

Name _____

Date _____



Larry Itliong

We learn about ourselves when we learn about each other.

America is a blend of many cultures.

This is the story of Larry Itliong,

A fearless Filipino who really needs a song.

He was born in the Philippines in 1913

and immigrated to the US when he was 16.

In the US, he became a migrant worker.

Hold up, let me break down these words, 'cause

Immigrant and migrant might sound the same,

But they mean two different things.

Immigrants move to a whole new country.

Migrant workers move around working to make money.

He worked on farms and in factories,

Picking produce and canning up things

From state to state, wherever the work was.

He got injured on a job in Alaska,

Which gave him the nickname "Seven Fingers,"

But those two hands built a legacy that lingers.

For migrant workers, conditions were dangerous.

They worked long hours and got low wages,

And since most were not citizens, if they complained

About the conditions, they faced deportation.

But Itliong was a true changemaker.

He saw a way to help the workers doing labor.

The Alaska Cannery Workers Union was one he formed

To make eight-hour days and paid overtime the norm.

To communicate, he also became fluent in languages

Spoken by other immigrant migrant laborers,
Like English, Japanese, Cantonese, and Spanish.
He soon became famous for being a fearless activist
Who defended the rights of the poor.
From humble beginnings he went on to do more.
After serving in the Second World War,
He won citizenship, then fought some more. (How'd he do it?)
By unionizing for workers' rights
As well as leading those workers in strikes,
The biggest in Delano, California,
Where thousands of Filipino grape pickers joined up.
Even Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta
Joined in in protest, 'cause we're stronger together.
The Delano Grape Strike lasted five years
And became a milestone for his labor movement peers,
A nationwide boycott that proved to be successful.
He was an everyday man who became a hero.
He passed away in '77, but fought till the end
To make this a better country to live in.
This is the story of Larry Itliong,
A fearless Filipino who finally got a song.