

## **The Bisbee Deportation of 1917: Engaging Students in a Historical Investigation and Mural Project**

### **AUTHORS:**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Students will investigate the people and events surrounding the Bisbee Deportation, an event in Southern Arizona that involved the illegal removal of nearly 1200 mine workers in 1917. This event allows students to examine border tensions, war-time paranoia, racial prejudices, and labor strikes of the early 20th century. The labor conflict and deportation also makes clear that different groups understood the event and American identity differently. Six groups of students will research the Deportation. Each group will examine the event from a different perspective and then propose a mural to commemorate the Bisbee Deportation. Perspectives include a law enforcement agent, the head of the Copper Queen Mine in Bisbee, a leader of the Industrial Workers of the World, a Mexican Revolutionary, the United States President, and a radical labor activist. Ultimately, the class will conduct a “Cochise County Historical Society Meeting” and each student group will be accountable for portraying their research through the eyes of their persona. Throughout this process, the goal is for students to understand and question different perspectives on border issues of the past and the present. They will seek to question who and what creates an American identity. Is it location of birth? Is it amount of time on American soil? Is an allegiance to the United States? As groups and as individuals, students will synthesize the history of Cochise County’s famous deportation with their own current perspectives on American identity.

**SUBJECT AND GRADE: U.S. History (Middle and High School); average class size is 25 students**

**Day (s):** Four fifty-five minute class periods

**LOCATION: Classroom**

**KEY VOCABULARY:** Identity, Immigration Act of 1917, The Texas Brownsville Incident, Jerome Deportation, Vigilantism, Dual Wage System, James Douglas, Phelps-Dodge, Nativism, Ludlow Massacre, Industrial Workers of the World, Coeur d'Alene Strike of 1892, Socialism, Mexican Revolution 1910, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Punitive Expedition, Geronimo’s War, World War I, Zimmerman Note, Anti-German propaganda WWI, Espionage and Sedition laws, Enlarged Homestead Act 1909, Ludlow Massacre, Western Federation of Workers, National Women’s Party

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:**

- Mural PowerPoint
- Bisbee Deportation Mural Presentation Rubric
- Secondary source summary of the Bisbee Deportation
- Questions for students to answer about given secondary source
- Character analysis worksheet
- Primary source packet
- Bisbee Deportation resource analysis
- Sentence stem mural outline

- Cochise County Historical Society meeting agenda

\* **All resources are available on the Bisbee Deportation website created for this lesson:**  
[www.deportationofbisbee.wordpress.com](http://www.deportationofbisbee.wordpress.com)

### **ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:**

- American identity varies based on who is defining it.
- American history (specifically labor history) is a powerful medium on which to study and understand world conflict.

### **ESSENTIAL QUESTION/S**

- Who is an American?
- Who defines what it means to be an American?
- Who was forcibly removed from Bisbee, Arizona in 1917 and why?

### **CONTENT OBJECTIVE/S**

- Students will be able to explain how different groups gave different reasons for the Bisbee Deportation
- Students will be able to outline the global events that contributed to the labor conflict
- Students will be able to analyze some of the reasons for labor conflicts at the turn of the century
- Students will be able to present differing views of American identity in Cochise County and the turn of the twentieth century
- Students will be able to research and synthesize a variety of global issues (seen in Arizona) at the turn of the twentieth century: WWI, immigration, racial inequality, labor, mining, etc.

### **SKILL OBJECTIVE/S**

- Students will be able to demonstrate that historical understanding is dependent on various perspectives by creating a mural that illustrates a specific identity.
- Students will be able to use primary source analysis guides to compare/contrast the various perspectives in Cochise County during the Bisbee Deportation.
- Students will be able to create and present a mural depicting those present at the Bisbee Deportation

### **STANDARDS appropriate for a national audience**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8: Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
- National History Standards

This lesson meets several local, state and national standards, specifically focused on industrial development, immigration at the turn of the twentieth century, WWI, and borderlands issues . Please visit the National Standards for History website for more information:

<http://www.nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards>

\*In Arizona this lesson can/will be used in a variety of ways. One of the authors is using this lesson at the middle school level to introduce international borderlands issues in the eighth grade geography curriculum. The other author is using the lesson as part of the

Progressive/Reform Era illustrating the struggle between labor and industry and also as a transition/connection to U.S. involvement in WWI in a high school U.S. History course.

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:**

Harry Wheeler, the sheriff of Cochise County, Arizona during the Bisbee Deportation of 1917, asked, "Are you an American, or are you not?" Historian Katherine Benton-Cohen returns to this question throughout her book, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands*. She looks at this question specifically in the context of Cochise County in the early 1900s, but extends that same question to the United States/Mexico border tensions of today.

As teachers and advocates of social inquiry, we seek to challenge our students to ask this same question. Due to recent immigration policy and protocol, students are accustomed to the current debate surrounding Wheeler's question ("Are you an American or not?"). In Arizona, due to SB 1070, many of our students have seen their parents pulled over and asked for papers. Others have parents who grew up on both sides of the United States/Mexico border. They live in the intersection of the two countries and have lived through the border tension. Some have seen loved ones metaphorically asked the question, "Are you an American, or are you not?"

Often in order to understand present day issues in our world, it is essential to investigate more deeply the historical relevance and context of the immigration issue. In following Benton-Cohen's lead, this lesson asks our students to look specifically at the Bisbee Deportation and how individuals and groups within Cochise County depicted it. In 1917, two thousand temporary deputies were appointed by Harry Wheeler to hunt for residents in Bisbee who were associated with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or "Wobblies"). Wheeler's men donned white armbands and ammunition and spread out throughout the town of Bisbee. "Deputies pounded on doors, rounding up men by threat and by force. They captured not just striking miners, but also restaurant owners, carpenters, a lawyer, and a state legislator. Amando Villalovas was buying food for his family when "about ten gunmen all armed came in and told me to get out. I asked them to let me take my groceries home to my family. They dragged me out of the store, hit me and knocked me down" (Benton-Cohen *Borderline Americans* 2). The deportees were rounded up, marched through town to a baseball field and sent 180 miles by train to a remote New Mexican town. Very few ever returned to Bisbee.

This event is but one example of racial and socio-economic tensions between the Mexican and United States border. However, it specifically highlights border themes that extend into the current tension. Students will work toward an enduring understanding that American identity varies based on who defines it. In the process, they will be seeking to answer the following essential questions, "Who is an American?", "Who defines what it means to be an American?", and "Who was forcibly removed from Bisbee, Arizona in 1917 and why?"

There are a multitude of reasons and rationale as to why 1,186 miners were deported from Bisbee, Arizona on July 12, 1917. Wartime paranoia was high. Labor struggles were ripe and rowdy. Corporations were in control. American nationalism was heightened and the "other" was feared and isolated.

The Bisbee Deportation became a pivotal event for the clash of the aforementioned issues. For students to ultimately understand how American identity varies, they will be researching specific people involved in the Bisbee Deportation. **Harry Wheeler** was a leading law enforcement agent in Bisbee who actually asked the question "Are you an American, or are you not?" in order to determine who to deport from Bisbee. He was the leader of the vigilante movement in Bisbee. **Walter Douglas** was the head of the Copper Queen Mine in Bisbee and a representative of the Phelps-Dodge Corporation (owner of the mines in Bisbee as well as many others throughout Arizona). **Bill Haywood** was the leader of the Industrial Workers of the World

(IWW or “Wobblies”), a prominent labor union that organized workers in Bisbee by encouraging strikes for equal pay, reasonable work hours, and a safe work environment. **Francisco “Pancho” Villa** was a Mexican Revolutionary who is still seen as a folk hero to many. He was well known for leading the raid on Columbus, New Mexico in 1916, the first Mexican attack on United States soil. **Woodrow Wilson** was the United States president during 1917. He was aware of the strikes in Bisbee but declined the invitation to send the Army for assistance. **Rosa McKay** was a radical labor activist and Cochise County representative. She introduced significant legislation to establish a minimum wage for women workers.

In groups, students will analyze one of these historical figures from the Bisbee Deportation, create timelines, and focus on key ideas specific to one character. Students will be given specific instructions and vocabulary to define for each character, using online resources to accomplish their tasks. Following the analysis, all groups will be given the same packet of resources depicting a variety of opinions and ideas surrounding the Deportation. These include, but are not limited to the following: maps of the land exchange from the Mexican Revolution and the Gadsden Purchase, newspaper articles about the Deportation, IWW publications, a letter to President Wilson, and photos from different stages of the Deportation. Each group will use the model of “observe, reflect, and question” to analyze these sources.

In order for students to examine the idea of American identity, they will be using one specific lens throughout the four days of studying the Bisbee Deportation. Ultimately, students will be creating a proposed mural for the Cochise County Historical Society that accurately depicts the important people present in Cochise County during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Students will attempt to use the perspective of their given character in order to make the decision about who will be present in the mural. In doing so, they will complete the following sentence stem: “Based on the following evidence, we believe that \_\_\_\_\_ (persons/groups) were forcibly removed from Bisbee because...” To support their claim, students will be responsible for citing evidence from their research. Each group will have an opportunity to present at the “Cochise County Historical Society Meeting”. They will create a rough draft of a mural. It could be large enough for the class to see or small enough to show on the document camera. Each group will have a different creation. Groups will present their perspectives and their proposed mural. Ultimately, acting as the Cochise County Historical Society, the students will vote and adopt one mural that most accurately depicts the ideas and tension present during the Bisbee Deportation.

Throughout this process, students will become well aware of one specific person and therefore, one perspective about the Bisbee Deportation. In presenting each character in a historical society meeting, all students should recognize the multiple perspectives present during a time of heightened tension near the Mexico/United States border. In reading the same primary sources, the intention is for students to understand the differing perspectives on what makes a person an American. Is it the location of birth? Is it an amount of time spent on American soil? Is it due to specific actions or an allegiance to America? Ultimately, we want students to question what actually makes someone an American and how different people work to define that question. Not only is this question vital in the time of the Bisbee Deportation, but also it is a question that extends into many issues today.

Benton-Cohen concludes *Borderline Americans* with a comparison of Cochise County in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to Cochise County today. She looks at the different rationale for placement of the National Guard; protecting the border from white American bandits or from immigrants and drug traffickers. She looks at the Vigilantes of the past (Wyatt Earp era) and the vigilantes today (Border Patrol). Finally, she draws similarities between the division of race and socioeconomics during both time periods. “What the future holds at the county’s and nation’s border is hard to say. But in Cochise County, as in the rest of the United States, race and nation

have proved difficult to extricate from each other. Over time, the division between ‘Mexican’ and ‘white’ sharpened, but it was a binary distilled from myriad other possible outcomes. Along the way, ideas about race became wrapped up in assumptions about manliness, womanhood, nation, family, work, and class” (Benton-Cohen *Borderline Americans* 274). Hence, the continuing variety of issues on the United States/Mexico border.

Ultimately, our desire is for our students to question the interactions on the United States/Mexico border with a similar process that we have gone through. We want them to make connections between present day events and historical relevance to these events. Finally, we want them to ask questions and draw conclusions about present-day immigration and racial policies in their own lives.

**SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:**

Day 1:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Students’ Learning Tasks</b>	<b>Teachers’ Learning Tasks</b>
5 min.	Anticipatory set: What is identity and how is it depicted in murals?	Write student interpretation of identity and mural.	Ask for student responses.
15 min.	Show examples of historical murals (see PPT) and explain end goals of project. Show students the rubric with which they will be summatively assessed.	Listen and ask clarifying questions	Direct instruction.
30 min.	Students will individually read and answer questions related to a secondary source on the Bisbee Deportation.	Read and respond to a guided reading.	Check for understanding, as students read and complete the guided questions.
5 min.	Closure: Why were certain people forcibly removed from Bisbee, AZ in 1917?	Students can write or verbally respond to the question.	Ask for student responses.

Day 2:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Students’ Learning Tasks</b>	<b>Teachers’ Learning Tasks</b>
5 min.	Anticipatory set: What are the 5W’s of the Bisbee Deportation?	Write student interpretation.	Ask for student responses.
20 min.	Students will be divided into groups and assigned a character/perspective. Using school computers or Ipads, groups will complete the tasks. Each student is responsible for	Research assigned task related to the character/perspective.	Responds to questions and assists students in research.

	one task. (See Character Analysis Guidelines)		
25 min.	Individual students will present the information they found to their group.	Students present, listen and discuss presentations.	Check for understanding.
5 min.	Closure: Why did your assigned character believe certain people were forcibly removed from Bisbee, AZ?	Students can write or verbally respond to the question.	Ask for student responses.

Day 3:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Students' Learning Tasks</b>	<b>Teachers' Learning Tasks</b>
5 min.	Anticipatory set: In what ways is your character associated with the Bisbee Deportation?	Write student interpretation.	Ask for student responses.
20 min.	In groups students will use the "Bisbee Deportation Resource Analysis" to analyze a series of documents and resources.	Participate in group analysis of documents and resources.	Responds to questions and assists students in document analysis.
25 min.	As a group, complete the sentence stem, supported by evidence and outline proposed mural.	Participate in group discussion, complete worksheet and sketch a mural.	Check for understanding.
5 min.	Closure: Based on the documents, who do you believe was deported in Bisbee? Why?	Students can write or verbally respond to the question.	Ask for student responses.

Day 4:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Students' Learning Tasks</b>	<b>Teachers' Learning Tasks</b>
10 min.	Group meeting to prepare an introduction of the character the group represents.	Prepare a short introduction.	Ask for student responses.
25 min.	Each group should present their mural and evidence used to create the mural. About 5 minute presentations for each group	Students not presenting should take notes and write questions to be addressed after presentations.	Using the rubric, the teacher should assess student presentations and involvement.
20 min.	As a whole group, discuss	Participate in whole	Using the rubric,

	and adopt a mural that the entire society (class) feel represents the Bisbee Deportation.	group discussion and actively come to a consensus.	the teacher should assess student presentations and involvement.
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**ASSESSMENT/s:**

- Formative: Character analysis and document analysis
- Summative: Town meeting presentation--Assessed with a rubric

**Student Rubric:**

Bisbee Deportation Mural Presentation/Cochise County Historical Society Meeting Rubric  
Group Members

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Assigned Character

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CATEGORY	25-23	22-20	19-15	15-0
Historical Accuracy  Score:	Character and document analysis presented appeared to be historically accurate and in chronological order.	Almost all of the character and document analysis presented appeared to be historically accurate and in chronological order.	Some of the character and document analysis presented appeared to be historically accurate and in chronological order.	Very little of the character and document analysis was accurate and/or in chronological order.
Historical Perspective  Score:	Point-of-view, arguments, and proposed mural were consistently reflective of the character.	Point-of-view, arguments, and proposed mural were often reflective of the character.	Point-of-view, arguments, and proposed mural were sometimes reflective of the character.	Point-of-view, arguments, and proposed mural were rarely reflective of the character.
Cochise County Historical Society Meeting Participation  Score:	Participated in meeting and illustrated understanding of opposing views, while actively worked on a consensus with peers.	Participated in meeting. Actively worked on a consensus with peers.	Participated in meeting.	Did not participate in meeting and/or was confrontational or inappropriate.

Group Work and Completion Score:	All students participated in group work and completed all assigned tasks.	Most students participated in group work and completed most assigned tasks.	Some students participated in some group work and completed some assigned tasks.	Students rarely participated in group work and completed few assigned tasks.
Score Total:  /100	Comments:			

**EXTENSION POSSIBILITIES:**

- Student-led lessons based on further research of characters involved in the Bisbee Deportation and/or other IWW strikes
- Comparison and contrast with the Jerome Deportation (located 1.5 hours from Flagstaff, Arizona) or another mining town in the West
- Physical mural creation

**RESOURCES:** All resources are available on the Bisbee Deportation website created for this lesson: [www.deportationofbisbee.wordpress.com](http://www.deportationofbisbee.wordpress.com)

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