

Christopher Columbus

The United States celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month annually from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 by recognizing the history, culture and contributions of Latino Americans. National Hispanic Heritage Week was introduced in 1968 by President Johnson and expanded to a month in 1988 by President Reagan.

1492 Christopher Columbus arrives in the New World, landing in the Bahamas

1513 Ponce de Leon arrives in Florida

1565 First permanent Spanish settlement is established in St. Augustine, Fla.

1820 Mexico, which includes settlements in California, Arizona, Texas, Colorado and New Mexico, gains independence from Spain. American settlers begin moving into Mexican territories

1822 Joseph Marion Hernandez of Florida becomes first Hispanic member of Congress as a nonvoting delegate

1845 Texas is annexed by the United States

1846 Mexican-American War begins

1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo establishes Rio Grande River as the U.S.-Mexico border, ceding Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Colorado, Nevada and Utah

1862 Homestead Act allows squatters in the West to claim vacant land, often owned by Mexican-Americans

1868 Fourteenth Amendment declares all people born in the United States to be citizens

1876 Romualdo Pacheco of California becomes first Hispanic U.S. Representative

1898 Treaty of Paris cedes control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam to the United States

1910 Mexican Revolution begins; hundreds of thousands of Mexicans flee to United States

1912 Mexican ambassador formally protests the mistreatment of Mexican-Americans in the southwestern United States, citing lynchings and murders

1917 Ezequiel Cabeza de Baca of New Mexico becomes first Hispanic U.S. governor

1917 Jones Act extends U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans

1917 During World War I, "temporary" Mexican farm workers, railroad laborers and miners enter the U.S. to work

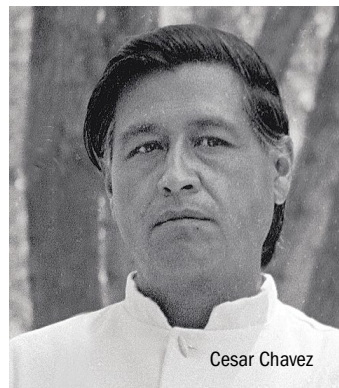
1924 Congress creates the U.S. Immigration Service Border Patrol

1928 Octaviano Larrazolo of New Mexico becomes first Hispanic U.S. Senator

1929 During the Great Depression, more than 400,000 Mexicans and Mexican-Americans are deported or forced to return to Mexico

1942 Under the Bracero Program (which would run through 1964), the U.S. brings in seasonal Mexican agricultural laborers to ease shortages

1950 Puerto Rico becomes a U.S. commonwealth



Cesar Chavez



Sonia Sotomayor

1954 Supreme Court rules that all racial groups are guaranteed equal protection under the 14th Amendment

1954-1959 Operation Wetback results in deportation of about 3.8 million undocumented Mexicans

1955 KCOR in San Antonio (now KWEX) becomes first Spanish-language TV station in the U.S.

1962 Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta found the National Farm Workers Association, forerunner of the United Farm Workers of America

1965 Mexico and the U.S. allow corporations to operate assembly plants on the border to provide jobs for Mexicans

1966 Over the next eight years, about 250,000 Cubans fleeing the Castro regime are airlifted to the U.S.

1973 Roberto Clemente becomes first Hispanic inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame

1973 U.S. government officially adopts the term Hispanic

1974 Equal Educational Opportunity Act allows for bilingual education

1975 Voting Rights Act of 1975 makes bilingual ballots a requirement in certain areas

1980 Mariel Boatlift brings about 125,000 Cuban refugees to the U.S.

1981 Robert Goizueta of The Coca-Cola Company becomes the first Latino CEO of a Fortune 500 company

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act creates process for undocumented immigrants to gain legal status and grants citizenship to about 3 million people

1988 Secretary of Education Lauro Cavazos becomes first Hispanic Cabinet member

1989 Ileana Ros-Lehtinen becomes first Latina elected to Congress

1990 Antonia Novello becomes first Hispanic and first woman Surgeon General

1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) goes into effect, eliminating all tariffs between Mexico and the U.S.

1997 U.S. government officially adopts the term Latino

1999 U.S. creates "people-to-people" licenses, lifting some restrictions on travel to Cuba

2001 Hispanics officially pass Blacks to become the nation's largest minority group

2003 Arturo Moreno becomes the first Hispanic owner of a major U.S. sports franchise, buying the Anaheim Angels baseball team

2009 Sonia Sotomayor becomes first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice

2009 Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis becomes first Latina Cabinet member

2010 Susana Martinez of New Mexico becomes first Latina governor

2012 Supreme Court strikes down provisions of Arizona law that require immigrants to carry registration documents and that authorize police to arrest undocumented immigrants without a warrant but allows immigration checks during law-enforcement stops

2012 Hispanics make up 10 percent of the electorate for the first time, helping to re-elect President Obama



Susana Martinez