

Welcome to TimesPeople  TimesPeople Lets You Share and Discover the Best of NY... 9:35 PM **Get Started** No, thanks

What's this? HOME PAGE TODAY'S PAPER VIDEO MOST POPULAR TIMES TOPICS [Get Home Delivery](#) [Log In](#) [Register Now](#)

The New York Times **U.S.** Search All NYTimes.com  

WORLD U.S. N.Y. / REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINION ARTS STYLE TRAVEL **JOBS** REAL ESTATE AUTOS
POLITICS EDUCATION



Was a Hispanic Justice on the Court in the '30s?

By [NEIL A. LEWIS](#)
Published: May 26, 2009

WASHINGTON — While most people may believe [Sonia Sotomayor](#) is poised to become the first Hispanic justice on the [Supreme Court](#), there has been a rich under-the-radar debate for years as to whether the court had already had a Hispanic justice.

Several people have suggested that Justice Benjamin Cardozo might properly hold the title of the court's first Hispanic justice based on his ancestry as a Sephardic Jew whose forebears hailed from the Iberian Peninsula. Prof. Andrew Kaufman of the [Harvard](#) Law School, who is the author of a 1998 biography of Cardozo, said the debate was esoteric, complicated and, perhaps above all, amusing.

“Was Cardozo Hispanic?” Professor Kaufman asked, noting that the assertion has been prevalent on Web sites and in articles for years. “Well, I think he regarded himself as a Sephardic Jew whose ancestors came from the Iberian Peninsula.”

SIGN IN TO RECOMMEND

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

REPRINTS


SHARE

ARTICLE TOOLS SPONSORED BY



[More Articles in US »](#)

Today's Headlines Daily E-Mail

 Sign up for a roundup of the day's top stories, sent every morning.

[See Sample](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

Ads by Google what's this?

[Heart Attack Survival](#)
Hugh Downs reports on little-known symptom too many tragically ignore
www.bottomlinesecrets.com

[Accredited Online MBA](#)
IE Business School, MBA Online. Study Anywhere in the World!
www.ie.edu/business

[Learn Portuguese - \\$9.95](#)
World-famous Pimsleur Method. Best price anywhere! Limited time.
PimsleurApproach.com

[Advertise on NYTimes.com](#)

He said the term “Hispanic” was not commonly used during Cardozo’s lifetime and would probably have been unfamiliar to him in 1932 when President Herbert Hoover named him to the court, where he served for six years until his death.

Professor Kaufman said that although there is no documentation, Cardozo’s family, which came to America in the 18th century, always believed that its forebears had come from Portugal, not Spain. And that raises an even more recondite question: are Portuguese people Hispanic?

Most Hispanic organizations and the [United States Census Bureau](#) do not regard Portuguese as Hispanic.

But [Tony Coelho](#), a Portuguese-American congressman from California, was a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus when he was in the House, and Representative Dennis Cardoza, Democrat of California, whose ancestors came from the Azores, a Portuguese archipelago, is still a member.

The executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, Arturo Vargas, said the contemporary political definition of Hispanic in the United States would definitely not include Cardozo. The practical definition he uses, Mr. Vargas said, includes people who are “descended from countries in the Americas” with a Spanish-language heritage. It does not even include those from Spain itself, he said.

[Sign in to Recommend](#)

[More Articles in US »](#)

A version of this article appeared in print on May 27, 2009, on page A16 of the New York edition.



[Click here to enjoy the convenience of home delivery of The Times for less than \\$1 a day.](#)

Buy Sports Tickets

TICKETS NOW[®]
a ticketmaster[®] company

Tue, May. 26th, 2009 7:05 PM	New York Yankees at Texas Rangers	From \$20-\$60	BUY
Wed, May. 27th, 2009 7:05 PM	New York Yankees at Texas Rangers	From \$10-\$695	BUY
Wed, May. 27th, 2009 7:10 PM	Washington Nationals at New York Mets	From \$7-\$450	BUY
Fri, May. 29th, 2009 7:05 PM	New York Yankees at Cleveland Indians	From \$10-\$345	BUY
Fri, May. 29th, 2009 7:10 PM	Florida Marlins at New York Mets	From \$15-\$525	BUY
Sat, May. 30th, 2009 1:10 PM	Florida Marlins at New York Mets	From \$10-\$5000	BUY
Sun, May. 31th, 2009 1:10 PM	Florida Marlins at New York Mets	From \$15-\$525	BUY

MOST POPULAR

E-MAILED BLOGGED SEARCHED

1. [Texting May Be Taking a Toll](#)
2. [The Case for Working With Your Hands](#)
3. [CONTROLLING INTERESTS: Principals Younger and Freer, but Raise Doubts in the Schools](#)
4. [David Brooks: And the Angels Rejoice](#)
5. [Ross Douhat: Liberated and Unhappy](#)
6. [Brain Power: At the Bridge Table, Clues to a Lucid Old Age](#)
7. [Happy Days: Happy Like God](#)
8. [Architecture Review: Lose the Traffic. Keep That Times Square Grit.](#)
9. [Polaroid Lovers Try to Revive Its Instant Film](#)
10. [Obama Hails Judge as ‘Inspiring’](#)

[Go to Complete List »](#)

Ads by Google

[what's this?](#)

Don't Pay for School

Get a scholarship for free! Millions go unused every year.
www.ProgramAdvisor.com

Azores, magic islands

Come and visit us in Pico Island Nature Tradition Adventure Sympathy
www.feriasnopico.com

History Of Jews In Spain

Get History Of Jews In Spain Info Access 10 Search Engines At Once.
www.Info.com/HistoryOfJewsInSpain

Past Coverage

- [Obama To Push Immigration Bill As One Priority \(April 9, 2009\)](#)
- [Gillibrand Hints at a Change of Mind on Immigration \(February 2, 2009\)](#)
- [For Striving 6th Graders, History Is Now and Their Future Just Changed \(November 6, 2008\)](#)
- [NEWS ANALYSIS; A Once-United G.O.P. Emerges, in Identity Crisis \(November 6, 2008\)](#)

Related Searches

- [United States Politics and Government](#)
- [Hispanic-Americans](#)
- [Cardozo, Benjamin](#)
- [Supreme Court](#)

[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)

[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)

[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)

[Get E-Mail Alerts](#)



Heeeeere's . . . Conan!!!

Also on NYTimes.com

Is Manny Ramirez really all that bad?
Behind the scenes: blowing up a pie

nytimes.com

ADVERTISEMENTS



Ads by Google

what's this?

Dr. Oz's Shocking Test

Millions have already taken this amazing test. What's your RealAge?
RealAge.com

Don't Pay for School

Get a scholarship for free! Millions go unused every year.
www.ProgramAdvisor.com

Hispanic Scholarships

Sign Up And Find Scholarships For Hispanic Students For Free
www.MyFreeDegree.com

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



THEATER »



Flashes of Steel in 'The Glass Menagerie'

N.Y. / REGION »



Younger Principals Raise Doubts in the Schools

OPINION »

The Rural Life: The Mule

Verlyn Klinkenborg writes about how the vigor of life filled a pain-chastened mule.

SPORTS »



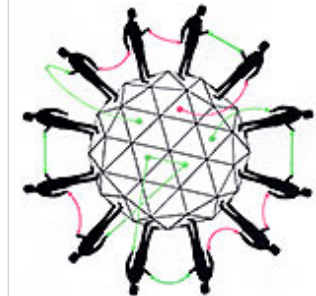
Magic's Howard Learns When to Grin, or Glare

OPINION »



Prom Excesses, Indignities and Flashbacks

HEALTH »



Referral System Turns Patients Into Commodities

[Home](#) | [World](#) | [U.S.](#) | [N.Y. / Region](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts](#) | [Style](#) | [Travel](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Automobiles](#) | [Back to Top](#)

Copyright 2009 The New York Times Company | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)