

Romualdo Pacheco

Lucrezia Bori



Selected Firsts

in Hispanic History

Government Romualdo Pacheco became the first Hispanic-American U.S. Representative when he won the California seat in 1876 by a one-vote lead. Four months later the win was overturned in favor of his opponent, but in 1879, Pacheco was again elected and went on to serve two terms.

Science and Medicine In 1968, Luiz Walter Alvarez won the Nobel Prize in physics for his discoveries about subatomic particles. Alvarez held patents for over 30 different inventions and was inducted into the Inventor's Hall of Fame. Along with a few other scientists, Alvarez and his son were the first to propose the now-accepted theory that the mass extinction of dinosaurs was caused by a meteor impact.

Literature and Publishing Released in 1872, Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton's novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* became the first English novel written and published in the U.S. by an Hispanic American.

Film In 1961, Rita Moreno became the first Hispanic American to win the Best Supporting Actress Oscar award for her performance in the film *West Side Story.* She is also the first Hispanic American to win all of the major acting awards offered in the U.S., the Oscar, Grammy, Tony, and Emmy awards.

Music In 1912, Lucrezia Bori became the first Hispanic American opera diva when she debuted at the Metropolitan Opera. She was a leading performer at the Metropolitan Opera from 1912 – 1915, and again from 1920 – 1936. In 1935, Bori became director of the Metropolitan Opera Association.

Air and Space In 1986, Franklin Chang-Diaz became the first Hispanic-American astronaut. He flew on seven space shuttle missions during his career, his first time on the space shuttle "Columbia" in 1986.

Military In 1866, David Farragut became the first U.S. Navy officer in history to reach the rank of Admiral.

Sports Roberto Clemente was the first Hispanic-American to serve on the baseball Players Association Board, and in 1973, he also became the first Hispanic-American baseball player inducted into the Hall of Fame.



Rita Morena

David Farragut



Hispanic Heritage Month

SEPTEMBER 15–OCTOBER 15

Hispanic Heritage Month began as National Hispanic Heritage Week in 1968, proclaimed as such by U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson. It was **expanded** to a month-long celebration in 1988. This month celebrates the traditions and cultures of all Americans who **trace** their roots to Spain, Mexico, and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. September 15 was chosen since it is the anniversary of independence of five countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico celebrates its independence on September 15th, and Chile on September 18th.

Celebrations in September and October often include cultural activities and programs with speeches, food, dance, and music that recognize the political, artistic, athletic, and educational achievements of Hispanic Americans. One well-known political activist was Cesar Chavez who was the major force in the Labor Movement of the 1960s. Cesar Chavez was born to a poor family on a farm in Arizona in 1927. As a young child of ten, he was forced into **migrant** farm labor. Despite these obstacles, he grew up to be a gifted leader and organizer. As a person well aware of the **inequities** that affected American farm laborers, in 1962 he **founded** the National Farm Workers Association in California which focused on working for **collective bargaining** and a minimum **wage** for farm workers. In 1966, this association merged with other unions, forming the United Farm Workers, which **advocated strikes, boycotts,** and marches to bring about political change. Chavez **adhered to** the philosophy of Martin Luther King by working in non-violent ways to achieve equity. In 1968 the United Farm Workers advocated a **widespread** boycott of California grapes, finally signing a contract with the grape growers in 1970. Chavez then continued with a boycott of California lettuce. He died in 1993, but received a **posthumous** National Medal of Honor Award in 1994 from President Bill Clinton, the highest civilian award that is given by the U.S. government.

Glossary

expand(ed): *v.* to increase
trace: *v.* to discover the cause or origin of something
migrant: *n.* someone who moves from place to place, often relating to the harvest industry
inequity(ies): *n.* a lack of equality or fair treatment
found(ed): to bring something into existence
collective bargain(ing): *phrase.* a system in which employees talk as a group to their employers to try to agree on issues such as pay and conditions of work
wage: *n.* a fixed amount of money that is paid regularly, usually for work that requires physical skills or strength
advocate(d): *v.* to speak in support of an idea or course of action
strike(s): *n.* a refusal to continue working because of an argument with an employer about working conditions or pay
boycott: *n.* a refusal to buy or support something in order to express strong disapproval, usually based on political, economic, or social reasons
adhere(d) to: v. to maintain a belief or standard
widespread: *adj.* existing in many places
posthumous: *adj.* happening after a person's death