

Pedro Sanchez

New Mexican Soldier, Politician, "Friend of the Poor"



Pedro Sanchez, photographed by Dana B. Chase, Courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), 011042

The U.S. Census Bureau continually strives to ensure an accurate count of the people of the United States. For this reason, it has always embraced the hiring of a diverse workforce that is representative of the local communities. In the middle of the 19th century, the United States expanded west into areas formerly governed by Spain and Mexico. Since many of the citizens and local officials only spoke Spanish, the Census Office quickly realized that it needed to employ workers fluent in the language. The establishment of a permanent Census Bureau in 1903 and increased immigration from Cuba and Central and South America expanded the need for Spanish-speaking employees both in the field and at headquarters.

Pedro Sanchez was born on February 22, 1831, in Valencia County, New Mexico. Pedro's father, Cristobal, moved the family to Taos in 1837, and taught Pedro how to raise

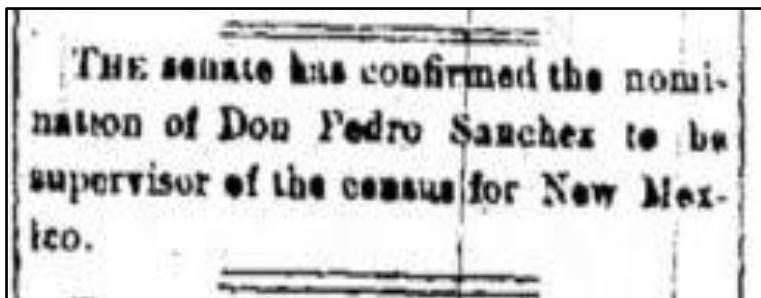
sheep. However, by 1847, Pedro had set out to make his way in life. Pedro worked at a variety of jobs and the 1860 Census lists his profession as "merchant." However, it is his success in farming which enabled him to build one of the most impressive houses in Taos. Additionally, Pedro served in the New Mexico militia against the various Mexican and Indian uprisings that occurred in the years after the Mexican-American War and the Gadsden Purchase.

Historic census records are maintained and released by the National Archives and Records Administration, not the U.S. Census Bureau.

Visit <http://www.archives.gov> for more information about publicly available records like the one shown here.

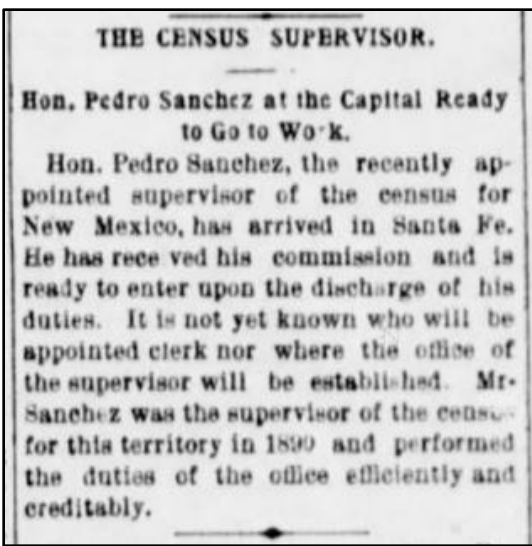
Pedro's 1900 Census

Pedro's involvement with the militia marked his first entry into public service and helped propel him into prominence. With the outbreak of the American Civil War, Pedro joined the New Mexican militia units that remained loyal to the Union, and commanded a group known as the "Antelope Hunters." Pedro soon had an opportunity to display his gallantry and competence during the Battle of Valverde, which took place in February of 1862.



The Las Vegas Daily Optic (East Las Vegas, NM) 25 June 1890

While the Confederates overran the left and center of the Union lines, Kit Carson's New Mexican volunteers, which included Pedro Sanchez, dominated the right flank and were surprised to hear the call to retreat when their fellow soldiers fell back. For his actions during the Battle of Valverde, Pedro received a brevet promotion to major.



The Albuquerque Citizen (Albuquerque, NM) 27 Sep 1899

Following his military service, Pedro entered the New Mexico legislature for the first time in 1862, when the people of Taos elected him to the territorial House of Representatives. This marked the beginning of Pedro's service to the legislature that would continue intermittently for the next 40 years in both the house and council. In addition to his work with the legislature, Pedro served as a probate judge for multiple terms, starting in 1869, and as an Indian Agent from 1882 to 1885, primarily to the Pueblo tribes. Pedro's contemporaries noted that he acted far differently from the average Indian Agent and used his position to help people rather than exploit them. Census Bureau officials included one of Pedro's 1883 reports on the Pueblo people of New Mexico in the 1890 Census special report on Pueblo tribes in Arizona and New

Mexico.

In 1890, Pedro continued his long career of public service by serving as the census supervisor for the territory of New Mexico. Pedro, as the sole supervisor for New Mexico, had his work cut out for him. As part of his responsibilities, he divided the territory into enumeration districts and hired and trained enumerators. Once he received schedules from census officials, Pedro supervised the distribution and retrieval of those important documents between his office, enumerators, and Washington, DC. The 1890 Census counted many fields in addition to population—agriculture, mining, manufacturing, health, education, and others for which Pedro had responsibility. The 11th Census of the United States also included a special section for veterans of the Civil War, and became the first census to be tabulated electronically by Herman Hollerith's counting machine.

Following the 1890 Census Pedro continued managing his farm and participating in territorial politics. When it became time for the 1900 Census, Pedro once again received the assignment as sole supervisor of the census for the territory of New Mexico. Following his experiences with the previous census, Pedro again divided New Mexico into enumeration districts and assigned enumerators. Pedro used the local newspapers to help spread messages about the census—like how one should be enumerated if they were absent from their residence for an extended period.



The Santa Fe New Mexican (Santa Fe, NM) 30 January 1899

Despite Pedro's experience, some difficulties surfaced—one enumerator quit mid-rounds and Pedro had to assign five people on short notice in order to complete the enumeration on time. Additionally, Pedro conducted part of his duties from his home in Taos after receiving injuries in a railroad accident, which kept him away from the center of the action in Santa Fe. And finally, Pedro's choice of Mariano Sena as his assistant clerk ended poorly—in 1903, a jury convicted Mariano of fraud and embezzlement in relation to his duties with the census.



Photograph from *The Leading Facts of New Mexican History: Volume 2, (1912)*, By Ralph Emerson Twitchell

After completing the 1900 Census, Pedro returned to living with his adopted daughter Carlota. Pedro received the name "Friend of the Poor" because he and his first wife, Refugio Martinez, adopted and raised between 20 and 25 orphaned children—many of whom went on to become prominent members of the community. After his first wife's death in 1895, Pedro married Refugio Rodriguez in 1903.

Pedro spent most of his time at his home in Taos, where he passed away on May 19, 1905. He is buried near his former commander, Kit Carson. The Census Bureau is thankful for Pedro's contributions, and for the contributions of all the members of our diverse workforce throughout the years.