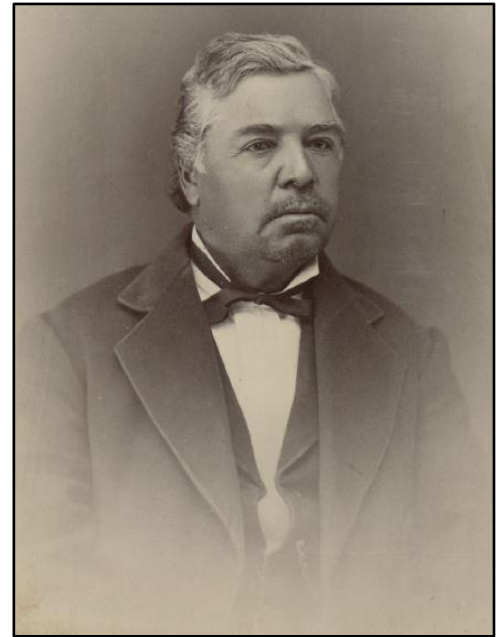


# Pedro Valdez

Assistant Marshal, Merchant, Politician

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 Valdez was born in 1825 in Taos, New Mexico. Pedro's father, Buenaventura Valdez, descended from some of the first Spaniards to come to New Mexico in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He served as a Justice of the Peace and held a prominent role in New Mexican society. His mother, Juana Catalina Lovato, served as



Portrait of Pedro Valdez in 1882.

Detail, Portrait of Pedro Valdez, photCL 314 v. 3 (9), William G. Ritch collection of studio portraits of New Mexico officials and residents, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

SCHEDULE 1—Free Inhabitants in the Territory of New Mexico in the County of Taos, State of New Mexico, enumerated by me, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June, 1860. Pedro Valdez, Post Office Taos, N. Mex.

No.	Name	Sex	Color	Profession, Occupation, or Trade, or other avocation	Years in New Mexico		Place of Birth	Whether Inhabitant of New Mexico, Indian, Spanish, or other	Whether Inhabitant of New Mexico, Indian, Spanish, or other
					Male	Female			
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
6	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
7	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
8	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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11	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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14	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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18	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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21	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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23	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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30	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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45	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
46	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
47	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
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49	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
50	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	

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 1860 Census.

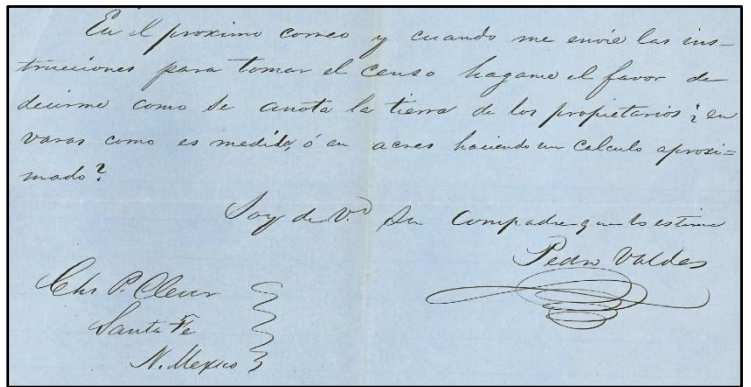
the matron of the large Valdez family, and continued operating the family's farm and business concerns following Buenaventura's death around 1847. For his early education, Pedro studied under Padre Antonio José Martínez, an influential priest, educator, and politician. Noted as one of Padre Martínez's most gifted students, Pedro studied mathematics, Latin, theology, rhetoric, and law. When the U.S. military occupied New Mexico in 1847, during the Mexican-American War, Pedro began studying English, and performed the duties of sheriff and justice of the peace in his hometown of Taos. During the early 1850s, Pedro would also study English in St. Louis, where he often traveled in order to expand his mercantile business.

In addition to his mercantile business, which stretched across the American west and helped establish new routes and settlements in Colorado, Pedro also began expanding his standing as a politician. He served as a probate clerk starting in 1855. In 1858, he first represented Taos in the Territorial Legislature, and in 1860, he won election as probate judge of Taos County. Pedro's next political accolade would also come in 1860, when he received an appointment as assistant marshal from U.S. marshal Charles P. Clever to take the census in Taos and Mora counties.

Resuelto, Que una comision compuesta de tres sea nombrada para visitar al M- tiscal de los Estados Unidos para este Ter- ritorio, y adquirir de él el número de hab- itantes (esceptuando Yndios) en cada con- dado de este Territorio; segun el censo del año actual, y dará su informe lo mas pron- to posible; Adoptada: Hubbell, Valdez, Romero, Comision.

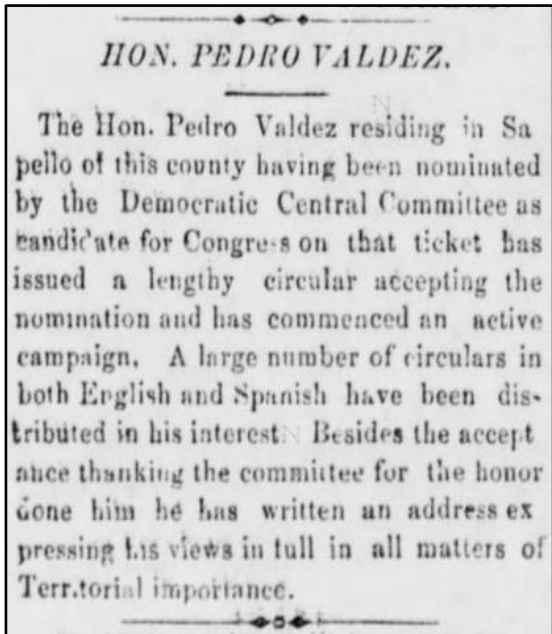
In late 1860, the Territorial Legislature assigned a commission to report on census results. Santa Fe Weekly Post (Santa Fe, NM) December 22, 1860

Pedro started enumerating in Taos on June 14, and ended in Rayado on August 17. Between the two counties, Pedro counted a total population of 19,669. Pedro represented exactly what the Census Office wanted from its census takers. Not only did the people in his territory trust him, as evidenced by his election to several political positions, but he also had a deep knowledge of the area through his travels as a merchant. This familiarity was particularly important in territorial areas, where it would be easy to miss new households in the far-flung settlements.



**On May 23, 1860, Pedro wrote to US Marshal Charles P. Clever requesting clarification on how to count farms and other land.**

Detail, Letter from Pedro Valdez to Charles P. Clever, May 23, 1860, RI 1011, William Gillett Rich Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.



*Las Vegas Gazette* (Las Vegas, NM) August 28, 1875

After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Pedro received a commission in the U.S. Army as a major general, where he supervised recruiting and assignments in Taos and the surrounding counties. In 1863, he returned to the territorial legislature where he served as clerk and speaker of the house. Following this, in 1866, Pedro moved to Sapello, NM—a stop along the Santa Fe Trail—where he continued to grow his mercantile business and to farm. Another town along the Santa Fe Trail, Trinidad, CO, owes its founding in part to Pedro and his partner Felipe Baca, who first stopped at the site on their way to Denver, and where Baca later returned to settle.

In 1875, Pedro ran for the position of territorial delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives and was narrowly defeated by the incumbent, Stephen B. Elkins. Although several of his allies raised questions about the vote count

and claimed victory for Pedro, the final vote tally in favor of Elkins stood. In 1877, Pedro again ran—unsuccessfully—against Trinidad Romero. In 1880, Pedro returned to the New Mexico Legislature, this time in the upper house, known as the Council. His bilingualism and practical business skills made him an attractive leader to the New Mexican people as the state became increasingly diverse with westward migration.

In 1880, the Census Bureau replaced the U.S. marshals with specially trained temporary enumerators. Once again Pedro worked as a census taker, this time in Sapello and the surrounding area. However, due to the increase in the number of enumerators and possibly in deference to his advanced age and responsibilities, his area was much smaller and he only enumerated 822 people. In 1884, Pedro ran for public office for the last time, for probate judge of San Miguel County, but lost to his competitor. Pedro passed away on December 1, 1884, survived by his wife Maria Paula Leroux, the daughter of prominent New Mexican Joaquin Antoine Leroux. Although the couple had married in 1851, they had no biological children, but fostered and adopted many children in need. The Census Bureau is thankful for Pedro's contributions, and of the contributions of all the members of our diverse workforce throughout the years.



**Pedro, front row third from right, with several of New Mexico's most notable politicians in 1881.**

Photographed by William Henry Brown, Courtesy Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM/DCA), 013144.