

National Park System Advisory Board 2013 Report

Task 7: Explore American Latino Heritage

An “American Latino Heritage Initiative” has commenced to identify new approaches for broader relevancy and inclusive public engagement with NPS resources. Establishment of an American Latino Heritage Scholars Expert Panel to produce a theme study is assisting government agencies and the private sector in identifying and evaluating places of significance related to American Latino heritage in communities nationwide. This model will be used to tell the stories of other under-represented groups and themes in America.

Addressing the Task

The newly established NPSAB panel has undertaken an innovative and successful approach for helping the NPS tell the stories of all Americans, particularly those represented by relatively few national landmarks or sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Working in collaboration with the NPS Associate Director for Cultural Resources, the American Latino Heritage Scholars Expert Panel is already realizing significant results.

Progress Report

The *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study* has been approved by the NPSAB for publication in spring 2013. Since the American Latino Heritage Scholars Expert Panel of nine scholars and three NPS employees began work in November 2011, the panel and staff completed the task of contracting for, reviewing, and editing 18 essays from nationally recognized scholars.

The theme study was structured with four main categories: Making the Nation, Making a Life, Making a Living, and Making a Democracy, with a core essay written by Dr. Steven J. Pitti of Yale University. The sites mentioned in the study comprise a starting place for the expanded telling of Latino stories. These special places offer a pool of potential candidates for designation as national historic landmarks and for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the work of the panel on the theme study, the experts also provided input on related activities of the National Park Service and Department of Interior including the National Park Foundation American Latino Heritage Fund, an on-line American Latino Heritage Travel Itinerary, conducting and promoting youth summits, pursuing world heritage site status for San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, development of the *Hispanics and The Civil War: From Battlefield to Homefront* booklet published by Eastern National, documentation of Forty Acres by the Historic American Buildings Survey, and development of a web toolkit.

Priorities Through 2016

The American Latino Heritage Scholars Expert Panel will continue to function as a new committee of the NPSAB. Future activities will include providing input to the NPS and to state and local preservation officers on priority sites for possible designation. Additional work will include identification of further research that must be conducted, coordination with other Latino heritage efforts (including the proposed Smithsonian Latino Museum), providing input on existing and new interpretive and educational materials at NPS sites that tell the stories of Latinos, and identifying tools to help Latino communities develop the capacity to attain historic landmark designations.

Follow Our Work

Visit the American Latino Heritage Projects website at www.nps.gov/latino. View the theme study at www.nps.gov/latino/latinothemestudy. Learn more about NPSAB relevancy efforts at www.nps.gov/resources/advisoryboardreport.htm.