

What defines or makes someone welcome or unwelcome in the U.S. in the context of immigration?



U.S. Border Patrol Museum. "Operation Wetback," U.S. Border Patrol Museum Archives, 9 June 1954.

Supporting Questions

1. What was the purpose of Operation Wetback?
2. What were the opinions of the various groups involved or affected by Operation Wetback?
3. What are some parallels that can be drawn with the issue of immigration today?

Compelling Question: What defines or makes someone welcome or unwelcome in the U.S. in the context of immigration?

Standards and Content	(4) History. The student understands the causes and impact of the Mexican American civil rights movement from the 1930s to 1975. The student is expected to: (A) explain the significance of the following events as turning points relevant to Mexican American history: Operation Wetback.
Staging the Compelling Question	Reflect on your family history, what were the reasons your family came to the U.S. and did you/do you feel welcomed? Keep in mind, everyone immigrated here.

Supporting Question 1

What was the purpose of Operation Wetback?

Formative Performance Task

Have students create a timeline that chronologically organizes the dates of following events:

- *The Mexican Revolution,
- *WWI start and end for the U.S.
- *Black Thursday of the Great Depression
- *WWI start and end for the U.S.
- *Operation Wetback start and end date
- *Mexico declares war on Axis powers
- *Executive Order 9066
- *Bracero Program start and end

Featured Sources

Source A:
<https://guides.loc.gov/latinx-civil-rights/bracero-program>

Source B:
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/japanese-american-internment-camp-newspapers/articles-and-essays/timeline/>

Source C:
<https://www.history.com/news/operation-wetback-eisenhower-1954-deportation>

Source D:
<https://guides.loc.gov/chronicling-america-mexican-revolution>

Supporting Question 2

What were the opinions of the various groups involved or affected by Operation Wetback?

Formative Performance Task

Students will analyze the different sources newspaper/pamphlet sources related to Operation Wetback and determine what their general point of view was.

- *What did the document reveal about the government's perspective?
- *How might this have affected the families involved?

In what ways does this relate to today's immigration situation?

Featured Sources

Source A: Federal Government Response
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lc-cn/sn93065779/1956-05-07/ed-1/seq-10/#date1=1954&index=1&rows=20&words=Oper+OPERATION+Operation+WETBACK+Wetback&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1963&proxtext=%22operation+wetback%22&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=y&earRange&page=1>

Source B: Catholic Priest POV:
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lc-cn/sn83007243/1954-07-23/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=1954&index=17&rows=20>

Supporting Question 3

What are some parallels that can be drawn with the issue of immigration today?

Formative Performance Task

Students will create a visual representation (e.g., infographic, poster) that illustrates the impact of Operation Wetback on Mexican American communities and its relevance to current immigration debates.

Featured Sources

Source A:
<https://origins.osu.edu/milestones/may-2014-immigrant-deportations-today-and-continuing-legacy-operation-wetback>

Source B:
<https://remove-its.com/https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2024/02/26/trump-immigration-deportation-eisenhower-operation/>

Source C:
<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/obamas-deportation-policy-numbers/story?id=41715661>

Source D:
<https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/i>

C3 TEACHERS

	<p>etbacks%22&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1</p> <p>Source C: Mexico’s POV https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lc/sn83045462/1954-01-16/ed-1/seq-2/#date1=1954&index=1&rows=20&words=good+Wetbacks&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1955&proxtext=wetback+good&y=0&x=0&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1</p> <p>Source D: The Immigrant’s POV: https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lc/sn83045462/1956-08-27/ed-1/seq-9/#date1=1954&index=1&rows=20&words=wetbacks&searchType=basic&sequence=0&state=&date2=1956&proxtext=%22wetbacks%22&y=11&x=17&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1</p>	<p>mmigration-migration/immigration-issues/</p>
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Summative Performance Task	<p>ARGUMENT: What defines or makes someone welcome or unwelcome in the U.S. in the context of immigration? Students will create a poster that welcomes or rejects Hispanics in the current or historical context using relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging the alternative competing point of view.</p> <p>EXTENSION: Participate in a Socratic Seminar about Hispanic immigration in the U.S., incorporating personal experiences and perspective (e.g. from conversations, media, television/movies, home, etc.).</p>
Taking Informed Action	<p>UNDERSTAND & ASSESS: Research and discuss current immigration issues in Texas or the U.S. (border security, types of visas, human rights of immigrants, etc...)</p> <p>ACT Using what you have learned from this lesson, write to an outside institution (e.g. a media outlet, a government representative, an NGO, etc...) and discuss the current policies or issues with suggestions about what further steps are needed.</p>

**Featured sources are suggested and links are provided. It may be that these links are broken and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience.*

Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of what defines or makes someone welcome or unwelcome in the U.S. in the context of immigration. This inquiry highlights the following additional standards:

(4) History. The student understands the causes and impact of the Mexican American civil rights movement from the 1930s to 1975. The student is expected to:

(A) explain the significance of the following events as turning points relevant to Mexican American history:
Operation Wetback.

It is important to note that this inquiry requires prerequisite knowledge of the historical context surrounding immigration policies, the Great Depression, WWII, and events leading to the start of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement in American history.

Note: This inquiry is expected to take three or 45-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (e.g., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, featured sources, writing). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their students. This inquiry lends itself to differentiation and modeling of historical thinking skills while assisting students in reading the variety of sources.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question, "What defines or makes someone welcome or unwelcome in the U.S. in the context of immigration?" students will engage in the following activities:

Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, reflect on your family history: What were the reasons your family came to the U.S.? Did you/do you feel welcome? Keep in mind, everyone immigrated here.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question—what was the purpose of Operation Wetback?

The formative task is to have students create a timeline that chronologically organizes the dates of the following events:

- The Mexican Revolution
- WWII start for the U.S
- WWII end for the U.S.
- Black Thursday of the Great Depression
- Operation Wetback start date
- Operation Wetback end date
- Mexico declares war on Axis powers
- Executive Order 9066
- Bracero Program start
- Bracero Program end

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

- Provide students with primary and secondary sources related to each event.
- Guide students in researching and verifying the dates and significance of each event.
- Facilitate group discussions to compare findings and ensure accuracy.
- Assist students in creating a visual timeline that clearly displays the chronological order of events.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources:

- Annotated bibliographies for each event
- Graphic organizers to help students organize their research
- Access to digital archives and databases for sourcing primary documents
- Rubrics to guide students in evaluating the reliability and relevance of source

Featured Sources are:

- [Source A](#)
- [Source B](#)
- [Source C](#)
- [Source D](#)

Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question is “What were the opinions of the various groups involved or affected by Operation Wetback?”

The formative task is students will analyze different newspaper and pamphlet sources related to Operation Wetback and determine their general points of view.

- What did the document reveal about the government's perspective?
- How might this have affected the families involved?
- In what ways does this relate to today’s immigration situation?

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

Modified Four Corners Protocol:

- **Preparation:** Post one of the four different sources on each of the four walls of the classroom.
- **Grouping:** Divide the class into four groups.
- **Activity:** Have each group read and analyze the posted source on their assigned wall. Each group will then write what they determine to be the main point of the source, focusing on the perspective it presents.
- **Rotation:** Groups rotate to the next wall, read the new source, and add to or refine the main points identified by the previous group. Continue until all groups have analyzed all sources.
- **Discussion:** Facilitate a class discussion where each group shares their findings and reflects on the different perspectives.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources:

- **Graphic Organizers:** Provide templates to help students organize their thoughts and identify key points from each source.
- **Guiding Questions:** Supply a list of questions to prompt deeper analysis and ensure students focus on relevant details.
- **Vocabulary Lists:** Offer definitions and explanations of key terms and concepts to aid comprehension.
- **Annotated Sources:** Provide versions of the sources with annotations that explain difficult passages or historical context.

The following sources were selected to ...

- [Federal Government Response](#)
- [Catholic Priest POV](#)
- [Mexico’s POV](#)
- [The Immigrant’s POV](#)

Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question, “What are some parallels that can be drawn with the issue of immigration today?”

The formative task is students will create a visual representation (e.g., infographic, poster) that illustrates the impact of Operation Wetback on Mexican American communities and its relevance to current immigration debates.

Teachers may implement this task with the following procedures:

1. **Research Phase:**
 - Provide students with a selection of primary and secondary sources related to Operation Wetback and current immigration issues.
 - Guide students in analyzing these sources to identify key themes, impacts, and parallels.
2. **Planning Phase:**
 - Have students brainstorm and outline their visual representation, deciding how to best illustrate the historical and contemporary connections.
 - Encourage students to consider various formats (e.g., infographic, poster) and choose the one that best suits their message.
3. **Creation Phase:**
 - Provide students with materials and tools (e.g., digital design software, poster boards, markers) to create their visual representation.
 - Offer guidance on effective design principles, such as clarity, organization, and visual appeal.
4. **Presentation Phase:**
 - Have students present their visual representations to the class, explaining the parallels they found and the significance of these connections.
 - Facilitate a class discussion to compare and contrast the different visual representations and deepen understanding.

The scaffolds and other materials may be used to support students as they work with sources:

- **Graphic Organizers:** Help students organize their thoughts and research findings systematically.
- **Source Analysis Worksheets:** Guide students in critically evaluating each source for content, perspective, and reliability.
- **Design Templates:** Provide templates for infographics and posters to help students structure their work.
- **Checklists and Rubrics:** Offer clear criteria for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of their visual representations.

The following sources were selected to ...

- [Source A](#)
- [Source B](#)
- [Source C](#)
- [Source D](#)

Summative Performance Task

Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students will create a poster that welcomes or rejects Hispanics in the current or historical context using relevant evidence from sources while acknowledging alternative competing points of view.

Students' arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- **Welcoming Perspective:**
 - Historical contributions of Hispanic immigrants to the U.S. economy and culture.
 - The importance of diversity and multiculturalism in enriching American society.
 - Humanitarian arguments for welcoming immigrants seeking better opportunities and safety.
- **Unwelcoming Perspective:**
 - Concerns about economic competition and job displacement for American workers.
 - National security issues and border control.
 - Cultural assimilation challenges and the preservation of American values.

To support students in their writing:

- **Provide Clear Guidelines:** Offer a detailed rubric that outlines the criteria for a strong argument, including the use of evidence, clarity of reasoning, and acknowledgment of alternative viewpoints.
- **Use Graphic Organizers:** Provide templates to help students structure their arguments logically, ensuring they include an introduction, supporting evidence, counterarguments, and a conclusion.
- **Offer Writing Workshops:** Conduct sessions focused on writing skills, such as developing a thesis statement, integrating quotations, and using transitional phrases.

To extend their arguments:

- **Encourage Peer Review:** Have students exchange drafts with classmates for feedback on clarity, coherence, and the strength of their arguments.
- **Incorporate Multimedia:** Allow students to use digital tools to enhance their posters with images, videos, and infographics that support their points.
- **Connect to Current Events:** Encourage students to link their arguments to recent news articles, reports, or statistics on immigration.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by:

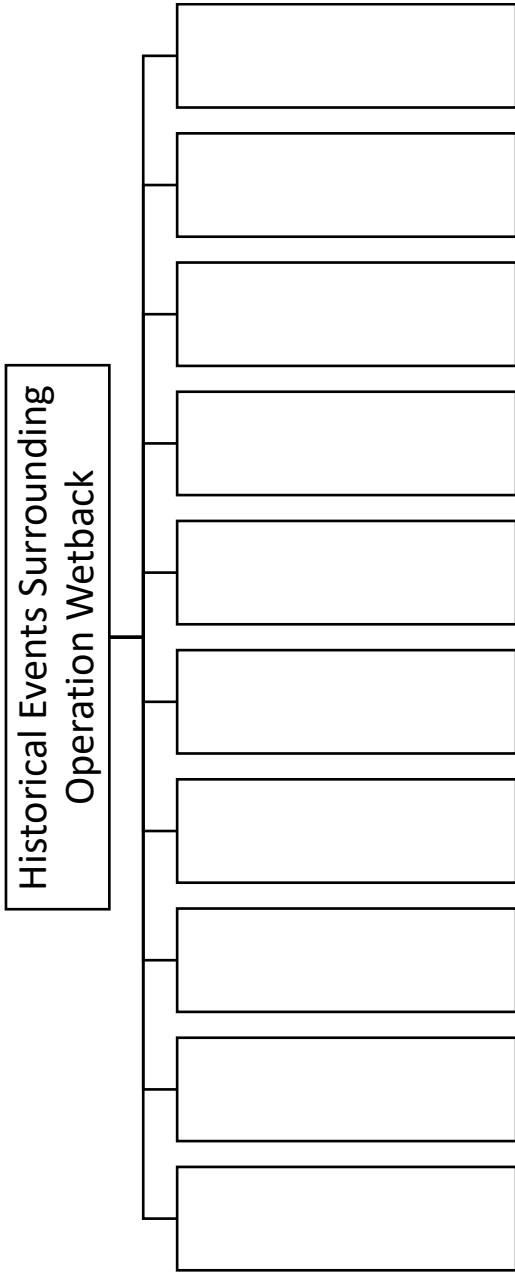
- **Researching Current Issues:** Investigate and discuss current immigration issues in Texas or the U.S., such as border security, types of visas, and the human rights of immigrants.
- **Writing to an Outside Institution:** Using what they have learned from this lesson, students will write to a media outlet, government representative, or NGO to discuss current policies or issues and suggest further steps that are needed. This will help students apply their knowledge to real-world contexts and engage in civic participation.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____

Timeline Worksheet

Directions: Complete the timeline by researching the information using the following events with an included brief discretion for each event.

- The Mexican Revolution
- WWII start for the U.S
- WWII end for the U.S.
- Black Thursday of the Great Depression
- Operation Wetback start date
- Operation Wetback end date
- Mexico declares war on
- Axis powers
- Executive Order 9066
- Bracero Program start
- Bracero Program end



Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____

Four Corners Worksheet

Directions: View each article and answer the questions as it related to each respective source.

<p>Source A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the document reveal about the government's perspective? • How might this have affected the families involved? • In what ways does this relate to today's immigration situation? 	<p>Source B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the document reveal about the government's perspective? • How might this have affected the families involved? • In what ways does this relate to today's immigration situation?
<p>Source C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the document reveal about the government's perspective? • How might this have affected the families involved? • In what ways does this relate to today's immigration situation? 	<p>Source D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the document reveal about the government's perspective? • How might this have affected the families involved? • In what ways does this relate to today's immigration situation?

Source A: The Lincoln times. [volume] (Lincolnton, N.C.) 190?-1965, May 07, 1956, Section Two, Page 4, Image 10
Image provided by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, Chapel Hill, NC via the Library of Congress Databases

Persistent link: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93065779/1956-05-07/ed-1/seq-10/>

“OPERATION WETBACK”—
An age-old problem has been called the top operational achievement of the Immigration and Naturalization Service during 1955.

In a report on 1955 activities, Commissioner J. M. Swing said: “Operation **Wetback**, completed last year, brought effective control of the southwest border for the first time. Continued vigilance and effective use of men and equipment has maintained that control.”

Swing pointed out that the flow of illegal wetbacks across the United States-Mexican border in 1955 was more than 90 per cent less than for 1954. Before **Operation Wetback**, he said, Border Patrolmen were picking up 3,000 illegal Mexican entries a day. During 1955 this number was reduced to less than 200 a day.

Swing’s report stated that when the **wetback** apprehensions were near the 3,000 a day figure, many were evading detection, while under present tight control practically all who cross illegally are detected and apprehended.

The report also termed a success the new Service detention policy, under which only those aliens likely to abscond and those whose release would be inimical to the national security or public safety are detained.

Prior to this new policy, many aliens whose papers were not in order were detained. Under the present policy, most aliens with purely “documentary” difficulties are

allowed to proceed to their destination under “parole” or supervision.

After closing of large Service detention facilities, such as Ellis Island, the only sizable groups of aliens detained were illegal Mexican entries, who were kept in staging area camps in Texas and California from two to four days prior to their return to Mexico.

Detentions for 1955 totaled 140,553, including 125,606 Mexicans. In 1954, detentions totaled 386,710 and of that number, 349,730 were Mexican nationals, showing effectiveness of **Operation Wetback** in reducing the necessary number of detentions on the southwest border.

The practice of “paroling” most aliens with documentary troubles to their destination has resulted in less than one per cent violation of parole terms, according to estimates of the Service.

* * *

During 1955, the Government realized in excess of \$15,000,000 from income and continuing liquidations of enemy assets seized during World War II. This amount is several millions more than was received in 1954.

In a year-end report to Attorney General Brownell, Assistant Attorney General Dallas S. Townsend, who heads the Office of Alien Property of the Department of Justice, stated that there had been continued progress in liquidating vested properties, terminating litigation and disposing of pending claims.

Source B: The Catholic times. [volume] (Columbus, Ohio) 1951-current, July 23, 1954, Image 2
 Image provided by Ohio History Connection, Columbus, OH to the Library of Congress Databases
 Persistent link: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83007243/1954-07-23/ed-1/seq-2/>

Priest Advocates Ban On 'Wetback' Traffic

WASHINGTON — Two laws to curb "wetback" traffic across the U.S.-Mexican border were called "powerful instruments for justice and charity" by a priest in testimony before a Senate subcommittee here.

Father Matthew H. Kelly of Houston, Tex., told the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization that the proposed bills would help relieve the plight of Spanish-speaking Americans in the southwest and would squelch communist claims that the United States is "the enslaver of the foreign born."

The priest, who is executive secretary of the regional office maintained by the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish Speaking, said the measures would lessen "grievous wetback scandals" along the 20,000 mile Mexican border.

One of the bills would make it unlawful for an employer to hire any alien known to have entered the country illegally. The other would authorize federal seizure of any vessel or vehicle used to transport "wetbacks"—so-called because some swim or wade across the Rio Grande into the U.S.

Father Kelly, who has spent 12 years working among the Spanish-speaking people in Texas and Cali-

fornia, painted a word picture of "evil and unchristian exploitation" of alien Mexicans who enter the U.S. The illegal entrants live in servility and fear, working on American farms for as little as "a nickel an hour in some cases" under "the most atrocious working and living conditions," he stated.

At the same time, he said, the American farm worker and the naturalized Spanish-American is forced to become a migrant worker in order to get a living wage—"a displaced person in his own land." The entire pattern of exploitation has also caused bitter anti-Yankee feeling in Mexico and has given communist propagandists material for their work in Latin America, Father Kelly said.

He told the Senate group that penalties "are being imposed on the wrong people and I firmly believe that it is time that the blame for wetback disorders was placed where it belongs."

If the American rancher did not hire wetbacks—and, under one of the proposed bills, he would risk arrest for doing so—the wetback traffic would dwindle, Father Kelly said.

Representatives of American rancher interests have opposed the two bills. The Texas Fruit and Vegetable Shippers and Growers' Association called the bills unnecessary.

Father Kelly, in supporting the bills, said the regional office of the Bishops' Committee for the Spanish Speaking has campaigned for many years to secure legislation of this kind.

The Bishops' Committee, composed of sixteen Bishops of the Southwest and West, was formed nine years ago to coordinate the Church's work among Spanish-speaking citizens of the region. Under executive chairman, Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio, the committee works for social justice and spiritual aid to Mexican-Americans, most of whom are Catholics.

Judge Upholds Police Censor Ban On Books

DETROIT — (NC) — The right of Detroit's police censor to ban the sale of paper-bound books he judges obscene has been upheld in the first round of a test case.

In a trial preceded by the announcement by both sides that they would pursue the case to the U.S. Supreme Court if necessary, Recorder's Judge John A. Ricca found a district sales representative guilty of selling a book classified as "objectionable" by the censor. He was fined \$100. The case was set up by prearrangement when the defendant sold a copy of the banned book to Inspector Herbert Case, the police

Source C: Evening star. [volume] (Washington, D.C.) 1854-1972, January 16, 1954, Page A-2 ***, Image 2
Image provided by Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Persistent link: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1954-01-16/ed-1/seq-2/>

Mexico Shuts Border To Workers Seeking United States Jobs

By the Associated Press

MEXICO CITY, Jan. 16.—Mexico closed its borders today to farm workers seeking jobs in the Southwestern United States. The action was in retaliation against a United States "stop-gap" plan for admitting the workers.

In Washington, State Department sources said that despite the sharp Mexican opposition, the United States would go ahead with its new temporary plan. It calls for the Labor Department to set up stations on the United States side of the border for registration of workers.

Under a United States-Mexican agreement which expired at midnight last night, the Mexican government did the recruiting in the interior and sent the laborers to the border for admission.

Patrol Up to Mexico.

The United States view was that it will be up to Mexico to patrol its lengthy border if it wants to prevent all crossings, and if the action results in a cutting down of "wetbacks" it will be all to the good.

"Wetbacks" are workers who slip into the country without registering and who work without proper permits. The United States said it will redouble its efforts to halt the flow of "wetbacks"—so-called because many swim across the Rio Grande border. United States patrols sent more than a million back last year, but about twice that number are believed to have eluded authorities.

Mexico's Foreign and Interior Ministries quickly issued a joint statement attacking the temporary United States program and declaring that Mexico could not "conform" to it. Henceforth, the ministry said, Mexico would not authorize the legal departure of farm workers to the United States.

Protection Lack Stressed.

Officials of Mexican States were ordered to publicize the fact that, since the old agreement had expired, workers leaving the country were no longer given Mexican protection.

The Mexican statement was sharply worded, but like the United States announcement, it left the door open for additional negotiations. It declared the former agreement was on the whole satisfactory.

The United States-Mexican negotiations broke down mainly over the question of wages. Mexico wanted the rate of pay fixed in the new agreement. United States officials want to stick by the arrangement under which the United States Labor Department decided on a "prevailing wage." The Americans pointed out that there is no legal basis in the United States for such fixed wages. For this reason, they could not be provided in an international agreement.

Source D: Evening S (Washington, D.C.), August 27, 1956, Page A-9, Image 9

Image provided by Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Persistent link: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1956-08-27/ed-1/seq-9/>

Wetbacks Force Ship Into Port

TAMPICO, Mexico, Aug. 27 (AP).—Mexican wetbacks being deported from the United States forced the old ship Mercurio Primero to put into this port yesterday in a protest demonstration against crowded shipboard conditions.

Thirty-six of the passengers jumped overboard and four drowned during the demonstration to force the captain to head in here.

About 500 Mexican workers, expelled for entering the United States illegally, were aboard the ship en route from Port Isabel, Tex., to Veracruz.

The workers are commonly called wetbacks because many of them wade the Rio Grande River to enter the United States. The United States Department of Immigration has chartered the Mercurio Primero frequently to return illegal immigrants far down the Mexican coast, so that they would have more difficulty making their way back across the border.

The Mexican press has charged the ship is being overcrowded.

Thirty-two of those who jumped overboard swam to beaches near Tampico. Most of the others aboard got off the ship here but some continued to Veracruz on the ship tonight.

Some who disembarked said they were crowded like animals and that they feared for their safety when one of the ship's engines failed. They said there were only two lifeboats with a total capacity of 96.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____

Visual Representation Worksheet

Directions: Illustrate a visual representation (e.g., infographic, poster) that illustrates the impact of Operation Wetback on Mexican American communities and its relevance to current immigration debates.