



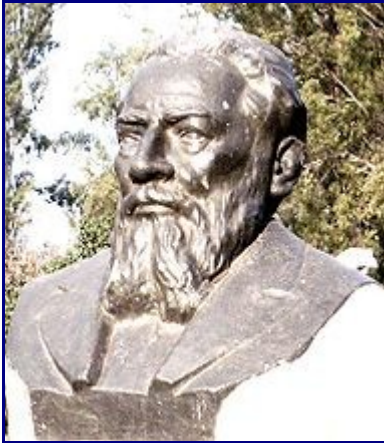
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José Hernández (writer)

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José Hernández (born José Rafael Hernández y Pueyrredón) (November 10, 1834 – October 21, 1886) was an [Argentine](#) journalist, poet, and politician best known as the author of the [epic poem](#) *[Martín Fierro](#)*.

Hernández, whose ancestry was a mix of [Spanish](#), [Irish](#), and [French](#), was born on a farm near [San Martín](#) ([Buenos Aires Province](#)). His father was a [butler](#) or foreman of a series of cattle ranches. His career was to be an alternation between stints on the *[Federal](#)* side in the civil wars of Argentina and [Uruguay](#) and life as a newspaperman, a short stint as an employee of a commercial firm, and a period as stenographer to the legislature of the Confederation.

Hernández founded the newspaper *El Río de la Plata*, which advocated local autonomy, abolition of the conscripted "frontier contingents", and election of justices of the peace, military commanders, and school boards. He opposed immigration, because he believed it undermined the pastoral foundation of the region's wealth. He envisioned a federal republic based in pastoralism, but also featuring a strong system of education and a literate population.

Although a federalist opposed to the centralizing, modernizing, and Europeanizing tendencies of Argentine president [Domingo Sarmiento](#), Hernández was no apologist for General [Juan Manuel de Rosas](#), whom he characterized as a tyrant and a despot.

Hernández is known today almost exclusively for his masterpiece *Martín Fierro*, the epic poem that stands as the pinnacle of gauchesque literature. The poem was apparently begun during a period of exile in [Brazil](#) following the defeat at [Ñaembé](#) (1870) and was published in two parts (in 1872 and 1879).

Hernández died of heart disease October 21, 1886, in [Belgrano](#), which was at that time a separate suburb, currently a [neighborhood](#) of the [Buenos Aires](#) city.

He was buried in [La Recoleta Cemetery](#) in [Buenos Aires](#).

[edit] References

- Jorge Luis Borges, "José Hernández", in *El Martín Fierro* ([ISBN 8420619337](#))

[edit] External links

- [Works by José Hernández](#) at [Project Gutenberg](#)
- [Historical-biographical study on José Hernández](#), epilogue to the full text of *Martín Fierro* (*Ida y Vuelta*), pages 474 to 495 of the 1995 online edition of the poem (free access) by the Buenos Aires City Govt. (Spanish).

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