



Script for Teacher (pages 1 and 2) and one student "actress" (page 3)

1.

Emma Tenayuca was just sixteen years old in 1932 when she joined a strike of women cigar makers. Born in San Antonio, she grew up in an atmosphere of fervent talk and political action.

2.

(Student Reader) "I could not help but be impressed by the discussions inside of my family, my family circle. Also, the Plaza de Zacate was the type of place where everyone went on Saturdays and Sundays to hold discussions. If you went there, you could find revolutionists from Mexico holding discussions. I was exposed to all of this."

3.

By 1937 Emma held a leadership role with the Workers Alliance of America, a group that sought to unite organizations of unemployed and industrial workers.

4.

She delivered fiery speeches to Hispanic audiences . . .

5.

. . .and led sit-down strikes at the Works Progress Administration (WPA) headquarters and at City Hall. Looking back, she explained what drove her to take such dangerous actions:

6.

(Student Reader) "I carried an Indian name. And I was very, very conscious of that. It was this historical background and my grandparents' attitude which formed my ideas and actually gave me that courage to undertake the type of work I did in San Antonio."

7.

In January 1938, when pecan shellers in San Antonio walked out of their jobs, they looked to Emma for leadership.

8.

She immediately joined them. Their ranks swelled to between six and eight thousand strikers.

9.

Emma was arrested and released along with hundreds of others. Then a dispute over leadership arose between the Workers Alliance and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Emma's Communist affiliations were used to discredit her.

10.

She agreed to take a background role for the duration of the strike, and she continued to write flyers and provide support behind the scenes.

11.

In 1939 the young activist was meeting with Communist Party members inside the new municipal auditorium.

12.

A crowd stormed the building, smashing windows. . .

13.

...and attacking participants.

14.

Emma managed to escape, but she never again led a major labor protest. Employers blacklisted her. As a result, Emma was unable to find work in San Antonio.

15.

She moved to California in 1946, where she earned a college degree and stayed for many years. Returning to San Antonio in the late 1960s, she was amazed to find herself hailed as "some sort of heroine."

Emma Tenayuca later earned a master's degree in education at Our Lady of the Lake University and taught in San Antonio public schools. . .

16.

. . . until retiring in 1982.

She died of Alzheimer's disease in 1999.

17.

People still remember her as "*La Pasionaria*" for her fierce defense of the working poor.

Student Reader Script:

You are reading the actual words of Emma Tenayuca.

For slide 2, practice pronouncing "Plaza de Zacate," Haymarket Square.

**PLA**-sa deh Sa-**CA**-teh

(Look to your teacher for your cue!)

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(Student Reader) **"I could not help but be impressed by the discussions inside of my family, my family circle. Also, the Plaza de Zacate was the type of place where everyone went on Saturdays and Sundays to hold discussions. If you went there, you could find revolutionists from Mexico holding discussions. I was exposed to all of this."**

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(Teacher) In January 1938, when pecan shellers in San Antonio walked out of their jobs, they looked to Emma for leadership.

(There are no more quotes to be read by student. Enjoy the rest of the story.)

*Thank you very much! You gave Emma Tenayuca her own voice  
in our slide show!*