder) DuBois served as editor of the *Crisis* for 23 years, using the publication to speak out against lynchings, imperialism, and economic exploitation. At the same time, he included creative work in its pages. The early twentieth century was a time when publishing houses, because of structural racism, refused to publish most

creative work by Black writers, thus the *Crisis* became a critical tool for Black political activists and artists throughout the nation. Excerpts from early issues of the *Crisis* can be found online at: [https://www.paperlessarchives.com/the_crisis.html](https://www.paperlessarchives.com/the_crisis.html) – check them out.

Several years ago, when writing about the work of Dolores Huerta and Harry Belafonte, Byronn Bain noted that both activists were demonized for the work they did for human rights. He called on his reader to ask,

> Who in our society has been dehumanized as "deviant" because of their inclination to see things differently? Who are the "paranoid" lookouts in our midst attune to the threats to the survival of our communities? How valuable is the vision of those written off as "radical" because it fundamentally challenges the way the rest of us see things.

In their own time, both Dolores Huerta and W.E.B. DuBois, were characterized as too radical (to-date, Dolores Huerta still is). Yet we continue to benefit from their vision and their work. Who in your life/world is seen as too radical? Might it be time and take a second look at their vision? Our future may depend upon it.

Wishing you a productive semester, rich with vision, digging, and action. And keep you eyes open for our Spring issue, which will feature a new editor, Dr. Alan Malfavón.

*Z. Heidenreich Zuñiga*

Washington State University

Fall, 2023


October 6, 1917

Celebrate Fannie Lou Hamer’s Birthday

Fannie Lou Hamer was born in 1917 in Montgomery County, Mississippi. When she was just twelve years old, she was pushed out of school to work full-time in the fields. While she did not have access to formal education, she went on to be one of the most well-known political organizers of the late twentieth-century. In the 1960s, she was active in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and cofounded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. It was the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party that, in 1964, directly and effectively challenged the white supremacist practices Southern Democrats at the Democrats national convention. One of her most famous quotations is “Nobody’s free until everybody’s free.” Hamer was often arrested for her activism, at times brutally beaten by the police, but she persisted. Because of her activism, Americans have many of the voting rights we have today. Learn more at the SNCC Digital Gateway, [https://snccdigital.org/people/fannie-lou-hamer/](https://snccdigital.org/people/fannie-lou-hamer/).

Honor the work and memory of Fannie Lou Hamer by:

⇒ Learning about the history of voting rights.
⇒ Making a poster about voting rights, about the history of Civil Rights in America, or about Ms. Hamer (think about posting it in your school library).
⇒ Writing a haiku about Fannie Lou Hamer and submitting it to Digging up the Past (see details in this issue).
⇒ Asking your parent or guardian about the first time they voted and what voting means to them.

Learn More about this Powerful Woman:

Books:


Youtube Videos:
Fannie Lou Hamer Risked Her Life for the Right to Vote, Smithsonian Channel, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J99ldHD6geQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J99ldHD6geQ).
Fannie Lou Hamer’s testimony before the Senate Credential’s Committee (audio only), Fanny Lou Hamer Institute, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRCUUpzFV7k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRCUUpzFV7k).
College-level history courses enable you to explore aspects of the past that are important and interesting to you. The field of history allows you to ... “dig up the past.”

“Fraternal Kiss” Painting on the Berlin Wall, by Shenghao Zhu, History 105

On October 7, 1979, the chairman of the presidium Soviet Union, Brezhnev, and East German president Erich Honecker kiss in East Berlin, photographer Régis Bossu takes the photo and names it “Fraternal Kiss.” The photo quickly became famous. Eleven years later, in 1990, artist Dmitri Vrubel painted the photo on the Berlin Wall, which became one of the famous paintings of the Berlin Wall. The painting suffered erosion after several years, but he repainted it in 2009. Why did Vrubel paint the “Fraternal Kiss” on the Wall? Because the Berlin Wall is one of the most important parts of German history. It tells people the importance of unity.

In 1961, the Berlin Wall was built, and the Soviet Union and East German governments tried to stop East Germans from going to the West. The Wall left many families and friends divided into two places. Some people tried to cross the Berlin Wall, and many took to the streets to protest. Although the Wall divided them for 18 years, Germans were still united. The night the Wall came down Germans cried and hugged each other. The fall of the Berlin Wall is an important historical event because one year later, East Germany and West Germany were united again. This is a perfect example of how unity can do anything. For this project I used newspapers, scholarly articles, and a memoir.

“The Ballroom Era,” By Jaz Harvey, History 369

The Ballroom was instrumental in creating a safe and inclusive queer subculture in major cities around the US. Ballroom culture was born out of a need for community and blossomed into a celebration of queer people, and self-expression. Ballroom culture started in Harlem, New York with Black fraternal organizations giving queer performers a space to be free. This grew into a subculture that housed, fed, and inspired many queer performers, activists, and journalists who worked to make America safer for queer people. This foundation inspired new generations who viewed gender expression with fresh eyes and were more open to accepting people different from them.

I found out about drag before I learned about ballroom culture; though the two are undeniably tied to one another ballroom is the umbrella through which gender expression, in queer subcultures, was made popular. I first learned about the culture watching Pose, and this sent me on a mission to learn about the history and the specific people who made a community safe and welcoming to those who were unwelcome in their own homes. Through my research I found a many sources from graduate students and professors of gender studies who were trying to share the history that has often been ignored by media. The history of ballroom culture is expansive and has played a role in many watershed moments in the queer rights movement. It’s important to understand the ways in which intersectionality played into queer rights and queer acceptance in America, and through the lens of ballroom it is interesting to see how race, gender, sexuality, class, and age play into the conversation surrounding queer acceptance.
Here you have a sampling of the many history projects completed by undergraduate students at Washington State University in Fall of 2021.

“How Castro Revolutionized the Cuban Economy and Moved it Into the Modern Age,” by Michael Lozdernik, History 105

Fidel Castro was a Cuban communist revolutionary and politician who was the Prime Minister of Cuba from 1959 to 1976, and then the President from 1976 to 2008. Castro led the 26th of July Movement, which overthrew the government of Cuban President Fulgencio Batista in 1959, and subsequently ruled Cuba as its leader for almost five decades. Castro's revolution was a response to the corruption and oppression of Batista's government and was driven by a desire to create a more equal and just society in Cuba. Despite facing opposition from the United States and other countries, Castro was able to implement several successful social and economic policies, including universal healthcare and education.

Castro’s early life was that of wealth, which gave him access to higher education. In college, he studied law. During his time there, he participated in political discussions and became involved in politics. He participated in attempts to overthrow various administrations and aligned himself with defending the poor and those who challenged the government. While in college, he also studied political texts, among them the speeches of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Spanish Falange. He hated both the capitalistic consumerism and extreme Marxist, opting for a middle ground of being decent to one another and having “strength through unity.”

“Satanic Panic,” by Shawn Radford, History 469

This research project examines satanic panic during the 1980s and early 1990s to ask: was the spread of satanic panic fueled by the media and fear of societal change? To answer this question, I used sources that consisted of news articles from the period, as well as books written by people claiming to be survivors of satanic cults. Additional sources were sociological books and scholarly/refereed articles on the topic. My research found that during the decade of the 1980s a new moral and physical threat began to arise to strike fear into the heart of America. People feared that Satan worshipers were committing widespread abductions, rape, and murder regardless of age but particularly of babies and young children, all under the nose of the unwitting American citizens. I found that the satanic panic of the 1980s and 1990s was not the first moral panic to arise in the United States nor was it the only one to involve fears of satanic cults committing unspeakable acts; in fact, there is a long history of previous moral panics. The times of panics often share common challenges such as rapid culture and, or economic change.
History Haiku: Get Published (college and high school students)!

**Haiku:** Poems that have five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third (a total of seventeen syllables). Their lines do not rhyme. *They recreate a single image/moment in time.*

Haiku is a form of poetry that uses few words to create a vivid image of a snapshot in time. It was popularized by Matsuo Basho in seventeenth-century Japan. In history classes at WSU, students sometimes write “history haiku,” short poems of three lines, capturing a specific moment/historical event from the past, or celebrating the power of history.

While “American haiku” sometimes plays loose and free with the number of syllables in each line of poetry, in Dr. H’s classes students adhere to the traditional 5-7-5 standard: line one of the haiku must be five syllables, line two seven and, and line three five.

**A method for crafting history haiku:**

♦ Sit and reflect on a specific moment in history, picture that moment in your mind. What does it feel like to be in that moment? What do you see?

♦ Pick up your pen and write three lines to paint the image. Do not worry about syllables, simply write three lines that capture that moment in time.

♦ Edit each line for syllables and imagery. Is there a word that brings out your image more vividly than the words in your draft? If so, bring those words into your poem. Does your poem have 10 syllables in line two? Then you must find synonyms for some of your words that have fewer syllables, or delete some words.

♦ While editing, be sure to keep the image fresh and vivid in your mind.

♦ Enjoy!

Below are two poems by WSU history students. Mila Montoya’s poem addresses the power of history, while John Hentges’ work focuses his readers on a specific struggle for freedom.

Mila Montoya, History 369, Spring 2023

Yo soy un libro
of histories and mysteries
a sacred scripture

John Hentges, History 369, Spring 2023

Harsh desert winds blow,
North Stars guide a mother home
Journey to new hope

Would you like to see your creative work in print? Craft a haiku for a project you are researching and send your polished work to Dr. Heidenreich Zuñiga at Lheidenr@wsu.edu. In the subject line, be sure to write “history haiku.” Our editing team will pick the top submissions to publish in the winter or spring editions of *Digging up the Past* (the theme of the winter edition is African American and Black history). High school students are welcome to submit!
September 8, 1965: Larry Itliong, head of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, calls a strike against grape growers in California. He invites César Chavez and the United Farmer Worker Association to join the strike (Zinn).

While many people know about the leadership of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta in the famous Grape Strike of 1965-1970, not as many know that it was the Filipino workers who began the strike. Larry Itliong and Philips Ver Cruz were the leaders of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee when the workers voted to strike (at the time agricultural workers did not even have the right to form a union, and were paid far below the minimum wage). Itliong asked the United Farm Worker Association to join the strike, and together the new union marched to victory (learn more at [https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/delano-grape-strike/](https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/delano-grape-strike/)).

Sep 11, 1973: A CIA-backed coup succeeds in overthrowing the democratically elected Marxist government in Chile. This marks the start of U.S.-backed Gen. Augusto Pinochet's 17-year rule, which is notoriously known for massive human rights violations (UW).

September 14, 1911: El Primer Congreso Mexicanista took place in Laredo, Texas. Its goal was to discuss issues that the Mexican and Chicano communities faced in the United States, including labor, social, economic, and educational ones (HL).

September 16, 1810: Father Miguel Hidalgo y Castillo makes the cry, or “grito” of liberation from the church tower in Dolores, Guanajuato, marking the beginning of the Mexican Revolution (LOC).
October 2, 1967: Thurgood Marshall sworn in as the first Black Supreme Court Justice (TBH).

October 6, 1917: Fannie Lou Hamer, freedom fighter, is born. (TBH)


November, 1968: Shirley Chisholm becomes first Black woman elected to Congress, representing Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, NY, (TBH.)

November 9, 1980: The SF Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band performs at Davies Symphony Hall, the first time that an LGBTQ group performs in any major symphony hall in the world (SFG).

November 9, 1980: The SF Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band performs at Davies Symphony Hall, the first time that an LGBTQ group performs in any major symphony hall in the world (SFG).

November 20, 1969: Native American activists occupy Alcatraz Island for a second time. The occupation lasts about two years, ending June 11, 1971 after some of their demands for basic rights are agreed to by the US government (SFG).

Dolores Huerta: An Activist of Her Time, and Ours

By L. Heidenreich Zuñiga, PhD

Monument celebrating work of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chávez at San José State University.
Photo by Katherine D. Harris. Wikimedia Creative Commons.

What makes a girl or woman decide to become an activist? Does she decide? Or does history decide for her? Focusing on the history of one activist, Dolores Huerta, can teach us about the many critical issues Chicanas faced in the late twentieth century. The late twentieth century was a time of liberation movements because the needs of the people of the United States were so great. Racism structured public education, farm workers were not allowed to demand contracts, and race and gender discrimination was taken for granted in many workplaces. Thus Dolores Huerta came of age in a time, much like ours, where people were eager to fight for justice. Facing the many challenges of her life, instead of turning away from them, helped make her one of the fiercest activists of the late twentieth century.

The challenges Huerta faced as a young girl fueled her commitment to justice. She was born into a working-class family in Dawson, New Mexico, in 1930. Her parents divorced when she was just five, and so she moved with her mother to Stockton, California, a place of wide-open fields, and hard-working people (and very very hot summers).¹ Her mother often worked two jobs to support her family, but made sure Dolores was able to be active in Church groups and in Girl Scouts. Huerta was an active Girl Scout for ten years. As an adult she looked back and noted “Being a Girl Scout from the time I was eight to eighteen taught me many things. It built my self-confidence and taught me not to be shy about speaking in public.”²


In high school, she was an A student, and excelled in composition. One of her teachers, unfortunately, did not believe that a young Chicana could produce the quality of essays she turned in and so accused her of plagiarism. This event was one of many events that would turn the young Dolores Huerta onto the path of Chicana activism.\(^3\)

Growing up in an agricultural town, the young Dolores Huerta dreamed of becoming a teacher, working in the public schools, and helping farm worker children make it through the school system. After high school, earned her B.A. and teaching credential, and began her career as a schoolteacher. But once she started teaching, and seeing the poverty that so many students lived in, she realized that too much work needed to be done outside the classroom if farm worker children were even to succeed in school. And so began looking for ways to challenge the unjust world around her.

It was when she was in her twenties, that doors opened for her to being working directly for a more just society. In 1955, she met a political activist by the name of Fred Ross, the founder of the Community Service Organization (CSO). The CSO was just that—an organization committed to creating resources in working class and low-income communities, mentoring people into leadership, and advocating for people’s rights. This was a turning point in her life. From 1955 until 1962, when she joined César Chávez to help found the United Farm Workers, Huerta worked to change the world in which working class and poor children lived. She fought police harassment and worked for health care for low-income families. She also lobbied for voting rights and for bilingual driver’s license exams. Her lobbying experience was an asset when, with César Chávez, she went on to co-founded the UFW.\(^4\)

![Image of Dolores Huerta at the 1965-70 Grape Strike](image-url)

Dolores Huerta at the 1965-70 Grape Strike. Because the strike was successful, it helped with the “right to contract” for agricultural workers. “Huelga” means strike in both Spanish and Tagalog. Image from Wikimedia Creative Commons.

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3. Beagle García, 41-44.
The founding of the United Farm Worker movement was filled with struggle, but because of the strong coalitions the founders built, it also saw many successes. In 1962, Cesar Chávez, whom Huerta met at the CSO, asked the organization for resources to work organizing farm workers. When the CSO rejected his request, Huerta and Chávez resigned and together founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) – which would later become the United Farm Workers (UFW). Three years later, in 1965, Larry Itliong and Filipino workers belonging to the Agricultural Worker’s Organizing Committee asked the NFWA to join them in a strike for better wages and working conditions. The two organizations together became one union and fought a five-year battle, beginning with a strike and ending with a strike and national boycott of grapes. The strike and boycott catapulted the Farm Worker movement into national attention, and won better wages and a negotiated contract for the workers.  

As the union grew, Dolores Huerta continued to play a significant role both in its administration and on the ground. Throughout the 1960s, Huerta was the Union’s primary contract negotiator. In the 1970s, after negotiating several contracts guaranteeing minimal wages, bathrooms, and health benefits, she successfully lobbied the State Legislature and the Governor of California to pass and sign the Agricultural Labor Relations Act (1975). For the first time in the history of the U.S. there was state legislation guaranteeing the right of farm workers to engage in collective bargaining.

By the nineteen eighties, Huerta had begun to focus much of her energy on pesticide control. Growers continued to use highly toxic pesticides in the fields, often without worker protections. It was in the 1980s, as well, that Huerta was hospitalized due to police brutality. At a nonviolent demonstration where she spoke out on pesticide abuses, police beat her so badly they broke her ribs and ruptured her spleen. In the 1980s she also worked as a spokesperson for feminist causes, and following her recovery from the police assault campaigned for the Feminist Majority’s Feminization of Power Campaign. It was not until 2002 however, that she was able to found her own organization, dedicated to training community leaders in their struggles for community health, equal access to education, just wages, and sustainable environments.

Dolores Huerta’s life of activism was possible because throughout her life, she chose activism. From her time as a Girl Scout, to fighting for voting rights with the Community Service Organization, to working for farm worker rights, to working for women’s rights, Dolores Huerta moved forward, and brought her many communities with her. She followed her conscience, even when turning away from the challenge would have been much easier. At times she faced violent opposition. Yet her work was successful, with gains in worker rights and protections that now span sixty years, and with several of her own children following in her footsteps as activists. Today, in her 90s, she continues to organize, educate, and protest.

8. Dolores Huerta Foundation.

Read about Huerta’s Life and Labor:


Dolores Huerta: Warrior for Justice

ACROSS
3 Throughout the 1970s, Huerta negotiated ____________ for the union.
6 When she was a girl, Huerta was an active Girl ________.
7 The young Huerta dreamed of becoming one of these:
10 In 1955, she worked for the Community Service _____________.

DOWN
1 In UFW, what does the W stand for?
2 __________ beat her and broke her ribs when she spoke at a protest.
3 The last name of the organizer with whom she founded the UFW:
4 In what town did Dolores Huerta grow up?
5 This word means "Strike."
8 The leader of the Filipino workers was named Larry _________.
9 This is number of years the grape strike and boycott lasted.
While most history majors go on to teach in secondary schools, there are many things you can do with a degree in history. According to the American Community Survey, this is where history majors go on to work:

18% Education: Teaching, Training, Library Sciences.
11% Legal Profession: Paralegals, Law Clerks.
10% Sales.
10% Support.
10% Admin.

For more information, see https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/april-2017/history-is-not-a-useless-major-fighting-myths-with-data
Fall History Quiz (all answers can be found in this edition of *Digging up the Past*)

Founded by W.E.B. Dubois and the NAACP in 1910, this journal published political articles and creative work.

Quotable Past
This activist was born in 1917. One of her famous quotations is “Nobody’s free until everybody’s free.”

Dolores Huerta worked with this organization from 1955 until 1962. It was there that she met César Chávez.

In 1965, he asked the National Farm Workers Association to join their strike:

How many syllables are in a History Haiku?

(hint)
With pride she marches
Reminds us “Sí se puede!”
Onward to justice

Bring your answers to the Department of History Wilson-Short 301 for your LOADED HISTORY MUG!
National Honor Societies

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