

***Hispanic Heritage  
Commemorating Florida's Quincentenary  
in Tampa Bay***

***October, 2012***

**University of South Florida**

**Lesson Title**

*"¡Huelga!" (Strike!)*

**Author**

Bárbara C. Cruz, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida

**Concept/Main Idea/Big Idea of Lesson**

Labor unions, workers' rights, strikes, and boycotts all figure prominently Ybor City's cigar manufacturing history. The strike of 1920-1921 serves as the focus of this lesson, shedding light on this important industry to Florida's economy.

**Conference Themes**

- Spanish Florida in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries
- Migration, Exile, Diaspora
- Cultural, Social, and Economic Exchange in Florida

**Intended Grade Levels**

Grades 6-12

**Infusion/Subject Areas**

Florida History  
American History  
American Mosaic

**Curriculum Standards**

*NCSS Themes:*

Culture  
Time, Continuity, & Change  
Individuals, Groups, & Institutions  
Power, Authority, & Governance  
Productivity, Distribution, & Consumption  
Civic Ideals & Practices

*Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:*

SS.912.A.1.4 Analyze how images, symbols, objects, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps,

and artwork may be used to interpret the significance of time periods and events from the past.

SS.912.A.4.11 Examine key events and peoples in Florida history as they relate to United States history

SS.912.C.2.8 Analyze the impact of citizen participation as a means of achieving political and social change.

### **Instructional Objectives**

Students will:

- analyze historical photographs;
- relate the history of cigar manufacturing in Tampa, Florida;
- identify the types of cigar workers;
- learn about the cigar workers' strike of 1920-1921;
- differentiate between "open shops" and "closed shops";
- tell how the strike was resolved and the unintended effects that resulted.

### **Learning Activities Sequence**

**Photo Analysis:** Project slide 2 of the PowerPoint provided (cigar workers at a union meeting) so that all students can see the photograph; note that the identifying information on the lower foreground of image has been covered up. Lead students in an analysis of the image by asking:

- Describe what you see.
- When do you think this was taken?
- Where do you think this was taken?
- What do you think just happened on the stage?

Advance to the next slide in the PowerPoint and ask for a volunteer to read it aloud.

- What language is this written in?

If there are any Spanish speakers in the class, ask for a volunteer to translate what it says ("Mass meeting celebrating the sixth month of strike, Tampa, Florida, 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 1920").

- What kind of industry do you think these workers belonged to?
- What are some reasons workers sometimes go on strike?
- What other forms of protest do workers use to call attention to unfair labor practices?

Tell students that today they will learn more about the strike that happened in Tampa, why the workers refused to work, which side won, and some of the consequences of the strike.

**PowerPoint Presentation & Timeline Activity:** Using the PowerPoint provided ("*Huelga!*"), lead students in an examination of the causes of the strike, how it was resolved, and its consequences. Engage students in discussion and check for comprehension frequently by asking questions that appear in the "Notes View" of the PowerPoint, pausing to allow them to take notes in their notebooks.

**Reading:** Distribute a copy of the article, “Bitter Strikes Brought Deviled Crabs” (HO1).

**Closure:** Place students in groups of 4 to 5. Ask them to create a document or poster to address one of the items below:

- What could the workers have done differently that would have changed the outcome of the 1920-1921 Cigar Workers Strike?
- Draft a letter of demands that present the cigar workers’ position to the owners.
- Create a pamphlet to gain support from fellow cigar workers.
- What would you do to overcome a shortage of food or money during the strike?
- Offer a solution to both parties (workers and owners) as an outside arbiter or professional mediator to the strike.
- Write a letter to the editor defending either “open shops” or “closed shops.”

Allow each group to share/present their products with the rest of the class.

### **Materials and Resources**

Image 1: Cigar workers at a union meeting

Handout 1(HO1): “Bitter Strikes Brought Deviled Crabs”

Student notebook

PowerPoint presentation: “*Huelga!*” (*Strike!*) [Note that there are two versions, longer and shorter, depending on the amount of detail you would like to provide.]

### **References**

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Flynt, Wayne. (1968). Florida labor and political “radicalism,” 1919–1920, *Labor History*, 9:1, 73-90

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Mormino, Gary R. (1998). The Reader and the Worker: Los Lectores and the Culture of Cigarmaking in Cuba and Florida. *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 54, 1-18.

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