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Land Rich, Cash Poor: Hispanic Subsistence Agri-Culture on Acequia Farms of Northern New Mexico, 1880-1950s

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ABSTRACT

Acequia-based agriculture in Hispanic northern New Mexico originated with the arrival of settlers from the central valley of Mexico in the late sixteenth century and later following the Camino Real into the upper Río Grande and its tributaries. The high desert environment required irrigation for food production and economic survival. Land parcels in the rural villages of northern New Mexico were small, and crop yields were limited to home consumption on a subsistence basis, an economy that lasted well into the territorial period and statehood of New Mexico. Despite a wage economy introduced with the arrival of the railroad around 1880 and intensified by rural outmigration in the aftermath of World War II, subsistence agriculture in many Hispanic villages persisted into the 1950s. Today, the descendant families hold onto the land base of the ancestors for the heritage and lifestyle values more so than for monetary benefits, a connection that also maintains the original values of mutuality and interdependence among neighbors in the community.

Why 1880 & the 1950s?

1880: Arrival of the Railroad. Prior to this date, most Hispanic New Mexicans relied on subsistence agriculture for economic survival. Occupations in other fields were limited. The railroad provided access to outside markets as well as wage employment in new industries, introducing a cash economy for the purchase of farm equipment and household goods.

1950s: Aftermath of World War II. The war period took New Mexicans to urban centers for military training or as wage employees in wartime industries. The end of the war resulted in outmigration from rural villages, leaving farm and ranch operations to elders in the family. Off-farm employment increased significantly after the war and gradually replaced subsistence agriculture as the norm.

Special Note: The terms "rural" and "village" are used throughout to emphasize that Hispanic subsistence agriculture prevailed at these locations and not in the towns and larger cities of New Mexico where occupations and economic activity were more diversified. Examples of communities engaged in subsistence agriculture include the valley areas of Peñasco, Taos, Embudo-Dixon, lower and upper Chama, Española, Pojoaque-Nambé, upper Pecos, Río Gallina, Mora, and others.

Land, water, and culture…past, present, and future. For most of New Mexico's early history, natural resources use, and subsistence agriculture dominated as the basis of economic production. Prior to 1598, indigenous people sustained their communities by living off resources on the land, whether as hunter gatherers or as desert farmers dependent on run-off irrigation and intermittent flows in creeks and arroyos. Next, coming up the Camino Real in 1598 were waves of Spanish-Mexican settlers from central Mexico initially bent on the discovery of gold and other minerals but finding none they resorted to farming and livestock herding as the primary economic base. Conditions of aridity in the northern frontiers of Nueva España required a high level of self-sufficiency among *pobladores* (settlers) who petitioned for and were issued grants of land to establish colonies along the upper Río Grande and its tributaries. From the start, the pobladores developed an agropastoral economy growing crops on small parcels of arable land and using adjacent forests and rangeland to raise sheep, goats, and cattle.

For crop agriculture to flourish, *acequias* (ditches) were hand-dug on the landscape as the earliest public works in the fledgling New Mexico province. The high desert climate required irrigation to grow newly introduced crop varieties from Europe such as wheat, barley, millet, oats, sorghum, and fruit trees, along with leaf, stem and root vegetable crops. For domesticated animals, the settlers also brought cattle, oxen, horses, mules, donkeys, sheep, cattle, goats, pigs, and chickens. Construction of acequias depended on collective action by the pobladores with labor as their primary investment. In a typical case, the Alcalde of the jurisdiction would approve the petition for land, conduct a possession ceremony at the designated location, and in the final step, instruct the newcomers to build a plaza, open ditches, and perform other work for the common welfare. By placing the petitioners in possession of the grant, they acquired status as landowners and were free to organize a *consejo de vecinos* (town council of neighbors) and set up rules for the sharing of resources. As to irrigation practices, the settlers adopted a hybrid model drawn in part from cases observed among the Pueblo Indians and melded with the Iberian-Islamic traditions imported to the Americas.

For ordinary people, money was in short supply due to isolation from markets further south in Zacatecas, Guadalajara, and the central valley of Mexico. Goods required for survival had to be produced locally, whether for home consumption, for bartering with other *vecinos* (citizen neighbors) or in more limited amounts, for exporting outside the region. The farm-ranch economy in the rural jurisdictions persisted into territorial New Mexico following U.S conquest and occupation in 1846, and two years later, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848. Around 1880, the introduction of the railroad in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado began a process of industrialization based on wage labor in mining, timbering, railroad construction, and

commercialized agriculture. Rail transportation enabled large ranch and cattle companies to ship livestock to eastern markets in larger quantities and more profitably than in the past. Investors, land speculators, and other unscrupulous outsiders, with support from the Anglo-American legal system, grabbed control of the *ejidos* (land grant commons), resources that Hispanic subsistence farmers had relied on for access to wood supply, hunting, and the grazing of livestock. In 1887 the territorial assembly of New Mexico authorized the incorporation of irrigation companies, permitting individuals and other capital investors to construct reservoirs, canals, or pipelines and provide water for commercial-scale agriculture. Small-scale ranches and subsistence farms continued alongside the new industries, but many of the younger adults left the area for seasonal, low-wage jobs to acquire cash for the purchase of goods to continue farm operations and for household necessities.

Many of the wage-based occupations were either seasonal, hazardous or both. In times of layoffs, injuries from work, or illnesses, vecinos banded together and organized mutual aid societies to raise funds and assist neighbors in need. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, New Mexico was still a frontier, mostly with a few small towns serving as trade centers, each surrounded by dozens of outlying farm and ranch villages and no municipal services or other forms of governmental assistance. The villagers were subsistence farmers with limited access to cash resources, and the majority spoke only Spanish, the native language. A strong sense of attachment to "*nuestro pueblo*" (our community) instilled a mutual obligation and willingness to take care of needs locally through cooperative associations known as *sociedades mutualistas* (mutual aid societies). Should a neighbor who was ill or injured on the job need help in harvesting of crops or other chores, people from the surrounding area pitched in to do the work. Monetary assistance included a local form of unemployment benefits for society members during periods of illness as well as a burial fund to assist widows and orphans left as dependents. These benefits predated social security and other programs of the New Deal or public welfare by the State. At the time, there were no income-maintenance programs, no workman's compensation, and no social security pensions, as came later during and after the Great Depression. In some communities, vecinos organized literary and debate societies to enlighten and educate the members, most of whom had not completed high school. Topics debated at society meeting halls often related to the agricultural economy of the times, as in the examples: "What would yield more on a man's farmland, planting all of it in wheat or oats, or all in corn?" "Which animal produces more, cows or sheep?" "How can a man work his ranch better, with a team of horses or with a tractor?"

During the depression era of the 1930s, families held on to their land and avoided the economic hardships experienced in the cities and urban areas of the country. Landholdings varied in size county to county, but irrigable parcels set along narrow valleys typically were limited to about six acres or less, too small for commercialized agriculture but adequate for subsistence farming that produced staples for home consumption: pinto beans, peas, onions, turnips, radishes, potatoes, melons, chile, squash, corn, as well as other grains and vegetables. A few farms supported peach, apricot, pear and apples trees. Wild fruits in the diet included *moras* (berries), *ciruela* (plums) and *capulín* (choke cherries). Other edible native plants were *quelites* (lamb's quarters), and *verdolagas* (purslane) along with piñon nuts gathered at nearby mesas when in season. Cash crops were mostly non-existent. Wheat was taken to the village *molino* (an acequia hydro-powered grist mill) for grinding into flour in villages where they were still in

operation, a vestige from the late nineteenth when hundreds had been built throughout northcentral New Mexico. Many families also had access to grazing lands in the summers to support horses, sheep, goats, and cattle. Chickens were kept near the household to supply eggs and occasionally for meat. Villagers who had left to work in jobs elsewhere and had been laid off returned to "*el rancho*," their place of origin, and some found employment in the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the 1930s and early 1940s. Others signed up for work relief projects of the New Deal such as the Civilian Conservation Corps camp at El Rito and other sites where they engaged in land and water conservation projects.

Near the end of the Great Depression came World War II. The aftermath in 1946-1950, a period of national economic recovery, was another game changer much like arrival of the railroad in 1880. This time, many acequia-based villages lost population as part of outmigration to centers of employment such as Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Pueblo, Denver, or to work in the mines of Colorado, Utah, or Arizona. Mostly, the out-migrants were younger adults who left the family farms that could no longer support all members of the household. Many residents from northern New Mexico left for Wyoming for employment in the Union Pacific Railroad in Cheyenne or as seasonal herders at sheep camps in the Laramie area, a process that later came to be called "The Manito Trail." In a typical pattern, once a family member obtained employment in Cheyenne, other relatives followed and were provided a place to stay until they also found permanent jobs. Others in the village found jobs closer to home by working at sugar beet and onion farms in the Rocky Ford-La Junta area of Colorado, and at the end of the harvest season, they returned to the family rancho in New Mexico. By the late 1940s, most adults were fully bilingual in native Spanish and English learned in school, the first generation from rural villages of New Mexico to do so. Those who had served in the military took advantage of the G.I. Bill, enrolled in colleges and universities, and after graduation moved on and began careers in professions such as teaching and law.

During the 1950s, the elders continued the farm and ranch operations and received income support from pensions or state welfare programs. For subsistence, they had a few chickens, a milk cow or two, a team of horses for plowing the fields, dozens of sheep for wool and mutton, as well as a small herd of cattle for sale at the auction or to buyers who came around at the end of the grazing season. Irrigated fields produced oats, wheat, alfalfa, and pasture grass as feed stock for animals. Closer to the home, just below the acequia, village families maintained a *huerta* for growing crops intended for home consumption: corn, peas, beans, chile, squash and other vegetables. Nearby was a small *arboleda* or tree orchard of apples, pears, apricots, and peaches. When piñon nuts were in season at nearby mesas, those too were harvested for home consumption or selling to local stores. Farm chores were done by members of the extended family with help from other kin or neighbors. Most of the younger adults held off-farm jobs as bus drivers for local schools, maintenance personnel for county governments or the State Highway Department, construction workers in the urban centers, agricultural labor in commercial farms, or they joined crews to fight fires in regional forests. Others went off to college in nearby cities or worked as office employees at the State Capitol in Santa Fe. Even after relocating to places of employment, parents and kids made frequent trips to their home base on weekends or summers to check up on the elders, often describing these destinations as "*el país*," a cultural term similar to "*patria chica*," meaning the place, pueblo, or region where one was born.

From among those who remained in the home villages, a few earned supplemental income by working in cottage industries such as weaving, or in the production of tinworks, jewelry, folk art, and wood-crafts pieces. Much as before, proceeds from farming and ranching were not sufficient to earn a full-time living, but some of the assets continued to return income when cash purchases were required. These costs ranged from the acquisition of farm equipment to the costs of supporting youth to stay in school, earn high school diplomas, and help them move to regional cities and pursue employment opportunities. As late as the 1950s, money in Hispanic households was counted in Spanish *reales* and *pesos*. Saving accounts in banking institutions were few as were the taking out of mortgage loans that would place liens on the ancestral properties, a risk that was not acceptable to most families. Per capita income in many rural counties of New Mexico remained among the lowest in the country. Often, government agencies described these counties as "pockets of persistent rural poverty." Not taken into consideration, however, was the fact that homes and arable lands were often mortgage free. Savings took the form of other assets. When cash was needed for household emergencies or other reasons, neighbors from the area could be counted on to purchase a steer or buy a load of hay bales, and in some cases, trade for items they wanted to liquidate. Livestock holdings served as tradable commodities or sources of cash, providing a level of financial security more so than relying on crops susceptible to periodic droughts. In addition, labor exchanges also saved on the family budget when relatives in the extended family and neighbors joined to help brand calves, shear sheep, or load up and stack hay bales to store them as winter feed for livestock. When the elders from the 1950s passed on or retired, the land, water rights, the ancestral home, along with other assets, were handed down as inheritance. By around 1960, off-farm employment had increased significantly, and subsistence agriculture for all practical purposes came to an end.

Today, most acequia farms and ranches are valued for their heritage and lifestyle values more so than for monetary benefits. Irrigated parcels most often are too small to farm on a commercial scale. Farming and ranching continue as part-time enterprises. Still, some operators manage to grow specialty crops that have local and regional markets, such as chile, blue corn, fava beans, asparagus, cucumbers, melons, and organic vegetables to be sold at grower's markets in Santa Fe, Taos, Los Alamos, Española, Las Vegas, Albuquerque or at roadside stands. Acequia organic farming and the production of heirloom crops continue on the rise as *parciantes* demonstrate that the cultivation of locally grown food can help sustain a land-based culture while at the same time promote sustainability of resources and local food security. For ranch operations, some families retain small herds of cattle since they can be pastured in the mountains during the summer months at low cost and fed alfalfa bales in the winter harvested on irrigated parcels owned by the family. Beef in the family freezer is also common and can be supplemented with deer and elk meat after hunting season is over in the nearby mountains. Cattle remain as perennial assets that can be turned into cash from one day to the next. In times of drought, as much as half of the small herd can be sold to lessen the impact of a reduced hay crop season to season, retaining only the breeder cows if necessary. When dry spells subside, the newborn calves will remain on-farm until they also mature as breeders. Water rights add to the value of ancestral land since rights to water are generally attached to arable land and can be passed down through inheritance unless sold to outside parties. For these and a multitude of other reasons, acequia organizations currently are involved in a campaign to defend water rights and put them to beneficial use by irrigating their fields as has been the practice over the generations. The best

way to protect their water rights, they say, is to maintain the Agri-Cultural traditions of the ancestors. In so doing, they will at the same time preserve their centuries-old attachment to the land, what acequia families call "*Querencia*."

The strong attachment to the land persists throughout the rural counties of northern New Mexico. In acequia culture, connections with a geographic locale are an integral part of individual as well as a collective identity. Everyone is "from a place." When two persons meet and introduce themselves, invariably the next question of mutual interest is: "*De dónde eres*?" ("Where are you from?") Often the acequia delineates the physical boundaries of the community; thus, many acequias bear the name of the locality itself, as in *La Acequia de Corrales*. Others pinpoint an interesting natural feature, such as *La Acequia del Monte* at Talpa, *La Acequia del Bosque* at Embudo, and the *Acequia Madre del Llano Largo* on the Río Santa Barbara near Peñasco. Still others identify family surnames with longtime connection to the ditch and the community: *Acequia de los Chávez*, *Acequia El Llano de Abeyta*, *Acequia de los Duranes*, *Acequia de Tío Borrego*, *Acequia del Finado Francisco Martínez*, and scores of others. At the time of the annual *limpia* (ditch cleaning ritual), parciantes renew their attachment to the locality, assuring the continuance of place for yet another cycle of irrigation and community antiquity. On ditch cleaning day, it is not uncommon to see relatives who relocated to distant cities return to their home village to help the elders clean out the acequia. Some city dwellers who still own property back home often opt to not sell out, and they routinely pay the county taxes even though they are not receiving economic benefits from the land. They hold on to their parcels in hopes of someday retiring from work in the city and moving back to the place from where they came.

Thus far, we have discussed the past and the present. What about the future of acequia community life? The pressures of economic modernity, urbanization, active water markets and the effects of climate change work against small-scale farming and ranching. Tensions between the commodity value of water and the community value surfaced decades ago and have escalated under conditions of increased water scarcity. Often, agricultural uses of water are viewed as strategic reserves that can be tapped for "higher value" uses such as for industry, municipalities, recreation, and tourism. In New Mexico, water is a commodity that can be bought and sold in the marketplace like any other private property. Water transfers out of acequia agriculture have occurred in the past and can reappear anytime if the price is right. In response, the acequia movement in New Mexico has launched a robust campaign to defend local water rights by organizing workshops on how to defend against water transfers. They also educate policymakers and government agencies about the social, cultural, and environmental values of acequia-based agriculture. Most acequias utilize earthen canals to flood irrigate fields, a method that produces non-market benefits for society: acequias recharge the aquifer and generate return flow to the river for uses downstream; acequias increase biodiversity of plants and provide habitats for wildlife within the riparian zone and along the ditch-banks. Unlike center-pivot and other irrigation methods in commercial farms, acequia farmers utilize gravity flow to distribute water to the fields, a technology that does not require pumping of groundwater nor consumption of fossil fuels. Water is diverted into acequia canals only in seasons when there is sufficient flow in the river.

Another community value has to do with the cooperative nature of village life and rituals that reinforce mutuality and interdependence among the vecinos. The custom of water sharing in times of shortages builds mutual trust and bonds the community, as does the mobilization of communal labor during the annual cleaning of the ditch. Reciprocity, mutualism, and other forms of social capital enable neighbors to mobilize energy and resources for the common good when other problems arise. In recent years, valuation studies of acequia ecosystem services along with system dynamics modeling of community resilience have documented a wide array of social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits associated with acequia agriculture. Strong connections to land, place and the acequia, coupled with long held values of traditions, family, and community, have been found to rank higher than accumulation of material wealth. For centuries, the agropastoral economy has linked people and water to land and community, a connection that has made acequia agriculture sustainable. Taken together, if we add up all the benefits, the answer is clear: the community value of water is worth protecting, not only for acequia parciantes but for other water stakeholders and society as a whole. Money alone is not sufficient to reproduce comparable outcomes.

Personal Memories: In the next section, I relate a brief case study of my family from Mora County, New Mexico, in context of the farm and ranch economy of the 1950s with a focus on Grandfather José Dulcineo Rivera and his brother, my Tío Marino Rivera.

The Rivera Family of El Llano del Coyote--Rainsville

The story of the Rivera family from El Llano del Coyote starts with José Ramón Ribera and his wife, María Josefa Sisneros. Born in the Española Valley west of the Sangre de Cristo mountains, Ramón and Josefa lived among other members of the extended family who resided in places such as Alcalde, Los Luceros, Plaza de la Soledad, Villita, and La Joya (now Velarde). When the resources of the valley were not sufficient to support the growing population, the young couple moved to the Mora Valley where they acquired property in Guadalupita along the Río del Coyote and at the nearby Laguna Negra. Later Ramón Ribera established a land claim at Rincón de La Jara, a mesa downstream of the creek past Lucero. He left one of his sons in charge of La Jara, Rómolo Rivera, and returned to Guadalupita where he served as a Mora County Commissioner in 1881-82 and again from 1891-92. He is widely remembered in the family as the pioneer from Alcalde who crossed the Sangre de Cristo Mountains over to the eastern slopes and brought the Riveras to Guadalupita and El Llano del Coyote (now Rainsville). El Llano del Coyote was so named since it is the most downstream land area of the Río del Coyote after the river traverses a narrow canyon that opens into a *llano* or broad plain that can be irrigated by diverting water onto both banks of the river. This feature made the land highly suitable for irrigated agriculture and for raising of livestock. Most families who settled in the Llano del

Coyote were both irrigation farmers (growing crops) and livestock ranchers (sheep, goats, and cattle).

Rómolo Rivera stayed in Llano del Coyote, and married into the Mascareñas family, Francisca Mascareñas Lucero, member of one of the largest landowner families in the area. Rómolo and Francisca had two sons: José Dulcineo Rivera (1882-1958) and Marino Rivera (1887-1971). Rómolo died in 1890 at the young of 39, but before passing, he had purchased additional property from Marina Herrera, widow to Chino de Dios Herrera, at 640 acres. There was also family land in Rainsville acquired by Francisca Lucero, Rómolo's widow, from her mother, Cecilia Mascareñas de Lucero. Rómolo's two surviving sons, Dulcineo and Marino, ultimately inherited the property, one on each side of the Río del Coyote: Dulcineo on the *la banda del sur* and Marino on the *banda del norte*. To water the fields, Rainsville was irrigated by the *Acequia de la Comunidad*, with a lateral on each side: *Acequia del Lado Sur*, and *Acequia del Lado Norte*. As a *parciante* (ditch member), Dulcineo was entitled to *dos derechos de agua* (two water rights) taken from the *Acequia del Lado Sur*.

My great uncle, Marino Rivera, married Rosa Cruz (1894-1983) who was from a family of sheep growers at Cañada Bonita, near Ocaté. They had many children: Adela, Marina, Adelaida, Antonio Francisco, Frances, Mildred, Priscilla, Elsie, Dora, and Henry. All the children grew up in Rainsville where the girls and boys helped with chores of the rancho especially with the sheep, cattle, and horses, and they also irrigated the alfalfa fields and other crops. Tío Marino had more than 300 sheep and cows. According to the acequia records, he owned three to four *derechos de agua* off the *Acequia del Lado Norte* to irrigate 286 yards and for this reason was very active in the operations and governance of the ditch. For major repairs at the diversion upstream, *la presa*, Tío Marino frequently contributed a team of horses, a wagon and fresno, rocks, bags of cement, and other materials. During the early 1950s he was elected as a *Comisionado* (*secretario* and *tesorero*) of the *Acequia del Lado Norte*, and later from 1958-1961 he served as the *Mayordomo* (ditch superintendent). He worked the land all of his life with basic tools, draft horses, *escrepas*, and *carros de caballo* (horse-drawn wagons), and in his later years he owned a tractor, hay baling equipment, and drove a pickup truck.

Grandfather Dulcineo Rivera and Grandmother Margarita Gilday (1887-1966) also raised their family in Rainsville. They had six children: Abelina, Mariquita (1910-1993), Rómolo II, my father Ambrosio Cornelio (1917-2013), Bernarda and Silviano. Tío Silviano, died from injuries he sustained during a horse accident when he was twelve years old. Dulcineo and his brother Marino were sheep, goat and cattle growers and grazed their livestock at the La Jara mesa in the summer on shared property. Grandfather Dulcineo owned about 75 sheep and goats, a small herd of cattle, and a milk cow or two. Even though each brother had his own ranch, they exchanged labor and conducted many ranch operations together such as cattle branding and sheep shearing. My cousin Wilfred and I used to help herd the sheep into the corral on Tío Marino’s property to remove the burrs from their wool, brand them, and dock the tails from the lambs. After shearing, Grandfather Dulcineo and Uncle Marino took the wool to McArthur's General Store and Warehouse in Wagon Mound. Once in town, they used the proceeds to buy clothing and other dry goods to take back to Rainsville for use during the rest of the summer. Calves and steers were often sold on the hoof to livestock buyers and at auctions. Mutton was a regular meat for the dinner table as were eggs at breakfast from the *gallinero* (chicken coop). These farm and ranch products made for survival of both Rivera families during the depression

years of the 1930s. During the late 1940s, after World War II, most of the younger adults left for employment opportunities outside the region in mining towns or urban centers of the Southwest.

Grandfather Dulcineo was a true subsistence farmer-rancher into the 1950s, the last generation in my family to live this way. I was 12 and 13 years old when I witnessed him struggle to eke out a living from the land and what he could make it produce. During the drought of the middle 1950s, I remember Grandfather Dulcineo lamenting the lack of water to nourish his alfalfa fields and the *milpas* of corn. As he kicked the dry earth out in the open fields, creating a swirl of dust, he warned: "*el mundo se está secando*" (the earth is drying up). I observed "*Granpa*," as we called him, plowing fields with his team of draft horses; planting corn, oats, peas, squash and other crops; weeding the milpa of corn; irrigating his parcel of native grass and alfalfa; cutting alfalfa with a mower pulled by horses; raking the alfalfa into rows to be gathered into *montones* (small mounds) with pitchforks and from there loaded into a horse-drawn wagon to a large pile near the corrals. He also mobilized vecinos to help shear the sheep early in the summer. After the shearing, my cousin Wilfred and I entered a huge gunny sack hanging inside a corral shed, and once inside we jumped up and down to pack the wool before Granpa and Tío Marino transported the wool to Wagon Mound. I remember that Wilfred and I went with them one summer, and Granpa bought each of us a western shirt and a hat.

Off and on during the rest of the summer, Wilfred and I tended to Grandfather's flock of sheep in the summer up in the *llano* (grazing land) on a hill not far from the house and helped him with other chores. To gather firewood that would be needed once winter arrived, Granpa hitched up the draft horses to a wagon and drove them to La Jara mesa to load the wagon with trunks of trees and branches. Wilfred and I helped Granpa fill up the wagon, and on the way back, when approaching steep gullies, he instructed us to apply wooden brakes onto the rear wagon wheels by pulling a rope hitched onto a pulley. For Grandmother Margarita Gilday, we chopped firewood, fed her chickens, milked the cow, and carried pails of drinking water from the *noria* (outside well) for use in the house. She prepared all meals in a wood-burning stove. For starter fuel, she had us gather *palitos* (sticks) from the wood pile to be used as kindling. Grandmother's house had electricity but no running water nor indoor plumbing. In the winter, she and Granpa used wood heaters to warm up the house in the early morning before we awoke. For the bathroom, we all used an outhouse as a shared facility, appropriately called "*el común*." Grandfather Dulcineo died in 1958, followed by Grandmother Margarita in 1966, sadly marking the end of an era.

PHOTO GALLERY

Below are photographs collected for use, among others, in "El Agua es Vida-Acequias in New Mexico," Exhibition at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, May 2014-June 2015. Curators for the exhibition included Devorah Romanek, Sylvia Rodríguez, José Rivera, Quita Ortiz, and Elise Trott. Exhibition funding was provided by the National Science Foundation and the Center for Regional Studies at the University of New Mexico under an NSF grant to the New Mexico Water Resources Research Institute at New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Title: LA CANOA ELEVADA: Trough of hollowed log, elevated on log structure. - La Cienega Acequia, Truchas Molino at Rancho de las Golondrinas, Santa Fe County.
Creator(s): Stupich, Martin, creator. Date Created/Published: 2007

Title: Wheat field on Spanish-American farm near Holman, New Mexico
Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer
Date Created/Published: 1939 Sept.

Title: Spanish-American woman removing baked bread from oven farm near Taos, New Mexico. Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer
Date Created/Published: 1939 Sept.

Title: Vegetables and fruits canned by Farm Security Administration (FSA) client near Taos, New Mexico.
Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer
Date Created/Published: 1939 Sept.

Title: Handmade tools of Spanish-American farmer at Chamisal, New Mexico. The axe was made by welding two automobile spring leaves together and then sharpening; the dagger was filed down from a piece of automobile spring leaf and inserted in the bone handle.
Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer

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Title: Chamisal, New Mexico. Spanish-American farmers loading a horse drawn alfalfa mower onto a truck.
Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer
Date Created/Published: 1940 July.

Title: Spanish-American Farm Security Administration client
picking chili peppers in her garden, Taos County, New Mexico.
Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, Photographer. Date Created/Published: 1939 Sept.

Title: Los Cordovas (vicinity), Taos County, New Mexico. Feeding stock on Blas Chavez's ranch.
Creator(s): Collier, John, 1913-1992, photographer. Date Created/Published: 1943 Feb.

Title: Corn and beans are grown by the Spanish-Americans at Chamisal, New Mexico. Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer

Title: Spanish-American woman washing wool in irrigation ditch, Chamisal, New Mexico. Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer

Title: Spanish-American farmer irrigating his wheat field, Rodarte, New Mexico. Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, Photographer. Date Created/Published: 1940 July.

Title: Threshing wheat near Questa, New Mexico
Creator(s): Lee, Russell, 1903-1986, photographer
Date Created/Published: 1939 Sept.

Village of El Cerrito, San Miguel County, New Mexico.
Photograph by Irving Rusinow 10 April 1941 - 16 April 1941

Photograph by Irving Rusinow 10 April 1941 - 16 April 1941

During his study of El Cerrito in the early 1940s, Rusinow described the village as a land pocket cut of the mesa by the Pecos River. The staple crops in El Cerrito, he wrote, are corn, beans, and alfalfa. Almost everything is grown on irrigated land although there are a few fields on the mesa where a certain amount of dry farming is carried on. Alfalfa produces more feed per acre than any other plant and for this reason more than half the irrigated land is devoted to this crop. There is little commercial farming in the village. Food is produced for home consumption. A few sacks of beans or bushels of peaches are sold each year, and two families have small flocks of sheep which brings in a little money - but for the most part the emphasis here is on subsistence farming. Money, when there is any, comes mostly from outside work.