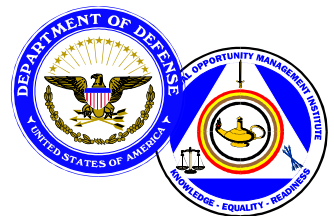


# Hispanic Heritage Month 2001



## Paving The Way For Future Generations

Directorate of Research  
Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute  
740 O'Malley Road  
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida 32925-3399  
Observance Series Pamphlet 01-4



## **PREFACE**

Major Tammy M. Savoie, United States Air Force, assigned to Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas, served as a participant in the Topical Research Intern Program at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) during the months of June and July 2001. She conducted the necessary research to prepare this report. The Institute thanks Major Savoie for her contributions to the research efforts of DEOMI.

## **SCOPE**

The Topical Research Intern Program provides the opportunity for Service members and DOD civilian employees to work on diversity/equal opportunity projects while on a 30-day tour of duty at the Institute. During their tour, the interns use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to compile a review of data or research pertaining to an issue of importance to equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialists, supervisors, and other leaders throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resource and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements by the DOD or any of its agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and selected senior officials to aid them in their duties.

**The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and should not be construed to represent the official position of DEOMI, the military Services, or the Department of Defense.**

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## **HISPANIC AMERICANS PAVING THE WAY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**Ever since Columbus sailed with his Spanish crew under Queen Isabella's flag, men and women of Spanish ancestry have been coming to American shores in pursuit of their dreams.**

- Novas, 1994 (13:xii)

In honor of this Spanish ancestry, the U.S. has celebrated Hispanic Heritage month from 15 September through 15 October every year since 1988. This year's celebration will be especially poignant as the results of Census 2000 indicate that Hispanics have become the largest minority group in the United States including Puerto Rico. (11:1) "Latino Hot" is the new wave in our popular culture and promises to have a lasting influence on the American landscape and culture. The purpose of this paper is to increase awareness and understanding of the diverse Latino heritage and culture and to use the information presented herein to celebrate it.

In Census 2000, 281.4 million residents of the United States were counted, excluding the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States island areas. Thirty-five million, or 12.5 percent, were of Hispanic ancestry. In addition, there were 3.8 million Hispanics living in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. (11:1) The concept and measurement of Hispanic origin has evolved across several censuses dating back to the 1930 census in which the term "Mexican" was included as a category within the race question. (8:2) The 1940 census reported people who had Spanish as their mother tongue. In 1950 and 1960, Hispanic origin was determined only indirectly when these censuses collected and published data for persons of Spanish surname in five western states. In 1970, a sample was taken in which 5 percent of households received questionnaires with questions relating directly to Spanish origins. (8:1) None of the methods used prior to 1970 could be applied nationwide with any consistency to get an accurate count of the Hispanic population. (5:5) In 1980, in order to eliminate sampling bias, the question regarding Spanish origin was received by all households. (5:7) The census questionnaire was also available in Spanish for the first time. Extensive efforts were made for the 1980 Census to consistently count all persons who considered themselves to be of Spanish origin; and the directions on the form were more explicit than they had ever been in this regard. (5:7) In 1990, people of Hispanic descent not only could identify themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or other, people who marked other Spanish/Hispanic had additional space to write in specific origins, e.g., Salvadoran or Dominican. (8:1) In 2000, the term Latino was used on the census form for the first time and individuals could identify themselves as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. (8:1)

Determining the origins of people in the United States is important as it helps define who we are, where we came from, and where our future is headed. The U.S.

Census is extremely important in this regard and is used for a variety of public purposes. (18:11) These include Congressional reapportionment, federal revenue sharing, identification of target populations for social services, and population projections. (18:11) Thus, the Census Bureau is required by federal directive to collect data on Hispanic origin. It is important because all levels of government need information on Hispanic origin to implement and evaluate programs, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, Public Health Act, Healthcare Improvement Act, Job Partnership Training Act, Fair Housing Act, Census Redistricting Data Program, and others. (8:8)

The Hispanic population increased by 57 percent from 1990 to 2000 compared to a 13 percent increase for the total U.S. population. This translates into an increase from 22.4 million Hispanic Americans to 35.3 million Hispanic Americans living in the United States in 2000. Forty-three and a half percent of Hispanics lived in the West, 32.8 percent in the South, 14.9 percent in the Northeast and 8.9 percent in the Midwest. Half of all Hispanics lived in the states of California and Texas with 11 million and 6.7 million Hispanics in each state, respectively. The majority of Hispanics, 76.8 percent, lived in seven states with Hispanic populations of a million or more: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, and New Jersey. Hispanics in New Mexico comprised 42.1 percent of the total state population, the highest proportion for any state. Hispanics in East Los Angeles comprised 96.8 percent of the total population for that city, the highest for any place outside the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. On the other hand, Hispanics accounted for less than 12.5 percent of the population in 41 states and the District of Columbia. (8)

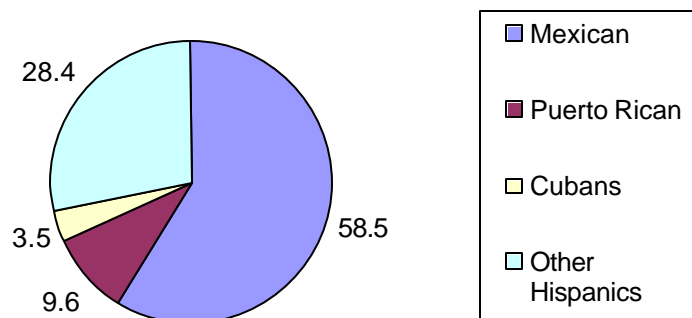
The relative youthfulness of the Hispanic population is reflected in its population under age 18 and the population's median age. While 25.7 percent of the U.S. population was under 18 years of age in 2000, 35 percent of Hispanics were less than age 18. The median age for Hispanics was 25.9 years versus 35.3 years for the total United States. (8:7) A larger percentage of Hispanics than non-Hispanics are young, with proportionately more children and fewer elderly. (14:405) This young population will grow into the leaders and shapers of the country over the next 20 to 30 years. Also, given the high birth rate, the low average age of Hispanics (40 percent are under 21), and the fact that 30 percent of legal immigrants are from Spanish speaking lands ensures that the Hispanic population in the United States will continue to grow well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (14:406)

## **DEFINING THE HISPANIC POPULATION**

The word Hispanic comes from Espana, Spain, the country that led the conquest of the New World. Hispanic ancestry is rich and consists of anyone who descended from the mother country. When the Spanish conquistadors settled the land, they conquered the native people known collectively as Amerindians, with whom they married and fathered children. They also married and fathered children with the African peoples they brought to the New World as slaves. This cultural mixture of the native Amerindians, the Spanish

settlers, and African people gave rise to the rich Hispanic culture we know today. (13:2) However, describing and labeling this rich culture has been problematic. The word Hispanic is controversial and the term Latino is currently considered preferable by many cultural activists because unlike Hispanic, the word Latino recognizes the influence of African and Amerindian populations on the group. (4:192; 13:3) Hispanic or Latino Americans share a common language and heritage. Because of this commonality, they are often lumped together despite their many differences. (14:401) The Hispanic experience varies greatly, depending on the particular ethnic group, area of the country, and period of immigration. (14:401)

**Percent Distribution of the Hispanic Population by Type: 2000**



As the chart illustrates, the ethnic backgrounds of the Hispanic population are diverse. (8:2) This paper discusses the four major groups presented in the chart, beginning with Mexican Americans, the largest group of Hispanic Americans and a group whose ancestors occupied the United States prior to the first settlement at Jamestown. It then discusses Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, and Hispanics of other origins who are the newest immigrants from various countries in Central and South America and the Dominican Republic. For Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cuban Americans, the native heritage of the people is discussed, followed by a brief history of the migration and assimilation into the American culture and summarized with the current status of the group. For the newest immigrants, a brief synopsis of their situation is provided through the history of each group, however a full discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. Following a discussion of these groups, the cultural traditions of the Latino people are reviewed. The last two sections will discuss Latino Americans in the Department of Defense and U.S. Coast Guard and the impact of the Latino culture on mainstream American culture.

## Mexican Americans

**When we speak about Chicanos, we do not speak of a cultural minority who crossed the borders and then by slow assimilation became part of the great American melting pot. We refer to a cultural minority who have lived within the boundaries of the present United States since long before the first English settlement at Jamestown.**

- Novas, 1994 (13:55)

The two main cultures that dominated present-day Mexico and Central America before the Spanish conquista were the Mayans and the Aztecs. The Maya lived in southern Mexico and were the first people of the New World to keep historical records. Their written history begins in 50 BC and their inscriptions tell the story of great Mayan queens and kings up until the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the Spaniards changed their lives forever. Mayan culture is known for its monumental architecture. They developed extensive and sophisticated skills in water management and agriculture. The Maya had a rich culture; they were artists, architects, astronomers, and poets. Mayan people survived the Spanish conquest and currently live in Central America. The faces of the Maya are reflected in the peoples of present-day Mexico and the United States. (13:21,22)

The Aztecs had achieved the most advanced civilization in North America when the conquistadors landed. They assimilated the cultures of earlier peoples, including the Maya. They built the magnificent city of Tenochtitlan which is, today, Mexico City. The Aztecs were admired for their art, ingenuity, and great technological and agricultural advancements. The Aztecs referred to themselves as the Mexican people, thus, the whole of Mexico is named after them. The descendants of the proud Aztec people include Native Americans and Mestizos (people of mixed Native and Spanish heritage) living in Mexico City today, as well as those Hispanic Americans who came from the valley of central Mexico and other areas where the Aztec traveled and conquered. (13:23-25)

From the time Hernando Cortes entered the Gulf of Mexico in 1519, the Spanish *conquista* of Mexico took only two and a half years. Montezuma II was the Aztec emperor who reigned from 1502 to 1520 over Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) and the valley of central Mexico. Montezuma lived lavishly, surrounded by nobles and thousands of slaves; he was believed to be directly descended from the gods. Montezuma believed that the conquistadors were gods and that their conquests had been preordained to punish the Aztecs for their previous conquests and enslavement of the Toltec and other Indian groups.

The Spanish army was decisively superior to the Aztecs, thus, the Aztecs were soundly defeated. The defeat was aided by the fact that smallpox and other European diseases caused the death of thousands of Amerindians. In addition, the Amerindians divided themselves into many warring factions, some of whom the Spanish enlisted as allies. (13:23-25,56)

Once the Spanish conquered Mexico, they immediately instituted the forced imposition of their Spanish culture. To include, the mass conversion to Catholicism. The early Spanish settlers and followers of Cortes were given *encomiendas*, or grants that gave them ownership and control over Native American land, labor, and produce. The establishment of the *encomiendas* was the first codification of slavery. It entitled the Spanish to control the lives of the Amerindians by installing local feudal governments that later gave rise to the formation of ranchos or ranches, which operated almost as individual cities. (13:58)

By the late 1700s, the Age of Reason was dawning, and absolute control of distant lands by monarchies was being seriously questioned. As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Spanish economy in the Americas had begun to collapse. Disease and overwork had reduced the native populations, and, without people to mine or cultivate the land, Spain could do little to reverse the recession. (13:69-70) Other contributions to Spain's downfall were social unrest, racial tensions, and the call for freedom in the colonies. A caste system was imposed in Mexico with *peninsulares* (Spaniards) ruling and discriminating against other groups including the *Criollos* (Mexican-born persons of Spanish parentage), *Mestizos* (people of mixed Native and Spanish heritage), and the Amerindians. In 1823, Antonio Lopez Santa Anna overthrew the loyalist government and took control; Mexico had won its independence (13:71-72).

From this point on, several events occurred to shape the landscape into what is present-day Mexico, Texas, and the Southwestern United States. These events included; the trade market along the Santa Fe Trail which increased commerce and interactions between the Mexicans and United States citizens; the settlement of Texas by Anglos and its independence from Mexico; the doctrine of Manifest Destiny; and the Mexican-American War from 1846-1847 in which New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, California, Texas, and half of Colorado were lost by Mexico and became part of the United States. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) was the official agreement between the United States and Mexico in which the United States acquired this vast amount of land, and, in doing so, also acquired a large group of new citizens. These citizens who remained in their homeland found themselves in the middle of a country whose laws, political and social institutions, and fundamental traditions were alien. Nearly 80,000 Mexican citizens became United States citizens who were guaranteed the right of worship and whose property rights were supposedly fully protected. However, Mexicans remained an insular and marginalized group in the United States for many decades. Some Mexican Americans were doing well as California ranchers, however, sudden catastrophes, such as flood and drought, and the Federal Land Grant Act of 1851 left them homeless and bankrupt. An underclass developed overnight and many were forced to seek menial jobs across the American Southwest frontier. (13:73-93)

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 was the next major event that changed the status quo. It was a lengthy, bloody, and devastating civil war that changed Mexico forever. Its root causes were both class and racial struggles and it laid the foundation for the present-day democratic Mexican government. The revolution lasted until 1917 and created the first Mexican political refugees in the United States, and it began a new wave of



migration that eventually reshaped Mexican-American life. Many who came were middle and upper class; others were poor and uneducated. All felt forced to flee their country. The Mexican peasants became a major part of the American Southwest economy. Their cheap labor enabled the commercial farms in the area to flourish. In the urban areas such as Los Angeles, Mexican refugees also were a source of cheap labor for the manufacturing plants. In a matter of years, the Mexican American population exploded. By 1925, Los Angeles had the largest Mexican population outside of Mexico City. Between 1900 and 1930, over a half million Mexican immigrants legally entered the United States. Many more were undocumented. Between 1930 and 1940, over 2,000 Mexicans applied for permanent residence in the U.S. annually. The new Mexican-American population in the U.S. was taking shape and giving birth to the Latino cultural heritage of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The sheer numbers of new Mexican immigrants began changing the face of the Southwest and incorporated a strong Mexican flavor into the communities in which they settled. (13:95-97) “Mexican immigration to the United States between 1890 and 1965 has been called one of the most significant demographic phenomena in the history of the Americas.” (13:100)

As Mexican Americans integrated into the larger society, they were met with discrimination in housing, jury selection, law enforcement, public accommodations, and employment. (3:102-103) Several Mexican-American organizations were formed to fight for equality for Mexican Americans. One such group, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) won several landmark legislation cases for Mexican Americans. In the 1940s the Community Service Organization (CSO) was formed; it emphasized mass political involvement and was instrumental in engineering voter registration drives and encouraging Mexican Americans to run for office. (13:116-117) The CSO along with other activist groups were successful in electing local Mexican-American officials to communities whose populations were largely Mexican American.

Cesar Chavez, a migrant worker, organized labor unions and helped raise America's consciousness of the unfair practices and conditions that Mexican-American farm workers had endured for decades. Chicano student organizations demanded that their language, culture, and ethnic contributions be recognized in schools and universities (13:120) The United Mexican Students (UMS) and the *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán* (MECHA), in the 1960s and 1970s, set the pace for today's Latino cultural revolution. (13:120) The leaders of the Mexican-American organizations, labor unions and student groups helped put Mexican-American studies programs in place in many universities and colleges and elected hundreds of Mexican Americans to political offices, school boards, and civic organizations. They righted many wrongs affecting the Mexican-American community. Medical clinics, credit unions, and legal aid for migrant workers were established. (13:120-123) Today, Mexican Americans continue to benefit from the work of these great leaders, but American society as a whole is the greater beneficiary.

As the 2000 Census indicates, Mexican Americans comprise the largest number of Hispanic Americans in the United States. Most Mexican Americans or Chicanos are Mestizo, i.e., of mixed Native American and Caucasian descent. The 2000 Census data

indicates an increase in the Mexican-American population of 52.9 percent from 13.5 million to 20.6 million Mexican Americans from 1990 to 2000. There were more than one million Chicanos living in the states of California, Texas, Illinois, and Arizona and concentrated in the cities of Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, San Antonio, and Phoenix. The majority of Mexicans, 55.3 percent, live in the West, 31.7 percent in the South, 10.7 percent in the Midwest, and 2.3 percent in the Northeast. The median age of Mexican Americans, at 24.2 years, is the youngest for any of the Hispanic groups ensuring that in the years to come this generation of Mexican Americans will have a lasting impact on American culture. (8:2-7)

### **Puerto Rican Americans**

Puerto Ricans are descendants from the native Taino Amerindians, the African people brought to the island as slaves, and the Spanish who conquered the island and interbred and intermarried with both groups. (13:2,145,148) Puerto Ricans comprise the second largest group of Hispanics; they are also the most socially and economically disadvantaged Latino group. (14:429)

The Taino people first occupied the island of Puerto Rico and were given this name by Christopher Columbus because *taino* meaning "peace" was the first word they spoke when they saw him. The Taino people were peaceful; they fished, hunted, and lived off the fruit of the land. "Borinquen" is the name the Taino people gave to Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans still refer to each other as "Boricua" as a form of bonding and reaffirming ancient roots. Columbus reached Borinquen in 1493 and was impressed with the wealth of the island. He immediately took possession of the island in the name of Isabella and Ferdinand, queen and king of Spain. He named the island San Juan Bautista after John the Baptist and the queen and king's son, Juan. Spain, busy with their efforts in Mexico, ignored the island for about 15 years. In 1508, Juan Ponce de Leon explored the island. Upon arrival at the bay at San Juan, he exclaimed "Ay que puerto rico!" ("Oh what a rich port!") The island became known as Puerto Rico from that moment on. Ponce de Leon became the first governor of Puerto Rico and San Juan became the capital of Puerto Rico and remains so today. (13:145-146)

The Taino Indians welcomed the Spanish, believing them to be gods. The Spanish enslaved the native people and took the land. The Tainos worked the gold mines and tended the fields. They were taught Catholicism as well as Spanish history and culture. In 1511, the Taino people rebelled. As a result of the rebellion, Ponce de Leon had 6,000 Tainos shot on the spot. Other Taino fled to the mountains or to neighboring islands. Hundreds of Tainos had already died of exhaustion, malnutrition, mistreatment, and of European diseases for which they had no defenses. The Spanish quest for riches had proven fruitless, the native population was decimated and the Spanish population was also in decline on the island. At this point, Ponce de Leon sought to bring African slaves to the island and in 1511 the first shipload of African people arrived. By 1515, fewer than four thousand Tainos remained, compared to the 40,000 originally found when Columbus landed. Ponce de Leon gave up the fruitless search for gold and attempted to

turn Puerto Rico into an agricultural paradise to help feed and support Spanish crews on their way to and from Spain from the lands of Mexico and Central and South America. The Spanish invested in sugar cane. The Africans and remaining Tainos cultivated and harvested the crop. The African population flourished while the Spanish and native populations dwindled. By 1531, the African population had reached 2,264 while the Spanish population was a mere 426. To reverse this trend, the Spanish government granted free land in Puerto Rico to each Spanish settler who agreed to farm the land and to stay more than five years. Other crops were added and by the 17<sup>th</sup> century tobacco and ginger had become the most important crops. Puerto Rico began to thrive. African slavery continued in Puerto Rico until 1873 when it was legally abolished by Spain. At this time, African culture was deeply imbedded in Puerto Rico. Intermarriage and interbreeding among the Tainos and Africans was common and gave rise to the diversity in Puerto Rico's art, music, philosophy, and literature. (13:146-148)

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, South American countries were winning their battles for independence. Mexico had won its independence in 1823. By the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only Puerto Rico and Cuba remained Spanish colonies. Puerto Rico had developed a cultural and national identity distinct from Spain and began demanding more autonomy. Puerto Ricans wanted educational reform, less taxation, more representation. They wanted Puerto Ricans, as opposed to Spaniards, in local government positions. In 1812, Puerto Ricans secured a more liberal constitution and the right to Spanish citizenship. Efforts continued on the part of Puerto Rican citizens to win full independence; Spain's response was to tighten its rule over Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans continued the struggle and in 1897 an agreement was reached with Spain whereby Puerto Rico was granted local governmental control. By July 17, 1898, Puerto Rico had voted for its first independent governor. However, on April 25, 1898, the U.S. declared war on Spain. The Spanish-American War lasted only a few months. When the war ended, the United States was in possession of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Wake Island, Guam, and the Philippines. Under the 1899 Treaty of Paris, Puerto Rico found itself a U.S. protectorate with fewer rights of self-government than it had recently won under Spain. (13:153-161)

In 1900, the United States declared Puerto Rico a United States territory. A civil administration replaced the transitional military government. This allowed for local elections of Puerto Ricans to a House of Delegates that made laws relating to internal affairs. The United States President appointed an American governor to head the House of Delegates. This appointed American governor had final say over the affairs of the island. In addition, in 1900 a heavy tariff was added on products coming out of Puerto Rico in order to protect U.S. sugar and tobacco interests from Puerto Rican competition. Many Puerto Ricans protested these arrangements. However, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the U.S. could govern its territories this way. This ruling gave rise to strident Puerto Rican political efforts to change the status quo. Due to these efforts and the threat of WWI, President Woodrow Wilson granted U.S. citizenship to all Puerto Ricans. This also meant that Puerto Ricans were subject to the draft. (13:162-164)

Almost 20,000 Puerto Ricans served in the United States Armed Forces during WWI and contributed by buying war bonds and making donations. Puerto Rico

continued to strive for more autonomy. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. was the appointed governor from 1929-1932 and implemented several favorable economic and cultural programs in hopes of greater self-government for Puerto Rico. A revolt during the late 1930s by a group of Puerto Rican nationalists demanding Puerto Rican independence left several dead and more injured. The U.S. Congress addressed the matter of independence but denied it indicating that the social and economic situation in Puerto Rico should be improved before independence was granted. (13:164)

In 1947, Congress implemented the Elective Governors Act, granting Puerto Rico the right to choose their governor and granting the governor the full right to appoint all officials except the auditor and the Supreme Court. In 1949, Luis Munoz Marin became the first native son elected by the people of Puerto Rico to its governorship. Marin revitalized the Puerto Rican economy. Marin was also influential in getting Congress to call for an election in Puerto Rico in which the people could determine whether Puerto Rico would become a "free associated state" (i.e., Commonwealth) of the United States. Marin favored this because he felt it was a status that would evolve over time until Puerto Rico could achieve total independence from U.S. control. The island could still benefit from economic and social privileges it could not have had otherwise. Marin was reelected as governor three more times. Under his leadership, Puerto Rico won new and respected political status, flew its own flag for the first time, and won the right to create and enact its own constitution. (13:165-168)

Significant migration from Puerto Rico to the U.S. occurred after WWII when 100,000 Puerto Ricans served in the war. Military life exposed many islanders to mainland prosperity and encouraged them to move North. The population of the island had doubled in the first 15 years of the century and grew rapidly due to improved medical services brought by the U.S. government. However, the unemployment rate soared. Jobs on the mainland were plentiful, particularly in the Garment District in New York City and in the service industry. The migration continued steadily until the 1960s when it began to slow. (13:169) Today tourism, agriculture, and the pharmaceutical industry thrive on the island. The standard of living on Puerto Rico, however, has not kept up with the mainland. Over the years, Puerto Ricans have brought their food, music, and way of life to many different cities, particularly in New York City where Puerto Ricans are considered the most significant rising political group. (13:170) In 1993, a referendum was held to determine the Puerto Rican relationship with the United States. Forty-eight percent favored continued Commonwealth status; 46 percent favored statehood and a mere 4 percent favored complete independence. The dream of statehood is still alive and well in the minds of millions of Puerto Ricans. (13:174-176)

The 2000 Census indicates an increase in the Puerto Rican population by 24.9 percent from 2.7 million in 1990 to 3.4 million in 2000. There were more than 250,000 Puerto Ricans living in the states of New York, Florida, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania with population concentrations in the metropolitan areas of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The majority of Puerto Ricans, 60.9 percent, live in the Northeast, 27.3 percent in the South, 9.6 percent in the Midwest, and 7.2 percent in the West. The

median age of Puerto Ricans is 27.3 years and is the second youngest for any of the Hispanic groups other than Mexican Americans. (8:2-7)

## **Cuban Americans**

In 1492 when Columbus landed on Cuba, he said this about the island in his journal,

**[I have] never seen anything so beautiful...[Everything I saw] was so lovely that my eyes could not weary of beholding such beauty, nor could I weary of the songs of the birds large and small...Flocks of parrots darken the sun. There are trees of a thousand species, each has its particular fruit, and all of marvelous flavor.**

- Columbus, in Novas, 1994 (13:187)

The Tainos and Siboney Amerindians inhabited the island and lived by fishing, hunting, and farming. Like the Tainos of Puerto Rico, the Amerindian population of Cuba was decimated by hard labor and European diseases. The Siboney and Tainos cultivated tobacco and taught the conquistadors how to roll and smoke tobacco. (13:187-188) The Spanish prospected for gold on the island; however Cuba's wealth was in its rich soil and strategic location. Cuba lies at the crossroads of three main maritime routes: the Straits of Florida, to the North; the Windward Passage to the East; and the Yucatan Channel to the West which allows access to both the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. Spain was most vulnerable to foreign aggression at this intersection. For two centuries, Cuba served as a home base and launching pad for some of the most important Spanish expeditions in the New World and was valued by Spain as a vital strategic colony and dubbed the "Spanish fortress of the Caribbean." (13:189-190)

With the help of imported African slaves, Cuba's agricultural wealth from sugar, coffee, and tobacco crops thrived. (13:191-192) It was during this period of relative prosperity that Spain became involved in Europe's Seven Years' War from 1756-1763. The English became interested in the Spanish colonies, particularly Cuba and in 1762, they struck Havana harbor and took control of the city. Trade taxes were abolished and the port was opened for commerce with merchants and traders from England and the North American colonies. Cuba could now buy and sell to a large part of the world that was forbidden under Spanish rule. However, the Spanish saw the value in Cuba and ceded Florida to the English in 1763 in exchange for Cuba. During the short 10 months of English rule more than 10,000 African slaves were introduced to the island. This surge of cheap labor increased the agricultural output. Sugar cane became the main crop of the island. The rich African-Cuban music, philosophy, and religious traditions can be traced to this period. The island was transformed with the influx of Africans. The economy was booming; sugar mills and plantations were sprouting all over the island. The population and towns grew. Havana was one of the largest cities in the New World by the end of the eighteenth century. Although agriculture flourished throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, there were many uprisings by the slaves due to the harsh treatment they

received. In 1845, Spain enacted the Law of Abolition and Repression of the Slave Trade which forbade importing any new slaves and declared that all slaves introduced to Cuba after 1820 were entitled to their freedom. In spite of this, the slave trade flourished in open defiance of Spanish law. The Cuban elite, i.e., the landowners, were disenchanted with Spain who charged them high taxes and attempted to ban slavery which they needed to raise their crops. This elite class saw annexation by the United States as a way to maintain slavery. Also, Cuban production of sugar and tobacco could be increased to serve the United States, duty-free. North of Cuba, the doctrine of Manifest Destiny had taken hold and Cuba was on the list of possible additions to U.S. territory. President James Polk offered Spain \$100 million for Cuba in the early 1850s and President Franklin Pierce offered \$130 million in 1854. Spain declined on both accounts. (13:195-197)

In Cuba, slavery was gradually losing favor among everyone including the land owners who had found newer sources of cheap labor in Asians and poor Whites coming from an economically crippled Spain. In 1865, a political group known as the Reformist Party wrote a memo to the Spanish parliament citing these demands:

- Cuban representation in Spanish parliament; a reformed tariff system;
- Cuban natives afforded the same rights as Spanish-born;
- and the permanent abolition of slavery in Cuba. (13:198)

In response, the Spanish denied Cubans parliamentary participation, they banned political meetings, raised colonial taxes, and imposed protectionist duties on all foreign products. The masses rebelled against Spain, launching a bloody civil war lasting 10 years. The Spanish destroyed the sugar mills, torched the land, and conducted mass executions. (13:198-199) The Cubans were not successful in this war, but the freedom fighters continued to plan for Cuba's eventual independence.

In 1897, a war of insurrection was underway. Revolutionary leaders predicted that the war could end by January of 1898 with Cuba gaining independence. In the United States, President William McKinley issued a war message against Spain. The United States sent the USS Maine to the port of Havana in an effort to "stabilize" the situation. The Maine exploded in the harbor; the Spanish-American War commenced and was over within a few months. (13:203-204) When it ended, the United States had not only acquired Cuba, but also Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and the Wake Islands. The Cubans launched a public relations blitz to ensure that the U.S. would agree to recognize an independent Cuba. (13:205) The people of the United States sympathized with the Cuban cause. In 1906, the Platt Amendment was passed transferring control of Cuba to its own government, however, with stipulations. The U.S. reserved the right to intervene in order to preserve Cuban independence; the U.S. could maintain naval stations on the island, and the Cuban government could not enter into any treaty or engagement with any foreign power that might interfere with the independence

of Cuba. The Platt Amendment has been a source of contention since its ratification in 1906. (13:207-208)

United States businesses invested heavily in sugar, tobacco, and other crops in Cuba. The economy flourished. Cuba became the chief supplier of sugar to the United States. By the 1950s, Cuba, existing primarily on imports from the U.S., had the strongest economy in Latin America. However, not everyone in Cuba was benefiting. An enormous disparity grew between wealthy landowners, the middle class, and rural workers. Due to the political corruption of the dictator Fulgencio Batiste, by the end of the 1950s Cuba became ripe for revolution. People began to stage mass demonstrations in the cities and throughout the country sides. In 1959, Batiste fled to Spain and Fidel Castro came into power. The people welcomed Castro and looked forward to restoration of democracy in their homeland. As early as 1961, Castro declared publicly that he was a communist and aligned himself with the Soviet Union. Within months of his assumption of power, he confiscated land and industry from private ownership. Political enemies were executed. Communist Party members ran the media, schools, and universities. Freedom of speech and the right to assembly were abolished. (13:211-217)

Cubans came to the U.S. as a result of the many waves of political unrest that occurred in Cuba prior to the Spanish-American War in 1898. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, a large Cuban colony blossomed in Tampa, Florida. Cubans imported Cuban cigar making techniques and established tobacco manufacturing plants and shops. However, post-Castro exiles outdid previous immigrants in sheer numbers and influence.

Today, more than three generations of Cuban Americans live in the U.S., with more than half a million in Florida. Two main immigrations from Cuba took place, one beginning in the 1960s and lasting through the early 1970s after Castro took control; and the Mariel boatlift of 1976. (13:187) In general, Cubans have done well in the United States. Cubans have the highest rate of incorporation into the workforce of any Hispanic community in the U.S. Cubans also have a lower unemployment rate, higher median family income, greater education rate, and greater middle-class population composition than other Hispanic groups. (14:435)

The 2000 Census data indicate an increase in the Cuban-American population by 18.9 percent from 1 million in 1990 to 1.2 million Cuban Americans in 2000. More than two-thirds of the Cuban-American population are living in the state of Florida and concentrated in the cities of Hialeah, Miami, and Tampa. The majority of Cuban Americans, 74.2 percent, live in the South, 13.6 percent in the Northeast, 8.5 percent in the West and 3.6 percent in the Midwest. Although the median age of Cuban Americans, at 40.7 years, is the oldest for any of the Hispanic groups and is actually older than the median age for the total U.S. population, this group is the wealthiest and yields considerable political clout. And even though the fertility rate is lowest in the Cuban population, due to its well-established communities and high-class status, its influence is likely to continue well into this century. (8:2-7;14:435)

## **The Newest Immigrants**

The great majority of Latinos began entering the American mainstream in the late 1970s and 1980s and continued on a large scale into the 1990s because of political and economic distress in the Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Peru, as well as devastating wars in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador. (13:235) Many believe that the Latino immigrants of today encounter many more hardships than their European counterparts who came to America decades ago. This is due, in part, from a shift in the U.S. from a manufacturing economy in which unskilled or semi-skilled laborers are often needed, to a technological service economy where only highly trained workers are essential. (13:235-236) New immigrants also help one another and create small businesses that foster growth of their own barrios and communities. Currently, there are large communities of Dominicans in New York, Nicaraguans in Miami, and Ecuadorans and Salvadorans in California and Washington state. (13:237)

The 2000 Census data indicate the number of Hispanic Americans of other origins increased by 96.9 percent from 5.1 million in 1990 to 10 million in 2000. Among the 10 million other Hispanics living in the U.S., 1.7 million were Central American, 1.4 million were South American, and 765,000 were Dominican; 17.3 percent did not identify a specific origin. Central American Hispanics were clustered in the cities of Los Angeles, New York, Houston, Miami, and San Francisco. South American Hispanics were concentrated in the cities of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami. Central Americans comprised 4.8 percent of the total Hispanic population with 655,000 Salvadorians, 372,000 Guatemalans and 218,000 Hondurans. South Americans comprised 3.8 percent of the total Hispanic population with 471,000 Colombians, 261,000 Ecuadorians and 234,000 Peruvians. The median age of Central Americans, Dominicans, and South Americans stood at 29.2, 29.5 and 33.1 years, respectively. (8:2-7)

## **CULTURE**

Culture defines the social rules surrounding lifestyles, beliefs, customs, and values that influence a society's pursuit of its goals, marked in part by its language, music, dance, dress, religion, history, and literature. (14:29) Latino culture is rich and differs among those of Spanish ancestry due to the various influences from Native Americans and the African people. The Mexican intellectual, Jose Vasconcelos (1925) saw the amalgamation of the White, Black, and Indian races occurring in Latin America and believed that all Spanish speaking peoples in the Western Hemisphere share a cultural bond and that God has planned for them a great destiny that has yet to be realized. This sentiment is known as *La Raza Cosmica* or the Cosmic Race. (14:404) Hispanics are firm believers in generosity, sharing their good fortune, and maintaining a warm open-house policy by reaching out to others. (14:404,434)



## Family

*La familia* includes members of the immediate household and any blood relatives. Hispanics have a high worth of the ideal of family values. This ideal is usually patriarchal, headed by the father, and embodies the Hispanic theme of machismo whereby men are imbued with dominant qualities. However, in reality, women often are the decision-makers in the family. The term *compadrazgo* refers to a strong friendship relationship whereby friends are seen as members of the family. This extension of kinship to non-relatives strengthens the bonds within the family. *Compadrazgo* also refers to godparents. Parents may choose close friends or relatives to become godparents to their children who have special responsibilities towards the child and will take the parental role if the parents pass away. The strongest relationship, however, is between the child's parents and godparents, who refer to each other as *compadres*; they provide each other with help, care, and support. (15:7.05)

## Religion

In general, Hispanic Americans are very religious. Approximately 75 percent of Hispanics are Catholic, 19 percent Protestant and 5 percent claim other religions. (15:7.05) Spiritualism, developed in Mexico during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is mainly practiced by Catholics. Spiritualists think of themselves to be vehicles or *cajas* ("boxes") for great religious figures and use these powers to heal others. There is a popular movement today to canonize these healing figures by the Catholic Church. Hispanic Americans have some unique Catholic customs. These include Pilgrimages, *Ex votos*, *Posada*, and *Pastorela*. Pilgrimages are organized wherever large groups of Hispanic Americans reside to various sites such as the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico, the Shrine of Our Lady of San Juan de Los Lagos in Mexico, and the Shrine to La Caridad del Cobre facing Biscayne Bay in Coral Gables. *Ex votos* is a tradition in which Mexican and Central Americans present gifts to the saints in gratitude for their protection and help. Many Mexican Americans observe *Posada*. For nine nights in a row, up to Christmas Eve, a different neighborhood family acts as a host for the *posada* ("pilgrims") who reenact Mary and Joseph's search for lodging. They knock at each designated home, sing a traditional hymn and ask for shelter, but are refused repeatedly. On Christmas Eve, they are let in and after saying a rosary, refreshments are served. *Pastorella* is a folk play that reenacts the adoration of the Magi and is presented by some Mexican Americans during the season of the *Posada*. (15:7.01)

Less typical Western religions such as Santeria and Spiritism, both of which have roots in folk and African traditions, are still popular, symbolizing Hispanic Americans' strong ties to their native culture and heritage. (15:7.01) Santeria is the religion of the saints. It is a syncretic belief, fusing Afro-Caribbean and Roman Catholic beliefs. Santeria, now traditionally a religion of the poor, began as a secret slave religion. (15:7.01) The gods or *santos* of Santeria fuse with the Catholic saints. For example, the Catholic Virgin del las Mercedes is the African goddess of the waters, Yemay, in Santeria. Santeria has both female and male priests. They worship an extensive

pantheon of deities and believe in animal sacrifice to honor their gods. In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court lifted a ban on animal sacrifice declaring it a violation of freedom of religion. A major victory for ethnic understanding and for practitioners of Santeria had been achieved. (15:7.01)

## **Holidays**

### ***El Dia de los Tres Reyes***

- (Three Kings Day), 6 January - Celebrated by various Hispanic groups: Children receive holiday presents said to be delivered by the Three Wise Men. (15:7.02)

### ***Calle Ocho***

- Various dates in March, - Celebrated by Cuban Americans, Little Havana, Miami: The celebration spanning 23 blocks is one of the largest block parties in the United States. Dancing, food, and costume parades abound, followed by live music. This is the largest Hispanic celebration in the nation and forms part of a seven-day celebration known as "*Carnaval Miami*." (15:7.02)

### ***Carnaval***

- Various dates in March, - Celebrated by Brazilians and Various Hispanic Groups: A celebration that takes place at the start of the Holy Week. (15:7.02)

### ***Cinco de Mayo***

- 5 May - Celebrated by Mexican Americans and is a national holiday in Mexico. Parades and fiestas honor the success of the Mexican army over French invaders at Puebla and the overthrow of Emperor Maximilian, the Austrian born monarch installed by the French in 1864. (15:7.02)

### ***Puerto Rican Day Parade***

- Various dates in June, - Celebrated by Puerto Ricans: Marching bands and carnival-dancing groups (*comparsas*) accompany floats in this New York City parade. Public school children from New York whom the parade committee adopts each year to provide with education and other services usually lead the procession. (15:7.02)

### ***Nativity of San Juan the Baptist***

- Late June - Celebrated by Puerto Ricans: Commemorates the patron saint of Puerto Rico. (15:7.02)

### ***Columbian Independence Day***

- 20 July - Celebrated by Columbian Americans: Many Columbian Americans celebrate this day by eating and drinking traditional Columbian foods. (15:7.02)

### ***Ecuador Day***

- 10 August - Celebrated by Ecuadorian Americans: Celebrated in the Ecuadorian community in New York City to commemorate Ecuadorian independence. (15:7.02)

### ***Fiesta Day Santa Fe***

- Early September - Celebrated by Mexican Americans: Every year, the weekend after Labor Day in Santa Fe, New Mexico, this fiesta takes place. A 40-foot marionette, named *Zozobra*, symbolizing gloom and frustration is burned in the main square. This symbolizes the celebration of the destruction of gloom for the entire year. After "gloom" has been burned, the people dance in the streets, shouting "Viva la fiesta." The following day, the town holds a "pet parade," where children walk with a real or imaginary pet. (15:7.02)

### ***Mexican Independence Day***

- 16 September - Celebrated by Mexican Americans. (15:7.02)

### ***National Hispanic American Heritage Month***

- 15 September - 15 October - Celebrated by Hispanics of all ethnic backgrounds: A national celebration of the history and achievements of all Hispanic Americans. (15:7.02)

### ***Desfile de Hispanidad***

- Early October - Celebrated by Latin American immigrants: Celebrated by all immigrants to the United States and falls on the day before Columbus Day each year. (15:7.02)

### ***El Dia del la Raza* (Columbus Day)**

- Early October - Celebrated by Puerto Ricans: A Puerto Rican celebration of Columbus Day. (15:7.02)

### ***El Dia de los Muertos* (The Day of the Dead)**

- 1-2 November - Celebrated by Mexican Americans: A celebration and observance of All Souls' Day. Mexican Americans decorate their homes with skeletons symbolizing spirits of the dead, who are believed to visit their relatives on these days. People sometimes go to the cemetery to lay food and flowers on the graves, as those buried are thought to regain their taste and hearing for two days. (15:7.02)

### ***Festival of the Virgin of Guadalupe***

- 12 December - Celebrated by Mexican Americans: Celebration of the Mexican patron saint and symbol of national identity, the Virgin of Guadalupe. Believers go to church to feast and to rejoice. They adorn the image of the Virgin with flowers, and mariachis sing *Las Mananitas* (Morning Songs) at the break of dawn. (15:7.02)

## Cuisine

Mexican food is a combination of Native American, Spanish, and African influences. Recipes mostly come from Mayan, Aztec, Pueblo and other Native American peoples living in Mexico and the Southwest when the conquistadors arrived. Sweet tamales, tomatoes, tortillas, chiles, avocados, coconuts, papayas, pigs, turkeys, and ducks are examples. Typical Mexican dishes in the U.S. are salsa, burritos, quesadillas, and chiles rellenos. In the U.S., Mexican food rivals Chinese food as the most popular ethnic cuisine. The major ethnic groups who once inhabited the island also influence Puerto Rican cuisine. The traditional Spanish dishes such as paella (cooked rice with fish and/or meat) are combined with African delicacies and native Taino Indian spices and vegetables. Unique seasonings are orange oil made from achiote seeds sautéed in olive oil; adobo, a marinade of lemon; garlic; and sofrito which is sautéed garlic, onions, and green peppers. Puerto Rican staples include rice and beans, typically eaten once or twice a day, and *vianda* (starchy vegetables). *Asopao* is Puerto Rico's most famous dish and is a chicken and rice mixture. Other favorites include *Empanadas de jueyes* (crab cakes), *Sopa de quimbimbo* (okra soup), *Lechon asado* (roast suckling pig). Favorite sweets are *pirulis*, (sugar sticks) and *churros* (deep-fried, sugared stick-shaped donuts). Cuban cuisine tends to be less spicy than Mexican or Puerto Rican and the most popular seasonings are garlic and olive oil. Some popular dishes are *Lechon asado* (roast-suckling pig), rice and black beans, *Calameres en su tinta* (Squid in its own ink) and *Fufu de platano* (mashed green plantains with garlic and pork crackling). (15:7.03)

## Music and Dance

From the heavy percussion of Afro-Caribbean and Brazilian music to the Spanish guitar and instruments of Mexican Mariachi bands, the diverse array of musical styles known as Latin music is the mixing of cultures. Latin music has continually found new ways to express the diversity of its people. Latin Pop, well known to American youth, is a general term for music derived from Latin musical styles, such as the sound of Ricky Martin, the ballads of Selena, or the inspirational songs of Gloria Estefan. (15:7.09)

**Mariachi** is an urban style of Mexican folk music. Mariachi bands originally consisted of two violins, a *vihuela* (small five-string guitar), a *jarana* (a larger five-string guitar), and a harp. The harp was replaced at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a *guitarron* (a large, acoustic four-string bass guitar). Since the 1930s, two trumpets have also been included in the ensemble. Mariachi bands are also known for the elaborate, highly embroidered costumes, which include sombreros, short bolero-jackets, and vaquero pants. (15.7.09)

**Ranchera** means "ranch song." Rancheras were a key element in the Mexican political theater of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century whose lyrics focus on powerful expressions of patriotism. Ranchera is very popular to this day. (15.7.09)

**Tejano** refers to the broad range of pop music from the Texas-Mexico border region. Tejano often blends mainstream rock or pop music with traditional Mexican genres, particularly the accordion-based conjunto. The tejano sound can vary from the countrified sound of Freddy Fender to the pop ballads of Selena. (15.7.09)

**Danzon** is a highly syncopated music form that is one of the earliest styles of Afro-Caribbean music. Danzon was introduced to Cuba by Haiti and Louisiana immigrants in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. (15.7.09)

**Tango** is a popular Argentinean dance form that became a worldwide sensation during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, featuring a solo vocalist accompanied by a guitar. Tangos often feature lyrics that stress long, sentimental narratives. Tangos have often been condemned, perhaps because of the dance's overt sensuality. (15.7.09)

**Guaracha** is a song and dance style, featuring alternating rhythms. It started in Cuba and was popular in Puerto Rico and New York City from the 1920s to the 1940s. (15.7.09)

**Merengue** is a music born in the Dominican Republic and imported to Puerto Rico and the U.S. during the 1930s. It is usually accompanied by a small accordion, a two-headed drum called the *tambora*, and a singer who plays the *guiro*. (15.7.09)

**Cubop** is a nickname for Afro-Cuban jazz, which first blossomed in the 1940s, fusing improvisational bebop jazz of that era with Latin percussion and rhythms. Artists such as Dizzy Gillespie and Machito popularized the form. (15.7.09)

**Mambo** an instrumental Cuban dance style that became immensely popular in New York City from the 1930s to 1950s. (15.7.09)

**Bossa Nova** is an improvisational blend of West Coast jazz and Brazilian rhythms and melodies, created by Carlos Jobim and popularized in the 1950s and 1960s by artists such as Joao and Astrud Gilberto, Charlie Byrd, and Stan Getz. (15.7.09)

**Salsa** is a mixture of African, Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Dominican styles first popularized in the U.S. during the 1970s. Salsa is usually played by a band of eight to ten musicians, including piano, bass, conga drums, timbales, bongos, cowbell, trumpet, cuatro, and one or two singers. Salsa stars include Celia Cruz and Tito Puente. (15.7.09)

**Lambada** is an Afro-Brazilian dance style featuring tightly embracing dance partners that became a popular European and American fad in the late 1980s. (15.7.09)

## **Theater**

Theater has long been an important part of the Hispanic-American community and has been influential on different levels ranging from the personal to the political. As early as 1598, Jan do Onate and his colonial mission in New Mexico reportedly

entertained themselves by improvising plays based on stories from their journey. In 1789, Mexican plays were being performed in California settlements. Don Antonio F. Coronel opened a theater to accommodate both English and Spanish language productions. In the 1860s, Mexican troupes began to tour extensively in New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Across the nation, New York City began housing many Spanish, Puerto Rican, and Cuban theater companies. In 1910, during the Mexican Revolution, many Mexican theater companies made the U.S. their permanent residence. The 1920s saw Hispanic theater groups grow in popularity. San Antonio and Los Angeles became major theatrical centers. The most popular forms of Hispanic theater at this time were Mexican plays and Spanish drama. New York City hosted regular touring companies from Cuba, Spain, and Mexico. Mexican vaudeville and musical comedy also started to rise. During the great depression from 1929 to 1935, numerous Mexicans were repatriated, depleting theaters throughout the U.S. and amateur theater groups developed in their place. From 1936 to 1937, the only Hispanic unit of the Works Progress Administration's (WPA's - a relief program for artist during the depression) was hosted by Centro Asturiano, a mutual aid society in Florida where Hispanic and Anglo-American theater artists joined forces. (15:7:04)

By the 1950s, repertory theaters began to appear across the Southwest, performing Latin American, Spanish, and American plays with Spanish translations. Then in 1953, *La Carreta (The Oxcart)* opened in New York; the play explored issues surrounding the dislocation of a family of Puerto Rican mountain people as they resettled in a San Juan slum, then later, in New York City. With the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the hub of Hispanic theater in Florida moved from Tampa to Miami, where wealthy Cuban expatriates found and supported theater companies, drama productions, Broadway musicals in Spanish, and Spanish-language versions of classics such as Shakespeare's plays. During the 1960s improvisational street theater, similar to Chicano theater, took off in New York City. (15:7.04)

A major shift occurred in 1965 when the modern Chicano theater movement was born. Aspiring playwright Luis Valdez joined Cesar Chavez in the fields of Delano, California, and formed the *Teatro Campesino* in an effort to advertise and raise money for the grape boycott and farm worker strike. For the next 20 years, Chicano theater expanded and dramatized the political and cultural concerns of their communities. The Puerto Rican traveling theater was born in 1967 in New York City and produced works by Puerto Rican, Latin American, and Spanish playwrights, and, in the 1970s, Nuyorican works. In 1968, *Teatro Repertorio Espanol* was founded in New York City; it remains the only Hispanic theater in the U.S. that puts on both classical Spanish works and works by contemporary Latin American writers. It performs in Spanish and in English, and is the only Hispanic company to regularly tour the U.S. to both educational and community-based audiences. *Teatro Campesino* branched out in 1970 from the exclusive domain of the labor field, developing *Teatro Chicano*, incorporating commedia del'arte with humor, folklore, and charter types of Mexican vaudeville theater. Also, in the 1970s, the biennial Festival Latino, a festival of Hispanic popular theater, was organized in conjunction with the Joseph Papp New York Shakespeare Festival. Many grassroots Chicano theater groups disbanded during the 1980s as more Hispanic playwrights emerged and were

published. And in 1998, the *Teatro de la Luna* in Arlington, Virginia, presented that area's first International Festival of Hispanic Theater, offering various genres, including puppetry, comedy, drama, and musicals. (15:7.04)

## Arts

The Latino presence in the U.S. visual art scene prior to 1965 was largely that of Latin American nationals residing in the U.S. for varying periods of time. Internationally acclaimed Latino masters were respected and became influential figures during their stays in the U.S. during the 1930s and 1940s. Internationally known artists such as Diego Rivera, Jose' Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Rufino Tamayo, Wifredo Lam, and Roberto Matta were influential in the American art scene. During this time, the U.S. was still searching for a "national" style of its own. These artists received attention in the most important institutions and were influential in shaping the developments of U.S. art. The Mexican muralists are generally credited with inspiring the WPA mural movement. (4:193)

Several important exhibitions of Latin American artists were mounted by American museums between 1930 and 1965, providing inspiration and support to Latinos living in the United States. These exhibitions often coincided with U.S. foreign policy initiatives in Latin America. During the 1930s, two important exhibitions of Mexican art were hosted in New York City. The Metropolitan Museum of Art hosted a major historical exhibition of Mexican Art and the newly founded Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art hosted its second one-person show of the great muralist, Diego Rivera. (4:193) Between 1940 and 1945, another spurt of interest arose in Latin American art. Seven exhibitions of Latin American art at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art were displayed in New York City to include: *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*, *Portinari of Brazil*, *Brazil Constructs*, and *Cuban Painting Today*. Through the 1950s and 60s, there were numerous important exhibitions throughout the country. Examples include the the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts 1959 show, *South American Art Today*; The Art Institute of Chicago's *U.S. Collects Latin American Art*; The Boston Institute of Contemporary Art's *New Departures of 1960*; The Walker Art Center's *New Art of Brazil*; the Peabody Museum's *Venezuelan Painting*; Cornell University and Guggenheim Museum's *The Emergent Decade*; and Yale University's *Art of Latin America Since Independence* (4:193)

Beginning in the mid 1980s, a renewed interest in the art of Latin America resulted in a large number of exhibitions. The exhibitions merged with significant events such as the 1992 Columbus Quincentennial, which provided the impetus for a similar series of official and unofficial exhibitions and publications discussing Hispanic contributions to America. (4:193)

## **HISPANICS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND U.S. COAST GUARD**

When it comes to serving the United States, Hispanic Americans have risen to the occasion. As far back as the American Revolution, Spaniards and people of Hispanic descent provided significant military assistance. (11:4) Prior to the Civil War, the 1860 U.S. Census showed 27,466 Mexican Americans living in the United States. (11:19) When war broke out in 1861, this population was split in its loyalty, with approximately 2,550 Mexican Americans joining Confederate military units and another 1,000 joining the Union forces. More volunteered as the war progressed and it is believed that approximately 9,900 Mexican Americans served during the war. (11:22)

In 1898, the United States declared war on Spain. (11:30) Hispanics were among those who served with the Rough Riders under Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. After landing in Cuba, the Rough Riders were successful in helping the Cuban rebels defeat the Spanish military. (11:32)

In March 1917, the United States declared war on Germany after four U.S. merchant ships were sunk on the open seas by German submarines. (11:35) Exactly how many Hispanics fought in WWI is unknown. Novas indicates that almost 20,000 Puerto Ricans served. (13:164) No particular count of Mexican Americans was found.

However, there are several accounts of Hispanic-American valor during the war. (11:36) During WWII, numbers were more accurate with estimates ranging from 250,000 to 500,000 Hispanic Americans serving in the Armed Forces. Hispanic women also served in the Women's Army Corps. (11:38) Mexican Americans received the greatest number of Congressional Medals of Honor of any single minority in the United States. (13:115) WWII helped integrate Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans into mainstream American culture. During WWII, many Hispanic Americans left the barrios for the first time and were exposed to new ideas of fairness and equality. They were also exposed to disparate and prosperous lifestyles. They learned new skills and took advantage of the GI Bill following the war which included obtaining a college education. Both wartime and peacetime jobs moved Mexican Americans into both White and multi-ethnic urban centers around the country, resulting in a large exodus of Mexican Americans from New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. (13:116,169) Puerto Ricans were encouraged to move North and established large communities in New York and New Jersey. (13:169) Hispanic Americans have served proudly in all U.S. wars and their presence in the ranks has increased since WWII. (13:115) During the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the number of Hispanic Americans on the front lines was disproportionate to their population. As in previous wars, many Hispanic Americans chose to serve in combat units like the Marines and paratroopers. They distinguished themselves through courage and bravery. (11:47)

## **DISTRIBUTION OF UNITED STATES ACTIVE DUTY FORCES, INCLUDING THE U.S. COAST GUARD**

As of September 2000, the total end strength for U.S. Active Duty Forces was 1,405,722 personnel. Hispanics make up 8.2 percent of this end strength, 4.0 percent of



the officer corps and 9.0 percent of the enlisted force. The number of Hispanic women serving on active duty mirrors that of the total Hispanic population. Eight percent of the female active duty population are Hispanic, 3.8 percent are officers, 8.8 percent are enlisted. (6:2) In 1990, the U.S. military was considerably larger with 2,065,507 members. Hispanics made up 4.6 percent of all active duty personnel, 2.1 percent of the officer corps and 5.0 percent of the enlisted force. Hispanics made up 4.1 percent of the female force, 2.3 percent of female officers and 4.4 percent of female enlisted personnel. As is evident, the percentage of Hispanics in the active duty force has almost doubled in the last ten years. (7:24) Given the continued growth in the Hispanic population and the youth of the population (40 percent are under age 21), it is evident that over the next 10 years, the representation of Hispanics in the Armed Forces will likely double again. (14:406)

What is interesting to note is that the increase in Hispanic Americans serving in the Armed Forces has not occurred equally across the Services. Hispanics, both women and men, tend to choose to enlist and receive commissions in the Marine Corps compared with the other Services. In September 1990, Hispanics made up 6.8 percent of the total Marine Corps; by September 2000, Hispanics made up 12.6 percent of the total Marine Corps. This increase represents the largest increase in all the Services. In 1990, 2.4 percent of Marine officers were Hispanic; in 2000 this number rose to 5.2 percent. The Hispanic enlisted ranks swelled from 7.3 percent in 1990 to 13.5 percent in 2000. In 1990, Hispanic female personnel comprised only 4.1 percent of all Marine Corps female personnel; in 2000 this number grew to 14.8 percent. In 2000, 5.9 percent of female officers and 15.7 percent of enlisted females were Hispanic. This verses 2.4 percent of female officers and 7.3 percent of enlisted females being Hispanic in 1990. (6:1,26; 7:24,30) The Army and the Navy have also had significant gains in the Hispanic population over the last ten years, albeit not as great as the Marine Corps. In 1990, Hispanics comprised 4.1 percent of total Army active duty personnel and 5.6 percent of total Navy active duty personnel. By 2000, Hispanics comprised 8.3 percent of total end strength for the Army and 9.3 percent of total end strength for the Navy.

Concomitant increases were seen in the officer and enlisted corps for both the Army and Navy from 1990 to 2000. The Hispanic officer corps in the Army in 1990 was a mere 1.8 percent; in 2000 it rose to 4.2 percent. In the Navy the Hispanic officer corps was 2.4 percent verses 5.3 percent in 2000. The Army enlisted corps in 1990 was comprised of 4.4 percent Hispanic verses 9.1 percent in 2000. Likewise, the Navy enlisted corps in 1990 was comprised of 6.0 percent Hispanic verses 9.9 percent in 2000. These trends are similar for Hispanic women in the Army and Navy. In 1990, Hispanic women comprised 2.9 percent of total Army female personnel; by 2000 this number was 8.0 percent of Army female personnel. In 1990, Hispanic women comprised 6.5 percent of total Navy female personnel; by 2000 this number was 10.1 percent of Navy female personnel. The distribution of Hispanic females in the officer and enlisted ranks in the Army and Navy is comparable to the distribution of all Hispanics in the officer and enlisted ranks in the Army and Navy, respectively. (6:2,14,18; 7:24,30)

On the other hand, the September 2000 demographic data indicate that fewer Hispanics tend to choose commissioning or enlistment in the Air Force and Coast Guard. In 2000, Hispanics comprised 4.9 percent and 6.5 percent of the total end strength of the Air Force and Coast Guard, respectively. These numbers represented only a small increase since 1990 in which Hispanics comprised 3.5 percent of the total Air Force population and Hispanics comprised only 4.1 percent of the total Coast Guard population. The Hispanic officer corps in the Air Force rose from 2.0 percent in 1990 to 2.2 percent in 2000; the Hispanic officer corps in the Coast Guard rose from 1.7 percent in 1990 to 3.9 percent in 2000. The enlisted corps also saw slight increases in the Air Force and Coast Guard. In 1990, the enlisted Hispanic population was 4.4 percent and 4.6 percent for the Air Force and Coast Guard, respectively; in 2000, the enlisted Hispanic population was 5.5 percent and 7.2 percent for the Air Force and Coast Guard, respectively. In 1990, Hispanic females in the Air Force comprised 3.2 percent of female Air Force personnel; in 2000, this number was 5.4 percent. In 1990, Hispanic females in the Coast Guard comprised 4.4 percent; in 2000, this number was 6.8 percent. (6:2,22,28; 7:24,30)

The reasons for the disparity are unclear but may be steeped in the deep tradition of Hispanic Americans serving with valor in the military in combat units in the Marines and the Army. Tradition and loyalty in the Hispanic community is strong. The sense of family and bonding are paramount, and it is this tradition that may attract so many Hispanics to the Marine Corps. Also, it is possible that given the Latino propensity to choose the Marine Corps, the recruitment efforts may be more geared towards this population. Young and veteran Hispanic troops may encourage other Hispanic youth to consider the Marine Corps as a career option.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF CIVILIAN FORCES IN THE DOD**

Just as Hispanics are well represented in our active duty military forces, so too are they well represented in the civilian workforce. As of Sept 2000, the largest proportion of Hispanics in the civilian work force is found at the GS-01 and GS-02 levels at 18.4 percent and 11.4 percent, respectively. The Hispanic ranks from the GS-03 level to the GS-09 levels range from 5.8 percent to 8.8 percent of the total DoD civilian work force with an average of 7.1 percent. Hispanics are least represented in the GS-10 through GS-15 categories with percentages ranging from 1.9 percent for GS-15s to 5.4 percent for GS-11s with an average of 3.6 percent. Data for civilian forces in 1990 are not available. Given the youth of the Hispanic population these numbers are not unexpected. It also follows that over the next 20 to 30 years as the young Hispanic workers progress upward, the Hispanic ranks in the GS-03 through GS-09 level will swell. Hispanics will also see gains in the ranks of the GS-10 through GS-15 categories, however, these gains are likely to take longer to materialize. (6:72)

According to David Jeremiah, a former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, by 2020, more than half of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps will be staffed by Hispanics and African Americans. Jeremiah recommended to Secretary of

Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, an aggressive recruitment of Hispanic and African-American sergeants and officers to lead what he predicted will be a military dominated by minorities in the coming decades. (17)

## **HISPANIC IMPACT ON MAINSTREAM AMERICAN CULTURE - TODAY AND INTO THE FUTURE**

**The history of the United States is one of different waves of immigrants coming to its shores seeking a new life. Central as immigration is to our national identity, we have always been ambivalent about the new immigrants.**

- Cafferty, 1985 (3:33)

As mentioned earlier, the Spanish were among the first to conquer the New World. However, over the last few decades, Hispanics have made up a large percentage of the recent immigrants coming to the United States. During the 1970s, about 50 percent of all immigrants were of Hispanic origin. (3:34) Today, that number holds at about 30 percent. (14:406) Most people who immigrate to the United States will, over some number of generations, assimilate, but the patterns of assimilation are different and original culture persists. Moreover, because it persists, it determines how people live in new circumstances. (16:12) According to Shores, the pattern of emigration from Latin America is repeated throughout the twentieth century. At first, a small number of poor people are driven to emigrate; the economic situation in the country of emigration worsens, revolution results; the rich and well-educated elite flee followed by the middle class and the poor. More than capital, education proves to be the most portable wealth. "The intellectually rich and the barely literate poor have entirely different experiences in the United States." (16:43)

The questions regarding Hispanic immigration and Hispanic culture in general are: Will it go the way of previous generations of immigrants? Will the culture and language gradually fade and become another ingredient in America? Or, will Hispanics maintain a strong cultural identity unto themselves and maintain their respective language? Acculturation is defined as the contact between two distinct cultures resulting in the change in one or both of the groups. Generally, the dominant group contributes more to the change and the nondominant group experiences more of the change. Sometimes this change can be difficult and conflictual rather than a smooth transition. It is likely that from first contact to change the relationship is at some point conflicted. (1:10) There are three phases to acculturation: contact, which is necessary; conflict, which is probable; and adaptation, which is inevitable. Groups do not lightly give up cherished features of their culture. Thus, conflict is a general rule. (1:11) Berry points out two facets of acculturation: Assimilation in which one relinquishes her or his cultural identity and moves into the larger society; and integration in which one maintains her or his cultural identity and also becomes an integral part of a larger societal framework. (1:13)

Language is a transmitter of culture, a mechanism by which individuals are socialized into a society. (2:87) When one can speak the language of the dominant society, the benefits of that society are available to the individual. When one cannot speak the language, access is almost certainly denied. It has not been unusual for each wave of new immigrants to want to retain their native language and cultural identity in some form, which has created conflict between immigrants and native born. Unlike prior immigrant groups, Hispanics have a higher rate of language retention. However, few Hispanics are monolingual, and those who are, tend to be over 40 years of age. (2:87) Even though Hispanics are retaining their language at a higher rate, some scholars believe that the Spanish language and hence its rich cultural heritage is fading. *The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study* examined the assimilation of second-generation immigrants in San Diego and other cities between 1992-1996. Today's immigrants, including Hispanics, are learning English and adapting to American culture faster than earlier generations. (12:5) By the end of high school, the children of immigrants were in general more fluent in English than in their parent's language. The level of Spanish proficiency among second-generation immigrants indicates their children "will most likely speak English-only." (12:6) Specifically speaking about the Spanish language, Shorris writes, "The language survives for one generation beyond the last little old lady who spoke it, and neither bilingual education nor English-only initiatives can change that. No other factors appear to have had much importance in the transmission of language." (16:5) But, might this be different for some Hispanic Americans? The answer may lie in the uniqueness of the Hispanic situation.

Migration patterns for Hispanic Americans are a bit different than their European counterparts. Like most Europeans, Hispanics come to the U.S. seeking jobs. However, in the case of Mexicans, Central Americans, and Puerto Ricans, the trip is relatively short. Proximity is a key factor for these immigrants. With little variation in the migration patterns of these groups during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they formed a steady stream to the same communities throughout the nation. (2:93) The promise of jobs and the comfort of joining relatives and friends in an unknown land is repeated from one generation to the next. Migration by whole families occurred during the last century and family networks were established so that family members have remained key sources of information for newer immigrants. These immigrants, unlike earlier European immigrants, have maintained significant ties to their homeland, language, and culture. (2:93)

Miami is a prime example of a community of Hispanic Americans who have been able to integrate into the mainstream of American culture while maintaining cultural heritage. Because of its proximity to Latin America, Miami serves also as a financial capital for Latin America's 22 countries; every major bank in the Spanish-speaking world has an office in Miami. Access to Latin-American markets has made greater Miami increasingly competitive with New York in the realm of international banking. (9:2) The influx of wealthy Latin Americans is creating a renaissance in the arts, benefiting largely Latino artists; most of the artists are from South America or Cuba. In Miami, there is a new generation of Latinos who are well educated and can navigate in and out of Spanish

and English flawlessly and who make up the single largest age group in Miami. People 25 to 44 years old represent 31 percent of the population. This opens up more opportunities for Hispanic-owned businesses that are over 1.3 million strong. (9:3) Because two out of three Cuban Americans live in Florida, the impact on Miami, now dubbed "Little Havana," has been significant. Over 60 percent of all Cuban Americans live in the Miami area where the Cuban influence has transformed Miami from a resort town into a leading bilingual cultural center. (14:433)

In some places such as Los Angeles and New Mexico, Hispanic Americans are often well entrenched into the mainstream of society. There are higher rates of intermarriage, nuclear, instead of extended family residence patterns, and less patriarchal male roles. They enter more diverse occupations, attain middle-class status, and move from the barrios to the suburbs. Some believe that the majority of Hispanics coming to the U.S. will likewise assimilate into the American culture. Claudia Gabarain, news editor for El Nuevo Herald Digital believes that "Miami is sort of an experiment of what can happen when the rest of the Hispanics in the U.S. prosper the way Cuban Americans have." (9:1) Many believe that we are in the midst of a Latino Renaissance, a celebration of a culture steeped in heritage and tradition but also young, hip, and increasingly powerful. (9)

## CONCLUSION

**Hispanic immigrants were among the earliest are now among the most recent to arrive in this haven of liberty and human rights, and I urge all Americans to reflect on the invaluable contributions they have made to the greatness, the diversity, and the strength of this nation.**

- Jimmy Carter, 1980 (10:1)

Just as the Native Americans and Africans had an enduring impact on the Spaniards who brought their culture to the New World, those of Latino descent have and will continue to have an enduring impact on mainstream American culture. Americans should embrace this culture, for it is a part of our history and it will become our future, as Jose Vasconcelos' vision of La Raza Cosmica extends from Latin America to the cities and suburbs of these United States of America.

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