



Digital Artifact Exploration for
**HISPANIC HERITAGE
MONTH**



This year, celebrate Latinx heritage by experiencing it.

First, dig through a [digital exhibit of artifacts](#) specially curated by our partners at the Hispanic Division and the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress.

Next, explore the [StoryCorps Archive](#) with ten stories from the [Historias initiative](#), selected by StoryCorps facilitator Mia Raquel.

Then, share your thoughts. Record a meaningful conversation on [StoryCorps Connect](#), a remote recording platform, or the [StoryCorps App](#). Pick a single artifact or story to reflect on — or do them all. Be sure to add the keyword #LatinxHeritage2020 to your interview!

What better way to celebrate?

ARTIFACTS FROM THE HISPANIC DIVISION AND THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

[Latino Soccer, Chicago, Illinois](#)

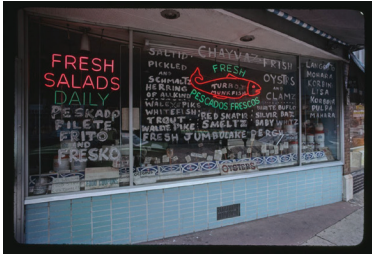
George, Philip B, and Jonas Dovydenas. *Latino soccer, Chicago, Illinois. Chicago Illinois, 1977. Chicago, Illinois. Photograph.* <https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1981004.b52861/>.



- How has teamwork been a part of your life? Have you also been in a sports club or team that identifies as Latinx?
- Reflect on how being part of a team or league like the one shown may impact your sense of identity and community. Did you learn more about your culture through these settings? What does a typical gathering entail?
- Look at this photo in the series: What do you see? Do any of these items look familiar?
- There are three games of soccer being played here, as well as a “paletero” selling ice cream. What are some examples of gatherings and community in your own life?

Mexican American Little Village neighborhood, Chicago, Illinois

Dovydenas, Jonas. *Mexican American Little Village neighborhood, Chicago, Illinois. Chicago Illinois, 1977. Chicago, Illinois. Photograph.* <https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1981004.173/>.



- Look at the images in the Mexican American village series, does this community look familiar to you? How do these spaces help create a sense of community?
- How do similar spaces in your neighborhood impact your sense of belonging in your community and your own identity?
- Reflect on your own neighborhood. How would you describe the stores and gathering spaces in your neighborhood?
- Has your neighborhood changed since you were a child? In the last few years? How so, and why do you think that may be?

José Santana, cigar maker; Little Village neighborhood, Chicago, Illinois

George, Philip B, and Jonas Dovydenas. *José Santana, cigar maker; Little Village neighborhood, Chicago, Illinois. Chicago Illinois, 1977. Chicago, Illinois. Photograph.* <https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1981004.b51719/>.



- Mr. Jose Santana is making cigars from home, a practice that he probably learned in his native Puerto Rico. Are there any skills you learned at home or with family that you continue to practice today?
- Have you learned any traditional art or crafts from your family?
- Do you work from home? In what ways is your work or school work at home different today?

Garden of Roberto and Amelia Leval, Chicago, Illinois

Dovydenas, Jonas. *Garden of Roberto and Amelia Leval, Chicago, Illinois. Chicago Illinois, 1977. Chicago, Illinois. Photograph.* <https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1981004.176/>.



- Do you see any items in this photo that remind you of your neighborhood?
- How would you describe your home? Are there any interesting things that make your home unique?
- Are there any decorations that you consider typical for your culture?
- What does your neighborhood look like? What are some typical items in your home similar or different to others'?

Recording of band Los Amantes at El Romance Club, Chicago, Illinois

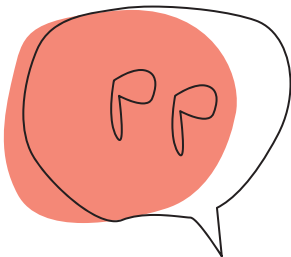
George, Philip B. Recording of band Los Amantes at El Romance Club, Chicago, Illinois, part 1. Chicago, Illinois, July 2, 1977. Audio. https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1981004_afs20771/.



- Do you recognize any of the songs in this recording?
- Are there any Latin music clubs in your neighborhood you like to visit?
- What is your favorite Latin music genre or performer?
- What are some songs that remind you of home?

Interview with Gamaliel Ramírez from the El Taller organization, Chicago, Illinois

George, Philip B, and Gamaliel Ramírez. Interview with Gamaliel Ramírez from the El Taller organization, Chicago, Illinois, part 1. Chicago, Illinois, 1977. Audio. https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1981004_afs20758/.



- Gamaliel and El Taller Collective worked to “develop and promote” local Latinx artists. Do you know any artists in your neighborhood? How did you find out about them?
- Gamaliel wants his murals and the workshops by El Taller to glorify his neighborhood as well as provide documentation for future generations. He believed art could uplift those around him. Have you seen the positive impact of arts in your own life?
- Gamaliel talks about working with neighborhood gangs, local students, the YMCA, as well as issues of gentrification and police violence his community has experienced. In what ways do you think the arts have helped you find common ground or identity with other Latinxs?
- How have you learned about your own community’s history? What are some positive images of your neighborhood?

Aurora Calderon, Eleanor Rodriguez, and Cruz Lozada, group portrait.

Cowell, Sidney Robertson, Collector. Aurora Calderon, Eleanor Rodriguez, and Cruz Lozada, group portrait, photograph. California Oakland, 1939. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017701220/>.



- These 3 women were part of a music group in Oakland, Ca. Do you like to play music with friends?
- Do you consider yourself a creative person? Who is your family would you describe as creative? Why?
- How has music been important to you and your community? How has it brought you together?

Atotonilco

Cowell, Sidney Robertson, Collector. *Atotonilco Mexican*. 1939. Audio. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017701643/>.



- This is a popular Mexican folk song. The singer is going back to his hometown. Do you know any songs that talk about going back home?
- This song serves as a love letter to the singer's hometown. How would you describe the beauty of your own hometown? What would your song's lyrics be?
- The singer describes his hometown as a beautiful place that he is returning to. Have you had to leave your hometown or are you still there? Would you like to return?

Cielito lindo = My sweetheart

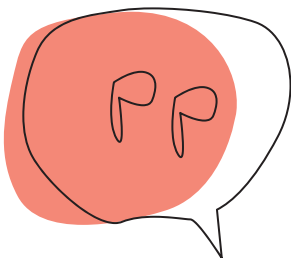
Cowell, Sidney Robertson, Collector. *Cielito lindo = My sweetheart*. 1939. Audio. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017701710/>.



- This is a song known and loved by many across Latin America, the Caribbean and the US. Does this song remind you of anything? When have you heard it?
- What do the lyrics mean to you mean to you? What about the chorus "canta y no llores"?
- What cheers you up when you're feeling down?
- Do you remember a situation where someone or a song has made you feel better?

Fado dos passarinhos

Cowell, Sidney Robertson, Collector. *Fado dos passarinhos = Fado of the little birds*. 1939. Audio. *Fado dos passarinhos = Fado of the little birds textual and melodic transcriptions*. [1939] Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017701624/>.



- Fado is a traditional Portuguese musical genre. People of Portuguese heritage lived side-by-side Latinos in areas like Oakland, CA. Frank Cunha and Alice Lemo's group many times performed traditional Mexican songs as part of their repertoire.
- The singer asks a little bird to lend them their wings so they can fly together and send love to someone dear to the singer. Who would you dedicate this song to if you could?
- Have you ever missed anyone enough to want to write a song, a letter, or a poem for them? What did you say in your song?

STORIES FROM STORYCORPS' HISTORIAS INITIATIVE



Ramon Melendez and Karina Melendez [In Spanish]

Ramon Melendez (56) y su hija Karina Melendez (23) hablan acerca de como era la vida de Ramon cuando se crió en un campo en Mexico donde no tenia muchas opciones para educación, y como llego a los EEUU en los 1980's y encontró éxito como chef y padre.

Ramon Melendez (56) and his daughter Karina Melendez (23) talk about what life was like for Ramon growing up without many options for schooling in Mexico and how he came to the US in the 1980s and found success as a chef and loving father.



Cristina Lash and Sara Velasco

Cristina Lash (35) talks with her mother Sara Velasco (63) about Sara's experience immigrating as a 7 year old from Mexico to the United States, about her long and thriving career as a doctor, and about the incredible goals her immigrant family has accomplished despite adversity



Maritza Cha and Blanca Herdewithini [In Spanish]

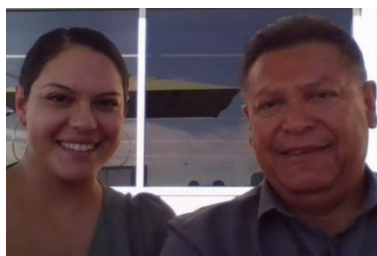
Maritza Cha (37) y su mama Blanca Herdewithini (65) hablan de la conexión bien fuerte que han hecho como madre y hija, a pesar de años muy duros que han pasado mientras tanto Blanca tuvo tres trabajos para hacer que Maritza podría salir adelante en la vida, y Maritza lo ha cumplido con su perseverancia con su educación, también a pesar de la muerte de su padre.

Maritza Cha (37) and her mother Blanca Herdewithini (65) talk about the extremely strong bond that they have as mother and daughter, despite very hard times that have occurred, meanwhile Blanca had three jobs so that Maritza could have opportunities. They talk about how Maritza has accomplished her goals with her education, despite the loss of her father.



Zayn Anthony and Zoyer Zyndel

Zayn Anthony (34) and his friend Zoyer Zyndel (33) talk about Zayn's experience being a drag king and how Zayn decided to transition. The friends talk about the trans community and how Zayn's trans and drag identities intersect and overlap.

**Gina Saldana and Jose Saldana**

Jose Saldana [no age given] shares with his daughter Gina Saldana [no age given] the story of how he got from Mexico to Washington State when he was 17. Jose also shares how he became a US citizen, a custodian in the local school district, a real estate agent, how he started his own real estate agency, and served on city council for 8 years.

**Josephine Hernandez and Yolanda Cottingham**

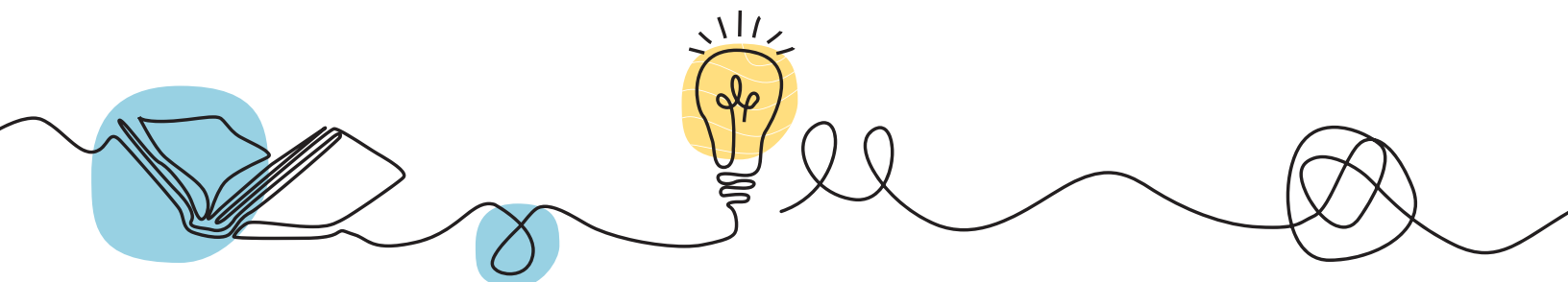
Josephine Hernandez (87) tells her daughter Yolanda Cottingham (63) about growing up during the Depression when her family had to move around looking for work.

**Isabel Esquivil and Christina Ramos**

Isabel Antonia Esquivil ,62, and her sister Christina “Tina” Natividad Ramos, 43, about the history of their family’s “Mex-icatesssen”, La Borinqueña, founded in Oakland, CA by their grandmother in 1944. They now own and run the restaurant, and here they share many stories about growing up in the store.

**Henry Ortega and Sheli Cryderman**

Henry Ortega, 87, interviewed by his friend and fellow Mariachi group member, Sheli Cryderman, 38. Henry talks about developing an early love of music growing up in Oakland, his many memories as director of Mariachi Ortega, and sings some favorite Mariachi songs.





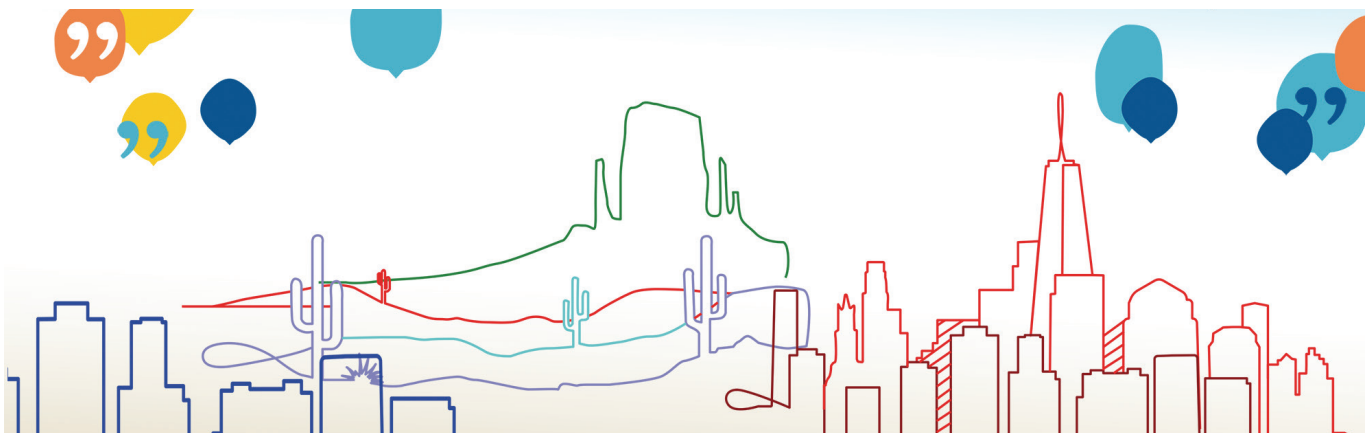
Rosa Acosta and Sofia Munoz

Sofia Munoz (25) interviews her grandmother, Rosa Acosta (80), who was a Cuban refugee fleeing the Castro regime during the 1960's. Rosa gives a first person account of living through and beyond the Revolution. At 80 years of age, Rosa feels that she is a living example of the melting pot that is the United States of America.



Cristina Pacione-Zayas and Steven Rosado

Cristina Pacione-Zayas (41) has a conversation with her friend and comrade Steven Rosado (34) about how they apply their “Chicagoism” to their work in the community.



BEHIND THESE SELECTIONS FROM STORYCORPS

Launched in 2009, [StoryCorps Historias](#) is an initiative to record the diverse stories and life experiences of Latinx people in the United States. Sharing these stories celebrates our history, honors our heritage, and captures the true spirit of this community. It will also ensure that the voices of Latinx people will be preserved and remembered for generations to come.

We asked facilitator Mia Raquel to share a few of her favorite Historias interviews. As a half-Latinx person who grew up bilingual at home, facilitating Historias interviews brought Mia back home, in many ways. She describes being in the recording booth with Spanish speaking people as reminiscent to spending time hearing stories of her grandparents and extended family, while visiting with her family in El Salvador.

As a facilitator, Mia has a front-row seat to profound, funny, and moving conversations. Mia selected these particular recordings to highlight the beautiful, complex, empowering stories that Latinx folks have shared with StoryCorps. The selection in this document represents just a tiny portion of the entire Historias archive.