

Approved

Promulgation authorized  
Executive Secretary  
Domestic Geographic Names

UNITED STATES  
BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

CASE BRIEF (Domestic)

**Campesino Corners:** populated place (unincorporated); located 2.4 miles SSW of Salinas; the name reflects the farmworkers (*campesinos* in Spanish) who support agriculture in the Salinas Valley; Nacional Land Grant; Monterey County, California; 36°38'41"N, 121°39'52"W; USGS map – Salinas 1:24,000; Not: Confederate Corners, Spring Town, Springtown.

[https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesrimap?p\\_lat=36.644682&p\\_longi=-121.6643902&fid=221451](https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/gazvector.getesrimap?p_lat=36.644682&p_longi=-121.6643902&fid=221451)

Proposal: to change a name to remove a name considered inappropriate

Map: USGS Salinas 1:24,000

Proponent: Aaron Alvero; Stanford, CA

Administrative area: None

Previous BGN Action: None

Names associated with feature:

GNIS: Confederate Corners (FID 221451)

Local Usage: None found

Published: Confederate Corners (USGS 1910, 1912, 1940, 1947, 1983, 2012, 2015; *Official Map of Monterey County California*, Hare 1898; *Monterey County Place Names*, Clark, 1991; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2017); Spring Town (*Monterey County Place Names*, Clark, 1991; *California's Geographic Names* Durham, 1998); Springtown (*Monterey County Place Names*, Clark, 1991; *California's Geographic Names*, Durham, 1998)

Case Summary: This proposal is to change the name of Confederate Corners, an unincorporated community southwest of Salinas in Monterey County, to Campesino Corners. The name Confederate Corners was first used in the 1860s after Southerners and Confederate sympathizers settled in the area. The community was also known as Spring Town or Springtown, although it is not clear whether this name was used before or after the 1860s. Confederate Corners was first labeled on USGS maps since 1910.

The proponent believes the existing name should be changed to one that would better reflect the history of the Salinas Valley. *Campefino* is a Spanish word that means “farmer,” which the proponent believes would promote “the importance of the campesinos” in Monterey County. He states, “Salinas has long been a big player in the US agricultural scene, and for most of that time the bulk of the difficult labor was performed by Mexican and Mexican-American ‘campesinos.’ Cesar Chavez, a prominent labor activist that was jailed in Salinas, spent time in jail fighting specifically for the ‘campesinos’ and would address them as such. Luis Valdez, a famous playwright and collaborator with Chavez, started the ‘Teatro Campesino’ (‘Farmworker Theatre’) to recognize not just the farmworkers themselves but their culture and importance to the history of California.”

Articles published in August 2017 in *The Mercury News* and the *San Francisco Chronicle* entitled, respectively, “Confederate Corners in Salinas embattled again amid Trump’s preservation call” and “Residents of Confederate Corners near Salinas say the name is history,” note that many local residents, including a Salinas City Council member, were unaware that the community was named Confederate Corners. The articles also note that it was the inspiration for the fictional town of “Rebel Corners” in John Steinbeck’s novel *The Wayward Bus*. Because of the Steinbeck connection, one resident stated “Out-of-towners know better about this place than the people who live here.” Another added, “I heard the name used many years ago, maybe sometime in the ’50s. As time goes by, you forget stuff.”

GNIS does not include any other features with “Campefino” in their names.

Proposed by: Aaron Alvero; Stanford, CA

Submitted by: same

Prepared by: M. O’Donnell

Case ID: 4755

Reviewed by: J.Runyon

Date: 9/22/17

Date: same

Date: 9/24/17

Quarterly Review List: 429

Date: 9/30/17

