

Minorities
In The
Confederate
Army

Historical facts concerning the ethnic makeup of the Confederate Army.

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Many people today are taught that the War Between The States was about slavery and that Southern whites were attempting to establish a white-only, or a white-supremacist society, and that the north was fighting only to free the slaves. The truth about the diversity in the Confederate army is nothing like this work of fiction most of our children are taught.

Not all of the Confederate soldiers came from the South, but from the North as well. Many were of foreign-birth, or from minorities within the Confederate States of America. Mexicans and Mexican-Americans enlisted, as well as African-Americans and even Native-Americans. Many unusual nationalities, such as Egypt and Syria, were represented on the Confederate enlistment rolls, and all of these groups made the Southern military a more interesting and diverse fighting force. The Confederate soldiers were indeed more varied than what is commonly portrayed today.

This pamphlet is only intended to provide the reader with an overview of those who filled the ranks of the Confederate Army. I encourage all those seeking the truth concerning the minorities who wore the gray to explore the bibliography provided at the end of this pamphlet.

Confederates of European Descent

Canadians enlisted to fight for the C.S.A. No clear reasons were given, but they are probably similar to many of the reasons given by the others. No exact number has ever been given, but the claim has been made by Canadians that they had 40,000 men in the Confederate ranks.

In the Confederate Army there was one brigade of Irishmen, several German regiments, a Polish legion and a European brigade of mixed nationalities came from Louisiana, that was commanded by the French Count Camille Armand Jules Marie, Prince de Polignac. His men abbreviated that considerably, and simply called him Polecat.

The outbreak of the War Between the States brought a flood of enlistments from the South's Irish immigrant population who were anxious to prove their loyalty to their new homeland. The legendary Irish Brigade of the Union Army is well documented, but little has been written concerning the role the Irish American soldier played for the Confederacy.

Forty thousand Irish served in the Confederate Army and played significant roles in the Army of Northern Virginia, the Army of Tennessee, the hotly disputed coastal areas and the Mississippi and Trans-Mississippi campaigns.

Hispanic Confederates

Hispanics were also well represented in the Confederate ranks. Texas, Florida and Louisiana had large Hispanic populations who enlisted to defend their homeland.

Hispanics were well represented in the Confederate Army, such as 6th Missouri Infantry Regiment, the 55th Alabama Infantry Regiment, the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles, the 1st Florida Cavalry Regiment and the 33rd Texas Cavalry Regiment, commanded by Col. Santos Benavides, the highest ranking Hispanic officer on the Confederate side. Others served in the Louisiana Zouaves Battalion, the Spanish Legion of the European Brigade, and the Spanish Guard of Mobile, Ala. Confederate militia formations with sizable Hispanic contingents included one independent infantry battalion and four independent infantry companies from New Mexico.

It has been estimated that about 13,000 Hispanic Americans

Hispanic women were also represented in the ranks. Cuban-born Loretta Janeta Velasquez was one of the most famous woman soldiers. She enlisted in the Confederate Army masquerading as a man and fought at First Manassas, Ball's Bluff and Fort Pillow. Discharged when her real gender was discovered, she rejoined and fought at Shiloh. Unmasked a second time, she ended her military career working as a Confederate spy.

St Johns County, Florida was home of the Sanchez sisters. The Sanchez sisters moved to Florida from Cuba with the return of Mauritia Sanchez before the civil war ever broke out. The Sanchez family was comprised of an ailing father, an invalid mother, a son who served in the Confederate army and three acclaimed beauties; Panchita, Lola and Eugenia, who were Confederate spies. The Sanchez sisters truly were valuable assets to the Confederate Army who effectively upset the plot of the Yankees and kept a constant train of information flowing for the Confederate Army.

At the outbreak of the war, the men of St Augustine formed what was to become the St. Augustine Blues or Company B, 3rd Florida Infantry Regiment. This unit was mostly comprised of men of Minorican or Spanish descent with the last names of Ponce, Masters, Pacetti, Bravo, Canova, Genovar, Capo, Lambias, Manucy, Papy and Solana.

Jewish Confederates

Contrary to popular belief, "Jews had found themselves very much at home in the South, much more so than elsewhere," says the University of Georgia's Emory Thomas, a historian and author of many Civil War books. "They were accepted members of the community, and therefore they cast their loyalties with this new Confederacy, bought bonds and did everything patriotic Southerners would do."

Some 3,000 or more Jews fought for the South, practically every male of military age. Many carried with them to the front the famous soldiers' prayer, beginning with the sacred prayer, the "*Shema*," written by Richmond Rabbi Max Michelbacher, who after secession, had issued a widely-published benediction comparing Southerners to "the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea."

Many Jewish Confederates distinguished themselves by showing, along with their Christian comrades, amazing courage, dedication, and valor—and all enduring incredible hardships against overwhelming and often hopeless odds.

All-Jewish companies reported to the fray from Macon and Savannah, Georgia. In Louisiana, 3 Jews reached the rank of Colonel. They were S. M. Hymans, Edwin Kuncheedt and Ira Moses.

Major Adolph Proskauer of Mobile, Alabama was wounded several times. A subordinate officer wrote "I can see him now as he nobly carried himself at Gettysburg, standing coolly and calmly with a cigar in his mouth at the head of the 12th Alabama amid a perfect rain of bullets, shot and shell. He was the personification of intrepid gallantry and imperturbable courage."

The most famous Southern Jew of that era was Judah Benjamin. He was educated in law at Yale. Judah Benjamin served President Davis and the Confederacy in 3 positions, Attorney General, Secretary of War and Secretary of State.

Abraham Myers was a West Point graduate and classmate of Robert E. Lee. Myers served as Quartermaster General.

Major Raphael Moses, General Longstreet's chief commissary officer, whose three sons also fought for the South. Moses ended up attending the last meeting and carrying out the Last Order of the Confederate government .

History books gloss over the fact that Union generals like Ulysses Grant and William Sherman, who burned Atlanta, talked about "damned Jewish peddlers," while both Jeff Davis and Robert E. Lee were known to have many Jewish friends.

General Robert E. Lee, is renowned for publicly showing great respect for his Jewish soldiers.

American Indian Confederates

Another interesting group were the Native-American soldiers of the Confederacy. Most members of the Five Civilized Tribes and of Indian Territory chose the Confederate side during the Civil War.

Indian tribes who signed treaties with and served the CSA beginning in the summer of 1861, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws,

Seminoles, Quapaws, Senecas, Caddos, Whitchitas, Osage, and Shawnees. In late fall 1861 Chief John Ross of the Cherokees abandoned his original stance of neutrality and also signed the treaty with the Confederacy. In these treaties the Confederate government promised to assume federal obligations, protect tribes from invasion, and invited Indian representation in the Confederate Congress. In turn these tribes were to provide troops for their own defense. About 15,000 American Indians served in the Confederacy Army.

The Confederate troops of Indian Territory were, by the end of the war, organized into a division of two brigades. Brig. Gen. Douglas H. Cooper commanded the division. Col. Tandy Walker commanded the second, or Choctaw Brigade, composed of Choctaw and Chickasaw units. Brig. Gen. Stand Watie, a Cherokee, commanded all the Indian units not in the Choctaw Brigade

Unlike the rest of the Confederacy, Indian Territory troops grew more and more successful after July 1863. The great majority of the Division, still in the field and undefeated in June of 1865, was finally surrendered at Doaksville, Choctaw Nation, on June 23, 1865, by Stand Watie, the last Confederate general in the field to surrender.

Cherokee Nation fielded 11 mounted infantry and cavalry units and 1 artillery unit.

Creek Nation fielded 3 mounted infantry and cavalry units..

Seminole Nation fielded 2 mounted Volunteer units.

Chickasaw Nation fielded 4 mounted infantry and cavalry units.

Choctaw Nation fielded 7 mounted infantry and cavalry units.

Osage Nation fielded 1 mounted Volunteer unit

Black Confederates

Black Confederates Why haven't we heard more about them? National Park Service historian, Ed Bearrs, stated, "I don't want to call it a conspiracy to ignore the role of Blacks both above and below the Mason-Dixon line, but it was definitely a tendency that began around 1910."

Historian, Erwin L. Jordan, Jr., calls it a "cover-up" which started back in 1865. He writes, "During my research, I came across instances where Black men stated they were soldiers, but you can plainly see where 'soldier' is crossed out and 'body servant' inserted, or 'teamster' on pension applications."

James Eaton, a professor at Florida A&M University who studied black Confederates, explained why those men might have joined the cause. "Some of them were promised their freedom if they

fought. Others went out of loyalty for their masters, and stayed with them in times of trouble."

James Eaton further stated; "Black men did fight on both sides," he continued. "There's been a whole lot of credible work done about the side of the Union, but they have not given any scholarly research to the Confederate side."

According to the Appomattox Courthouse National Historic Site, 36 black Confederates were among those who surrendered to the Union army at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia on April 9, 1865. Most were teamsters, guards, cooks or musicians.

Historians have estimated the total number of black men who served in the Confederate Army either as laborers or soldiers range anywhere from 60,000 to 90,000. Over 13,000 of these, "saw the elephant" also known as meeting the enemy in combat. These Black Confederates included both slave and free.

Another black historian, Roland Young, says he is not surprised that blacks fought. He explains that "some, if not most, Black southerners would support their country" and that by doing so they were "demonstrating it's possible to hate the system of slavery and love one's country." This is the very same reaction that most African Americans showed during the American Revolution, where they fought for the colonies, even though the British offered them freedom if they fought for them.

Dr. Leonard Haynes, an African-American professor at Southern University, stated, "When you eliminate the black Confederate soldier, you've eliminated the history of the South."

The Jackson Battalion included two companies of black soldiers. They saw combat at Petersburg under Col. Shipp. "My men acted with utmost promptness and goodwill...Allow me to state sir that they behaved in an extraordinary acceptable manner."

The "Richmond Howitzers" were partially manned by black militiamen. They saw action at 1st Manassas where they operated battery no. 2. In addition two black "regiments", one free and one slave, participated in the battle on behalf of the South. "Many colored people were killed in the action", recorded John Parker, a former slave.

Dr. Lewis Steiner, Chief Inspector of the United States Sanitary Commission while observing Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's occupation of Frederick, Maryland, in 1862: "Over 3,000 Negroes must be included in this number [Confederate troops]. These were clad in all kinds of uniforms, not only in cast-off or captured United States uniforms, but in coats with Southern buttons, State buttons, etc. These were shabby, but not shabbier or seedier than those worn by white men in the rebel ranks. Most of the Negroes had arms, rifles, muskets, sabers, bowie-knives, dirks, etc.....and were manifestly an integral portion of the Southern Confederate Army."

"I had two uncles. Jipp and Charlie Clark in Stonewall's company. They would never talk much about him after his death. It hurts them too much, for Stonewall's men loved him so much. Jeff Davis was a great man, too." Charles Harvey was a slave and his father and uncles fought on the Confederate side. From the Slave Narratives, Charlie Jeff Harvey, South Carolina

There is documentation regarding the participation of Black Confederates according to Col. Parkhurst's report (Ninth Michigan Infantry) included in the Federal Official Records. He wrote: "There were also quite a number of negroes attached to the Texas and Georgia troops, who were armed and equipped, and took part in the several engagements with my forces during the day."

In the May 10, 1862 issue of the Harper's Weekly we find an article titled FOR US OR AGAINST US? Part of that article states "The correspondent of the New York Herald, in one of its late numbers, reports that the rebels had a regiment of mounted Negroes, armed with sabres, at Manassas, and that some five hundred Union prisoners taken at Bull Run were escorted to their filthy prison by a regiment of black men."

In an article titled Rebel Negro Pickets appearing on page 17 in the Saturday, January 10, 1863 issue of Harper's Weekly the following was found. "So much has been said about the wickedness of using the negroes on our side in the present war, that we have thought it worth while to reproduce on this page a sketch sent us from Fredericksburg by our artist, Mr. Theodore R. Davis, which is a faithful representation of what was seen by one of our officers through his field-glass, while on outpost duty at that place. As the picture shows, it represents two full-blooded negroes, fully armed, and serving as pickets in the rebel army."

As of Feb. 1865 1,150 black seamen served in the Confederate Navy. One of these was among the last Confederates to surrender, aboard the CSS Shenandoah, six months after the war ended. This surrender took place in England.

A Black Confederate, George _____, when captured by Federals was bribed to desert to the other side. He defiantly spoke, "Sir, you want me to desert, and I ain't no deserter. Down South, deserters disgrace their families and I am never going to do that."

St. Augustine is the home of three known Black Confederates. All three of them are buried here in St. Augustine at the San Lorenzo Cemetery and all have Confederate Headstones. Their names are listed below.

Private Isaac Papino, Company B, 3rd Florida Infantry Regiment
Private Anthony T. Welters, Company B, 3rd Florida Infantry Regiment
Private Emanuel Osborne, B, 3rd Florida Infantry Regiment

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