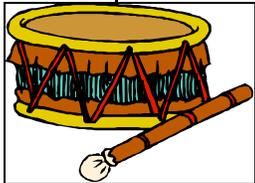


# Classroom Spice

Volume 5, Issue 1 Dr. Jeanne Mather, Editor

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<i>El Grito?</i>	Five Civilized Tribes		
<p>Since September 15th-October 15th is designated as Hispanic Month, it would seem appropriate to discuss some elements of the Hispanic culture. Hispanics have little mention in most American history books, other than the Texas and California annexations, and the Mexican American War.</p> <p>Do they ever mention that just as there were Jim Crow laws dealing with African Americans, there were Greaser Laws that outlawed Mexican Culture and the Spanish Language in the southwest? Do they mention that thousands of <b>United States-born Americans</b> have been rounded up in stores and on the street and deported to Mexico? Do they point out that when the Spanish explorer Cortes arrived in Tenochtitlan that this Aztec city was larger than London or Paris (and reportedly cleaner)? Do they mention that not only American Indians but also Mexican Americans used their native languages to communicate in code during World War II, and that Chicanos are the most decorated ethnic or racial group to have served in the armed forces? In classes a little may be discussed in social studies about food and Cinco de mayo, but that is about it.</p> <p>Speaking of Cinco de mayo, it is frequently described as the Mexican Independence day. But that is wrong! Mexicans celebrate independence day on</p> <p><i>(Continued on page 3)</i></p>	<p>The Five Civilized Tribes have played an important role in Oklahoma history. So how much do <i>you</i> know about them? Hopefully, you know that they include the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole. But why were they called civilized? Actually, that is an irritation to many other tribes, as the implication is that these five, and only these five were civilized. Obviously, this was not true. But, back to the question, "Why were these five identified as civilized?" White settlers invented the term because they <i>thought</i> that these tribes had adopted many of the White Man's ways. They lived in settled towns; farmed and in many instances used plowed agriculture, and raised animals; and held elections. And since some of these tribes married with whites, there developed a small class of Native Americans from these tribes that managed plantations and kept slaves. What the whites failed to recognize</p>	<p>was that these tribes in large part had been doing many of these things, long before contact with white men.</p> <p>Of the five tribes, four were of the same language group (muskogean) Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole; but the Cherokee were from the Iroquois language group. Something they all had in common was the federal government's use of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 to remove them from their homelands in Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia to Indian Territory. When the Supreme Court supported the tribes' rights to stay on their lands in <u>Cherokee Nation V. Georgia</u> and <u>Worcester V. Georgia</u>, President Andrew Jackson ignored the court's decision saying, "[Justice] Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it." Jackson then forcibly removed the tribes. The removal involved not only relocation of virtually all tribes east of the Mississippi, but their ceding over 100 million acres and their freedom in exchange for</p>	<p>\$68 million and 32 million acres of inhospitable land.</p> <p>Only the Seminoles were never completely relocated. Only after the U.S. government had spent \$20 million dollars and lost the lives of 1,500 white soldiers, did the government abandon the war and relocation of the Seminoles in 1842. The Seminoles were actually an offshoot of the Creek. They were formed from Creek runaways escaping the white settlement, and settled in the swamps and jungles of Florida which provided them more isolation and thus an advantage in resisting the relocation. In addition to their belief in resistance, the Seminole were also firm believers in education, and those who moved to Indian Territory founded four schools by 1868.</p> <p>The Cherokee lived in the Appalachians and parts of the South. White interest in their lands was sparked when rumor of gold on their land surfaced. By the mid-18th century most Cherokee were planters, owning homes, plantations, and</p> <p><i>(Continued on page 3)</i></p>
<h2>Table of Contents</h2>			
		<p>El Grito; Five Civilized Tribes</p> <p>Mexican Culture and The Mexican Flag</p> <p>The Literature Connection An Hispanic Focus</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>



## Mexican Culture and The Mexican Flag

We see the Mexican flag more and more in the United States. It is displayed when Mexico's President Vicente Fox is conducting a press conference, at Cinco de Mayo celebrations, and in Mexican restaurants. What does it really represent? The American flag for instance has 13 stripes representing the original colonies, and 50 stars to represent the 50 states. What do the parts of the Mexican flag mean? Following, you will find information on the Mexican Flag and a small version to color in (feel free to enlarge the flag for your students).

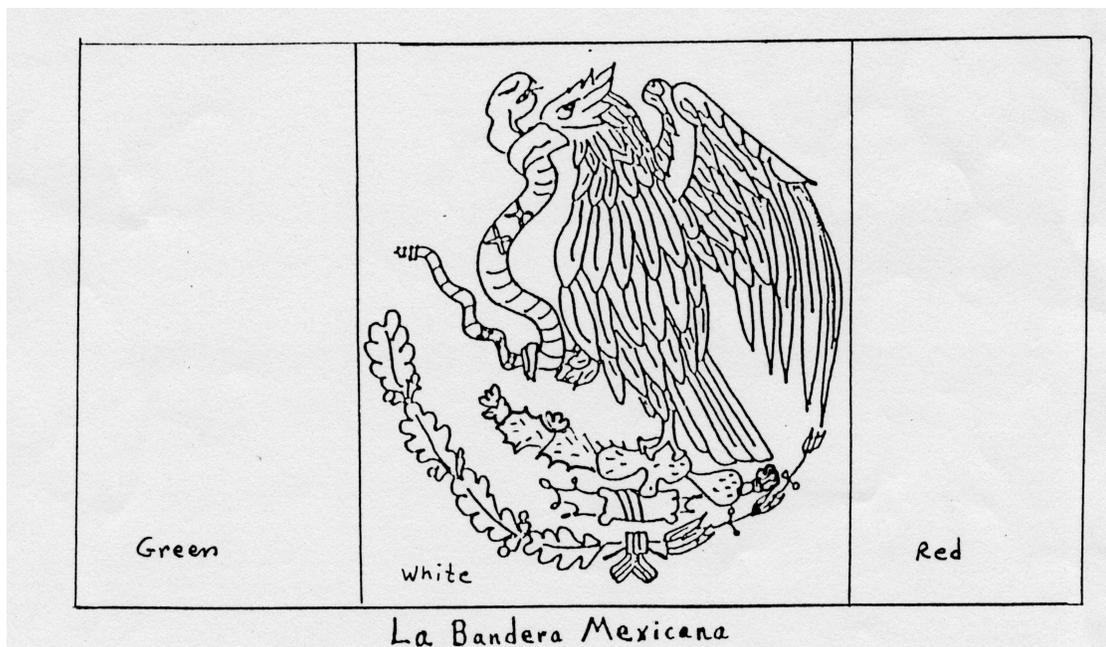
**GREEN**—the left most band is green. Green stands for independence. Mexico earned its freedom from Spain in 1821, after an 11 year fight.

**WHITE**—the middle band is white. White represents religion. While Catholicism is not the only religion in Mexico, it is the most common.

**RED**— the right most band is red. Red stands for union. Just as the United States of America is made up of individual states and the District of Columbia, Mexico, whose official name is Estados Unidos Mexicanos or the United Mexican States, has 31 states and a federal district. Similar to the United States of America, Mexico also has a chief executive president; a bicameral legislature; and a judicial system with a Supreme Court, local and federal courts.

**Coat of Arms**—The coat of arms is an eagle with a snake in its beak and talons, standing on a prickly-pear cactus. This is a reference to an Aztec legend in which the god of sun and war told the Aztec people to go in search of a new land. They were told they would be given a sign of an eagle eating a snake while sitting on a cactus in the middle of a lake. When they found the sign they were to build their home. After many hardships they found the place and built the city of Tenochtitlan which means "cactus growing on a stone." Much later when the Spaniards conquered Mexico, they destroyed the city and built Mexico City on its ruins.

(By the way do you know where the word Mexico comes from? Well, the Aztecs called themselves "Mexica.")



Color: Eagle—brown  
 Beak & talons—yellow  
 Cactus & leaves—green  
 Scroll under cactus—blue

Ribbon—red, white, green stripes  
 Snake—green  
 Berries & nuts—brown  
 Flowers on cactus—red

(*El Grito—cont'd from page 1*)

September 16th. Spanish rule over Mexico, also known as “*La Nueva Espana*” or New Spain, began around 1521. Spanish rule was hard on the native population which dropped from 20 million to only 1 million after just 100 years. In 1808 Napoleon invaded Spain and named his brother Jose Bonaparte, king of Spain. This French takeover caused dissent not only in Spain but in Mexico as well. The Mexican-born Spaniards and the *mestizos* (descendents of marriages between Spaniards and native peoples) joined forces and planned a revolt. The plan was discovered and forced the revolutionaries to take action sooner than expected. In the town of Dolores Father Hidalgo, a Catholic priest and supporter of the revolution, ordered the arrest of the “Spaniards” in the town, then rang the church bell for mass and called upon the Natives and *Mestizos* to revolt. His cry, *el Grito*, was “Long live religion!, Long live Our Lady of Guadalupe! Long live the Americas and death to the corrupt government!” Note the reference to Our Lady of Guadalupe, also called The Virgin of Guadalupe. This reflected the patron saint who was a woman of color, “indigenous” to Mexico and became the banner of the revolutionary forces. It took eleven years of bloody war for Mexico to gain its independence and throughout the years *El Grito de Dolores*, “Mexicanos, viva Mexico,” helped sustain the drive.

Every year Mexican independence is celebrated over two days, September 15th and 16th. At 11 p.m. on September 15th, the President of Mexico shouts *El Grito de Dolores* from the balcony of the National Palace and rings the original bell of Dolores. This shouting and ringing of bells is repeated in every Mexican state by each state governor and all Mexicans gathered together in remembrance and celebration.

So while Cinco de Mayo is an important date remembering the victory of the Mexican Army over the occupying French in 1862, Mexican Independence was first earned years before on September 16th, 1810—*El Grito*!

## The Literature Connection An Hispanic Focus

An excellent resource for teachers and students is [Mexico!: 40 activities to experience Mexico past and present](#), by Susan Milord, published by Williamson. While it can best be used for middle school and up, there are some activities which could easily be adapted for lower elementary. It briefly and simply discusses Mexican history and culture. It includes a couple of pages of basic Spanish phrases, pages of Spanish games, arts and craft activities, recipes, Mayan numeration, ancient and recent



timelines, and much more. I dare you to pick up this book and not learn something new, and/or not be able to find something you could incorporate in your class, regardless of what grade you teach. It is a truly wonderful book! ISBN 1-885593-22-8.

[Spanish-American Folktales: The Practical Wisdom of Spanish-Americans in 28 Eloquent and Simple Stories](#), by Teresa Pijoran de Van Etten is best used with older students. It could easily be incorporated in a language arts, social studies, or Spanish class. It is interesting to see how

many of the stories have a Native American connection, up to and including the trickster Coyote. As is true of most folktales, these stories include a moral lesson. The book is published by August House, ISBN 0-87483-155-5.

A book that probably many of you are familiar with is [Family Pictures: Cuadros de familia](#) by Carmen Lomas Garza. While it is a primary level book, it could easily be used to illustrate culture in a middle school or even higher setting. The author/illustrator uses her own childhood memories to create culture rich text and pictures. The details in the pictures provide added cultural insight. In addition, the book is written with both English and Spanish translations. Being Mexican American myself, and having spent many summers with my grandparents and extended family in Texas I personally could relate to many of the incidents and found this is a beautiful book for accurately sharing culture.

[The Iguana Brothers](#), by Tony Johnston and illustrated by Mark Teague, is one of my favorites, and a favorite of many fifth graders. This story about iguana brothers Tom and Dom is delightful. Tom decides he is sick of eating bugs and attempts to convince Dom to eat something else. Along the

(Continued on page 4)

(*Five Civilized Tribes— cont'd from page 1*)

even slaves. They had schools, were literate, published a newspaper, and had a formal constitution and legal system. Approximately one fourth of the Cherokee nation died on the Trail of Tears.

The Creek, whose real name is Muscogee, were not a true tribe but rather a confederation of approximately 300 tribes speaking 6 different languages. The Creek were matrilineal with women owning family property. They were traditionally either peaceful tribes (white tribes) or warring tribes (red tribes). Following relocation they divided into Lower Creek who became Christian and Upper Creek who maintained the Green Corn Ceremony.

The Choctaw were the first of the civilized tribes to sign a removal treaty and move to Indian Territory. Choctaw life centered about growing corn, and

while other vegetables and even poultry were added the scarcity of meat led them west into Oklahoma for “big hunts” even before the Indian Removal. As one of the earlier tribes to relocate they benefited from the rich timberland and discovery of coal on their land. As such they were able to maintain a relatively high standard of living with a model school system.

While the Chickasaw were the smallest of the five civilized tribes, they were known for their warfare. They played a significant role in Britain’s victory over France in the control of North America, and were the last Confederate government to surrender to the Union during the Civil War.

The Five Civilized Tribes are a significant part of our state and its history. Learn more about their history, culture, and current status.



USAO Multicultural  
Resource Center  
1727 W. Alabama  
Chickasha, OK 73018

Phone (405) 574-1291

facmatherj@usao.edu

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El Grito; Five Civilized Tribes; The Mexican Flag; Literature Connections

### Would you say Moctezuma II really liked hot chocolate?

Moctezuma II was the Aztec ruler during the 1500s. It was said that he drank "fifty" cups of chocolate a day, served in a solid gold cup.

Mexican hot chocolate is whipped to be very frothy with a hand-carved wooden stick called a *molinillo*, and has a hint of cinnamon, almonds, cloves, and vanilla.



(Literature—Cont'd from page 3)  
way they investigate friendship and brotherhood. Sprinkled with Spanish phrases this book is enjoyed by primary through middle school aged students. Published by Blue Sky Press, ISBN 0-590-47468-5.

There is a great series Friends and Amigos, published by Yearling Books, and authored by Patricia Reilly Giff. It incorporates simple Spanish lessons in chapter books. Reading level varies, depending on the book but is anywhere from first grade through middle school. For example, Adios, Anna is about a girl and her summer adventures while trying to learn such things as counting to 10 and saying the days of the week and facial features in Spanish. Say Hola, Sarah is about overcoming fears, and includes Spanish lessons on family, food, and holidays. These provide a fun and

easy way to incorporate a second language into your class or to practice what has already been learned. Other titles in the series include Ho, Ho, Benjamin: Feliz Navidad; Happy Birthday, Anna, Sopresa!; and It's a Fiesta Benjamin.

Diego by Jeannette Winter is a biography of the famous Mexican painter Diego Rivera easily enjoyable by elementary aged children. It incorporates art and social studies, and is written with both English and Spanish translations (which could serve as a good translation exercise for high school Spanish students). Published by Alfred Knopf, ISBN 0-679-81987-8.

Abuela's Weave by Omar Castaneda could easily be used in combination with, or to replace use of, Annie and the Old One by Miska Miles, published by Little Brown, ISBN 0-440-84258-1. Both books are about

a young girl, her grandmother and weaving, but the latter has a Native American setting with subdued illustrations, the former a Guatemalan setting with bright colorful illustrations. Another difference is Annie is dealing with the impending death of her grandmother, while Abuela's Weave deals with the implications of a birthmark on the grandmother's face. Both are excellent books. Abuela's Weave is published by Lee & Low, ISBN 1-880000-20-2.

For middle school try Lost Temple of the Aztecs by Shelley Tanaka, published by Hyperion/Madison, ISBN 0-78681542-6. Opening with a real archaeological dig, it theorizes what it would have been like in Mexico when the Spaniards invaded, using a mix of text, photographs and drawings. A very thought provoking book!