

scrolls are mounted on wood rollers, two of which are decorated with exquisite colonial silver bell-tops. Above the Ark is a representation of the Ten Commandments in Hebrew, painted by the Newport artist, Benjamin Howland. In the center of the room is the Bimah, an elevated platform where the cantor intones the liturgy and reads the Torah. These holy objects, all rich in symbolism, give to the synagogue a profoundly religious atmosphere.

Touro Synagogue reflects the wide diversity represented within the continuity of our Hispanic heritage. By visiting Touro Synagogue, Americans are reminded of the diversity of this heritage.

Additional information on Touro Synagogue can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.tourosynagogue.org/>.

---

\*Affiliated units of the national park system are historic sites that are closely linked in importance and purpose to existing units of the national park system but they are not counted as units of the national park system. They are generally owned by state and local authorities or by private entities. Affiliated areas of the national park system are similar to our national parks in that they preserve and interpret important segments of our nation's heritage.

---

*Harry A. Butowsky is a historian with the NPS and a frequent contributor to CRM.*

---

## Hispanics in the Civil War

---

America's Civil War touched the lives and divided the loyalties of the nation's Hispanic population as it did everyone during that tumultuous time. From the first shots at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, in 1861, to the last action at Palmito Ranch, Texas, in 1865, Hispanics were involved in every aspect of the war and made notable contributions on behalf of their chosen sides.

People of Spanish heritage lived in all parts of the country. Some traced their ancestry to explorers and pioneers who had settled in the United States several generations ahead of the English; others were recent immigrants, born in Cuba or other Latin American countries and drawn to America for education, employment, or land. Those who joined the war effort represented all economic and social levels—from wealthy aristocrats fighting to preserve their way of life, to impoverished laborers seeking to change their lives. Like other Americans, Hispanics entered the war for reasons of patriotism, private beliefs, or personal gain. And, like other Americans, they were divided by the conflict: names such as Gonzales, Garcia, Perez, and Sanchez appeared on the rosters of both Union and Confederate armies.

### *Spanish Roots*

Spain once laid claim to much of the land that stretches from Florida to California. Its campaign of exploration and conquest began with Christopher Columbus and continued for three centuries. As early as 1526 settlers from Hispaniola arrived at what is present-day South Carolina, and through the 1500s and 1600s the Spanish pushed westward and northward, estab-

lishing missions, trading posts, colonies, and presidios. By the mid-19th century and the approach of the Civil War, Spanish roots ran especially deep in two diverse parts of America: in the Gulf states, particularly Louisiana, and in the Southwest.

Hispanic soldiers supported Louisiana's war effort both at home and in the field. The City of New Orleans mustered nearly 800 Spanish soldiers as part of the "European Brigade," a home guard of 4,500 that was to keep order and defend the city. Other Louisiana regiments also recruited Hispanics. Harry T. Hays' Brigade, popularly called the "Louisiana Tigers," and William E. Starke's Brigade included native Louisianans of Anglo and Creole descent, plus men from Spain, Cuba, Mexico, and other Latin American countries. Both brigades campaigned with Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in the eastern theater of the war and saw action at the major battles of Antietam and Gettysburg.

Other Gulf Coast states also mustered Hispanics into the military. One Alabama company, the Spanish Guards, was made up exclusively of men with Spanish surnames and served as a home guard for Mobile. Two regiments—Alabama's 55th Infantry which served in the Vicksburg, Atlanta, and Nashville campaigns, and Florida's 2d Infantry which fought at Antietam and Gettysburg—included a number of Hispanic soldiers.

Hispanic participation was greatest in Texas and the territories of the Southwest: Arizona, California, and New Mexico. As elsewhere, Hispanics in the Southwest had divided loyalties when the Civil War began. In Texas and New Mexico, where bitter feelings lingered from the Mexican War, some Hispanics sided with the Union. Others, tied politically and economically to the fortunes of the South, sided with the Confederacy.

### *On the Battlefields*

Recognizing the importance of the Southwest for shipping routes to the West Coast and rich gold fields, the Confederacy launched a campaign to secure New Mexico and Colorado.

The United States, on the other hand, was determined to keep New Mexico in the Union and to prevent Confederate expansion. This meant the Union needed to gain the trust and support of local populations that had been forced into the United States only 15 years earlier in the war with Mexico. Federal authorities sent influential Hispanics to towns and villages to encourage enlistments. Of the 10,000 Hispanics estimated to have joined the military in the Southwest alone, more than half were in Union armies.

Many New Mexico Volunteers were valued soldiers and scouts. Descendants of pioneers, they knew the terrain well and had experience in combat against the Apaches and Comanches. Capt. Rafael Chacon, a graduate of the Mexican Military Academy of Chihuahua, Mexico, led one Union company. Chacon was praised as "an accomplished gentleman and a general favorite." A traveler being escorted by his troops in 1863 recalled: "Our escort for the present is the company of Captain Chacon, 1st New Mexico Volunteers.... These Mexican soldiers ... are most thoroughly disciplined and seem possessed of all the requisites of fine soldiers." These men served well and were praised for their valor at such battlefields as Glorieta Pass, now a part of Pecos National Historical Park.

Some of the bitterest fighting in the Southwest occurred in Texas where Hispanics served in the armies of both sides. The Union supported the raiding operations of Antonio Ochoa, Octaviano Zapata, Celario Balerio, and Juan Cortina who preyed upon Confederate interests along the Mexico-Texas border. Their attacks on military and economic targets disrupted operations and kept Confederate troops occupied. Confederate forces under Hispanic officers like Col. Santos Benavides and his brothers Refugio and Cristobal retaliated. Benavides's regiment of cavalry was one of the largest and most effective units keeping Union forces from interrupting Confederate cotton trade into Mexico.

Not all Hispanic soldiers came from the Deep South or the Southwest. Others enlisted from northern states, especially urban centers that had large mixed ethnic populations. Pedro H. Alvarez, for example, enlisted in the Union army at New York City in 1861 where he mustered into the famous 5th New York Zouaves. Joseph C. Rodrigues served as a captain in the 9th New York Infantry which fought at South Mountain, Antietam, and Fredericksburg. Mexican-born cabi-

net maker Calistro Castro enlisted in 1861. Promoted to corporal, he saw considerable service with the 5th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry. At the Second Battle of Manassas, a bullet smashed his canteen after striking a fellow soldier.

Spanish and Portuguese soldiers made up one company of the "Garibaldi Guard," the 39th New York Infantry known for its distinctive Italian-style uniforms. The company was captured at Harpers Ferry in 1862, but returned to action in time for the battle of Gettysburg and the rest of the major campaigns of the Army of the Potomac.

Joseph Augustin Quintero is an example of a northern-educated Hispanic who threw his lot with the Confederacy. Born in La Habana, Cuba, he was educated at Harvard College and taught Spanish in Massachusetts in the 1840s. He practiced as an attorney in Texas but later moved to New York City. At the outbreak of war, Quintero returned south and enlisted in the Confederate army as a private. He served in Virginia with the Quitman Rifles until transferring to the Confederate Diplomatic Service where he was appointed Confidential Agent to Mexico.

### *On the Seas*

Some of the most dramatic fighting of the Civil War occurred on the high seas where Hispanics served with valor in the navies of both sides.

Two Hispanic Union sailors earned Medals of Honor for their actions in battle. Philip Bazaar was a seaman on board U.S.S. *Santiago de Cuba* in 1865. He was one of six men from the fleet to enter the enemy works during the assault on Fort Fisher, North Carolina. He carried dispatches during the battle while under heavy fire from the Confederates, and for these actions, Seaman Bazaar was awarded the Medal of Honor. John Ortega enlisted in Pennsylvania and served as a seaman on U.S.S. *Saratoga*. Conspicuous gallantry in two actions gained Ortega the Medal of Honor and a promotion to acting master's mate.

For his exploits during the Civil War, Adm. David G. Farragut became one of the most famous naval commanders in American history. Born to a Spanish father and an American mother, Farragut was raised in Tennessee and began his naval career when only nine years old. He served in the War of 1812 and the War with Mexico and was 60 when the Civil War broke out. He lived in Virginia at the time but sided with the Union. Promoted to rear admiral for success in an expedition that he commanded to New Orleans, and later appointed vice admiral, Farragut became famous for his capture of Mobile Bay and his command, "Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead!" In 1866, Farragut was promoted to full admiral, a rank in the U.S. Navy created especially for this national hero.



Printed on  
recycled paper

Dozens of Hispanic sailors have been identified on Confederate warships as well, such as Seamen A.P. Garcia aboard C.S.S. *Huntsville*, brothers Peter and Domingo Francisco aboard C.S.S. *Morgan*, and Seaman Antonio Silva on C.S.S. *Sea Bird*. W.D. Oliveira served as master's mate on the Confederate tender *Resolute*. One of the most daring Hispanics in the Confederate navy was Michael Usina, a captain on blockade runners, vessels that smuggled supplies past Union ships blockading Southern ports. Usina had many narrow escapes but avoided capture and after the war returned to his work as a river pilot.

In the fields and on the seas, Hispanics fought alongside or against friends and family, as

was the nature of civil war. They shared the hardships of military life with other soldiers—poor food, boredom, homesickness, danger—yet they performed their duties well and contributed significantly to the war efforts of their chosen sides. Few first-person accounts have been found to tell about the daily lives and feelings of Hispanic soldiers, but national battlefield parks from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to Glorieta Pass, New Mexico, give silent testimony to their valor.

*Text adapted from interpretive brochure produced by Parks and History Association, Washington, DC, 1991, in cooperation with the NPS.*

## Hispanics in the Civil War Conference

On May 2-3, 1997, Pecos National Historical Park hosted a conference on "Hispanics in the Civil War," an event which explored how the Civil War impacted the Hispanics of the Southwest. It also offered an opportunity for the local community to share some of their stories about the battle of Glorieta Pass. Key note speaker Alvin Josephy, author of the *The Civil War in the American West*, set the stage with an overview of the Confederate campaign to take the Southwest and the defense by Union forces, New Mexico recruits and reinforcements from Colorado and California.

Marc Simmons, biographer of Lt. Col. Manuel Chavez, a hero of Glorieta Pass, described the cultural changes brought by the Civil War to the Hispanic community, from changes in fashion, dress and hair cuts, songs and community events, to social-economic changes within the broader community. NPS historians Frank

Torres and Joseph Sanchez helped participants understand the significance of the Hispanic's role in being part of the process of change brought by the war, especially as soldiers in the New Mexico volunteers. Neil Mangum led the group on a forced march tour of the Glorieta Pass battlefield. Re-enactors set up a field camp and showed the audience the Hispanic soldier's daily life.

Superintendent Duane Alire saw the success of the conference as many fold, but especially in that it facilitated discussion with the Hispanic neighbors to the park, who were too often absent from earlier events. An added positive spin-off of the conference was revealed in a Santa Fe newspaper headline that would not have been seen before the NPS conference. The newspaper covered the story of a nearby, unrelated re-enactors event two weeks after the conference and printed: "Hispanic role finally recognized."

The logo for Cultural Resources Management (CRM), featuring the letters "CRM" in a large, bold, serif font. The letters are white and set against a dark red rectangular background.

U.S. Department of  
the Interior  
National Park Service  
Cultural Resources  
1849 C Street, NW (2251)  
Washington, DC 20240

OFFICIAL BUSINESS  
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE \$300

FIRST CLASS MAIL  
Postage & Fees Paid  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
G-83

VOLUME 20 • NO. 11  
Cultural Resources  
Washington, DC