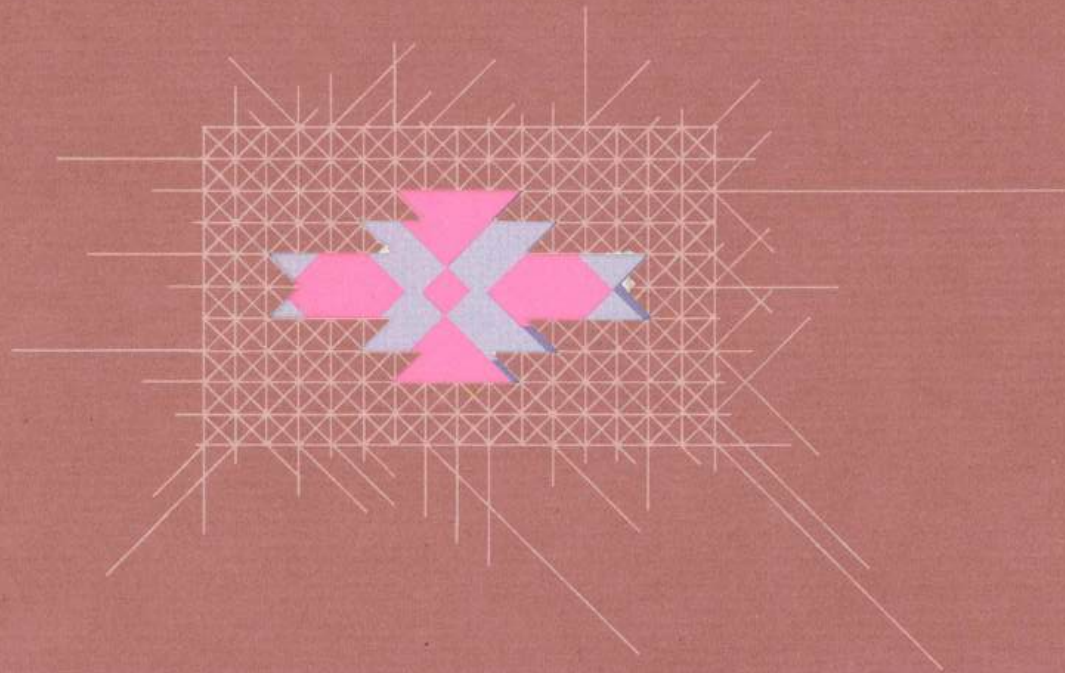


♦ Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis ♦ Artists of the San Luis Valley ♦



◆ Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis ◆



The San Luis Valley in Southern Colorado is a place of breathtaking beauty. But it is also a harsh and inhospitable environment for human survival... isolated, with an arid valley floor. Most of the people who live there are poor and Spanish. Their culture reflects nineteenth century Spanish Colonial settlement and layers of intermingling Native American and Anglo-American influences.

Out of this Valley, in the last seven years, have come new woven tapestries in the rich Southwestern traditions of the Rio Grande and Chimayo styles, and original pictorial embroideries endowed with grace, warmth, and naivete. For the most part, the weavers and embroiderers who do this work do not consider themselves artists. They are simply Mrs. Martinez, Mrs. Trujillo, or Mrs. Valdez of Saguache, Capulin, or San Luis... women who make things, aware that, by so doing, they have picked up broken threads of the strong craft traditions of their people.

The project, *Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis*, presented by the Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, is in praise of these women. The exhibition of textiles and photographs, and this publication, are designed to heighten the general public's awareness and understanding of the special character and cultural heritage of the Valley, and to encourage the revival of traditional crafts.

Published between these covers are two essays, color reproductions of selected tapestries, and portions of Kathryn Nelson's photographic study of the Hispanic women folk artists. The essays support and help to explain the patterns and imagery found in the handwork and the qualities captured by Ms. Nelson's camera.

It is our hope that everywhere this book is distributed and the exhibition is seen, more people will come to appreciate the arts of our region and the contributions of the Hispanic people.

Paula Duggan
Gallery/Museum Director

◆ THE HISPANIC PIONEERS OF THE SAN LUIS VALLEY

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In this essay, I shall try to describe what appear to me to be some significant aspects of Hispanic history and culture of the San Luis Valley—significant especially in the sense that these aspects may help to explain the qualities of contemporary life dealt with in the exhibit "Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis." It should be emphasized that these qualities, which are discussed in the latter part of the essay, are some but certainly not the only ones that characterize Hispanic-American life, just as the events of history are some but not the only ones in the Hispanic occupation of the Southwest.¹ I hope they provide one way to approach, understand and appreciate the meanings of the images.

En este ensayo, trataré de describir aspectos significantes de la cultura e historia hispana tocante al Valle de San Luis—significante en el sentido de que estos aspectos aportan las calidades de la vida contemporánea, manifestadas aquí en la exposición de las artistas del Valle de San Luis. Se debe enfatizar que estas calidades, explicadas mas tarde, no son las únicas que caracterizan la vida hispana del Suroeste.¹ Espero que lo siguiente ayude a darles una aproximación al entendimiento, y por consecuencia, una apreciación de las imágenes expuestas aquí.

◆ LOS PIONEROS HISPANA DEL VALLE DE SAN LUIS

Marianne L. Stoller
Traducción por Dr. Marcella Lucero

Frontiers and Pioneers

The word 'pioneers' evokes an image for most Americans of covered wagon trains bravely setting out from Missouri and Kansas to colonize the West, as history books imply.² Or it suggests earlier settlers from along the Atlantic seaboard pushing west into Kentucky, Ohio, Illinois—or the even earlier Europeans who sailed west across that Atlantic Ocean. Generally we associate pioneer colonization of North America with an east to west movement. Yet, the evidence from archaeology strongly indicates that the very earliest colonists of North America—the Native Americans—came from the north, and the earliest European pioneers who succeeded in establishing themselves permanently came from the south. It is well to remember that what today is called the American Southwest is only southwest from the perspective of New York and Washington; for a very much longer period of time it was the Spanish Colonial and, later, Mexican Northwest.

Los pioneros de las nuevas fronteras

Por medio de los textos históricos, nosotros tenemos una idea general de lo que consta la palabra "pionero." Esa imagen se basa en la idea de que la colonización fue un movimiento en los Estados Unidos del Este al Oeste; sea de caravanas de carretas cubiertas, dirigidas de individuos robustos y valientes que abrieron los caminos al Oeste desde Missouri y Kansas;² o de los previos pobladores que vinieron del Este a Kentucky, Ohio e Illinois; y más atrás, de los europeos que cruzaron el Atlántico para llegar al Oeste. Pero, hay evidencia arqueológica que demuestra que la raza indígena de los Estados Unidos vinieron del norte, y de que los europeos vinieron del sur a fundar lugares. Hay que recordar de lo que hoy se llama el Suroeste estadounidense, es solo una perspectiva lanzada del Este, principalmente de Nueva York y de Washington. El hecho está de que el Suroeste formaba parte del

In the late 1840's members of the Spanish Colonial Empire and the Mexican Republic were still pioneering northward establishing the first settlements in what is now the state of Colorado in the San Luis Valley. They came from the mountain villages and valleys of the yet to be created Territory of New Mexico: El Rito, Petaca, Ojo Caliente and Abiquiú in the Rio Chama drainage, and from Taos, Arroyo Hondo, and Arroyo Seco. These pioneers were the tip of the long finger of Hispanic colonization that had leap-frogged up from central Mexico since 1598 and now was reaching to the headwaters of the Rio Grande in the San Juan and Sangre de Cristo mountains.

The San Luis Valley was not unknown territory to these mid-19th century settlers.

colonialismo español que despues paso al dominio mexicano. Esto ocurrió previo a la historia propagada por los nuevo yorquianos.

En la década de los 1840s, los colonizadores españoles, tanto como los de la república mexicana, todavía estaban estableciendo comunidades en lo que hoy se conoce como el Valle de San Luis de Colorado. Estos pobladores vinieron a Colorado de las villas montañosas de El Rito, de Petaca y de Abiquiú, lugares situados en el drenaje del Río Chama. También vinieron de Taos, de El Arroyo Hondo y de otras partes del territorio que hoy día se llama Nuevo México. Estos pioneros eran los últimos colonizadores de la empresa española, iniciado en este país en 1598 en Nuevo Mexico, y que, luego, fueron extendiéndose por

Despite the assertion of her sovereign claims that Pike's arrest represents, Spain was rapidly losing her imperial grasp on New World colonies. The far northern frontier was difficult to defend and economically unrewarding. After Spain and Mexico severed ties in 1821, the new Republic of Mexico, hard-pressed to establish civil authority and economic viability in its core area, could do even less for the province of New Mexico. Military defenses declined and the nomadic Indian tribes raided the agricultural, sedentary villages of both Pueblos and Hispanos with increasing impunity [Bloom, 1914, p. 352]. With natural population increase, augmented by new immigrants from Mexico proper after political independence, the central and upper Rio Grande valley — from Socorro in the south to Taos in the north — was becoming overpopulated [Bloom, 1913, p. 30]. New settlements, like cusped

tentacles, moved up the tributary valleys and along the foothills of the mountain ranges occupying virtually every spot that had water, enough flat land for fields, and access to mountain pastures. In a sense, the Hispanos waited to be rebuffed by the raiding tribes, or were dependent on interpersonal trading alliances, kinship connections both through intermarriage and *compadrazgo* [ritual godparenthood], and informal ties of friendship with the Utes or Apaches or Navajos for their survival.

Freed of Spain's economic restrictions on trade, Mexico opened her borders to trade with her eastern neighbor, the United States. The Mountain Men and the Santa Fe Trail brought both different names and different goods into the upper Rio Grande Valley

particularly, but the wealth these enterprises generated was largely siphoned off by either the central government or a few entrepreneurs. A trickle of new material goods — cotton cloth, nails and iron tools, a little glass — reached the more remote villages.

Even the church seemed to abandon the northern frontier peoples in the first half of the 19th century. In 1797, religious operations were officially secularized; that is, the missionary orders, no longer supported by the Spanish Crown, were to be withdrawn and replaced by secular [diocesan] priests. Nonetheless, few of the Franciscans who had served the Pueblo missions — and by extension, the nearby Spanish villages — actually left; however, as their ranks were decimated by death, they were not replaced, nor was the poor and remote area attractive to secular priests [Weigle, 1976, pp. 21-22].

Almost in vain there was a rash of church-building in each Hispanic community after secularization because only rarely — at best, once a month — was there a priest to say mass in the church. [Stoller, 1979, Fig 22, pp. 594-596]. People took more and more responsibility for many of their religious needs.

By the 1830s and 1840s these "new" Mexicans began to look longingly at the fertile well-watered valleys of tributary streams which rim the southern two-thirds of the San Luis Valley. They must have hoped the Utes would tolerate their presence because the increasing scarcity of land in their home villages drove them 10 to 25 leagues [25 to 60 miles] away to seek new land. In the early 1830s a group petitioned the Governor for a grant of land on the western side of the Valley running northward along the San Juan Mountains; they needed the land, they said, to support

La liberación de Pike representa el declive del imperio español, impotente en esa época, a defender las colonias del Nuevo Mundo. España estaba alejada en tiempo y en espacio, y le costaba trabajo proteger sus fronteras norteañas. Igual se podría decir de México. Después de la independencia, y desligada de España en 1821, la nueva república se vió en necesidad de establecer prioridades civiles y económicas en la zona central, casi olvidando las provincias en Nuevo México. Las vinculaciones militares y económicas distanciadas del poder central, los indios nómádicos se aprovecharon de la situación e invadieron las villas agrícolas de otros indios enemigos y de los hispanos, con frecuencia e impunidad. Sin embargo, la

población fue aumentando por los muchos inmigrantes de México. Las nuevas comunidades que se establecieron parecían tentáculos que se extendían desde Socorro en el sur hasta Taos en el norte. Ocuparon todos los valles, las lomas y las sierras al margen de los tributarios. Las nuevas tierras ofrecían suelo fértil, campos y ejidos, accesibles a todos. Los hispanos siempre esperaban el rechazo de algunas tribus enemigas. Así es que el proceso social se desarrolló dentro del mismo grupo por muchas generaciones. Dependían mucho en las estructuras internas parentescas del *compadrazgo*, de las alianzas matrimoniales, y dependían también en la amistad de los Yutas, de los Apaches, y de los Navajos para la supervivencia.

Lo que más afectó a los hispanos fue la apertura al librecambismo con el resto de los Estados Unidos. Vinieron los

montañeses anglos, (Mountain Men), y entraron por rutas y caminos ya conocidos, como el Santa Fe Trail, Llegaron hasta el valle superior del Río Grande para intercambiar mercancías. Pero nadie se hizo rico, puesto que la ganancia pasó al gobierno central, o a algunos empresarios. Pocas mercancías llegaron a las aldeas más remotas, pero, entre ellas, se contaban clavos, algunas herramientas, vidrio y algodón en rama.

La lejanía tampoco apelaba a los curas nuevos en 1799, cuando los misioneros franciscanos fueron reemplazados por los curas parroquiales. (Weigle, 1976, pp. 21-22). Sin embargo algunos franciscanos que habían servido a los indios y a los hispanos vecindarios decidieron

quedarse. En todo caso, cuando estos murieron, no había nadie que ocupara su lugar. Después del nuevo cambio de secularización, la gente se apuró en construir nuevas iglesias para tener lugar en donde el cura visitante podía dar misa una vez al mes. (Stoller, 1979, Fig. 22, pp. 594-96). Por la escasez de curas, la gente fue tomando más responsabilidad por necesidades religiosas, particularmente a principios del siglo XIX cuando las estructuras eclesíásticas formales estaban en declinación.

Había escasez de todo en toda parte en el norte de Nuevo México. La gente carecía de curas, de tierra fértil, de muchas cosas, pero fue la necesidad económica que les hizo pensar en el Valle de San Luis. Esto fue en las décadas de los 1830s y 1840s. Los "nuevos" mexicanos

their families. Apparently the grant was made, for pioneering settlers came. These people were driven out by the Navajos according to statements made in a petition for a re-grant in 1842 [Blackmore Papers, 0023 and 0024]. Local history claims that an attempted settlement in 1845 was defeated by Ute harassment [Bean, 1964, p. 50]. Not until 1849 was a colony established [at Rincones, on Rio San Antonio] led by Atanacio Trujillo from El Rito. He had a long association with the Utes as a trader and interpreter and they permitted the small band of people he brought [mostly members of his own family] to stay.

On the east side of the Rio Grande the situation was similar: on a grant of land made by the Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo in 1843, the inheritor of the grant, Carlos Beaubien, had little difficulty finding settlers for it. He provided them donations of land for their homes and fields and the use of mountain land for their flocks of sheep and other animals. In 1849 a settlement was founded on Rio Costilla and in 1851 on Rio Culebra, followed in rapid succession by several others on the same streams. These pioneers also suffered Ute raids but were not driven back south, and the advent of a U.S. Army post, Fort Massachusetts, in 1852, was sufficient assurance for would-be settlers who moved in rapidly and in sizable numbers on both sides of the Rio Grande [Stoller, 1979, pp. 249, 256-257].¹ In the 1860s the Utes were moved out of the Valley.

The San Luis Valley comprises the upper reaches of the Rio Grande, but its physical environment is more harsh than that of northern New Mexico: the altitude is higher by a thousand feet and the growing season is shorter, the winters longer and colder because the physiography of this intermontane basin traps cold air in itself; the Valley floor is as arid as a true desert and even the slopes of the mountains do not receive much precipitation since the whole Valley is in the rain shadow of the San Juan Mountains [Lantis, 1950, p. 32]; the tributary streams — where most all Hispanic settlements were placed — are widely separated from each other. The geography, in sum, almost seems an intensification of the more difficult and demanding aspects of other Southwestern landscapes.

Although this last frontier of Hispanic settlement was actually populated after the Mexican Northwest became the American Southwest with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the Mexican-American Wars in 1848, political arrangements do not alter geography. They may have simply added another cultural dimension to an already strong tradition.

Some Cultural Characteristics of Hispanic Pioneers

Always a frontier, always pioneers, what are the cultural characteristics this long historical tradition left upon the Hispanic people of the San Luis Valley? What images of history might be reflected in the portraits and scenes of the descendants of these people in this photographic essay — and the creative textile expressions in the exhibit?

proposieron entrar en el valle, esperando que los indios tolerarían su presencia. En 1830, un grupo peticionó al gobernador por una merced en el oeste del Valle. Esta tierra quedaba al norte, en la orilla de la cadena de San Juan. Fueron allí, pero les fue mal, porque los Navajos los echaron dentro de pocos años. Otra vez en 1842, hicieron la lucha de entrar, pero en vano. (Blackmore Papers, 0023 and 0024). En 1845, entraron, y esta vez fueron rechazados por los Yutas. (Bean, 1964, p. 50). Así es que no pudieron arraigarse hasta 1849 cuando los Yutas dieron permiso a que pasara un amigo de ellos, Anatacio Trujillo que con su grupo, vinieron de El Rito para establecer su caserío en Rincones que esta al lado del

Río San Antonio. Trujillo había trabado la amistad con los Yutas, años atrás, El sabía el idioma de ellos; había sido intérprete en las ferias y los indios confiaban en él.

Al lado este del Río Grande, otros pobladores estaban entrando puesto que en 1843, el gobernador, Manuel Armijo otorgó una merced a Carlos Beaubien. Hubo muchas familias que vinieron con él en 1849, buscando el bienestar que el Valle ofrecía mediante la economía agrícola. Estos se establecieron cerca del Río Costilla, y en 1859, otro grupo se instaló al lado del Río Culebra. Estos pioneros aguantaron los ataques de los Yutas, pero, esta vez, no se alejaron. Con la llegada del ejército en Fort Massachusetts en 1852, la seguridad contra ataques establecida, mas pobladores vinieron, colocándose en ambos lados del Río Grande. (Stoller, 1979, pp. 249, 256-57).⁴ En los 1860s, los

Yutas fueron despojados de sus tierras y deportados a otras partes. A principios de este siglo, la primera merced de los 1830s, fue negada por el gobierno federal porque el documento original se había perdido.

El Valle de San Luis es un cercado de tierra en la parte superior del Río Grande; es un hoyo rodeado por cadenas montañosas. Hace gran contraste con el norte de Nuevo Mexico. La altitud es mil pies más de altura; la sazón cultivadora es mas corta; los inviernos son mas largos y fríos, y es tan árido como el desierto por la poca precipitación. La cadena, San Juan, absorbe la precipitación de la lluvia al pasar del oeste. Las comunidades están situadas en las riberas de las corrientes, y por eso hay pocas, y hay mucho espacio

entre ellas. Estas comunidades fueron la última empresa hispánica, aunque ya era territorio estadounidense, por el Tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo, el cual terminó la guerra México-Americana en 1848. Pero nuevos gobiernos, con distintas reglas y política, no alteran los determinantes geográficos que rigen en otra cultura tradicional. Claro, con el tiempo, hubo modificaciones al sintetizar las nuevas dimensiones foráneas.

Algunas características de los pioneros hispanos

Siempre frontera, siempre pioneros — esto nos hace preguntar: ¿Qué son las huellas culturales heredadas por la gente hispana del Valle de San Luis, manifestadas hoy día? Es decir, ¿Cómo se refleja la historia de los antepasados en esta exhibición de textiles y de fotografía?

Several characteristics emerge from the Hispanic experience on the northern frontier that are still sustained. Perhaps the most important one is social isolation. Each community in the mountainous areas was isolated from others by intervening mesas, ridges, or simply spaces of cultivated/uncultivated land that intervened between the small *plazas*. The effect was that people tended to form very strong bonds of self-reliance and cooperation among themselves. The founding families may have been few in number and, with intermarriage, the sentiment and structure of kinship further strengthened the sense of inclusiveness and completeness unto themselves. The San Luis Valley is a geographic unit, but each community within it is ascribed a social personality and the members have a strong

sense of identity with that place. Villages separated by only a few miles, or a few minutes with today's transportation, are still distinct entities, and outsiders who may be only from another village remain outsiders even after living in a given village for many years. Those who may have moved away — to Pueblo, Denver, California — still come "home" for holidays and ritual occasions. The autonomy and independence of a community is as important as the integrity of one's own family and the family provides one a place in history — time — as well as space.

Another characteristic extracted from historical experience may be called that of tolerance and respect for other kinds of people or ethnic groups. This seeming contradiction to the themes resulting from isolation is actually complementary to them. The willingness to recognize the validity of other people's way of life, to respect it, to incorporate elements, especially material

ones, from other cultures, to move over and make space for others, to extend the warmth of hospitality and the caring typical of family life on a personal, individual basis — all of these attitudes may be born of the long frontier experience of accommodation to the many different Indian cultures. These methods of dealing with others, refined over two centuries, were continued in the Hispanos way of dealing with Anglo-Americans. The latter started immigrating into the San Luis Valley in sizeable numbers in the 1870s, pre-empting large amounts of land, and introducing new technology, economic patterns, religions, and political organizations. Hispanos have adapted to and adopted certain of these introductions in a selective fashion, despite the economic and social degradation that resulted from a much more sudden and massive onslaught

of these newcomers than their kinsmen in northern New Mexico received. They continue to maintain their own cultural integrity — and command respect for it just as they accord respect to other ethnic and religious groups. The techniques of living with shifting patterns of hostility and friendship may be derived from that earlier heritage of independence/dependence on their multiple-cultured Indian neighbors.

Confidence in the strength of their cultural traditions, tested and tempered by the success of their survival in the isolation of distance and geography, is a characteristic of great import. The need for self-sufficiency, both socially and technologically, was certainly born of the combination of geography plus economic and religious neglect by Spanish, Mexican, and, more recently, United States authority structures. Dependent on each other and the local environment, each village in its isolating river valley tended to become as totally self-sufficient as possible.

Varios rasgos vigentes, sui generis, han surgido de la experiencia fronteriza hispana, existentes, hoy día. Notamos que el aislamiento ha jugado un papel muy importante por las barreras topográficas del Valle: las mesas, las sierras, las lomas, las corrientes, los ríos; por las comunidades distanciadas entre sí, no sólo por el espacio, sino por las costumbres. Todo esto ha servido para moldear grupos homogéneos que repiten las mismas costumbres y tradiciones con cada generación, basadas en, y reforzadas por el inter-matrimonio entre miembros de la misma comunidad. Las relaciones sociales vinculadas por estructuras parentescas ha producido una personalidad e identidad única, haciendo contraste entre la población de cada sitio. Claro, el Valle es una sola entidad geográfica, pero cada grupo se identifica con su propio lugar, e ignoran a los

habitantes que vienen de afuera, aún cuando éstos viven en la misma comunidad. Hoy día, la infraestructura ha penetrado, y la comunicación y el transporte son más accesibles, pero las diferencias entre las comunidades, permanecen. Algunos miembros han salido a vivir en centros urbanos como Denver, Pueblo, o se han ido a otros estados como California. Pero el Valle es un imán que los regresa a la patria chica para observar los ritos únicos de los días feriados.

Estas personas tienen una conciencia histórica y se han dado cuenta de que la autonomía e independencia es tan importante como la integridad de cada familia que ha forjado su comunidad en un momento histórico determinado.

Parece una contradicción que el aislamiento se prestaría a una tolerancia y respeto a otras razas de otras culturas, pero esto se explica a través de la historia. La hospitalidad de aceptar y de acomodar distintos grupos étnicos procede de la convivencia anterior entre las diversas culturas indígenas. También fue un proceso de cooperación mutua entre las familias de cada caserío. Así es que cuando entraron los Anglos, los hispanos bien sabían integrar y asimilar la nueva tecnología, economía de distintas religiones y organizaciones políticas. Los hispanos sintetizaron los elementos que les convenían, aunque sufrieron la degradación social y económica a manos de los recién llegados. Mantuvieron su estilo de vida, demandando respeto por su cultura, tanto como ellos respetaban las culturas y las religiones ajenas. El

aumento de la nueva población produjo una fluctuación entre las relaciones anglo-hispanas que tenían su origen en las relaciones pre-existentes con los indígenas, mudando entre dependencia/amistad; independencia/hostilidad.

La necesidad del auto-reglamento en cada aspecto de la vida, fue el producto del olvido económico y religioso, primero por parte del régimen español, luego por el gobierno mexicano, y ahora por parte del gobierno federal estadounidense. Los hispanos siempre han tenido que depender de la bondad de los vecinos, y esa costumbre se transformó en la confianza total del grupo particular.

The peoples' own accounts in personal documents and oral history furnish this composite picture of village life in the 19th and early 20th century.⁵ The earth provided clay for adobe houses as well as fertility for plants to feed people and their livestock. The mesas provided stone for house foundations and the wood of piñon trees and junipers for heat. The mountains furnished tall pines and spruces for house roofs and other shelters, game and fish to eat, and most importantly, summer pastures to fatten sheep and other livestock. Clothing was made from the wool of sheep and hides of animals, furniture and tools from local woods. Neighbors provided mates, comfort in times of sorrow and help in times of need, and the social context necessary for good times of celebration and rituals. Self-sufficiency led to the development of very strong and distinctive craft traditions. Material goods could only be augmented

through trade with outsiders. In such a world, little was wasted; things worn out for one purpose were kept to be recycled into a new one, challenging the inventiveness and creativity of the individual. Such circumstances mitigated against individual accumulations of wealth or attitudes of competitiveness; personal prestige derived from being a responsible and charitable person towards others and from creative skills and abilities whether exhibited in managing sheep or composing songs or weaving blankets. However, the realization that one's own skills might not span the spectrum of needs kept pride and self-glorification under control. The things which nourish the spirit-religious faith, aesthetic pleasure—were provided by devotion to Catholic deities and rituals and by the appreciation of the beauty of the natural

environment and their own creations. Self-sufficiency was not only a necessary characteristic for physical survival but also became a cherished and traditional value. Pioneers know how to live with few comforts if they must.

The degree to which self-sufficiency is still possible and still held as an ideal in today's Hispanic San Luis Valley depends on economic factors which in turn are dependent on Hispanos' access to local environmental resources. Anglo-American technology and material goods in large part replaced the old craft traditions. A decreasing number of descendants of the early settlers in the San Luis Valley have been able to retain possession of land and water and the use rights to the resources and products of the mesas and mountains, and thus have lost much of their economic independence. Many have had to migrate to cities where the traditional values of pioneer characteristics may confront the ultimate

challenge to the preservation of this time-wrought cultural heritage.

Some of those Hispanic citizens who remain in the San Luis Valley, and their work, are the subjects of this exhibition. Their textile creations represent a revival started within the last decade of some traditional techniques and forms. Many women in this group relearned and resumed the traditional work of their ancestresses with alacrity. At the same time their imaginations responded to new encouragement to create original pictorial tapestries. This ability to absorb new ideas and work them into traditional forms emphasizes the quality of adaptability and the strength of the historically derived Hispanic cultural heritage. ◆

Por medio de la historia oral, y por algunos documentos existentes, tenemos un cuadro compuesto del *modus vivendi* de los hispanos dentro del siglo XIX y al principio de éste. La idea central de los susodichos documentos subraya el auto-mantenimiento en utilizar los recursos circundantes.⁵ De la tierra, sacaron los adobes para las casas; de las mesas, piedra para la fundación de las casas; de las plantas, alimento para la gente y para el ganado; de las selvas, madera de piñon y de juniperos para la calefacción y para techos y otros amparos. En las montañas había caza, y en las acequias había pescado en abundancia. Las sierras proveían las pasturas para las ovejas y el ganado. De las zaleas, sacaban lana para ropa; de la madera, hacían muebles y algunas herramientas. Las alianzas matrimoniales encomendaron la creación de la cultura social, del arte y de la artesanía. Los prójimos acompañaban al vecino,

festejando tiempos gozosos, y sufriendo las ocasiones tristes. Carecían de instrumentos artísticos y las pocas mercancías que tenían, las guardaban, las utilizaban, y las regalaban al vecino para comprobar el ingenio de cada uno en buscarle una nueva forma. En tal mundo, nada se gastaba, nada se votaba. No se conocía la competencia y por consecuencia, nadie tenía riqueza. Valía más, la honra personal, ortogada a los miembros por obras caritativas, por habilidades creativas, para el mejor tejedor, artesano, aún, para el mejor pastor, es decir, para el mejor productor de la comunidad.

En todo caso, la gente era humilde y reconocía sus limitaciones en producir. Esa realización impedía el egoísmo y la vanagloria. Los elementos que nutren el

espíritu—la fe y el placer estético—eran suministrados por la fe en los santos de la iglesia católica, y por el aprecio de la belleza de la naturaleza. Los pioneros supieron vivir con pocas comodidades, y con el tiempo, el auto-reglamento, adquirió la importancia de valor tradicional.

Hoy día, el auto-mantenimiento es más un ideal que una posibilidad entre los habitantes del Valle de San Luis. El plantamiento Anglo del nuevo consumerismo y tecnología ha reemplazado la artesanía antigua. Pocos de los herederos hispanos han podido retener sus tierras y las acequias acompañantes, y por consecuencia, han perdido el poder económico. Los recursos naturales y las materias primas, abastecimientos de la economía local, casi todo se ha perdido. Eso ha causado mucha emigración del Valle, y no se sabe

si el choque cultural en las ciudades ponga en prueba los valores tradicionales de los pioneros.

Los sujetos de esta exhibición son los descendientes de los pioneros que han permanecido en el Valle. Sus obras representan un resurgimiento de la viejas técnicas y formas tradicionales. Es notable que esta generación de mujeres han re-aprendido, con mucha celeridad, la artesanía de sus antecedentes. Al mismo tiempo, se notan en las imágenes, un esfuerzo de crear tapices originales y pintorescos. La sintetización de ideas modernas en formas tradicionales, enfatiza la adaptabilidad que ya hemos notado en la trayectoria de esta herencia cultural. ◆

◆ ENDNOTES

1. The themes of the frontier and of pioneer colonization have been developed by many other writers and are merely used here as a framework for the Hispanic experience in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado.

2. The best known frontier hypothesis, first advanced in 1893, is that of Frederick Jackson Turner whose much debated idea is that not only American national character but American democracy itself was developed by the experience of the westward movement across the continent [1961]. A helpful examination of theories of pioneer colonization is Thompson's work, 1973.

3. Swadesh, 1974, provides a detailed description of Ute-Spanish relationships; her study is concentrated on the Rio Chama and Rio San Juan settlements but her work has some material on the San Luis Valley.

4. Stoller, 1980, reviews the Mexican land grants made in Colorado.

5. Two firsthand accounts by initial settlers are the manuscript of Atanacio Trujillo as told to his son, Louis Raphael Trujillo, in 1866, written by José E. Trujillo in 1901 and placed in the Conejos church records, and that of Juan Bautista Silva, one of the founders of La Loma de San José [near present Del Norte] in 1859; a transcript of the Silva Diary was published by Richmond, 1973.

◆ NOTAS

1. Los temas de la frontera y de la colonización han sido desarrollados por muchos otros escritores y se usan aquí solo de marco para la experiencia Hispánica en el norte de Nuevo México y el sur de Colorado.

2. La hipótesis de la frontera mejor conocida, primero adelantada en 1893, es la de Frederick Jackson Turner cuya tesis es que no solo el carácter nacional americano sino la democracia americana misma se desarrolló por la experiencia del movimiento al través del continente hacia el oeste (1961). Una investigación provechosa de teorías de la colonización es la obra de Thompson, 1973.

3. Swadesh, 1974, da una descripción detallada de las relaciones entre los yutas y los españoles; sus investigaciones están concentradas en las colonias del Río de Chama y del Río de San Juan, pero su obra contiene algo acerca del Valle de San Luis.

4. Stoller, 1980, examina las mercedes mexicanas en Colorado.

5. Dos relatos originales por primeros pobladores son los manuscritos de Atanacio Trujillo, contado a su hijo Luis Rafael Trujillo en 1866, escrito por José E. Trujillo en 1901, e incluido en el registro de la iglesia de Conejos, y el de Juan Bautista Silva, uno de los fundadores de La Loma de San José (cerca del presente Del Norte) en 1859; un trasunto del diario de Silva fue publicado por Richmond en 1973.

BACKGROUND

The exhibition which this book accompanies has two parts: a collection of selected weavings and pictorial embroideries produced in the San Luis Valley through the current craft revival; and Kathryn Nelson's black and white photographic essay on the Valley and its people, the result of three years work. Together the photographs, the textiles, and the written text, drawn largely from oral histories of the artists, speak to contemporary life, personal experience in the Hispanic culture, and the renewed importance of weaving and embroidery. Six of the textiles and portions of the essay are reproduced on the following pages.

The Craft Revival

The most recent initiative to reestablish the craft tradition in the San Luis Valley came in 1975 from two independent sources: The Sisters of Divine Providence through their crafts cooperative, Los Artes del Valle, in Center, Colorado; and the Virginia Neal Blue Resource Center for Colorado Women (VNB), a job training organization based in Denver. The stimulus was the extreme economic deprivation in the Valley. The goals were to improve that economic condition for Hispanic families by creating new cottage industries, and to build self-esteem and self-confidence among Valley women.

The widespread production of textiles by craftsmen had ceased in Southern Colorado by the early decades of this century, and intermittent attempts at revival had failed. Still, weaving and embroidery seemed viable for these programs. Not only was the local production of textiles part of a unique material culture, but it was work that could be done in the home, keeping in tact the strong family. There was convincing evidence of potential markets outside the Valley and there was the future possibility of drawing on the local sheep industry for materials.

The first weaving classes that were set up by VNB were taught in Capulin by Eppie Archuleta, a local weaver who had worked at the loom since childhood. Under her tutelage, students began weaving in the Rio Grande and Chimayo traditions using historical pieces, photographs and their own imaginations for inspiration.

In weaving, the women followed traditional patterns, but the stitchery workshops provoked a different turn, and the needleworkers never picked up the decorative elements of 19th century *colcho* embroidery. In the summer of 1975, Los Artes and VNB cooperated in organizing week long workshops in San Luis, Capulin, and Center with Carmen Orrego-Salas, a native of Chile living in the United States. In them, Mrs. Orrego-Salas taught the simple traditional *colcho* stitch along with other embroidery stitches. But most importantly, she encouraged the women to use embroidery to make original pictures of places from their pasts and their villages and to stitch their dreams and fantasies. With this inspiration, the women continued to embroider at home, meeting weekly to talk about what they had done.

It is significant that, seven years later, people are still stitching and weaving. Some artists have continued to work for VNB, which, in 1979, obtained CETA funding for their crafts program. Others have worked with Los Artes or independently.

The San Luis textiles have been marketed outside the Valley by VNB and individual artists, and through the San Juan Art Center in La Garita by Los Artes del Valle. Currently the geographical isolation from markets provides the largest frustration, and potentially endangers the revival. The people wonder who will appreciate their pieces; who will buy them; and whether they should continue to invest themselves in this work.

The Photographic Essay

When Kathryn Nelson first went to the Valley in 1979 to begin studying the emerging women folk artists for a slide documentary, she found one of her biggest challenges to be the women's self-perceptions and their perceptions of the public value of their work. The stitchers, particularly, were reticent. They seemed

perplexed by her interest in them and their pictures. Taking cues from magazines, they suspected that realism might be essential to 'good art' and they were hard to convince that "it didn't matter if a horse didn't look exactly like a horse as long as it felt like one."

When she began the slide-tape production, Ms. Nelson worked intuitively. The script and the visuals came together as the women relaxed and she got to know her subjects. For that production, she focused on two artists: the weaver, Eppie Archuleta, and Tiva Trujillo, an embroiderer. These two offered important comparisons in the context of folk art. For Eppie, the descendant of a long line of weavers, weaving had been a process in her life, a continuing involvement. The raising of sheep, carding, spinning, dyeing the wool, and weaving it—these were daily rhythms. For Tiva, the newly learned pictorial embroidery was a way to put down her thoughts and memories. Through it she reflected on her life. Her pieces became parts of a singular autobiography, unfinished at her death in 1980.

When the slide project was complete, Ms. Nelson continued to visit the Valley to record other women on tape and with her camera, determined to capture a broader range of the physical and cultural complexities of the area and the character of the people. The overriding passion in this work was a need to communicate her deep feelings for these people and a desire to express through her photographs the elusive qualities of the Valley.

Paula Duggan,
Gallery/Museum Director

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Historical records document exploration of it by Don Diego de Vargas in July, 1694, on his continued reconquest of the kingdom of New Mexico following the revolt against and expulsion of the Spanish colonizers by the Pueblo Indians in 1680. De Vargas, with a large company of men, explored north of Taos along the east side of the Valley as far as the Rio Culebra, then crossed the flat Valley floor and flooding Rio Grande to the west side. His expedition had two purposes: to obtain food for his hungry people trying to reestablish themselves in Santa Fe [at Taos Pueblo he had confiscated 300 *fanegas* — about 450 bushels — of corn], and to contact the Ute Indians in order to assure them that Spanish sovereignty had returned. Although the Utes had been friendly to the Spanish in pre-Revolt times, they attacked them now under the suspicion that they

terrenos ribereños del Río Grande hasta llegar a las cordilleras, nonbrados San Juan y la Sangre de Cristo.

Ya para el siglo XIX, el Valle de San Luis era territorio familiar a varios exploradores. Existen documentos históricos de las expediciones de Don Diego de Vargas, en 1694. Esta fecha coincide con la Reconquista. Es decir, que los indios de Taos se rebelaron en 1680, esiliaron a los españoles y tomaron el poder por catorce años. Cuando los españoles reconquistaron la tierra, De Vargas inició el viaje a lo que hoy día es el Valle de San Luis, impulsado por dos motivos: (1) para obtener alimento y llevarlo a los paisanos de Santa Fe, (en Taos, en el pueblo de los indios, había confiscado 300 *fanegas* de maíz), y (2) para hacer contacto con los Yutas para avisarles que ese grupo representaba el

were Pueblo Indians disguised as Spaniards. After eight had been killed, the Utes asked for peace, apparently because both sides recognized friends from earlier times. Their pack animals further laden with buffalo and deer [or elk] hunted in the Valley, de Vargas and his troops returned south along the base of the San Juan mountains to Santa Fe [Espinosa, 1942, pp. 194-198]. Thereafter, it appears the Spanish recognized the San Luis Valley as the territory of the "Yutas" and throughout the Colonial period never attempted to establish settlement although their friendly relationship waxed and waned over the ensuing century and one-half.³

Other nomadic tribes — Apaches, Navajos and Kiowas — used the Valley as hunting grounds, and alliances among all of these tribes and between each of them and the Spanish were formed and dissolved over the years. In August, 1779, Governor Juan Bautista de Anza lead an expedition of soldiers, militia [citizen — soldiers], and 259

regreso del dominio español. Partiendo de Santa Fe, De Vargas y su grupo exploraron el norte de Taos, llegaron al Rio Culebra, siguieron el flujo que se extiende por El Valle, y luego cruzaron las riadas del Rio Grande hasta llegar al lado oeste. Allí se encontraron con los Yutas, que antes habían sido sus aliados. Los Yutas los atacaron, pensando que eran indios enemigos disfrazados como españoles. Después de que habían matado ocho españoles, se dieron cuenta de que sí eran los amigos antiguos, y pidieron la paz. De Vargas y sus soldados volvieron a Santa Fe por el lado oeste, al margen de la cadena San Juan. En las alforjas llevaban trozos de búfalo, ganado y venado. (Espinosa, 1942 pp. 194-98). De allí en adelante, los españoles reconocieron el Valle como el territorio de los "Yutas," y durante el período colonial, nunca trataron de establecerse allí, a pesar de que las vinculaciones amigables se debilitaron a lo largo del tiempo.³

Indians [mostly Pueblos] north on the west side of the Rio Grande, then northeastward across the Valley floor and over the mountains in pursuit of the Comanche who had been raiding the Pueblo and Spanish villages north of Santa Fe. De Anza's force battled with and defeated them. [Thomas, 1932, pp. 122-137]. De Anza's diary of the expedition contains apparently the first mention of the name San Luis for the area — La Ciénaga de San Luis, the marsh of San Luis, now referred to as the San Luis Lakes of the upper closed basin portion of the Valley [Thomas, 1932, p. 127. Thomas translates *ciénaga* as pleasant pond].

The next recorded event in the early history of the San Luis Valley was the capture of Lt. Zebulon M. Pike and his sorry remnants of an exploring expedition sent by the United States to ascertain the headwaters

Otras tribus nómicas—los Apaches, los Navajos y los Kiowas—también usaron El Valle para cazar. También, las alianzas entre estas tribus y los españoles, se disolvieron con el tiempo. En agosto de 1779, el gobernador Juan Bautista de Anza con una tropa de soldados rasos, incluso 259 indios (la mayoría Pueblos) se lanzo en pos de los comanches que habían atacado los pueblos de los indios y de los españoles, situados al norte de Santa Fe. Esta incursión lo llevó al parte oeste del Río Grande; travesó el noroeste del Valle y cruzó las montañas para luchar con los comanches. Cubrió mucho territorio según su diario. Allí, también, nos revela que el Valle fue nombrado "La cienaga de San Luis," que ahora se llama "San Luis Lake of the upper closed basin portion of the Valley." (Thomas traduce la *ciénaga* como "lago placentero".) (Thomas, 1932, p. 127.)

of the Arkansas River [Rio de Napestle] following the Louisiana Purchase and the determination of that river as the border between the United States and New Spain. Pike, in mid-winter, 1807, crossed the rugged mountain divide between the waters of the Arkansas and Rio Grande, allegedly in search of the Red River. More than midway down the Valley floor he stopped in desperation for the survival of his starving, half-frozen men and built a simple stockade on the Rio Grande. There he was discovered and apprehended by a troop of Spanish dragoons and militia, marched to Santa Fe and Chihuahua, and was finally released at Natchitoches, Louisiana, the U.S. boundary [Jackson, 1966, pp. 373-386].

Otro acontecimiento documentado de la historia del Valle de San Luis tiene que ver con la captura del teniente Zebulon M. Pike y su tropa, éstos en condiciones desesperadas, muriéndose de hambre y del frío cuando tropezaron con la cuadrilla española. Pike y su tropa habían traspasado en el territorio de la Nueva España en busca de los linderos de los dos países. Pike siguió la corriente del río de Napestle, (hoy día, llamado el Arkansas). Esta expedición tomo lugar después de la venta del territorio Louisiana (the Louisiana Purchase) y el gobierno estadounidense había mandado a Pike a explorar la tierra al oeste. Los españoles le tomaron preso, lo marcharon a Santa Fe, y luego a Chihuahua. Finalmente, lo depositaron en Natchitoches, Louisiana, que era los confines de los Estados Unidos.

Old San Acacio in 1925
Tiva Trujillo, Saguache

"It's nice to think of yourself as a child, you know. That's something to think about now that you're getting old. When you go to your childhood or to your past, you think about everything. That's why I like to draw."
Tiva Trujillo

1980
29" x 40½"



The Legend of La Llorona

Tiva Trujillo, Saguache

"I don't know about this Llorona. I don't believe it, but I thought it was kinda fun to embroider her. What the story says is that the Llorona was a pretty woman. Can't you see her on the first picture? It looks like it's pretty."

"And then the second picture, it's ugly. Why she drowned her babies was because her husband was a mean husband to her. The story says it's in the well, and some say that it's in the river. I drew her in the river."

"The third picture, it's evil. She wanted her children so bad after she had drowned them, that that's the reason they say she comes out in the night... looking for her children. So the mothers, when they hear this noise coming like the wind or something, they just take their children inside or they're already in bed. She only comes out in the night around eleven... something like that. I don't know if this is only the Spanish people's believing, but in Monte Vista, I think they have heard her."

Tiva Trujillo

1978

Three 9" x 11" panels



Rag Rug

Eppie Archuleta, Alamosa

It is easier and more economical to use strips from existing rags for rugs than to card and spin wool. This weaving combines stripes with the tapestry motif taken from the Saltillo *sarape*.

1979

52½" x 84"

Wet faced rag rug





"There's so many special things about the Spanish people. Our language is special to me...our different ways. It's taken a long time for me to be able to say that because I think for a long time we wanted to be someone else. It would be a lot easier not to be Spanish, or not to be poor. It would be a lot easier, but we are who we are, and we are special that way."

Patsy Garcia

Patsy Garcia, Embroiderer
Saguache, Colorado



"I was born here in Saguache in 1910. I was born and raised here. My name is Evelyn Trujillo. My maiden name was Evelyn Lobato. I married my husband... he is Trujillo, so I am Evelyn Trujillo. I had nine children."

Evelyn Trujillo

Evelyn Trujillo, Embroiderer
Saguache, Colorado



"My father was a sawmiller and he used to have a farm way up in the La Jara Canyon. He had us some land and a farm and he had a lot of goats and a lot of sheep. That's the way he made a living...by planing and cutting wood."

Viola Martinez

Viola Martinez, Weaver
Capulin, Colorado



"My mother always weave all the time. I think she learn alot from my great-grandparents and my grandparents. She's still weaving. 'Can't live without weaving,' she says."

Eppie Archuleta

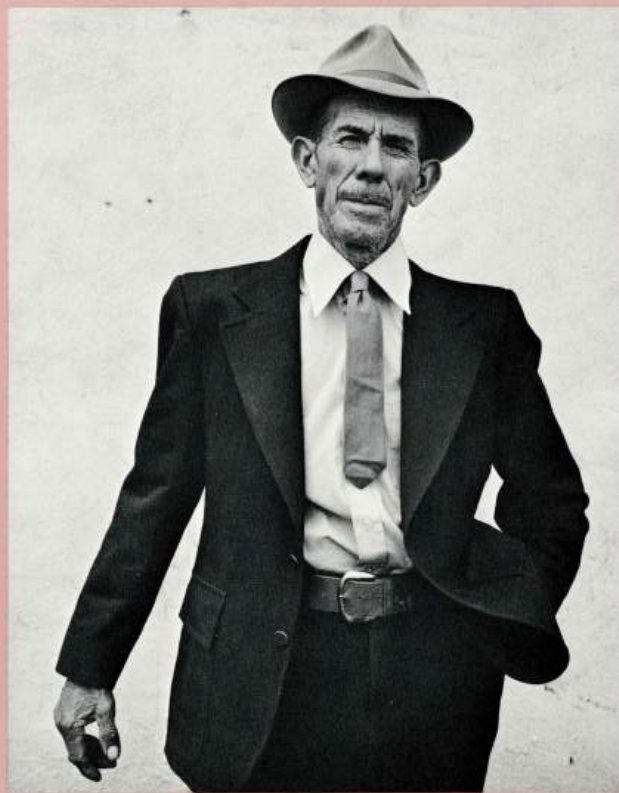
Eppie Archuleta and Her Mother
Agueda Martinez, Weavers



"My husband. I don't know how he thought about me. He said he was 'espotting' me or something...that we were good girls. And I think we've been very happy. We've been married forty years already. I think what the wife has to do is keep your husband happy no matter what."

Eppie Archuleta

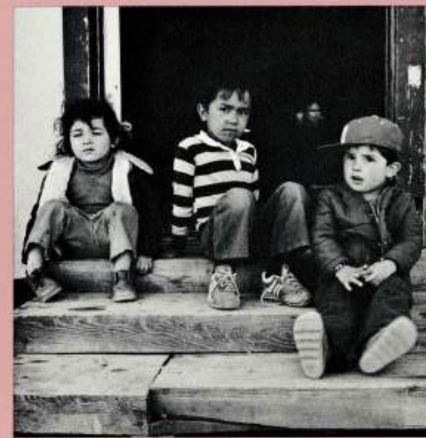
Frank Archuleta



"They say we're supposed to have good luck. But I think we have to make our good luck. It don't come along. We have to help. We're doing pretty good and we have ten children, too. We lost two. Small ones."

Eppie Archuleta

Two Archuleta Grandchildren
and a Friend

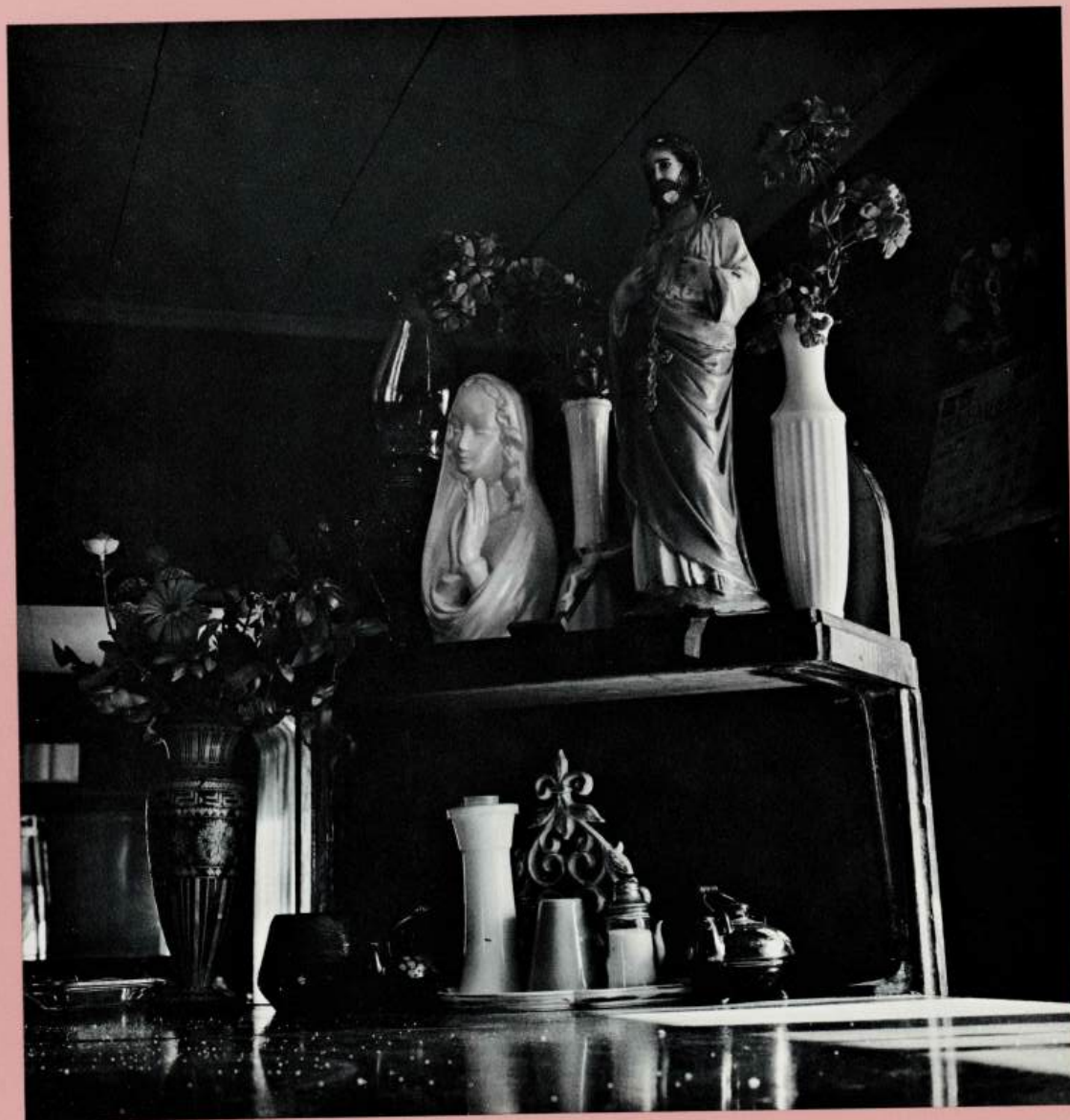
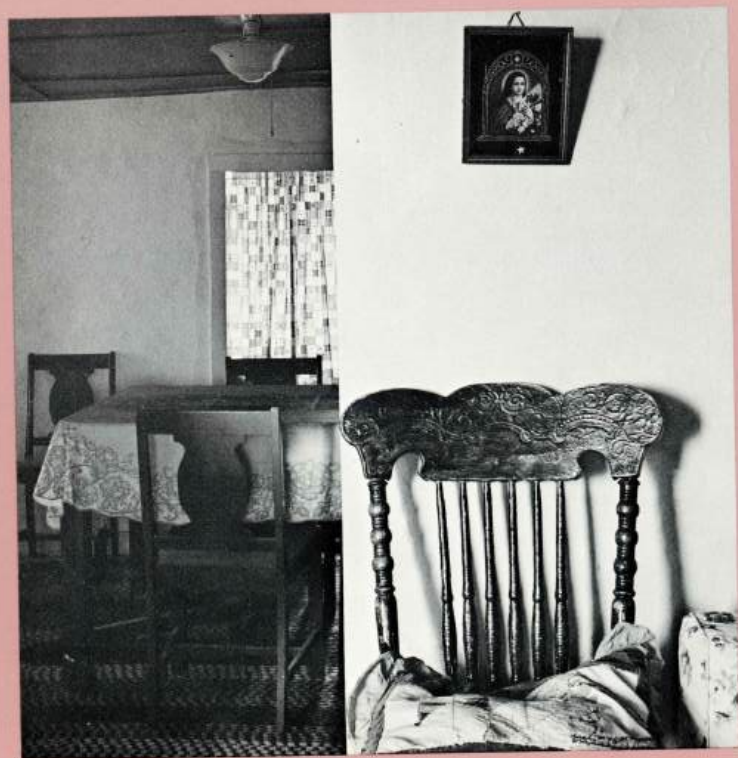


El Refran:
Mi Casa es su casa. [My house is your house.]

La Casa

Religion is at home as well as in church.
People pray before home altars usually
decorated with fresh flowers in summer
and dried bouquets in winter.

El Altar



The terrain, altitude and aridity led the Hispanic settlers to hug the mountain flanks and settle in the isolated tributary

valleys of the high mountains where they established their villages, farms, and pasturelands.

The Vega,
San Luis, Colorado



San Luis claims to be the oldest town in Colorado. Here, as in towns and villages throughout the Valley, men who have come to town for supplies or other business, gather around their pickups and share news.

Village of San Luis,
Colorado



Music and dancing are central to social life in the Valley. Any place is a good place to make music with friends.

Santa Anna Fiesta,
San Luis, Colorado



Agri-biz, or large scale commercial farming of the Valley floor, provides intermittent employment for local people as well as more recent migrants from Mexico.

"In the cellars I have worked about nine years. But in the potato fields and harvest I have worked all my life."

Tiva Trujillo

Harvesting Potatoes,
Center, Colorado

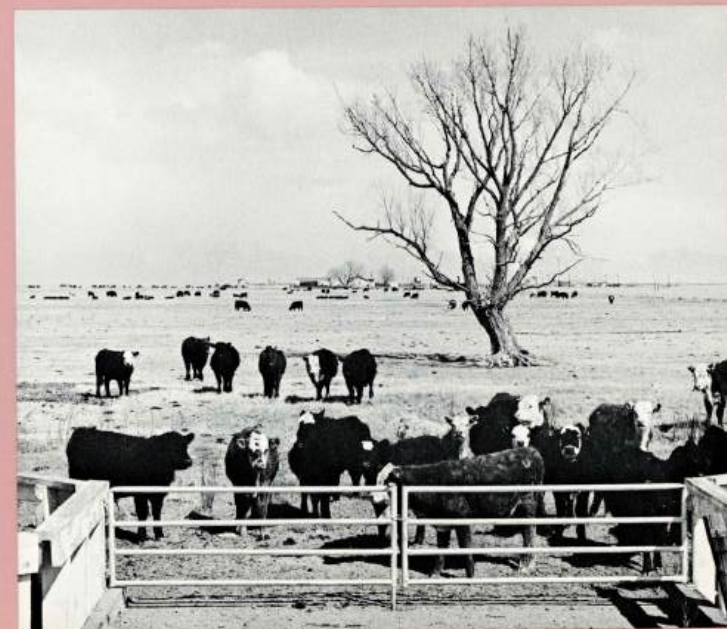


Farming and the raising of sheep, cattle and horses have been important occupations in the Valley.

"In the old days people were mostly farmers. The little farmer can't make it now, not any more."

Julia Valdez

Cattle Grazing



Being a self-sufficient people, many families still heat their homes with wood and also prefer wood-burning stoves for cooking over gas or electric ranges. It is said that the woodpile has to be twice the size of the house to make it through the winter.

San Luis,
Colorado



"We had a farm up here about a mile from town. We planted beans and corn, potatoes and barley. And we made a garden and we had animals. But then he got disabled. That wasn't going to put any food on the table. So what I did, me and the kids went out to work. Little by little we sold calves, cows, and pigs and sheep

and goats. We had to sell everything in order to eat because you know, in the winter time there's no jobs over here. In the summer we used to go out thinning lettuce and hoeing peas and picking peas ... picking potatoes. Me and the kids. I had eight. They were small. The oldest, Eddie, he was only 14.

Viola Martinez

The Martinez Home



"That was something really good for him, that weaving. When he is weaving, he don't hear; he don't speak to me. He just keep on weaving. It's peace of mind for anybody that weaves.

They used to do weaving...his family. And I think he did too. But he hadn't done it for so many years that he had already forgot how. But as soon as he stood on the loom, he remembered it."

Viola Martinez

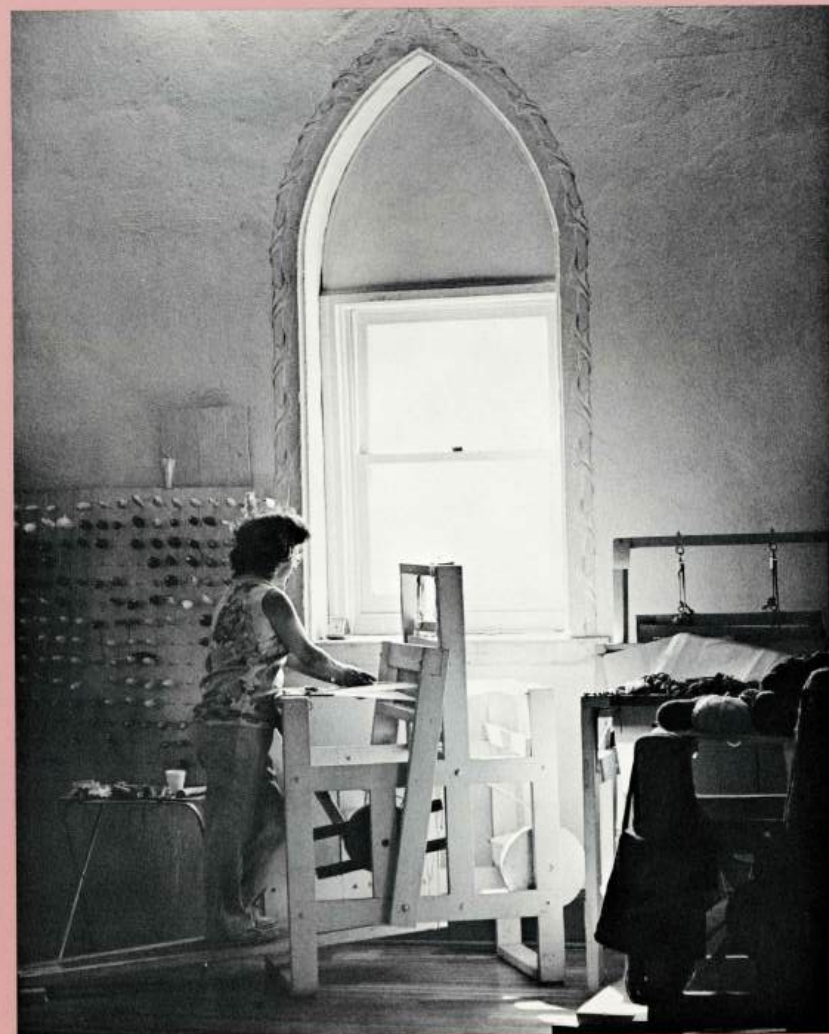
The Hispano technique of weaving on the treadle loom hasn't changed, although the yarn used is often commercially processed now. Men as well as women were and are weavers, and the skill was handed down in family lines. The recent craft projects have encouraged the practice of these skills.

Senon Martinez de Chavez, Weaver
Capulin, Colorado

"I come to work in the morning; I build a fire and go to my weaving. I'm always weaving. At night when I'm sleeping, I'm weaving. I dream that I'm working and I'm always trying to think of different designs."

Cordy Duran

Cordy Duran, Weaver
Center, Colorado



"Since I was 7 years old, my mom sat me at the sewing machine. If I didn't sew it right, she would take it apart and I'd have to sew it again. She just stayed with me until I learned. I take pride in my work. You put a lot of yourself in it. In those little stitches you put love and thought. To me it means a lot."

Margie Gurule

Margie Gurule, Embroiderer
Saguache, Colorado



"If you draw a picture of your own, the past, and that's what I've been doing... every picture that I have drawn... it's my past. My life, you know, that's what it is. It's a true picture and a real picture. They were alive sometime... oh once upon a time."

That's why I love to draw. I love to draw my own tangles... embroider my own tangles. This has been something real nice for me to work on, you know. It's hard, but it's nice. It's proud.

Tiva Trujillo

Tiva Trujillo, Embroiderer
Saguache, Colorado





Rug

Nora Quintana, Capulin

"I get my ideas from a book or whatever comes into my head. I draw it on a piece of paper. Sometimes I'm weaving along and something different just comes out. I just do what comes out."

Nora Quintana

1979

30" x 72"

Commercial Wool



Colorado Aggregate

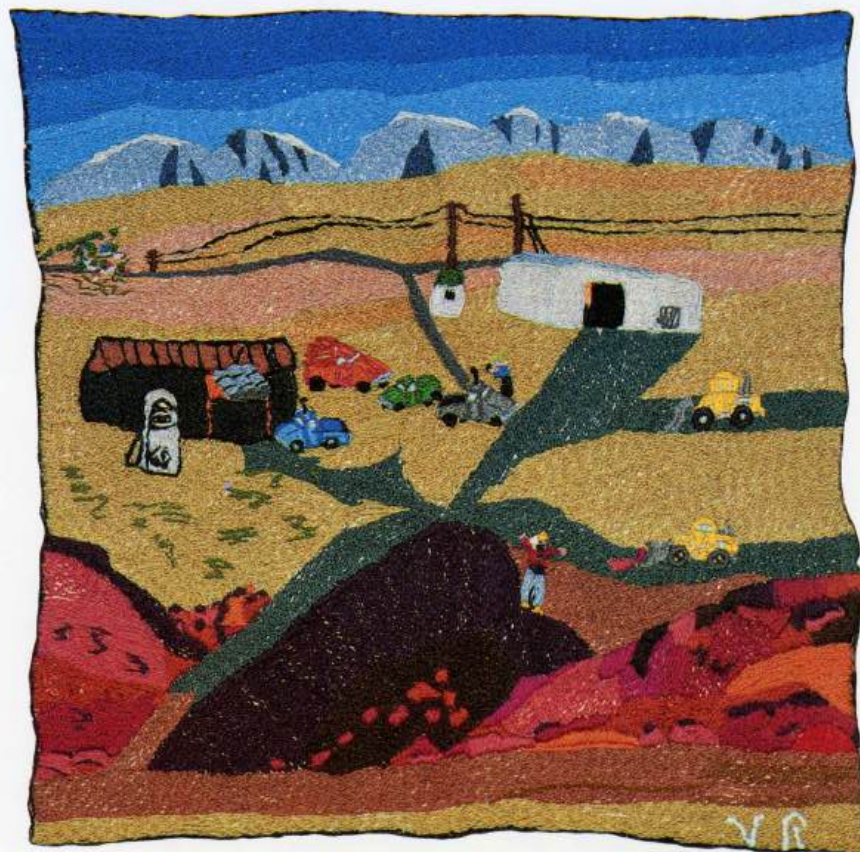
Virginia Rodriguez, San Pablo

When I did it, everyone was deciding to draw about something from the community. Colorado Aggregate is important to the people because half of the people in the community depend on Colorado Aggregate. They mine this rock for the pebbles they put in gardens and they put them on the roof. I drew this picture from several colored photographs and I tried to pick the colors exactly, but you have to go with the yarn you have. There were three 'pictures' I really put my heart into and this was one of them.

Virginia Rodriguez

1981

16" x 16"



Old Fort Garland

Margie Gurule, Saguache

"Fort Garland was established in 1858. The buildings were made of adobe, with sod roofs and planked floors. Kit Carson was its most famous commander. I love Fort Garland. I'm a very patriotic person, really I am. I love the flag, and I love my country. I guess that is why I love Fort Garland. It was history and it really happened."

Margie Gurule

1980

24" x 34"

210 hours,

385 strands of yarn



SOUTHWESTERN HISPANIC TEXTILES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Dorothy Boyd Bowen

Those adventuresome and determined Hispanics who first attempted to settle the San Luis Valley in the mid-nineteenth century brought with them a rich textile tradition which had been developing over the past two and a half centuries in the small villages and isolated ranchos of New Mexico. To the area inhabited by village dwelling farmers and nomadic hunting groups the sixteenth century Spanish had brought sheep, the technology of the horizontal treadle loom, and new dyes, designs, and fashions.

By 1638 New Mexico Governor Luis de Rosas had developed a textile industry in Santa Fe (Blum, 1935, p. 242), an industry which, though interrupted by the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, continued in New Mexico until the late nineteenth century. During this period the basis of New Mexico's economy was the churro breed of sheep from Spain, a

tough, small animal with long, wavy wool particularly suited to hand cleaning and spinning, and not so greasy that native dyes would not "take." Although the fleece weight averaged only one to one and one-half pounds per animal, the churro herds were so vast as to provide ample raw material for home use as well as for export.

Trade caravans carried tens of thousands of New Mexican-made textiles south to "old" Mexico. After Mexican Independence in 1821, trade routes were also opened eastward along the Santa Fe Trail, and after 1847, westward to California.

What were these textiles which were so much part of daily life in eighteenth and nineteenth century New Mexico? Typically, the Rio Grande blanket (*frazada*) was a plain weave, web-faced textile, often with designs executed in tapestry weave. The wool was handspun and either left its natural color of dark brown or white, or dyed with indigo, basewood, or local vegetal dyes.

Occasionally, in special pieces, commercial 3-ply yarn was used for accents, usually dyed red with cochineal or lac. Seldom was vegetal-dyed commercial yarn in other colors used. Designs ranged from bands and stripes to complex tapestry-woven designs on wearing blankets *sarapes* derived from the much-admired Saltillo *sarape*. Since the horizontal looms were narrow, most blankets and *sarapes* were woven in two long matching strips and joined at the center. Typically, warps at the ends were tied off and either left in a short fringe or tucked back into the web.

Another common textile was *jerga*, a twill weave plaid fabric. Most *jerga* was produced in natural undyed light and dark wool. Woven by the yard, *jerga* was used for floor covering, pack covering for freight, saddle blankets, and coarse clothing.

Aquellos hispanos aventureros y determinados que fueron los primeros de tratar de poblar el valle de San Luis a mediados del siglo diecinueve se trajeron una tradición de textiles abundante que había venido desarrollándose por dos siglos y medio en los pueblos pequeños y en los ranchos aislados de Nuevo México. Los españoles del siglo dieciséis habían traído ovejas, la tecnología del telar horizontal de cárcota, nuevos tintes, dibujos y estilos a la región poblada con agricultores que vivían en pueblos a así como a los grupos nómadas cazadores.

Para el 1638, el gobernador de Nuevo México, Luis de Rosas había desarrollado un industria textil en Santa Fe (Bloom p. 242), una industria que, aunque interrumpida por el levantamiento de los Pueblos en 1680, continuó en Nuevo México hasta fines del siglo diecinueve.

Durante este período la base de la economía de Nuevo México era el churro, una casta de ovejas de España, un animal pequeño y correoso, de lana larga y ondulada, adecuada para limpiarse a mano y para hilarse, y no tan grasienta para no tomar los tintes nativos.

Aunque el vellón pesaba solo de una a una y media libras por animal, los ganados de churro eran tan enormes que proveían bastante materia para el uso del hogar así como sobrante para exportar.

Caravanas de comercio llevaban miles de textiles hechos en Nuevo México hacia el sur para México "viejo". Después de la independencia de México en 1821, se abrieron caminos de comercio también hacia el este por el Santa Fe Trail, y después de 1830 hacia el oeste para California.

¿Qué eran estos textiles que eran tan grande parte de la vida diaria en los siglos dieciocho y diecinueve en Nuevo México?

Por lo general, la frazada del Río Grande era de un textil simple, embozado, a menudo con dibujos ejecutados en tejido de tapiz, y, o un moreno oscuro o blanco, o teñido con añil, palo del Brasil, o con tintes de plantas del local. De vez en cuando, en piezas especiales, lana comercial de tres dobleces, se usaba para acento, generalmente roja, teñida con cochinilla o resina. Rara vez era de otros colores el hilo de lana comercial. Los dibujos variaban de tiras y bandas a diseño de tapices de los *sarapes* que venían de Saltillo. Puesto que los telares horizontales ran estrechos, la mayor parte de las mantas y de los *sarapes* se tejían en dos tiras y se juntaban en el centro. Por lo general, los urdimbres se ataban y se dejaban o en un fleco corto o se metían en la tela.

TEXTILES HISPANOS DEL SUDOESTE: UNA VISTA HISTORICA

Dorothy Boyd Bowen
Traducción por Mary Choury

◆ SOUTHWESTERN HISPANIC TEXTILES: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Dorothy Boyd Bowen

Those adventuresome and determined Hispanos who first attempted to settle the San Luis Valley in the mid-nineteenth century brought with them a rich textile tradition which had been developing over the past two and a half centuries in the small villages and isolated ranchos of New Mexico. To the area inhabited by village dwelling farmers and nomadic hunting groups the sixteenth century Spanish had brought sheep, the technology of the horizontal treadle loom, and new dyes, designs, and fashions.

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tough, small animal with long, wavy wool particularly suited to hand cleaning and spinning, and not so greasy that native dyes would not "take." Although the fleece weight averaged only one to one and one-half pounds per animal, the *churro* herds were so vast as to provide ample raw material for home use as well as for export.

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Balanced plain weave yardage of handspun 1-ply undyed natural light wool was called *sabanilla*. A loosely woven fabric, *sabanilla* was used for clothing, mattress covers, wool sacks, and most interestingly, for the ground cloth of the earliest *colcha* embroideries.

Defined in Spanish as "bed covering," the term *colcha* today also refers both to the embroideries done in eighteenth and nineteenth century New Mexico and southern Colorado and to the self-couching stitch most commonly used there. A practical, economical, quick way of covering large areas, the *colcha* stitch has been favored in many areas of the world for centuries. However, the stitch could easily have been independently developed by largely self-taught embroiderers in New Mexico [Fisher, 1919 Spanish Textile Tradition, pp. 153-155].

Otro textil común era la jerga, una tela cruzada en cuadros de varios colores de un doblez. Tejida en yardas, se hacía de lana natural, sin teñir (de lana oscura) y se usaba para cubrir los pisos, de cubierta para cargas, mantas para las sillas de montar, o para hacer ropa áspera.

Un tejido equilibrado de un doblez, hilado a mano, de lana natural, no teñida, se llamaba *sabanilla*. De un tejido suelto, esta tela versátil, la *sabanilla* se usaba para ropa, cubiertas para los colchones, sacos para lana, y de interés, para hacer las primeras *colchas* bordadas.

Descritas en español como cubrecama, hoy la palabra *colcha* también se refiere a los bordados de Nuevo México y del sur de Colorado de los siglos dieciocho y diecinueve y al punto de encorvamiento usado mas generalmente allí. Una manera práctica y económica y ligera para cubrir un espacio grande, el punto de *colcha* ha sido favorecido en muchas partes del

The eighteenth century *colcha* embroideries were worked in handspun undyed and naturally dyed wool, and stitches completely covered the *sabanilla* ground. Designs were primarily flower and leaf motifs derived from the painted chintz fabrics of India which were imported through Mexico. [Fisher, 1979, *Spanish Textile Tradition*, pp. 159-162] Other early designs were geometric. The stitches in these old pieces usually followed the curvilinear designs and added movement and textural interest to the surfaces.

By the early nineteenth century, the handspun wool-on-wool embroideries in which the ground cloth was entirely covered with stitches began to give way to work executed in finer commercial 3-ply wool yarn on imported white cotton yardage. Leaving much of the cotton unembroidered, the stitchers worked only isolated motifs, which again were mostly curvilinear floral patterns adapted from Indian chintz. These

mundo por centenares. Sin embargo, este punto podía haber sido desarrollado independientemente por bordadoras de Nuevo México que se enseñaban a sí mismas (Fisher pp. 153-155).

Los bordados de *colcha* del siglo dieciocho se labraban con lana sin teñir, y teñida con plantas. Los puntos cubrían la *sabanilla* completamente. Los dibujos eran principalmente florales derivados de las telas de zaraza de la India que se importaba por México (Fisher pp. 159-162). Otros dibujos primitivos eran geométricos. Los puntos de estas piezas generalmente seguían los diseños curvilíneos y daban movimiento y interés textural a la superficie.

Para principio del siglo dieciocho, los bordados de lana hilado a mano en cuales la tela estaba completamente cubierta con puntos empezó a cambiar y ya se bordaba con lana comercial mas fina de tres dobleces, en tela blanca de algodón importada. Dejando mucha de la tela sin

wool-on-cotton pieces resemble crewel embroidery then fashionable in the eastern United States, and apparently reflect this outside influence as well as the availability of new materials imported over the Santa Fe Trail. They were probably used as bed-coverings, counterpanes, and altar hangings.

This was the state of Hispanic New Mexican textiles when people from the northern New Mexican villages began to move into the San Luis Valley. Self-reliant and isolated, they continued to spin, dye, weave, and stitch these same fabrics and designs for their own use and for local trade.

The textile arts in the more urban areas in New Mexico began to decline in the 1880's and the 1890's after the arrival of the merino sheep, which boosted the meat industry but produced less desirable wool

bordar, las bordadoras bordaban solo motivos aislados, que, de nuevo eran curvilíneos, de dibujos de flores adaptados de la zaraza. Estas piezas de lana-en-algodón se asemejan al ovillo de estambre que estaba de moda en el este de los Estados Unidos, y aparentemente reflejan la influencia de afuera así como la oportunidad de conseguir materiales nuevos importados por el Santa Fe Trail. Probablemente se usaban como *colchas*, cubrecamas y colgaduras para el altar. Este era el estado de textiles hispánicos de Nuevo México cuando gentes del norte de Nuevo México empezaron a mudarse al valle de San Luis. Aislados y con confianza en si mismos, siguieron hilando, tejiendo, y haciendo costuras para su propio uso y para trato local, estas mismas telas y dibujos.

Los artes textiles in las regiones urbanas de Nuevo México empezaron a

for weaving, and the coming of the railroads, which brought inexpensive commercial textiles. Weavers in the northern villages did continue to work, adapting their products to commercial wools and the taste of Anglo tourists for Native American designs. By 1900 a thriving weaving industry had developed in and around Chimayo, and the Chimayo style of weaving has remained enormously successful throughout this century.

Individual weavers and embroiderers continued to practice their crafts elsewhere in New Mexico also. In Santa Fe, during the 1930's the Native Market [established by Leonora Curtin,] provided encouragement, instruction, materials, and a sales outlet to traditional Hispanic craftspeople. Some of those involved with this effort continued to stitch and to weave into the late 1970's. [Nestor, 1978, p. 53]

desminuir en los años 1880 a 1890, después de la llegada de las ovejas merino que alzaron la industria de la carne pero produjeron lana menos adecuada para tejer, y la llegada de los ferrocarriles que trajo textiles comerciales menos costosos. Los tejedores de los pueblos del norte si continuaron a trabajar adaptando sus productos a las lanas comerciales y al gusto de los turistas Anglos para dibujos de los americanos nativos. Para el 1900, una industria de tejidos se había desarrollado en los alrededores de Chimayó y el estilo de tejidos de Chimayó ha tenido gran éxito durante este siglo.

Individuos tejedores y bordadores continuaron su artesanía en otras partes de Nuevo México también. En Santa Fe, en la década de 1930, The Native Market (fundada por Leonora Curtin) dio ánimo, instrucción, materiales y mercado para artesanos tradicionales hispanos. Algunos de aquellos que participaron en este esfuerzo continuaron a tejer hasta fines de la década de 1970. (Nestor p. 53).

In the San Luis Valley of Southern Colorado, traditional textiles of fine quality flowed from the looms into the early twentieth century. And, interestingly, documented weavers include Navajo *criadas* [servants] as well as Hispanos. [Stoller, 1979, Spanish Textile Traditions, pp. 34-35, 44-48] Eventually the increasing availability of commercial fabrics and deterioration of the market for handwoven goods did result in these crafts all but disappearing in the area by the 1930's. Then, in 1935, a WPA Weaving Project began with the goal of providing employment and income for those near the bottom of the job market. Unfortunately, the project ran out of funds in 1940 and the war economy of the next decade encouraged most craftspeople to find better-paying employment. [Stoller, p. 48]

En el valle de San Luis del sur de Colorado, textiles tradicionales de calidad fina siguieron saliendo de los telares hasta principios del siglo diecinueve. Es de mucho interés que tejedoras documentadas incluyen criadas Navajo así como tejedoras hispanas. (Stoller pp. 34-35, 44-48). Con el tiempo, la oportunidad de conseguir telas comerciales y la deterioración del mercado para materiales tejidos a mano resultaron en que casi desaparecieran estos artes en la región para los 1930. Entonces, en 1935, el WPA Weaving Project empezó con el fin de proveer empleo e ingreso para aquellas sin empleo. Desafortunadamente, el proyecto quedó sin fondos en 1940 y la economía de guerra de la década siguiente animó a la mayor parte de las artesanas a buscar empleo que pagara mejor. (Stoller p. 48).

More recently, renewed public interest in handcrafts and traditional folk art has encouraged local weavers and stitchers in both Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado, and projects like those initiated by Virginia Neal Blue and Los Artes del Valle in the San Luis Valley have taught new students these skills.

Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis: the Embroideries

The *colcha* embroideries which have been created by *las artistas* since their initial inspired instruction by Sra. Orrego-Salas in 1975 are truly remarkable. Working in soft woolen yarn on cotton fabric, the women have employed a wide variety of stitches, including the *colcha*, stem, split, feather, satin, buttonhole, fly, chain, cross, Turkey, and French knot. These produce rich surface textural variations which were created in the older *colchas* simply by varying the size and direction of the same

stitch. The magic by which a row of buttonhole stitches becomes a tiny flower, a cross stitch a star, and a French knot a flower may explain the joy expressed by the women through their newly learned vocabulary.

Subject matter of the embroideries can be divided into three loosely defined categories: genre scenes, architectural records, and fantastic scenes [dream images and folktales]. Included in the first category are depictions of everyday activities remembered from childhood, such as the marvelous "Old San Acacio—1925" by Tiva Trujillo. The very soul of village life has been captured in one work, as tiny figures lasso a horse, plow fields, hoe crops, bring in the hay, and butcher a pig while the pot boils for *chicharrones*. Women visit in the street, children romp in the schoolyard, laundry is

done in a huge pot over an open fire and hung out on the line, and hot *hornos* are ready to receive the day's baking. A Penitente *morada* awaits the *Hermanos*. It is as though a day in the life of San Acacio has been frozen forever.

In other equally inspired stitcheries Mrs. Trujillo has preserved the time-honored scenes of "Plastering the Adobe," "Shearing Time," and "Going to School." An ambitious composition is her detailed "Map of the San Luis Valley."

Somewhat similar in theme to "Old San Acacio" is "El Rancho Grande," by Sostena Sandoval de Clevén. The composition includes farm animals and a child playing, while the family wash hangs on the line. The subject matter is similar to certain Navajo pictorial tapestries depicting reservation scenes, but the embroidery medium allows greater spontaneity and textural variation.

Recientemente, un interés ha surgido para los artes tradicionales y ha dado ánimo a las tejedoras del norte de Nuevo México y a las del sur de Colorado, y proyectos como los que inició Virginia Neal Blue y Los Artes del Valle en el Valle de San Luis han enseñado a artesanas principiantes los artes tradicionales.

Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis: Los Bordados

Los bordados de *colcha* que han sido creados por las artistas desde la instrucción inicial inspirado por la Sra. Orrego-Salas en 1975 son verdaderamente extraordinarios. Trabajando en tela de algodón con hilo de lana suave, las mujeres han empleado una gran variedad de puntos incluyendo el de *colcha*, tallo, el nudo francés, cadena, pluma, ojal, cruz, etc. Estos producen una superficie textural variada que habían sido creadas en las *colchas* antiguas variando el tamaño y la dirección del mismo punto. La magia que una fila de

ojales se hace florecita, un punto de cruces una estrella, y un nudo una flor explica el goce que expresan las mujeres por el vocabulario recién aprendido.

El tema de los bordados se puede dividir entre tres categorías vagamente definidas: escenas de género, registros arquitecturales, y escenas fantásticas (sueños y cuentos folclóricos). Se incluyen en la primera categoría retratos de las actividades diarias recordadas de la niñez, como el maravilloso "San Acacio Viejo—1925" de Tiva Trujillo. El alma de la vida aldeana ha sido captada en esta obra cuando las figuras pequeñas luzan un caballo, aran un campo, cavan las plantas, recogen el heno, matan un puerco mientras el perol hierve con *chicharrones*. Las mujeres visitan en la calle, los niños retozan cerca de la escuela, se lava la ropa en un perol

colocado sobre el fuego y colgado in el cordel, y los hornos están listos para recibir el pan. Una *Morada* de los penitentes espera a los *Hermanos*. Es como si un día en la vida de San Acacio ha sido congelado para siempre.

En otros bordados con la misma inspiración la Sra. Trujillo ha conservado las escenas "Enyesando el Adobe", "Esquilando", "A la Escuela". Una composición ambiciosa es su detallado "Mapa del Valle de San Luis".

Algo semejante en tema "San Acacio Viejo" es "El Rancho Grande", de Sostena Sandoval de Clevén. La composición tiene animales de rancho y un niño jugando mientras la ropa lavada esta colgada en el cordel. El tema se parece a ciertos tapices gráficos de los Navajo que retratan escenas de la "reservación", pero el medio de bordado permite mas espontaneidad y variación textural.

Other pieces which fit into this category are the timeless "Fishing on Sanchez Reservoir" by Marcella Quintana, "Potato Shed" by Tiva Trujillo, "San Luis Vega" by Tina Valdez, "The Cuts" by Patsy Garcia, and "Colorado Aggregate" by Virginia Rodriguez.

The second category of subject matter found in the *colcha* embroideries consists of the faithful and sometimes fanciful recording of historic buildings in the San Luis Valley. Founded in 1851, San Luis itself was the site of many of these. A particularly fine example is "The Valencia Hotel" by Joyce Romero. The bright, cheery colors and many different stitches delight the eye, and one would like to have known the old home as it was nearly a century ago.

An even older building, "The Don Carlos Hotel," is worked by Elsie Gallegos. Built in 1857, the hotel/supermarket/hardware store is the oldest business in Colorado and has been operated by the same family for over 120 years. This strong, enduring quality has been conveyed by the stitcher.

Ursulita Lovato has memorialized the "Costilla County Courthouse," a picturesque century-old adobe with a whimsical cupola. She must have enjoyed working the trees and sky, which have an almost Van Gogh-like quality. The architectural details of the building are more formally defined.

Margie Gurule has accepted the ambitious challenge of depicting "Old Fort Garland," now a museum. From a birdseye perspective she shows the architectural layout of the fort, while the soft browns and blues are descriptive of its dusty, isolated location.

Most of the buildings have been portrayed as they were at some point in the past; indeed, some no longer exist. Thus, there is a dream quality to the designs which is similar to that found in the genre scenes. The *artistas* are personally involved with their subjects and because of this, the viewer cares about them, too.

The third category of subject matter includes fantastic scenes of imagined or dreamed events. An example is "The Dream of Carlos Jaramillo" by Tiva Trujillo. The first panel shows Carlos in bed dreaming of a white dog. In the second panel, he is shown after having the same dream for three nights in a row. He saw the white dog at night just before he was attacked by a mysterious girl in white. In relating the story, Mrs. Trujillo stated that for the rest of his life, Carlos was "tongue-tied." [Stoller, Martin, Nelson, 1980, p. 25]

Mrs. Trujillo also produced three panels illustrating the familiar legend of "La Llorona," a sorrowing woman who drowned her own children and who lurks in the dark beside rivers and ditches to pull unwary children to their deaths. The terror of one who heard this folktale as a child is effectively conveyed. In two scenes the *colcha* stitch has been creatively used to show the swirling river current. This is truly an image seen with the "mind's eye" of the artist rather than with photographic reality.

Another theme of interest to the women is religious life. Few pieces that might fit this category have been finished, however, as the stitchers have been discouraged from producing them for the market. Among those that do exist are the more formalized *santos* and altar hangings, such as the altarpiece by Los Artes del Valle in Center, Colorado. The "Baptism of Christ" panel is easily recognized by the standard iconography, a vital aspect of religious art. The figures

Otras piezas que se pueden poner en esta categoría son "Pescando en el Depósito Sanchez" de Marcella Quintana, "Sotachado para Papas" de Tiva Trujillo, "La Vega de San Luis", de Tina Valdez, "Las Cortadas" de Patsy Garcia, y "El Conjunto Colorado" de Virginia Rodriguez.

La segunda categoría de temas que se encuentran en bordados de *colcha* consisten de registros leales y a veces fantásticos de edificios en el Valle de San Luis. Fundado en 1851 San Luis mismo fue el local de muchos de estos. Un ejemplo bastante bueno es "El Hotel Valencia" de Joyce Romero. Los colores brillantes y vivos y muchos distintos puntos son tan agradables que uno quisiera haber conocido la casa vieja como era casi un siglo pasado.

Otro edificio, aun mas antiguo, el Hotel Don Carlos, labrado por Elsie Gallegos, fue construido en 1857. El hotel-supermercado-ferreteria es el negocio mas antiguo en Colorado y ha sido manejado por la misma familia por mas de 120 años. Esta característica fuerte y durable ha sido transmitida por la cosedora.

Ursulita Lovato ha conmemorado la Casa de Corte del Condado de Costilla, un edificio pintoresco de adobe de cien años con una torre caprichosa. Ella ha de haber gozado retratando los árboles y el cielo, que tienen una cualidad parecida a la de Van Gogh. Los detalles arquitecturales están mas realmente definidos.

Margie Gurulé ha aceptado la demanda ambiciosa de retratar "El Antiguo Fort Garland" que ahora es un museo. Desde una vista de pájaro, ella muestra el plan arquitectural del fuerte, mientras los colores azules y morenos describen el local polvoso y aislado.

La mayor parte de estos edificios han sido representados como eran en un punto en el pasado; algunos ya no existen. Por lo tanto, hay una cualidad de fantasía en los diseños que son semejantes a los de las escenas de género. Los artistas están personalmente implicadas en sus temas y por esto el observador los estima también.

Los temas de tercera categoría incluyen escenas fantásticas de ocurrencias imaginadas o soñadas. Uno ejemplo es "El Sueño de Carlos Jaramillo" de Tiva Trujillo. El primer entrapaño muestra a Carlos acostado soñándose con un perro blanco, en el segundo se retrata soñando tres noches seguidas. Veía el perro blanco de noche antes de ser atacado por una muchacha misteriosa vestida de blanco. Al relatar el cuento, la Sra. Trujillo contó que por el resto de su vida, Carlos quedó mudo. ("Stoller, Martin, Nelson p. 25).

La Sra. Trujillo también produjo tres entrapaños ilustrando la leyenda de "La Llorona", una mujer angustiada que había ahogado a sus hijos y que se esconde en las oscuras orillas de los ríos y acéquias y tira de los niños incautos y los lleva a la muerte. El terror que siente el que ha oído de niño este cuento se transmite efectivamente. En dos escenas el punto de *colcha* se ha usado creativamente para mostrar los remolinos en la corriente del río. Esto es verdaderamente una imagen vista con el "ojo del espíritu" del artista mas bien que realidad fotográfica.

Otro tema de interés para las mujeres es la vida religiosa. Sin embargo, pocas piezas que constan esta categoría han sido terminadas, puesto que las cosedoras se han desanimado para producir las para vender. Entre las que existen se encuentran los *santos* y los manteles para el altar como las piezas para el altar ejecutadas por Los Artes del Valle en Center, Colorado.

are stylized in much the same manner as nineteenth century painted *santos* from northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The production of textiles for the local churches is a prime example of how folk art functions in a traditional society: altar hangings and other furnishings are often group projects and must meet with the approval of the priest and the congregation. They need not conform to the sophisticated expectations of a cosmopolitan population.

In summary, the *colcha* embroideries of *las artistas del valle* represent a highly personal expression by unsophisticated but genuinely creative women who deserve to have their work more widely known and appreciated. The scenes and events they record would perhaps be lost without their dedication and persistence.

El entrepaño "El Bautismo de Cristo" se puede conocer facilmente por iconografia normal que es un aspecto del arte religioso. Las figuras están compuestas de la misma manera que están pintados los santos del siglo diecinueve del norte de Nuevo México y del sur de Colorado.

La producción de textiles para uso de las iglesias es un buen ejemplo de como el arte del pueblo se funciona en un pueblo tradicional. Los manteles para el altar y para otros muebles a menudo son proyectos de un grupo y deben ser aprobados por el sacerdote y por los parroquianos. No es necesario que conformen con los gustos de la población urbana o cosmopolita.

En resumen, los bordados de colcha de las artistas del valle representan una expresión personal verdaderamente creativa, sin instrucción, que merecen que su obra se conozca ampliamente y

The Woven Textiles

Unlike the embroideries, which are largely a recent development rather than directly related in subject matter or technique to the traditional *colchas*, woven textiles in the San Luis Valley are a legacy of the nineteenth century Rio Grande tradition. Many of the weavers now active there have roots in the Chimayo tradition, which developed around the turn of the century from the late Rio Grande styles in response to the commercial demand for "tourist" or curio items. Chimayo design systems were planned to look "Southwestern": the materials were commercial wool yarn and often commercial cotton warp, and the shapes and sizes changed to function as pillow covers, runners, jackets, and area rugs.

Eppie Archuleta, an expert weaver from the Valley, is the daughter of well-known weaver Agueda Martinez of Medanales, New Mexico. Their designs include Chimayo,

que sea apreciada. Las escenas y las ocurrencias que retratan tal vez se perderian sin la persistencia y la dedicación de estas artistas.

Los Textiles Tejidos

Diferente a los bordados, que son acontecimientos recientes y no directamente relacionados a las colchas tradicionales en tema o técnica, los textiles tejidos en el Valle de San Luis son legado de la tradición del Rio Grande del siglo diecinueve. Muchos de los tejedores activos allí hoy día tienen orígenes en la tradición de Chimayó que se desarrolló a fines del siglo pasado de los últimos modelos del Rio Grande en reacción a la demanda comercial para curiosidades para turistas. Los diseños de Chimayó fueron concebidos para que parecieran "Southwestern" (del sudoeste), los materiales eran de hilo de lana y a menudo hilo de algodón comercial. Las formas y tamaños cambiaban para que se usaran de fundas, de correderas, chaquetas y de pisos.

old Rio Grande, and Navajo styles. Mrs. Archuleta has made a conscious effort to reproduce the technically demanding old Rio Grande designs, and her success is evident in several beautiful pieces. Her finely woven renditions of the famous Navajo Two Grey Hills designs also show her skill. Mrs. Archuleta sometimes spins and dyes her own wool with native plants but otherwise uses commercial wool yarn. Her rag rugs are woven with brightly colored strips of cloth on dyed cotton warps. This continues a tradition which began with the brown and white *jerga* carpet and gradually evolved after contact with Anglo settlers from the East into the rag rug. Instead of simple bands and stripes, her rugs are embellished with colorful "Saltillo" motifs from the Old Rio Grande blankets.

Eppie Archuleta, experta tejedora del Valle, es hija de Agueda Martinez, tejedora bien conocida de Medanales, Nuevo México. Sus dibujos constan de los de Chimayó, del Río Grande antiguo, y de los estilos de los Navajó. La Sra. Archuleta ha tratado de reproducir la técnica exigente de los diseños del Rio Grande antiguo y su éxito se ve en varias piezas hermosas. Sus versiones tejidas de los diseños famosos de Navajo Two Grey Hills (Las Dos Lomas Morenas del Navajó), también muestran su artesanía. La Sra. Archuleta a veces hila y tiñe su lana con plantas nativas pero por otra parte emplea lana hilada comercialmente. Sus tapetes de trapo son tejidos con tiras de tela de colores vivos en urdimbre de algodón. Esto sigue una tradición que comenzó con *jerga* morena y blanca y poco a poco se desarrolló después de haber contacto con los pobladores Anglos del este de los Estados Unidos. En vez de tiras, sus tapetes están adornados

Mrs. Archuleta has also created a small pictorial, "La Señora del Socorro," which can be seen as a descendant of a few known Rio Grande pictorials and the pictorial Saltillo *sarape* [one fine example analyzed by the author featured horses' heads]. A somewhat parallel pictorial tradition has been developed by Navajo weavers beginning in the 1860's [or earlier] and continuing to the present day. [D.E. Boyd, 1970, pp. 10, 18] Navajo women have skillfully depicted everything from Kleenex boxes and American Flags to the insignia of the Apollo Space Program. In this century, Chimayó weavers have continued to weave pictorials, and Mrs. Archuleta's work seems most closely related to these pieces.

con motivos de colores de Saltillo de las mantas del antiguo Río Grande.

La Sra. Archuleta también ha creado una pintura, "La Señora del Socorro" que se puede ver como descendiente de los retratos conocidos del Río Grande, y de los sarapes de Saltillo. Una tradición de representación poco conocida se ha desarrollado por los tejedores Navajó desde el principio de los 1860 (o mas temprano) y ha continuado hasta el presente (D.E. Boyd, pp. 10-18). Las mujeres Navajo han representado hábilmente desde cajas de Kleenex a banderas norteamericanas, hasta la insignia del Apollo Space Program (D.E. Boyd, pp. 10-18). En este siglo los tejedores de Chimayó han seguido tejiendo retratos, y la obra de la Sra. Archuleta se parece mas a estas piezas.

A particularly well-done piece by Nora Quintana is partly based on a strong design woven about 1875 by a Navajo *criada* [servant] in Abiqui. [Illus. Spanish Textile Tradition, p. 120] This typifies the complicated interchange between the Navajo and Hispanic weavers throughout the past three centuries. The colors are wisely limited to dark, light and warm grey, and deep red.

Clearly, the weavers of the Valley have been influenced by twentieth century "Chimayó style" traditions. The pieces are designed to appeal to a market primarily outside of the Valley, and most sizes tend to be fairly small so that prices can be affordable. They are woven with great care and technical skill.

Yet, the weavers are aware of Rio Grande textile traditions of the past century and are

making conscious efforts to learn the old patterns and some of the old technology. Eppie Archuleta spins some of her own wool on a spinning wheel and dyes it with native vegetal dyes in big pots outdoors. A growing public appreciation of historic Hispanic textiles has created a market among collectors for contemporary work in handspun, vegetal dyed wool in the old patterns.

In the nineteenth century San Luis Valley, textiles of varying quality were probably woven in nearly every household until the 1880's. The handspun woolen blankets were very warm. *Jerga* and *sabanilla* were good for many uses, and probably were produced until imported commercial fabrics replaced them. These textiles were made for use within the local community and for trade to the miners and other Anglos nearby. They were woven in the styles and sizes deemed appropriate by the local people.

Today, however, most of the woven and embroidered textiles created by *las artistas del valle* have a decorative or expressive function rather than a practical one. They are not made for local use but rather for an anonymous market outside the valley and they pass through several hands before ending up in unknown places. Fortunately, some of the work has stayed within the Valley as an inspiration to craftspeople of the future. The San Luis Cultural Center retains a collection of ten embroideries of local scenes, and *Los Artes del Valle* in Center is a source of encouragement to weavers. Hopefully exhibits such as "Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis" will widen public exposure to and understanding of the very special arts which have recently been flowering in the San Luis Valley of Colorado. ◆

Una pieza muy bien hecha por Nora Quintana está basada en parte en un dibujo tejido hacia el año 1875 por una criada Navajo en Abiqui. (Ilustrado La Tradición Textil Española). Esto es típico del intercambio entre los tejedores hispanos y los Navajo durante los últimos tres siglos. Los Colores están limitados a oscuros, claros, grises y rojos.

Está claro que las tradiciones del estilo de Chimayó del siglo veinte han tenido influjo en los tejedores del Valle. Las piezas se han dibujado con el motivo de placer el gusto de compradores fuera del Valle, y tienden a ser pequeños para que los precios se mantengan bajos. Son tejidos con mucho cuidado y arte técnico.

Pero los tejedores saben las tradiciones textiles del Río Grande del siglo pasado y

tratan de aprender los modelos viejos y algo de la tecnología vieja. El aprecio del público de los textiles hispánicos históricos que sigue aumentando ha creado un mercado entre colectores de obras contemporáneas tejidas a mano, de lana teñida con plantas y con los modelos viejos.

En el Valle de San Luis del siglo diecinueve, textiles de varias cualidades probablemente se tejían en muchos de los hogares hasta los 1880. Las mantas de lana hechas de lana eran muy calorosas. La *jerga* y *sabanilla* servían para muchas cosas y probablemente las hicieron hasta que las telas importadas las reemplazaron. Estos textiles se hacían para usarse en la comunidad y para el comercio. Eran tejidos en los estilos y tamaños determinados propios para el uso del lugar.

Sin embargo, hoy día la mayor parte de los textiles bordados y tejidos creados

por las artistas del Valle tienen función de adorno y de expresión artística mas bien que una práctica.

Estas obras no se hacen para el uso local sino para un mercado anónimo fuera del Valle y pasan por varias manos antes de parar en lugares desconocidos. Afortunadamente algunas de las obras se han quedado en el Valle y sirven de inspiración para los artesanos del porvenir. El Centro Cultural de San Luis retiene una colección de diez bordados de escenas locales y Los Artes del Valle en Center sirven de fuente para el ánimo de los tejedores. Ojalá que exposiciones como la de Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis extiendan el conocimiento del pueblo de unos artes especiales que recientemente han estado floreciendo en el Valle de San Luis de Colorado. ◆

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The Arvada Center is one of the few complete cultural centers found in a city of its size in the United States. It is designed to be both a comfortable and an exhilarating environment; a place where artists meet to exhibit and perform and the public gathers to explore the arts and the humanities.

Las Artistas del Valle de San Luis is a program we are delighted to present in our 1982 season. The revival of weaving and embroidery in the San Luis Valley represents a deep commitment within those communities to nourish the arts and preserve our cultural heritage. The goals which they strive for are ones which the Arvada Center is dedicated to, and so, we are particularly proud to be part of sustaining their efforts.

Bringing *Las Artistas* to completion has required the hard work of many people. The Project Director, Paula Duggan, and I would like to express our appreciation to them all: the artists of the Valley; Kathryn Nelson, with special gratitude for her dedication and advocacy in this project; those individuals who have generously loaned pieces for the exhibition; the volunteers and staff who helped to organize and promote it, among them Jane Kepford, Ted Vogel, Kim Roush, Carol Crow, and Peggy Reagan; the scholars who assisted us; Dorothy Boyd Bowen and Dr. Marianne Stoller who contributed articles, with an added thanks to Dr. Stoller for her guidance throughout; the translators Dr. Marcella Lucero, and Mary Choury; the community resources and friends here and in the Valley who have encouraged us; and the City of Arvada and the Arvada Arts Council which support us.

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