

Chapter 1 : Foreign enlistment in the American Civil War - Wikipedia

*An immigrant soldier in the Mexican War. [Frederick Zeh; William J Orr; Robert Ryal Miller] -- "Frederick Zeh, a young German immigrant, had hardly arrived in the United States when he was caught up in the war fever that swept his new homeland.*

For many Americans this conflict evokes images of the storied battlefields of North and South and of dramatic changes in the lives of Americans of African and Anglo descent. Lesser known is the story of the people of Spanish ancestry who participated in this epic conflict and of the many battles that took place in the West, in areas of large Hispanic populations and strong Spanish heritage. Like all Americans, Hispanics were deeply affected by the Civil War. When the conflict erupted, they lived in all parts of the country. Some traced their ancestry to explorers who settled in North America generations ahead of the English. Many had suddenly found themselves classified as Americans when the United States expanded its boundaries. Others were recent immigrants from Spain and Latin America, drawn to the United States to improve their lives. When the nation split in two, many were forced to choose whether to support the Union or the Confederacy. Some had little choice as they were swept into the maelstrom. From the first shots at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, in to the last action at Palmito Ranch, Texas, in , many Hispanics made a conscious decision to join the fight: They responded to a variety of motives, public and private. They represented all socio-economic levels, from wealthy aristocrats fighting to preserve a way of life to impoverished laborers seeking to improve their fortunes. Patriotism, personal gain, regional conditions, and history all played a role in their decisions. By the close of the war, more than 20, Hispanics had participated in the bloody conflict and thousands of Hispanic civilians had lent hearts and hands on the homefront, weaving their own individual stories into this important national fabric. Augustine, Florida, the first permanent European settlement in the continental United States. Following the arrival of Columbus in , many explorers rushed to claim the "New World" for Spain, including the mainland of North America. As early as , Spanish settlers attempted to colonize the shores of what is now South Carolina. This effort failed, but in Spain established St. Augustine, Florida, the first permanent European settlement in the present-day United States. Other explorers pushed inland. In , Hernando de Soto landed on the coast of Florida and began a winding journey that would carry him across the Mississippi River. This push north- and westward continued with the establishment of trading posts, missions, colonies, and towns. By the s, Spain claimed ownership of much of the continent. On July 4, , while the American colonies in the East boldly declared independence from Britain, the Spanish were celebrating the founding of San Francisco on the other side of the continent. Imperial rivalries and the emergence of the United States of America would carve away this huge empire. By the mids most of the Spanish lands in North America were gone, now occupied as states and territories of the United States. But a Hispanic population remained, most notably in the Southeast and the Southwest, and these citizens were drawn into the conflict that swept the nation in . Soldiers in the Southeast Descendants of Spanish explorers and settlers made their homes along the bayous, on large plantations, and in the port cities of the Gulf Coast. This population represented a rich mixture of cultures and languages: These "Creoles" were often well-to-do planters with plantations or established merchants with homes in the bustling ports of New Orleans and Mobile. Others made their money through the cotton trade that relied on the "peculiar institution" of slavery. Part of the aristocracy of the region, these citizens joined their like-minded southern neighbors and actively fought to preserve their way of life. In Louisiana, Hispanics lent their arms to actions both nearby and far afield. Many Hispanics in Louisiana had immigrated from the Canary Islands in the late s. New Orleans mustered nearly Hispanics as part of the "European Brigade," a home guard of 4, to keep order and defend the city. The brigades of Brigadier General Harry T. Both brigades campaigned with Confederate Gen. Lee and fought at battles such as 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 of Spanish ancestry and served as a home guard for the city of Mobile. When Union troops occupied her Florida home, she overheard their plans and informed nearby Confederates of a pending raid. Forewarned, Confederate forces turned the tables and captured the Union

troops. The Minorcans, a Hispanic group from the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean, colonized parts of Florida in the mid- to late 18th century under British auspices. A century later, a number of their descendants served in the Confederate Army and Navy. Some also served for the Union. Augustine, he graduated from West Point in 1847. During the war, he taught the science of gunnery there. His grandson, named for him, went on to write significant prose and poetry about the Civil War. Soldiers in the North Recognized by their European-style uniforms, living historians portray the "Garibaldi Guard" which included a company of Spanish and Portuguese soldiers. Northern states also had significant Hispanic communities, and many of their members supported the Union cause. Most came from large urban centers like Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Many of these newcomers sought to integrate themselves into the society of their new homeland but faced daunting racial prejudices. Serving in the uniform of a US soldier was the quickest and best way to reach their goal of becoming an "American. He protected the Union capital in the defenses of Washington, D. At the close of the war Rodriguez left the army but continued his life of service fighting fire in the city of New Haven. Born in Cuba but raised in the United States, Lt. His contribution to the war was the ultimate one. While serving as Chief of Staff to Lt. To escape their exposed position outside of Petersburg, Virginia, Lt. Henry Pleasants devised an unusual plan to break the Confederate stranglehold on the city. Born in Argentina to a Hispanic mother and an American father from Pennsylvania, Pleasants came to the United States at age 13 and later became a mining engineer. He proposed digging a mine shaft under the Confederate line and blowing up the fortifications on the other side with four tons of gunpowder. The well-conceived but poorly executed "Battle of the Crater" failed, resulting in another eight months of fighting. For his ingenuity, Pleasants was promoted to Brevet Brigadier General, while the commanding officer was relieved of duty. Anxious to fight, Luis F. Emilio, the year-old son of a Spanish immigrant, lied about his age in order to enlist with the 23rd Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. His bravery quickly earned him a promotion to sergeant. Selected as one of the officers of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment--one of the first African American units--Emilio soon rose to the rank of captain. In that role, he helped lead the 54th in its ferocious assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina. The attack failed but was successful in demonstrating the bravery and ability of African American troops. In other cases whole groups of Hispanics signed up together. A prime example is the 39th New York Infantry. This regiment, called the "Garibaldi Guard" in honor of the famed Italian freedom fighter Giuseppe Garibaldi, was formed entirely of European immigrants. In addition to companies of Italians, Hungarians, Swiss, German, and French immigrants, the regiment included a company wholly composed of Spanish and Portuguese soldiers. Easily recognized in their distinctive European-style uniforms, the unit engaged in dozens of clashes, including Gettysburg and the major campaigns of the Army of the Potomac. North and South Some of the most dramatic fighting of the Civil War occurred on the high seas where Hispanics fought with valor in the navies of both sides. Dozens of Hispanic sailors served on Confederate vessels, helping in the dangerous task of breaking the Union blockade of southern ports. One of the most daring officers in the Confederate navy was Capt. After suffering serious wounds in the battle at Manassas, he joined the Confederate Navy. As captain of several blockade runners, Usina made several harrowing escapes, always managing to avoid capture on his many successful missions. Hispanic sailors served the Union with equal bravery and distinction. He risked his life on two occasions as he fought to maintain the Union blockade against the efforts of men like Usina. Philip Bazaar, of Chilean origin, faced a different danger. Under heavy fire, he courageously delivered critical dispatches during the battle. For their valor "above and beyond the call of duty," both Ortega and Bazaar were awarded the Medal of Honor. One of the most famous naval commanders in American history is David Farragut. Born to a Spanish father and an American mother, Farragut was raised in Tennessee and began his naval career when only nine years old. Though he lived in the southern state of Virginia at the time, he remained loyal to the Union. Farragut soon earned praise for commanding a successful naval expedition against Confederate New Orleans. This venture reestablished Union access to the strategically important Mississippi River Valley and Farragut was rewarded with the newly established rank of vice admiral. Farragut is perhaps most celebrated for his capture of Mobile Bay in 1864. There, in the midst of battle, Farragut showed his disdain for the opposing fire by uttering the order that has been famously paraphrased as "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead! Ambrosio Gonzales later designed a system of coastal defenses from Charleston to

Savannah. Hispanic citizens of the United States often acted to preserve a lifestyle and defend lands that they had occupied for generations. Immigrants often had to choose based upon newly-established ties. Cavada was born in Cuba in 1825. Following the death of his Spanish father, he moved to Philadelphia, the hometown of his American mother. Despite growing up and completing his education in the United States, he retained a strong attachment to the land of his birth. He also developed a fierce hatred of slavery so, when the Civil War erupted, he enlisted in the US Army.

**Chapter 2 : Hispanics and the Civil War (U.S. National Park Service)**

*Frederick Zeh, a young German immigrant, had hardly arrived in the United States when he was caught up in the war fever that swept his new homeland. He joined the Mountain Howitzer and Rocket Company of the U.S. Army.*

Does not apply Zirckel, Otto. Mitgetheilt und besonders abgedruckt aus dem Tagebuche, geschrieben wahrend der nordamerikanisch-mexikanischen Campagne in den Jahren und The pages are occasionally foxed and the edges of the pages are chipped. Loosely translated, this work is titled "The Democratic and social conditions of North America compared with the recent such aspirations in Europe and some notes on emigration to the United States. Reported and specially printed from the diary, written during the North American-Mexican Campaign in and ". The regiment set off to support and rescue Colonel Childs who held the town of Puebla. It was mustered out of service July 24, Shipping charges are calculated based on the total packed weight of this item. New York State residents will be assessed and charged the relevant sales tax. Postage on foreign orders will be assessed and billed at full value. You may request Express Mail or Air Mail service at additional charge. All items are guaranteed authentic and as described. Seller assumes all responsibility for this listing. Shipping and handling This item will ship to Germany, but the seller has not specified shipping options. Contact the seller- opens in a new window or tab and request a shipping method to your location. Shipping cost cannot be calculated. Please enter a valid ZIP Code. Worldwide No additional import charges at delivery! This item will be shipped through the Global Shipping Program and includes international tracking. Learn more- opens in a new window or tab Change country: There are 1 items available. Please enter a number less than or equal to 1. Select a valid country. Please enter 5 or 9 numbers for the ZIP Code.

**Chapter 3 : Texas' Most Decorated World War I Hero Was an Undocumented Mexican Immigrant**

*An Immigrant Soldier in the Mexican War* Soon after emigrating from Germany to the United States, Frederick Zeh impulsively joined the army as war with Mexico loomed. His written account is the first book-length description of the Mexican War by a German-American participant—a significant contribution, given that nearly half the regular army.

This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. Jackson , lead by Maj. Julius Stahel , Brig. Louis Blenker and Col. Felix Salm-Salm , a Prussian prince. It should be noted that these immigrants had been living in the US for years before the war. Communication difficulties, especially in Union regiments, were a constant problem in divisions made up of varied nationalities. Such divisions included volunteers from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, and other European countries. One regiment, in particular,[ which? Major General Franz Sigel had his orders translated from his native German to Hungarian for his officers. Reports to him then had to be translated in English for the rest of his command and finally to German again when Sigel received reports. The US, especially in the North, had received a large influx of European immigrants in the s because of people leaving Europe to avoid the ongoing wars and rebellions there. Europe had been in the midst of a pro-republican transformation with people such as Garibaldi , from Italy. Many British citizens from the colony of Bermuda , especially from the coloured a term in Bermuda used to designate anyone not entirely of European heritage population, fought for the Union, either in the United States Navy or the United States Army. Harris, of the 6th Coloured Infantry , and George Smith. Simmons was to die of wounds following the Second Battle of Fort Wagner , on the outskirts of the Bermudian settlement of Charleston, South Carolina, where most of the weapons run through the blockade from Bermuda were landed. Other British citizens who were active in the war included numerous Irish emigres, who served in large numbers on both sides. Many of these Irish veterans took part in the Fenian raids on Canada after the war, and Britain strengthened the defences in Bermuda because of fear of similar raids there or a feared punitive invasion of the colony by the United States. Confederate enlistment[ edit ] Thousands of pre-war immigrants served in the Confederate Army , which had its own Irish Brigade and Polish Legion, as well as several German and Mexican divisions. These units were composed of men who had lived most of their lives in the US. The most notable volunteer division comprised descendants of people from various European countries then living in Louisiana, under the command of French Major General Count Camille Armand Jules Marie, Prince de Polignac. The war was to split the British population as well as American, in both the mother country and her colonies. In Britain, those who benefited from the sale of war materials and supplies to the Confederacy, whose cloth factories were dependent on the supply of American cotton, or who admired the vaguely aristocratic political hierarchy of the Southern states, were set against abolitionists, at least until the Trent Affair. The conflict was even greater in colonies that were nearer to the field of battle. Bermudians had also provided important cadres of skilled settlers to the settlement of other southern colonies, including Georgia and Florida. These close ties had led Bermudians to sympathise with the rebels during the American War of Independence , supplying them with ships and weapons in exchange for exemption from the embargo of the Continental Congress on trade with colonies not in revolt. During the American Civil War, St. Cotton travelled in the reverse direction in payment. Although it had been perceived in the South as an enemy, supporting abolition, before the war, Britain nearly entered the fray effectively as an ally of the Confederacy following the Trent Affair, building up forces in Canada to either defend against a Union attack, or to launch an invasion of the northern states, while preparing the naval and military forces in Bermuda to launch an expedition intended to capture New York. Many British citizens took part in the war in the Confederate forces, including Henry Wemyss Feilden , who resigned his commission in the British Army to become an officer in the Confederate Army, and William Watson , who served as a sergeant in the 3rd Louisiana Infantry before crewing blockade runners. In Bermuda, the close historical ties with the South, as well as the enticement to profiteer from the war by supplying the South, meant that the Confederate agent operated openly from the Globe Hotel in St. Many Bermudians earned fortunes handling supplies to the South, or, like Thomas Leslie Outerbridge , crewing blockade

runners. Another prominent volunteer was the Scotland-born, Captain William Watson.

Chapter 4 : The San Patricio Battalion | [calendrierdelascience.com](http://calendrierdelascience.com)

*Get this from a library! An immigrant soldier in the Mexican War. [Frederick Zeh; William J Orr; Robert Ryal Miller] -- Frederick Zeh, a young German immigrant, had hardly arrived in the United States when he was caught up in the war fever that swept his new homeland.*

Then, a brave group of Irish soldiers They were martyred for adhering to the highest ideals In the name of the people of Mexico, I salute today the people of Ireland and express my eternal gratitude". Army often recruited Irishmen and other immigrants into military service shortly or sometimes immediately after arrival in America in coffin ships , with promises of salaries and land after the war. Numerous theories have been proposed as to their motives for desertion, including cultural alienation, [8] [9] mistreatment of immigrant soldiers by nativist soldiers and senior officers, [10] [9] brutal military discipline and dislike of service in the U. This hypothesis is based on evidence of the number of Irish Catholics in the Battalion, the letters of John Riley , and the field entries of senior officers. Army; this was the conviction of George Ballentine, an Englishman who served in the American army. Ballentine stated that while "there was a portion of truth" in the view commonly assigned by officers that the deserters joined the Mexican army due to their Catholicism, "I have good reason to believe, in fact in some cases I know, that harsh and unjust treatment by their officers operated far more strongly than any other consideration to produce the deplorable result [desertion]," describing how he found the punishments used for "trivial offenses" to be "revolting and disgusting". In addition, many Irish fought as soldiers in South American wars of independence. No flags or depictions of them are known to have survived to the present day. The only version of the flag known to have survived the war was subsequently lost or stolen from the chapel at West Point. It was that glorious Emblem of native rights, that being the banner which should have floated over our native Soil many years ago, it was St. Patrick, the Harp of Erin , the Shamrock upon a green field. Under the harp is the motto of Erin go Bragh! On the other side is a painting Patrick, in his left hand a key and in his right a crook or staff resting upon a serpent. Underneath is painted San Patricio. The first describes it as: Popularly they were called Los Colorados by the Mexicans because of their ruddy, sun-burnt complexions and red hair color. Army in Michigan in September He deserted in Matamoros in April Among their targets were companies led by such officers as Braxton Bragg , many of whose soldiers would end up in their own ranks later in the war. Following the engagement at Monterrey , the San Patricios grew in number, by some estimates reaching an enlistment of over men. They were assigned the three heaviest 18 and 24 pound cannons the Mexican army possessed, which were positioned on high ground over-looking the battlefield , at the base of a hillside just below what is now a gravel mine. As the division got close enough they charged the artillery battery, bayoneting whoever remained and routing the rest, leaving the attached San Patricios free to haul away two six-pound cannons. It was renamed The Foreign Legion of Patricios and consisted of volunteers from many European countries, commanded by Col. Santa Anna gave a verbal order to "preserve the point at all risk". Pedro Anaya to order his men to fight on, with their bare hands if necessary. Army Captain James M. Smith suggested a surrender after raising his white handkerchief. Army were treated and punished as traitors for desertion in time of war. Seventy-two men were immediately charged with desertion by the Army. At neither of these trials were the men represented by lawyers nor were transcripts made of the proceedings. This lack of formal legal advice could account for the fact that several of the men claimed that drunkenness had led them to desert a common defense in military trials at the time that sometimes led to lighter sentences , and others described how they were forced to join the Mexican Army in some form or another. The majority of the San Patricios either offered no defense or their defenses were not recorded. The rationale was that they had entered Mexican military service following the declaration of war. Collectively, this was the largest mass execution in United States history the hanging of 38 Sioux at the conclusion of the Dakota War of appears to be the largest execution by hanging at a single event. Winfield Scott , thirty San Patricios were to be executed at Chapultepec in full view of the two armies while they fought the Battle of Chapultepec , at the precise moment that the flag of the U. This order was carried out by Col. When the army surgeon informed the colonel that the absent soldier had lost both his legs in battle, Harney

replied: In a final act of defiance, the men about to be hanged cheered the Mexican flag , as one onlooker remarked; "Hands tied, feet tied, their voices still free". Army occupied Mexico City. The Mexican government described the hangings as "a cruel death or horrible torments, improper in a civilized age, and [ironic] for a people who aspire to the title of illustrious and humane", [12] and by a writer covering the war as "a refinement of cruelty and Some former San Patricios found work at the arsenal in Guadalajara making gun stocks. Carpenter, who found himself in this predicament, stated that: Numerous schools, churches and other landmarks in Mexico take their name from the battalion, including: The band was inducted into the Irish America Hall of Fame in This was the first time a metro had been renamed in such a manner. In an inquiry was initiated by U. This resulted in the U. Congress ordered the army to turn over its records on the battalion to the National Archives. This is where the U. Army conducted the first 16 hangings after the men were convicted of desertion at court martial. Ireland and Mexico jointly issued commemorative postage stamps to mark the anniversary. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

Chapter 5 : Saint Patrick's Battalion - Wikipedia

*His written account is the first book-length description of the Mexican War by a German-American participant—a significant contribution, given that nearly half the regular army was made up of immigrant recruits.*

Latinos in World War II: August United States Army At the heart of the modern Latino experience has been the quest for first-class citizenship. Within this broader framework, military service provides unassailable proof that Latinos are Americans who have been proud to serve, fight, and die for their country, the U. Thus, advocates of Latino equality often note that Latinos have fought in every U. By , people of Mexican descent in the U. Often the children of immigrants who had entered in previous decades, they strongly identified with the country of their birth. The result was massive Mexican American participation in World War II, the most recent estimate being that some , Mexican Americans served in the conflict For many, a novel sensation of belonging accompanied the experience. Private Armando Flores of Corpus Christi, Texas, for example, fondly recalled being rebuked for putting his hands in his pockets on a cold day during basic training. After basic training, she spent 18 months in the Philippine jungle working out of an administrative building but also tending the wounded when needed. In addition, thousands of Mexican American men and women found jobs in defense industries, an opportunity that was almost denied them because anti-Mexican prejudice remained so high. The upshot was that wartime sacrifice was often a family affair. The Sanchez family, transplanted from Bernalillo, New Mexico to Southern California before the war, is a case in point. Of ten grown siblings, three sisters each became a "Rosita the Riveter," while all five brothers served: Navy Construction Battalion, and the eldest, who turned 50 during the war, as a civil defense air-raid warden. Thus, a tiny two-block lane in Silvis, Illinois, originally settled by Mexican immigrant railroad workers, earned the nickname "Hero Street" for sending an amazing 45 sons off to war. Sent to the Philippines because of their ability to use Spanish to communicate with their Filipino allies, many New Mexicans meanwhile experienced the horrors of the Bataan death march. Pinpointing ethnicity by looking at Spanish-surnames in addition to birthplace makes clear, moreover, that at least 11 Mexican Americans received the Medal of Honor during the conflict. Among them was Joseph P. Many ethnic group members attributed their willingness to serve, and to serve so courageously to their unique cultural inheritance, one rooted in both Iberian and indigenous warrior societies. As Medal of Honor recipient Silvestre Herrera explained his decision to enter a minefield and single-handedly attack an enemy stronghold in France, a decision that cost him both feet in an explosion, "I am a Mexican-American and we have a tradition. Unfortunately, in advance of that date the governor also had to order Phoenix businesses to take down signs that read, "No Mexican Trade Wanted. Although local city officials charged Garcia with aggravated assault, nationally he won in the court of public opinion, especially after the radio celebrity Walter Winchell decried the injustice of the incident on his program. Especially after fighting a fascist dictatorship that championed an ideology of racial supremacy, the idea that wartime sacrifice merited peacetime equality resonated with more Americans than ever. It also contributed to the success of another civil rights organization dedicated to addressing Mexican American concerns. Across the Southwest, segregation against Mexican Americans endured less as a matter of law than as a matter of social custom. Yet what had been common practice before the war was no longer acceptable to Mexican Americans or to their Anglo American allies. A Corpus Christi physician, Hector P. Garcia, led the charge to address the injustice. Garcia, who had served as a medic in Europe during the war, had upon his return to the States formed an organization called the American G. Forum to secure equal treatment for Mexican American veterans at Veteran Administration hospitals. He was quickly rebuffed. To Garcia, the irony of enforcing segregation even in the case of dead soldier amounted to a "direct contradiction of those principles for which this American soldier made the supreme sacrifice. In response, Lyndon B. Johnson, then the junior senator from Texas, graciously arranged for Longoria to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. For Garcia, however, his work on the civil rights front had just begun. The Longoria incident propelled the American G. Forum to the front lines of the fight for Mexican American equality. So successful were the two organizations that the most overt manifestations of this practice as it was aimed at Mexican Americans substantially diminished by the end of the decade. Unfortunately, the experience

of Puerto Ricans during World War II also echoed their experience during the previous global conflict. Once again, Puerto Ricans on the island eagerly registered for the draft or volunteered in the dual hope of contributing to the war effort and along the way helping their island through an infusion of defense dollars and technical training. Once again, military officials limited those hopes. Although the classic bolero *La Despedida* has its origins in the World War II era because so many soldiers left the island during those years, the military preferred to keep islanders in security and service roles. Army researchers concluded that Puerto Ricans burnt and blistered just like "whites. After being deployed to North Africa and Italy to guard supply lines, they came under assault from German forces in Europe. They received training in the States, and, unfortunately, in some cases experienced discrimination, before returning to Puerto Rico. On the mainland, Puerto Ricans found ways to contribute, too. Puerto Ricans who served in the regular army units versus service-oriented African American ones likewise experienced combat. In some cases, a single family sent sons to war from both the island and the continental U. Although many Americans families saw multiple sons go off to war, the stereotype of big, Catholic families certainly held true in the case of the "Fighting Medinas," who were seven brothers from a single Puerto Rican family divided between the island and Brooklyn, all of who served. Not until the Korean War did Puerto Ricans have the chance to prove themselves in battle in significant numbers. Following the surprise outbreak of war on the Korean peninsula in June , the sudden and urgent need for manpower propelled the 65th Regiment to the front lines where they engaged in some of the most heated fighting of the entire war. Although the armed forces had been desegregated in by presidential order, the 65th Regiment, comprised entirely of islanders, remained an all-Puerto Rican unit. Thrust in the thick of a war that featured a dramatically shifting front line across a rugged, mountainous terrain, these island soldiers also slogged through mud and snow as they faced both North Korean and Chinese enemy soldiers. By the end of , the 65th Infantry Regiment had been in battle for days, suffered 1, battle casualties and taken 2, enemy prisoners, meaning it had fought more days, lost fewer men, and taken more prisoners than comparable regiments on the front line. Little wonder that General Douglas MacArthur, who until April was in charge of military operations in Korea, said that the 65th "was showing magnificent ability and courage in field operations. For Puerto Rican politicians on the island, moreover, the Puerto Rican soldier exemplified the new working relationship they hoped to see between the island and the mainland. The 65th Regiment was both wholly Puerto Rican but also completely partnered to the U. Increasingly, Puerto Ricans had settled on a middle road between independence and statehood: In the wake of World War II, islanders had received the right to elect their own governor. During the Korean conflict, U. Shortly afterward, Puerto Rico officially became a Commonwealth of the U. This is from an essay that focuses on Latinos in the United States military during the wars of the late 19th and entire 20th centuries as well as the peacetime roles of American Latino soldiers and veterans. The essay also discusses the economic and social significance of military service to American Latinos.

**Chapter 6 : Latinos in World War II: Fighting on Two Fronts (U.S. National Park Service)**

*An Immigrant Soldier in the Mexican War by Frederick Zeh, , available at Book Depository with free delivery worldwide.*

Army was made up of recent immigrants to the United States , many of whom had chosen military service because other jobs were not available to them. Living and working conditions were harsh, and immigrants were often viewed unfavorably and treated unfairly. This was especially true for Irish Catholics, whose religion made them particular targets for prejudice in a society that was mostly Protestant. These and other factors led a group of U. Army and fight on the Mexican side in a special military unit called the San Patricio Battalion. Considered traitors in the United States , these men were highly valued by the Mexican army and are still fondly remembered by the Mexican people. The story of the San Patricio Battalion helps to illustrate not only an interesting aspect of the war but social conditions in the United States in the nineteenth century. The hard lives of U. Army was quite small. Military service was not viewed as a very promising, respectable profession and most young men considered it a last resort if they could not find other work. When Congress authorized funding for fifty thousand volunteer troops to help fight the war against Mexico, however, enlistment offices were crowded with men eager to sign up to travel to an exotic foreign country and fight an enemy they thought would be easy to beat. All of these drawbacks led as many as nine thousand U. Less than one hundred of these men were tried for the crime of desertion, the punishment for which was usually death. However, members of the San Patricio Battalion who were still alive at the end of the war were captured after one of its final battles, and most received the death penalty. Among all the deserters of the Mexican American War, only the San Patricios were sentenced to death by hanging; the usual form of execution was by firing squad, which was considered more humane. Those who were not executed were severely punished with whipping and branding. The low status of Irish immigrants The reason that the men of the San Patricio Battalion were signaled out for such harsh punishments was because of the views of U. In the s and early s, extremely poor economic conditions in Ireland brought a huge number of Irish immigrants into the United States. Unlike the Irish who had immigrated in the eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, who tended to be skilled craftsmen and Protestants, most of these new Irish immigrants were poor farmers. They also were members of the Roman Catholic religion, to which only 1 percent of the total U. The United States had been founded and long dominated by Protestants, and as a result, there was widespread prejudice against and fear of Catholicism. Although it is true that the U. Constitution guarantees freedom of religion, most Americans did not think their society had to accept or accommodate people who were racially or otherwise different from those who currently dominated it. Thus, even people who thought slavery was wrong did not think that white Americans would ever live side by side, in equality, with blacks; instead, they envisioned that African Americans would either return to Africa or form their own state in the Caribbean region. The racial prejudice that was used to justify the unfair treatment of blacks was extended to Mexicans, who were considered lazy, irresponsible, uncivilized, and too excitable. And it also was often applied to the Irish, who were assigned many of the same qualities as the Mexicans, and who also were predominantly Catholic. Long discriminated against at home by the British, who had been in control of Ireland for many centuries, Irish immigrants discovered that they were subject to much of the same treatment in the United States. Many of the Irishmen, who were unable to find other jobs, joined the U. In fact, immigrants, including the Irish, made up almost half of the U. These immigrants were generally held in contempt by their officers and fellow soldiers. It was believed that since these newcomers were not yet U. Critics cited that these new immigrants were fighting for money, not to defend the United States, and thus they were not "real" soldiers. As a result of this discrimination, Irish-born soldiers were usually given the lowliest and hardest jobs, received harsher punishments and fewer promotions, and were prevented from practicing their own religion. In fact, some historians have found it surprising that more of the five thousand plus Irish soldiers who did fight on the U. The United States sends troops to Mexico In March , the nation of Texas, which had declared its independence from Mexico nine years earlier, became a U. Mexico had promised that this action would mean war, since Mexico never officially recognized Texas as an independent nation. Thus, the United States and Mexico were

now on the brink of war. At this time, U. Polk ; see biographical entry was an ardent expansionist, and he was only the most prominent among a large number of Americans who hoped Mexico would make the first move and start a war. If this occurred, it was believed that the United States could take over parts or even all of Mexico. Soon after the annexation granting of official state-hood of Texas, Polk sent several thousand troops under the command of General Zachary Taylor ; see biographical entry to Corpus Christi , a town on the Nueces River, the traditional border between Texas and Mexico. The following spring, Taylor was ordered to move his troops south to the Rio Grande , a river about miles south of the Nueces that the United States was now declaring as its border. Across the narrow river was the pleasant Mexican town of Matamoros, whose citizens peered curiously across at the U. During the months between the arrival of the troops at the Rio Grande and the May start of the Mexican American War, about forty U. They deserted the army, swimming across the river to join the enemy on the other side, and fighting against their former officers and fellow U. They did so for a variety of reasonsâ€”including the harsh discipline and treatment they had received from the U. Army, the lure of a friendly and welcoming people who shared their religion, and perhaps because of a feeling of sympathy for the Mexicans, whose homeland had been invaded. Riley would later try to persuade more U. Initially, though, this new unit was made up not only of the U. Army deserters, but of foreigners from Ireland, Germany, and other places who were already living in Mexico. By August , the unit had grown to include two hundred men who were known to the Mexicans as colorados red heads; many people of Irish descent have red or reddish hair. It was then renamed the San Patricio Battalion after Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland , and its men began to fly a distinctive flag of green silk with the traditional Irish images of Saint Patrick , a shamrock, and a harp sewn on it in silver thread. Even before this flag flew, however, and even before the official May 13 declaration of war, the men who would make up the core of the San Patricio Battalion had taken part in the first two battles of the war. The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma The man in charge of the Mexican troops stationed in Matamoros was General Pedro Ampudia , a Cuban-born officer with a reputation for brutality. The residents of Matamoros had asked for a replacement and General Mariano Arista had been sent to take over command from Ampudia, who now became second-in-command. On May 8 and 9, troops under these two officers fought the U. Army in the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. The men whose unit would soon be christened the San Patricio Battalion were probably present at both these battles, which turned out disastrously for the Mexicans. Outgunned by the U. Arista took most of the blame for these defeats, and as a result, Ampudia was again put in charge of the army. He halted his army of about nine thousand at the city of Monterrey. The San Patricios help to defend Monterrey The battle began on September 20, and lasted for three days, ending in brutal hand-to-hand fighting through the city streets. The San Patricio Battalion played a major role in the clash, proving their artillery large guns such as cannons skills as they mowed down many U. After a high number of casualties on both sides but more for the Mexicans, including many civilians , Ampudia surrendered. A ceasefire agreement that some, including Polk, felt was too generous allowed the Mexicans to walk out of Monterrey, with officers carrying their personal weapons. Among those who marched away were the San Patricios, their green flag held high. Because of the high number of civilian casualties in the Battle of Monterrey, and the fact that U. Santa Anna decided to take advantage of this opportunity. He sent out notices that encouraged U. Catholic soldiers to turn their backs on an army and a nation that had no respect for their religion. Realizing that their artillery was far inferior to that used by the United States, the Mexicans had to plan their strategy carefully. They assigned the well-trained San Patricio Battalion to the three biggest cannons, which were mounted on high ground above the battle field. Although the United States won the Battle of Buena Vista due to their superior weapons and equipment and to the fact that their troops were in much better physical condition, the San Patricios performed well, even though they lost about a third of their men. Despite several costly attempts, the U. In addition, the San Patricios captured two U. After the battle, they were recognized by the Mexicans for their bravery, and John Riley received a medal and a promotion to the rank of captain. By August , the San Patricios had enough men for two companies, each made up of about one hundred soldiers. In reality, of course, it had been a great loss. Mexican citizens were growing more and more alarmed, especially after troops under General Winfield Scott ; see biographical entry , now in command of the U. Once again, many civilian lives were lost in the U. Army

was now on the march toward Mexico City , the conquest of which, it was believed, was necessary if the United States was to win this war. From their position at a Churubusco convent, the San Patricios fought fiercely, and it is for this effort that they are most remembered in Mexico. Fighting with both heavy artillery and rifles, the San Patricios held on to the convent valiantly, inflicting many casualties on the U. At one point, the Mexicans ran out of ammunition. They made a plea for more, but received only supplies designed for U. However, since the San Patricios carried U. Three times the Mexican soldiers tried to raise a white flag of surrender, but each time the San Patricios tore it down, determined to fight on. Finally, knowing that they were defeated, an officer in the San Patricios put his own white handkerchief on the point of a bayonet and raised it in the air. The battle was over. Thirty-five San Patricios had been killed in the battle, while about eighty had escaped. The remaining eighty-five members of the battalion were taken prisoner. Seventy-two of them were immediately charged with desertion from the U. They were to be tried in two groups, on August 23, in the town of Tacubaya and on August 26, at San Angel. A panel of officers would hear the case, and the sentence would be sent to Scott for approval. Assigned to carry out the terms of the sentences was Colonel William Harney , an officer of Irish Catholic heritage who was known for his cruelty. Found guilty of desertion At the trials, the San Patricios were not represented by lawyers, but they were allowed to call witnesses who would testify that they were men of good character. Knowing that conviction meant the death penalty and unable to get formal legal advice, about half the men claimed that drunkenness had led them to desert from the army this was a very common defense in military trials and sometimes led to lighter sentences. Others claimed that the Mexicans had forced them to join their army. None brought up the issues of religious or racial prejudice.

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