



Stories on Film - San Luis Valley

“A Story To Tell”

A collection of oral history films

As part of its ongoing research and development efforts, Down to Earth Media, LLC has created a collection of oral history documentary films accompanied by original music. These films address the Culture, Tradition and Spirituality of the Spanish speaking communities within the counties of Conejos and Costilla. These communities are located in the San Luis Valley in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico.

My name is Rick Vigil currently from Antonito, Co proprietor and film producer of Down To Earth Media, LLC. In the past 20 years I have produced a collection of documentaries on the Culture, Tradition and Spirituality of the Spanish speaking communities within the counties of Conejos and Costilla in the San Luis Valley.

The picturesque San Luis Valley is located in the heart of Southern Colorado. The resident in the San Luis Valley are decedents of the Spanish conquistadores whose families have lived here for hundreds of years. Our community's rich cultural traditions have been passed on from generation to generation.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the oldest Catholic Church located in the county of Conejos Co. The church was added to the National and State Register of Historic places on December 17, 2018, and continues to be a cultural center to promote faith and educate its communities on the culture of the Hispano settlers of Southern Colorado-Northern New Mexico.

“Cenicero, Co _ Circa 1856”

Esperanza "Hope" Lobato-Gallegos has been researching her family's genealogy for a number of years. The names of her paternal and maternal grandparents are "Gallegos" and "Lobato", respectively.

On the 10 of July 1751, the King of Spain, granted to Captain Juan Jose ´ Lobato son of Bartolome Lobato, to take possession of Las Trampas Land Grant. The governor of New Mexico approved the Land Grant for 12 families.

Hope’s great-great-grandfather Pedro Lobato and his 3 sons voted in the first Territorial Election in 1861. He was a legislator during the establishment of Colorado in 1865 and 1866. Hope’s great-great-grandfather Pedro also served on the Union ticket in the House of Representatives.

Juan Bautista Lobato established the first Pony Express route from Southwestern Colorado to Denver.

Esperanza "Hope" Lobatos-Gallegos, great-great granddaughter of Pedro Antonio Lobato and Concepcion DeHerrera, received the First Family Certificate of Recognition signed by Colorado Governor Bill Owens on September 30th, 2003.

These communities are located in the San Luis Valley in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. The film will address the past, present and future of these Spanish speaking communities.

Being granted and trusted with these stories for the purpose of this documentary was an honor and a blessing.

Cenicero, Co _ Circa 1856
<http://downtoearthmedia.org/films.html>

“If we lose our traditions, we lose our identity”
Father Sergio Robles,
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Conejos, Co

Wow! Very impressive, Rick! Thank you for championing this special place, its history, and its people.

“A Place Of Miracles”

The Restoration Of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Conejos, CO
Dvd/Dvd Ebook Photograph Collection

“A Place of Miracles” The Restoration of Our Lady of Guadalupe is part three of a five-part documentary series highlighting the History, Culture and Spirituality of its Nuevomexicano Communities in Southern Colorado, Northern New Mexico.

Almost 90 years to the day, the Our of Lady Guadalupe church experienced an electrical fire on the eve of Ash Wednesday, February 9, 2016. The majority of the church survived, but much of the art and building were heavily damaged by smoke. Our of Lady of Guadalupe Church is part of the oldest Catholic parish in the San Luis Valley, located in Southern Colorado. The present church dates to 1927/48. The original structure was an adobe church built in 1863 that partially burned down on February 17, 1926, and was rebuilt and added onto in 1927, using some of the original facades that survived the fire. In 1948, it underwent further renovations and reconstruction of a new front and bell towers. The church serves a heavily Hispano or Neuvomexicano parish that had long-standing ties to the Spanish settlement of the San Luis Valley beginning in the late 1840s-early 1850s. Hispano brought with them traditions that had developed over two centuries of Spanish and Mexican control of the Southwest. These Spanish-speaking settlers primarily resided in New Mexico and the southern part of Colorado. Hispanos identify strongly with their Spanish heritage and varying levels of Native American ancestry.

The 2016 fire caused an estimated \$500,000 total loss and fueled much preservation and restoration work on the damaged art and statues. The

painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe located right above the altar and the statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary located outside in an enclave were two pieces that received significant restoration. The painting had been discolored from the smoke damage and was very brittle due to its age. The statue was also significantly damaged and faded from enduring the elements outside for almost 100 years. In both restoration processes, the conservators from Colorado Art Restoration Services retained most of the original materials and paint. The goal was to restore them as close to the originals as possible, and the conservators also took steps to ensure the permanence of each of the art pieces. A time capsule from 1947 was also found under the Immaculate Heart of Mary statue when it was removed for repair. Inside was a tin box about the size of a pack of cigarettes which had letters, medals, and stamps of St. Cajetan celebrating the anniversary of his death in 1547, and a list of names of parishioners that donated towards a project that the church conducted. After the fire in 2016, a crown of smoke appeared over the head of the Our Lady of Guadalupe painting, and parishioners labeled it a miracle. Michael Bettman, Proprietor, and Conservator at Colorado Art Restoration Services, said, “There are two parts to the crown appearing. The first part is the scientific reasoning of what caused the crown to appear. On the other side, when you look at the spiritual portion of it, all of the things that had to have happened for this to come all together on that day is no question; you can call it a miracle.” A “Place of Miracles ” is part three of a five-part documentary series on Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and its Missions, featuring the language, faith, traditions, and culture of its Nuevomexicano communities in Southern Colorado. TRT 24:11

Keith Valdez, M.L.S

Film Trailer: <http://downtoearthmedia.org/films.html>

“La Placita de San Rafael”

“What good is a hometown when everyone you know is gone?”
-John Nichols, “*Milagro Beanfield War*”

The truth is, you never outgrow where you come from. You carry it with you everywhere you go. I was raised in the shadow of the church of San Pedro y San Rafael, not the San Rafael Presbyterian church in Mogote but the Catholic church by the same name. Sufficed to say that since I lived right across the fence from church, I spent a lot of my time there; attending mass, helping in the maintenance and upkeep and even playing guitar in the three-person choir.

When I'm asked where I grew up, a sense of pride and satisfaction comes over me. I was brought up in San Rafael and educated by Catholic nuns, it was all I knew. As far as other religions were concerned, they didn't exist, everybody was Catholic. I'm not proud to say that my church attendance has lessened over the years but I'm still a Catholic, it's my identity, my culture. The entire population of the "Placita" felt similarly, and we all felt as if the little church belonged to all of us.

My family, as well as our relatives and neighbors all shared a common bond, our little church. From the changing of "mayordomos" to the annual "función" and our monthly mass, it was all about family and community. Father Felix Lopez was the pastor, he was from Spain and spoke little English, all our interactions with him, including mass, were in Spanish. That was fine though, since it was our native language anyway. When my father passed in 2014, my aunt Fedelina and I rang the church bell to announce his passing. I was told that it was the tradition.

Who I became and my perception of the people and places around me was forged in this Placita. I don't live there anymore and I wish could spend more time there. But

I carry it with me everywhere I go. I hope you enjoy this documentary as much as I enjoyed growing up en "La Placita de San Rafael".

TRT 20:00

Film Trailer: <http://downtoearthmedia.org/films.html>

This is such an important record to preserve this history and culture of the Indo-Hispano villages of the Valle de San Luis for future generations. Ronald Rael, B.Envd; University of Colorado, M.Arch; Columbia University

It is so important to have this kind of history. Dr. Martha Urioste, Denver, CO

Toby A. Madrid Jr. Teacher and Educator

This is such an important record to preserve this history and culture of the Indo-Hispano villages of the Valle de San Luis for futur generations. Ronald Rael,B.Envd; University of Colorado, M.Arch; Columbia University

It is so important to have this kind of history. Dr. Martha Urioste, Denver, CO

“La Misión de San Miguel / St. Michael of the Mountain”

Our Lady of Guadalupe church in Conejos, CO was built in 1858, and it provided a communal lynch pin for the surrounding sub-communities in the southern part of the San Luis Valley. Our Lady of Guadalupe was the small seed of Gospel that was planted so that it could spread to the rest of the valley. Those who settled in what is now Conejos County were devout Catholics and they would establish mission churches to provide religious services in surrounding areas. The Mission of San Miguel is located in New Mexico but still administered through Conejos. The original mission church was built roughly around the same time as the church in Conejos but in 1926, the church burned down and was rebuilt in 1928. Even though Our Lady of Guadalupe is the per say the “Vatican” for the missions, they provided important services and tied together communities in the vast rural areas. This can be seen through the traditions and practices at the Mission of San Miguel that are still practiced today. People in Conejos and in the San Luis Valley still practice and observe the traditions of San Miguel because it preserves the culture and the legacy of the families that settled and established life in the valley. The youth in the community are kept involved in these traditions so that they are not forgotten and that they feel like they are part of it. All of the missions of Our Lady of Guadalupe are separate but yet are still connected even today. The valley is continuously changing

yet the traditions, cultural practices, and values have endured. As this documentary series illustrates the traditions and values of the missions of Our Lady of Guadalupe it will layout the story and the legacy of the San Luis Valley in Colorado. Keith Valdez, M.L.S Film Trailer:

“La Misión de San Miguel / St. Michael of the Mountain”

Film trailer: <http://downtoearthmedia.org/films.html>

“ Fr. Al Muñiz Story”

The story of Fr. Alfonso Muñiz begins in Capulín a small town in the western part of the San Luis Valley. The documentary highlights what it was like growing up in Colorado’s San Luis Valley in the early 1930’s.

After a recording career and a stint in the Air Force, he became a priest in the Sacred Heart Order. After becoming a priest of the Sacred Heart in Franklin, Wisconsin, Father Al Muñiz spent two years in Puerto Rico preparing to be parish priest for East Gary, Indiana. He was a priest in East Gary, Indiana from 1972 to 1983 and in Guayaquil Ecuador from 1987 to 2004. Included with this film documentary Al’s original country and western music part of this DVD/CD package. TRT 38:06
Antonio Esquibel, PhD

Film Trailer: <http://downtoearthmedia.org/films.html>

“Spirituality and Its People””El Valle de San Luis”

Is a 24-minute documentary of the communities in San Luis, Capulin, Conejos and San Antonio during holy week. Narrated by Fr. Pat Valdez, Sister Rene Weeks. Participants will have the opportunity to learn of the history, contributions and rituals of the Penitente brotherhood. The

documentary includes exclusive interviews by, Hermano Mayor Max Taylor, Hermano Charlie Maestas and other participating community members. In the town of San Luis, the community joined arms together with the help of Fr. Pat Valdez and Huberto Maestas, a renowned sculptor, who designed the bronze statues that are now part of the Stations of the Cross Shrine. San Luis Valley is also the location of the Oldest Catholic Parish Catholic Church in Colorado. In this documentary, you will see and experience the History, Cultural and Faith of the people of the San Luis Valley.

The tradition of the Encuentro as it is celebrated in San Antonio and Capulin comes from the Penitente Brotherhood dating back a couple hundred years. The tradition's roots come from a biblical portrayal of the meeting of Jesus and Mary on their way to Calvary on Good Friday. To this day the Encuentro is still celebrated in Capulin and San Antonio. TRT 24:23

Film Trailer: <http://downtoearthmedia.org/films.html>

Larry Apodaca, Voice Over Talent/Singer and Songwriter

Rick, your documentary was well done and very inspiring. My birth family is from Antonio but I was adopted in Alamosa by a loving Catholic family 62 years ago. Although I've lived in Rocky Ford, Los Angeles and Denver my spirit is always drawn to El Valle. Your film touched my soul, warmed my heart and lifted my spirit. Gracias

Maria Cisneros

Technician at City and County of Denver Jobs Great documentary. Proud to be from the San Luis Valley, specifically Capulin. I well remember Holy Week and La Morada in Capulin.

Robert Gurza Cultural & Diversity Relevance - Clinical Program Management at Jefferson Center for Mental Health. Stations of the Cross in San Luis are so beautiful and with so much detail. Rick, this is a touching and intimate portrait of a particular community's religious beliefs and the ways in which their spirituality is expressed in their daily lives. Nicely done.

Exploring Integrative Medicine: A Cultural Health Video Series
Education teaching materials on the herb “OSHA”

Carol Jensen, R.N., M.Ed., Professor/Retired of Integrative Therapies and creator of the bachelors of science in Integrative Therapeutic Practices degree at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Culturally competent health care is a complex process that includes not just understanding the culture and health practices of others, but also honoring them so that they may be discussed in conjunction with the Western approach to medicine. Respecting the traditional health practices of others is vital for an open, honest dialogue between client and practitioner.

This video series offers short documentary vignettes about cultural health issues and provides a teaching tool kit to create lively discussions within the classroom. The tool kit includes a PowerPoint presentation, list of works cited for further research, discussion questions and group projects.

For this video the herb **Osha** was specifically chosen because it has not been discussed at length in the media, but is widely used in the western United States by indigenous and Hispanic peoples has a great deal of cultural significance.

Information from herbalist Teresa Vigil of the San Luis Valley of Colorado is included with historical and cultural uses of the herb, and the scientific knowledge about the herb.

Qualified herbalist interested in the production and distribution of educational video materials on the topic of alternative medicine (Remedios). The focus would be on the history, preservation and safe use of these natural medicines as a supportive educational reference tool by the general market. TRT 09:20

DVD/CD Packet includes (Toolkit) Teaching Materials, Film Guide, *Ligusticum porteri* OSHA (Power Point)

Film Trailer: <http://downtoearthmedia.org>

Community Support: University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, University of Colorado at Boulder, Denver Office of Children Affair, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Denver Public School, Red Rocks Community College, the University of Colorado Denver-Downtown Campus and Colorado Community Health Centers (CCHN) all have been proud supporters of my work.

Please visit <http://downtoearthmedia.org> to view additional films.

Purchasing one of these films contributes to the preservation of oral history.

Down To Earth Media
Opportunity to express the artist in you

Down To Earth Media, LLC, <http://downtoearthmedia.org>
Contact Rick Vigil @ 303-842-9579 / dtem@comcast.net



“Our Elders are open books and when they die so do their stories”