



Latinos in Nebraska: A Socio-Historical Profile

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ABSTRACT

This Statistical Brief or CIFRAS is a modest beginning toward providing a better understanding of Latinos in Nebraska. It provides an overview of Latino history and a set of tables based upon U.S. Census reports of Hispanics in Nebraska. Nebraska's history is known for its "flood of European immigrants," mostly Germans and its heritage of American Indians. Nebraska's population includes other ethnic and racial groups, Latinos, among them, whose background is little known. Latinos constitute an important and growing share of Nebraska's population with origins dating back to the frontier days, when Spaniards and Mexicans brought horses and sought wealth and trading partners throughout the Midwest. Baltensperger (1985) notes that Latinos are primarily of Mexican origin. Larsen and Cottrell (1982) point out that the flow of Mexicans to Nebraska was stimulated by the Mexican Revolution and economic opportunities for labor in railroads, packing industries, and farming. Mexicans are known for their strong sense of unity and are described as people with profound appreciation of hard work, religion, family ties, and noteworthy community achievements. In 1990, the Latino population in Nebraska constituted 2.3% of the state's population; more recently there has been a noted surge in Latino residents, mostly from Texas and Mexico. Nebraska's Latinos differ in important respects from other groups in Nebraska. They have relatively lower levels of educational attainment and figure prominently among the poor. Unemployment is relatively high for Latinos, but not as high as the unemployment levels experienced by Indians and African Americans.