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SHEPHERD, DOG, AND FLOCK IN NEW MEXICO, 1947
(Photograph courtesy of the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, New Mexico Department of Tourism Collection, Box 6, no. 2167.)

Culture at Work

THE FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT AND MODERN USES OF THE PREMODERN IN LORIN W. BROWN'S "BASILICO GARDUNO, NEW MEXICAN SHEEPHERDER"

Matthew Basso

While conducting research at the Montana Historical Society Archives a number of years ago, I stumbled across a file in the Montana Works Progress Administration (WPA) records titled *Men at Work*. In it were five unusual stories by authors who had worked for the Montana Federal Writers' Project (FWP) in the early 1940s.[1] Each story discussed the intricacies of a specific job or line of work—from miner to field irrigator to wilderness fire fighter. Their disparate subjects were linked by close attention to the sounds, textures, sensations, and mindsets involved in performing the labor described. A few supporting documents indicated that these essays had arrived in Washington, D.C., too late to be included in *Men at Work*, a volume "of writings

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My thanks to Durwood Ball, Sarah Payne, and James Martin for their editorial help. Angela Smith's advice also made this a more cogent essay in innumerable ways, while only George Imredy's willingness to spend a day at the Library of Congress made it possible at all. This article is for David Noble in honor of his fifty years at the University of Minnesota. He has taught me more about history and engagement than he will likely ever know.

based on the experiences of men at work in various trades and industries of the United States," for which "contributions [would be] selected primarily on the basis of literary quality." I had never heard of such a collection and was quite intrigued. A futile search through numerous catalogues and bibliographies, along with conversations with leading figures in the study of Depression-era American literature and history—none of whom had ever heard of such a FWP undertaking—only deepened the mystery. Assuming that *Men at Work* had never come to fruition, I made a last-ditch call to the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress and had the good fortune of speaking to a reference librarian who quickly became similarly curious. After some searching he reported the remarkable news that the Library indeed had a single onion-paper copy of a manuscript called "Men at Work: Stories of People at their Jobs in America."

Completed in the summer of 1941, *Men at Work*, like many FWP projects, had fallen victim to circumstance. With wartime mobilization providing thousands of new jobs every week, the WPA and its subsidiary programs were told that their work was done. Skeleton crews struggled to organize and transfer tens of thousands of pages of FWP national headquarters records to the Library of Congress, but in late 1941 funding for even this minor initiative evaporated.[2] In succession World War II and the Cold War absorbed federal dollars and national attention. Not until the 1960s did scholars and, through them, the American public begin to rediscover the rich legacy left by the FWP and the New Deal's other arts programs. Life histories—especially those of former slaves—along with the FWP's state guides and almanacs have rightly become celebrated resources for understanding the social, political, and economic trajectory of the United States.[3] The individual works of some FWP writers like Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Saul Bellow, Nelson Algren, and Zora Neale Hurston have also gained equal renown. Yet today, some three decades into the rediscovery of the FWP's legacy, a remarkable number of documents such as "Men at Work" remain virtually unknown, even to specialists.

The full draft of "Men at Work" contained essays penned both by unheralded FWP writers and by well-known artists such as Jack Conroy and Chester Himes. These essays addressed the lives of a wide range of laborers including cannery workers, loggers, oil-drillers, jazzmen, fishermen, miners, tobacco auctioneers, and welders. The specific instructions sent to Himes, Conroy, and the other contributors in 1940 gave a thematic consistency to the collection: "The author may present his experience in the form of an article,

a short story, a descriptive sketch, an autobiographical account, an interview. He may describe an individual at work or a team working together. *But the writers must have seen the work done, or perhaps have done it themselves."*[4]

While the finished product contained thirty-four stories, the preface to "Men at Work," written by the volume editor, Harold Rosenberg, indicated that one story in particular, "Basílico Garduño, New Mexican Sheepherder," provided a critical referent for understanding the other stories and the volume as a whole.[5] Rosenberg wrote:

> Methods of labor sometimes remain static for centuries, are sometimes completely revolutionized by the introduction of a single machine. One great source of America's social and cultural variety is that, by the side of the most advanced techniques of the twentieth century, men still work in ways that have descended from the beginnings of human history. The story of Basílico Garduño, New Mexican sheepherder, included in this book, presents an idyllic picture reminiscent of the Bible, old Italy, the slopes of the Alps. "My father and I both worked for Don Mariano, who first owned these springs. He was *muy rico*, a man of many sheep and much land. . . ." Today, a tourist hotel or "dude ranch" or the depot of a transcontinental air line [*sic*] has perhaps alighted not far from Don Mariano's meadows. Yet the *pastor*, and the manner of living built upon his labor, belong as fully to contemporary America, in both its inner and outer aspects, as the golf instructor or the transport pilot.[6]

Lorin Brown, the author of "Basílico Garduño," although not as well known as Bellow or Wright, is one of the few rank-and-file FWP veterans whose life and work are well documented.[7] Working with Brown, Marta Weigle and Charles Briggs finished compiling *Hispano Folklife of New Mexico: The Lorin W. Brown Federal Writers' Project Manuscripts* just prior to the author's death in 1978. Among the many remarkable manuscripts in this collection is a version of "Basílico Garduño" almost identical to the version found in the Library of Congress and culled, like the rest of *Hispano Folklife*, from the FWP records at the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives. One of the primary purposes of (re)publishing "Basílico Garduño" in the *New Mexico Historical Review* is to alert those interested in New Mexico history to the important yet often forgotten resource that is *Hispano Folklife* and, even more so, to call attention to the New Mexico State Records Center and

Archives' extensive FWP holdings.[8] Like other scholars, I remain surprised at the dearth of scholarship on this period in New Mexico history.[9]

The second major impetus behind this essay is to provide a fuller context for interpreting "Basílico Garduño" and the other FWP manuscripts housed in the Historical Society as well as to comment on the use of New Mexico as a symbol by intellectuals in the 1930s. Along with the enormous attention paid to "ordinary" people, especially their lives as industrial workers, an interest in "the folk" dominated American culture in the 1930s. At the national level New Mexico, Appalachia, and the African American South were consistently deployed as the principle examples of an organic American folk culture. The inclusion of "Basílico Garduño" in *Men at Work* and Harold Rosenberg's extensive commentary on it indicate that some 1930s intellectuals saw a strong relationship between discussions of folklife and the politics of work. Both texts provide insight into how that relationship was imagined, and display New Mexico's crucial but problematic place not only in the effort to outline the so-called "native" aspects of the American experience but also in the effort to change American politics and society by illuminating and elevating the role of the worker.[10]

Emerging at the end of the Depression but still very much a part of the New Deal, *Men at Work* was the product of a specific, peculiar, and important moment. Historians often divide the Great Depression into several distinct eras. The stock market crash in 1929 is commonly held as the starting point of the depression. Another watermark is 1934, during which the Democratic party made significant midterm election gains and earned a vote of confidence for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Afterward, certain groups made a strong push for a radical restructuring of American society. The United States has seen very few general strikes, mass labor stoppages in a city, but three—San Francisco, Toledo, and Minneapolis—occurred in 1934. In September 1934, adding to the mood of unrest, four hundred thousand textile workers walked off their jobs in the largest strike in a single industry in U.S. history. The Filipino poet Carlos Bulosan, who took part in the California lettuce workers' strike, captured the spirit of the moment: "From this day onward my life became one long conspiracy . . . I was so intensely fired by this dream of a better America that I had completely forgotten myself."[11] Within a year, these and other skilled and unskilled industrial workers joined together in a new association of laborers, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), that welcomed the unskilled and, to a much greater extent than its forebears, workers of color.[12] Simultaneously, as Michael Denning, the

movement's most adept chronicler, writes, "a new radical culture was taking shape" among artists and intellectuals. Playwrights, painters, editors, authors, and other cultural workers emerged from the immigrant and African American neighborhoods of America's cities as well as from the nation's traditional rural populist strongholds. They formed "proletarian literary clubs, worker theaters, camera clubs, film and photo leagues, composers collectives, Red dance troupes, and revolutionary choruses." Those cultural producers, in concert with an older generation of American modernists and antifascist émigrés, endeavored to convince the masses, including those newly organized by the CIO, that revolutionary change was needed.[13]

Many challenges eventually decimated this movement, but the internal divisions that fractured the U.S. Left during the 1930s had the greatest effect on artistic endeavors, like *Men at Work*, that came toward the decade's end. Some activists believed that cultural workers operating within the Popular Front, including those employed by the FWP, should toe the Communist Party line. Others, particularly a well-known group of anti-Stalinists, among whom Harold Rosenberg was a prominent member, not only criticized Popular Front intellectuals for supporting Stalin but also for producing cultural products that mirrored the "'kitsch" of corporate-produced mass culture and "the 'official' art of the state apparatus."[14] Historian Alan Brinkley reports that, partly because of these ruptures, "by the summer of 1939 . . . the Federal Writers' Project was fighting for its life against foes from both outside the New Deal and within." For example, the FWP's new director, Col. Francis Harrington, thought the agency too individualistic and independent; Republican critics also decried the FWP for, in their words, "appealing to class hatred" and penning "communist propaganda."[15]

There can thus be no question that the late 1930s and early 1940s constituted a political crisis for the Left and, with the beginning of mobilization for World War II, the final era of the Great Depression.[16] Beside attacks by Harrington and like-minded conservatives, the literary scholar Caren Irr points out that, in particular, the period following the 1939 Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact also saw a "growing number of profoundly disillusioned ex-Marxist intellectuals . . . writing articles and books in which they fundamentally misrepresented doctrines for which they had been articulate exponents only a few years before." At the time, Dwight Macdonald and Philip Rahv labeled this trend "cultural amnesia."[17]

Significantly, *Men at Work*, as constructed by Rosenberg, did not participate in the practice of "cultural amnesia." Instead, by concentrating on work

itself, the project made another attempt at finding an aesthetic that might connect the intellectual left with the masses. In his preface, Rosenberg contended that American literature and art had not, by-and-large, depicted work. The art and fiction of the 1930s, with their focus on regionalism and turn away from elite subjects, finally produced a surge of interest in workers, but all too often, Rosenberg posited, artists and writers seemed interested in nonindustrial work worlds.[18] In contrast Rosenberg, like most activists and scholars of the time, concerned himself primarily with the fate of industrial workers. In "Men at Work" he noted:

> For the bulk of occupations in the United States . . . the trend is away from the skillful self-sufficiency of the shepherd or the artisan. "The National Research Project studies have shown," testified Corrington Gill, Assistant Commissioner of the WPA, at a hearing of the Temporary National Economic Committee, "that the jobs of factory production workers are steadily becoming more simplified, as machinery is made more automatic and specialized, and as production methods are otherwise improved by management."[19]

For Rosenberg, "Basílico Garduño"—in many ways a typical story of nonindustrial work and workers—served as a point of comparison to this labor trend. Garduño, Rosenberg alluded, had freedom from supervision and, because of that autonomy, the ability to determine the pace and the conditions of his work.[20] To differentiate, Rosenberg presented one job description from the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, issued by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1939, that he had chosen at random: "*KEY-CRIMPING-MACHINE OPERATOR. Attaches can-opening keys to metal containers of preserved foods by means of an automatic or pedal operated key-crimping machine: feeds cans one at a time into machine; presses pedal to actuate crimping mechanism; removes cans with keys attached; loads key magazine at regular intervals.*" Using the pastor and the key-crimping-machine operator as evidence, he contended:

> Jobs take in the landscape surrounding them, and odors, tempos, climates, costumes. They take in the worker's delight in touching things and changing them handily. They take in, too, the special kind of suffering and crippling that comes from toil that is tiresome and infinitely repetitious, and in which the instinct of workmanship is

> reduced to beggary. A man's work, say the philosophers, is the means by which he stamps his image on nature, and also gives form to his own character. So that the manner of his daily doing is an influence interacting deeply with the future of society and with political ideas and social theories.[21]

In short, Rosenberg, like other leftist intellectuals of the 1930s, used "Basílico Garduño" and the preindustrial folk work-ways Lorin Brown's story reflected to present a social theory powerfully critical of an industrial society they saw as characterized by wage slavery.

However, because of the prominence he assigned industrial work and workers, Rosenberg failed to recognize the problems of Basílico Garduño the worker. Garduño's world was defined as much by the enormous sacrifices of a peon class for the wealth of the master as by an idyllic landscape. Indeed, many of the same criticisms Rosenberg leveled at industrial society based on the relations between the worker and the means of production hold true for Garduño's way of life.[22] Rosenberg's pastor is closely equivalent to the "Indian" that Anglo intellectuals used before and during the 1930s to construct and distinguish historically the United States from corrupt and despoiled Europe.[23] Like the "Indian," Garduño was a figure of the past, frozen in time.[24] But unlike the "Indian" who had been "vanished" from the national landscape, Garduño, like other emblems of the folk, was a figure that could still index the pluralist nation and provide a model for a dimension of a healthy work culture.[25] More a symbol than a reality, New Mexico in this construction seemingly did not have the same problems that plagued the rest of the nation.[26] Tellingly but perhaps surprisingly, Lorin Brown depicted a similar New Mexico and was similarly uncritical in his approach to the working world of the pastor, and like Rosenberg, Brown cherished the quietude of the pastor's premodern life. However, to a far greater extent than Rosenberg, Brown, drawing on his deep New Mexico roots, clearly saw Garduño and other Hispanos facing the real problems of the all-too-modern present.

Lorin or Lorenzo Brown was born in 1900 in Elizabethtown, a New Mexico mining camp, but after his father's sudden death in 1901, he and his mother moved to Taos. Starting in 1905, Brown's mother, Cassandra Martínez de Brown, taught in the rural villages of northern New Mexico for twenty years. Although Brown visited her frequently and spent two school terms under her tutelage, his maternal grandparents, the Martínezes, raised Brown in Taos and had an enormous influence on his view of New Mexico and the place

of Hispano culture within it. Brown's grandfather, Vicente Martínez, had been a follower of the rebel Catholic priest, Antonio José Martínez of Taos. Vicente attended Father Martínez's college and, like the father and his other students, was excommunicated in 1857. Unlike a number of his classmates who turned to Protestantism after their banishment from the Church, Vicente found in socialism a doctrine with similarities to the humane liberalism of Father Martínez's teachings.[27] However, Brown's maternal grandmother Juanita Montoya de Martínez, not Vicente, had the greatest impact on him. She taught him the folkways—particularly folk medicine—that she and other Taoseños practiced. A well-regarded healer and midwife, she claimed Taos Pueblo and Hispano ancestry, and enjoyed connections to both communities. Adding to the diverse influences on his young life, Brown also spent four years living with his father's Anglo relatives and attending school in Kansas.[28] After short stints as an employee of the National Recovery Agency (NRA) and the Public Works Administration (PWA), Brown began working for the Santa Fe office of the FWP in November 1936, remaining in that position for more than half a decade.[29] Brown's bilingual capability and multicultural sensitivity, and his ties through blood and experience to Hispano, Anglo, and Pueblo culture made him, in many ways, the ideal chronicler of 1930s New Mexico.[30]

As much a commentary on the changing nature of work as an ethnographic portrait, the story of Basílico Garduño is better understood not as Harold Rosenberg comprehended it but as Brown did—within the regional and local contexts of northern New Mexico and its villages like Córdova. Brown intimately knew the community, making it his home from 1922 to 1933 and again for extended periods between 1936 and 1941.[31] Córdova was once a subsistence economy, but various factors in the first two decades of the twentieth century led to the inability of this economy to provide fully for the town's residents. A considerable portion of the male villagers was forced to engage in migratory wage labor, usually either railroad construction, mining, harvesting, or sheep-camp work, for as much as six months of the year.[32]

Taken as a whole, Brown's manuscripts from the 1930s describe the negative influence the transition from a barter to cash economy had on life in Córdova and the other villages of the upper Río Grande Valley in the early to mid-twentieth century. While recognizing that more material goods found their way into the villages, Brown suggests that the loss of the valley's subsistence base profoundly affected the severity with which the Great Depression hit Córdovans and their neighbors. As in many areas across the country, only

the creation of jobs associated with the United States's wartime role as "an Arsenal for Democracy" ended the Depression in the upper Río Grande Valley.[33] It was during these years that Brown left New Mexico. Upon his return in 1972, he once again visited the villages that had been at the center of his ethnographic reporting in the 1930s and commented on the "solution" that wartime modernization had offered the area. He wrote, "Los Alamos, with its opportunities for employment, had changed the whole picture in the plazas; their atmosphere had altered and the simplicity of the village life was gone." His old village friends, "the wise and ancient *viejos* and *viejitas* of fond recollection" who had served as his primary informants had also passed on. "The younger generation," he noted, "was living in the modern era of rock and roll, new cars, and a fast pace unknown thirty years back." He concluded that the war hastened the dispersal of geographically rooted ethnic groups into, in his always purposefully chosen words, "the mainstream of American industrial life."[34]

What should we make of these comments in light of Brown's writing, particularly "Basílico Garduño," during the 1930s? I believe they offer us clues about the relationship between ideas of "the folk" and the perceptions of modernity in New Mexico, constructions that are as important as the ways in which Depression-era intellectuals, such as Harold Rosenberg, used New Mexico in their writing. Although the Lorin Brown of the 1970s, like the Brown of the 1930s, mixed a sense of nostalgia with an awareness of powerful modern market forces, nostalgia seems to dominate both views. In a passage from "Basílico Garduño" in which Garduño, relieved from his duties, goes on holiday, Brown writes:

> With many *pastores*, leaves meant drinking sprees or women, until, funds exhausted, they were rounded up by the *patrón* and set upon the sobering trail which led back to camp. For the married ones, while there might also be a spree, in most cases the arrival of the *remuda* was the occasion for a reunion with wife and children. So far as I knew, Basílico had never been married, and he was very reticent about what he did on his leaves. His patrón confided that Basílico would go to Santa Fe and return on the appointed day, with never a word as to his activities.

The picture Brown paints of how most pastors spent their holiday does not gel with the nostalgia shown by Brown and Rosenberg for the life of the pastor.

Instead, they sound like the after-work or vacation activities of industrial workers as described in a number of other stories found in "Men at Work." Perhaps more telling is Garduño's unwillingness to tell either his patrón or ethnographer what he did on his own time. There is little question that Brown more fully understands the realities of 1930s New Mexico than Harold Rosenberg does. Garduño's silence, however, suggests he grasps those realities far better than either man.

Weigle and Briggs intended their volume on Brown's WPA legacy to hasten the use of the remarkable collection of ethnohistorical, folklife, and folklore data gathered by the New Mexico WPA. I hope this essay, along with Lorin Brown's wonderful story, "Basílico Garduño," performs a similar function: alerting readers to the rich resource that is *Hispano Folklife of New Mexico*, the WPA holdings at the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, the larger trove of documents associated with both the national and various state offices of the FWP, and the context in which emerged the remarkable record of cultural production achieved during the rich decade of the 1930s. Once analyzed, these records will undoubtedly broaden our knowledge and hopefully put words into some of the silences that resonate so strongly in the following story.[35]

Note to Readers

There are minor differences between the *Hispano Folklife* version of "Basílico Garduño" and the version in the "Men at Work" manuscript at the Library of Congress. "Basílico," "Garduño," and all other Spanish words and names are missing diacritical marks in the "Men at Work" version, although the diacritical marks appear in Harold Rosenberg's introduction. There are also no parentheses around English translations in the "Men at Work" piece, and there are a few word differences. For example, "Men at Work" contains the passage: "My greeting was returned in a muffled tone . . ." In the *Hispano Folklife* version the same passage reads, "My greeting was returned in a low tone . . ." and, similarly, "He would lose his temper . . ." versus, "He lost his temper . . ." I have chosen to replicate the story as found in "Men at Work" at the Library of Congress. For the sake of readability, I have corrected inconsistencies in Spanish orthography and added translations where necessary.

UNKNOWN EARLY-TWENTIETH-CENTURY NEW MEXICAN SHEPHERD
(Photograph courtesy of the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Bergere Collection, Box 8, folder 1, no. 23321.)

"Basílico Garduño, New Mexico Sheepherder"

by Lorin W. Brown

It was late afternoon when I approached the camp site in the shadow of El Cerro Redondo (Round Peak), near Jémez Hot Spring. The sheep were still grazing, although all had their heads turned toward the wooded base of the peak, which dominated this upland pasture. The meadow, stretching as far as I could see, encircled the peak. I knew enough of sheep habits to go in the direction in which they grazed, for there would be their *majada* (bedding ground), and close by would be the camp of the *pastor* (shepherd).

A curling blue column rising from a cluster of fir and spruce indicated the spot I sought, and three nondescript dogs gave warning of my approach. Then Basílico's squat, broad figure emerged from the patched and weather-beaten, one-pole tent. He was clad in bib overalls of denim, with an ill-fitting jacket of the same material buttoned over his shirts (the weather determined the number), and a battered black felt hat and home-made shoes.

A low, muttered command to the dogs quieted them, and a circling motion of his arm sent them racing around the edge of the flock to urge on lagging members toward the majada and make the group more compact.

"Buenas tardes," I said, and added praise for the well trained dogs. My greeting was returned in a muffled tone, strange and hesitant, the reluctant, inhibited speech of one used to living alone. "Llegue, amigo" (Come in, friend), said Basílico, his wind-reddened, bloodshot eyes glaring into mine as if he were angry. Years of squatting over a campfire had given him this baleful look.

I seated myself on a block of pine, while he poured a cup of coffee, the pastor's first act of hospitality. A blackened pot is always present on the edge of the campfire. Ground coffee and water are added as needed. Some of the essence of the first potful made in each camp remains until the camp itself is removed.

The beat of many hooves accompanied by the throaty bleating of the sheep and the quicker blats of goats announced the arrival of the flock at the salt troughs scattered near the bedding ground. I looked up to see the sheep clustered in shoving, butting groups along the length of the slightly hollowed logs that held the coarse rock salt—brought from the deposits of the Estancia valley, several miles south of the sheep camp.

A ten-pound lard pail huddled in the coals near the coffee pot, its lid punctured with a nail, emitting jets of vapor which I hoped might come from beans and fat mutton cooking together. Without saying anything more, my host set an iron spider on a bed of coals and put in two spoonfuls of lard to melt. From the tent he took a sack of flour and rolled down the edges, until a mound was formed of the exposed flour. Into this he poured a cup of water, then added the melted grease. Stirring the mixture in the sack, he soon lifted out a ball of dough, which he placed in a small pan. All the flour that had touched the water and grease had become incorporated in the ball of dough, the rest remaining dry. Evidently, baking powder and salt had been added beforehand, making the mixing a quick and simple process.

Pinching off small portions of the dough, Basílico rolled them into balls, then flattened them into round flat cakes, a little thicker than tortillas. These were *gordas* (fat ones), the bread commonly made by the New Mexican sheepherder. Soon six browned gordas were taken from the skillet and stacked on a cloth spread across a water keg. The pail of beans was dragged out of the fire and its lid pried off. Just as Basílico was about to seat himself on a log close to the bean pail, one of the two goats that had approached quite familiarly to the

fireside bleated softly. Taking down a small pail that hung from a tree branch overhead, Basílico approached the goats, seized them one at a time by a hind leg, and milked them. Tossing the two a piece of old bread, he set a cupful of milk down on the keg holding the gordas, first straining it through a piece of thin cloth, part of an old salt sack. The goats' milk was almost as thick as cream.

Basílico needed no spoon. Each mouthful was picked up with a split gorda, bent between thumb and forefinger. Meat was enfolded in a piece of the gorda, and eaten with it.

A muffled drum of hooves caused me to look up from our meal, and I was aware for the first time that it had grown darker. Four burros stood beyond the light of the fire. Their feet were hobbled, and the two leaders were belled. One of the *almanaques* (almanacs), as Basílico called them, was obviously a pet. He asked for a tidbit in the intimate, soft, demanding tone that pampered animals use. The herder rose and fed them the remnants of our meal, and while they ate he removed their hobbles.

"Aren't you afraid they will stray away, if you loose them?" I asked.

"No, not at night, and scarcely ever in the daytime, either. At night they stick very close to where I sleep, as you shall see." I realized that I was going to spend the night at camp. It was just as well, since I had not yet even mentioned the purchase of the *cabrito* (kid) for which I had come.

I picked up the hobbles that were thrown in a heap close to where I sat. They were home made, and their construction interested me. They were about three feet long and as many inches wide, the inner side lined with cowhide on which the hair had been left to give more protection from chafing. The wide straps fitted closely around a forefoot, just below the fetlock. After several twists, which took up slack between the two front feet, one end fitted into a slot cut in the other. A neat and efficient fastening, which, since the leather was soft, would not be difficult to fasten or unfasten even with benumbed fingers on a cold damp morning. I appreciated this feature, because of my experience with store-bought hobbles of thick leather straps linked with chains and secured with heavy buckles. There is no agony equal to that of trying to unbuckle one of these factory-made hobbles, wet and stiff from snow. Awkward, unmanageable, and perverse, they inevitably produce torn finger nails and bad tempers. These seemingly crude hobbles of Basílico's were a vast improvement. Later, I saw Basílico use them as a tie strap to secure a pack and for other purposes, by linking five pairs together.

The burros did stay close to the fire, except when Basílico slaughtered a lamb and they moved over to look on. The lamb had been seized from the

bedding ground and carried to a convenient tree, where Basílico suspended it by a hind leg from a lower branch just high enough to be within easy reach. The shepherd grasped the lamb's muzzle in his left hand and bore the animal's head back and down against the bole of the tree, as his right drew a sharp butcher's knife across the taut throat. This stroke was followed by a sharp cut down the under side from tail to severed throat, while the carcass still jerked and quivered. Incisions up the length of each leg connected with the central belly cut. From this point on, Basílico had no more use for the knife. Tossing it aside, he started ripping off the skin with his hands. One held the carcass away against the pull of the other. Along the sides and back, he used his fist in a knuckling, rolling fashion, neatly separating the pelt from the carcass while rending the paper-thin tissue which held the two together.

The pelt, flesh side up, was stretched out on the ground, and the smaller portions were laid on it, the quarters being hung on branches to cool. The dogs sat around with lolling tongues and cocked ears deftly catching each offering that Basílico tossed them. They did not fight over each other's share but gulped their own and resumed their eager, expectant attitude.

"Hey, don't throw them all of that," I called out excitedly, as I saw Basílico start to apportion the liver around the circle. "I should like some of it for breakfast."

"Here's something else we will have for breakfast," said Basílico, as he held out the lamb's head for my inspection; and from the way he kept his eyes fixed on my face, I knew he was trying to get my reaction to this novel breakfast dish. He had not neglected to save a piece of liver as well.

"La cabez[a] es del matador," I said. My saying that the head belonged to him who killed the animal evoked a pleased smile. I had given him to understand that I knew what a delicacy roast head was considered, especially that of a lamb or cabrito.

Digging a hole in the spot from which he had cleared the coals of the campfire, Basílico deposited the head therein, after first dampening it and the sides and bottom of the hole with a little water. Directly over the head he placed a tin lid and covered the whole with hot ashes and glowing coals.

"In the morning it will be done to a hair," he said. "But for now I will make some *burraniates*. Do you know what they are?" I pretended not to know, in order to allow him the pleasure of introducing a new dish. Taking a chunk of leaf lard from around the kidneys, he worked it into the shape of a wiener; around this he wrapped a good length of the milk intestines, which had first

been stripped of their contents. With greedy eyes I watched to see how many of these delectable bundles he would make.

Six—three apiece—I thought to myself, as he handed them to me saying, "You roast these while I make three or four more gordas, and don't forget to salt them when they are just about done."

"Leave them to me," I answered, pleased that he thought I could be useful.

When the burraniates were finished, I placed my share inside a folded gorda sandwich fashion. The filling had just the desired crispness, with plenty of body, but without the greasy taste that might have been expected. The forest round about was quiet, its silence unbroken except for the occasional sound of the cowbells as the burros cropped the grass nearby.

"And why do you call your burros almanaques?" I asked, as Basílico was fixing a pallet for me near the fire. "Oh, they are the almanac of the pastor. I can tell of sudden changes in the weather by watching their actions and hearing their braying at unusual hours of the day or night." That was new to me. I had heard burros called many things, some of them unprintable, but never almanacs.

My bed consisted of three woolly sheepskins next to the ground, a blanket over these, and another with which to cover myself. Additional warmth, if needed, would have to be supplied by the "poor man's blanket," the fire, wood for which stood neatly stacked close enough so that I could throw an occasional stick on it without getting up.

My friend, as I thought of him after those burraniates, lay on a pallet similar to mine on the opposite side of the fire. Both of us had lighted cigarettes, and I talked to him about the stars. He had interesting names for some of the more familiar constellations. The Pleiades, he called Las Cabrillas (herd of little goats), the Great Dipper was La Carreta (the cart), and he pointed out to me what seemed to be one star, but which were, he said, in reality two, if your eyesight was good enough. He said the Indians used this phenomenon to test the eyes of their young men. I had to take his word for this; all I could see was one star. La Estrella del Pastor (the shepherd's star), as the morning star was called, received its name, according to him, from the fact that the shepherd is supposed to be up when it appears. He added drily [*sic*] that all the stars might also be called shepherd's stars since a pastor sees them all nearly every night, sleeping as he does with one eye open, especially when on the summer range in the high mountains.

The moon appeared over the top of El Cerro Redondo. Basílico said it promised wet weather because its points were tilted so that it would not

hold water. He told me he could figure in advance the different phases of the moon for months ahead. This knowledge he found very useful in caring for his flock. For instance, a full moon was of great advantage at lambing time. He therefore figured out the exact day to turn the rams (*carneros mesos*) in with the ewes so that the lambs would begin to drop while there was a full moon to light the pastor's labors. A full moon was also to be desired when the sheep were driven from summer to winter range or back again.

Basílico claimed, too, to have a method of predicting the weather for a year ahead, by means of *las cabañuelas*. "And how do you do that?" "It is very simple," he replied, then launched into a very complex account.

I was lost in a maze of *primeros, segundos* (firsts and seconds), and *cuarto días* (quarter days). Boiled down, the method was based on an average of the weather for the first 24 days of January, called las cabañuelas. These 24 days were paired to make 12 units, using the first and last together, each pair determining the weather for one month. For instance, the second and twenty-third days of January represent February; the third and twenty-second days, March, and so on. Then there are *los pastores*, the succeeding 6 days of January, which do not enter into the calculation of las cabañuelas. These are divided into quarter-day units, 24 in all; and, as in las cabañuelas, are paired, the second and twenty-third entering into the calculations for February—and so on.

"Y el último día de enero" (and the last day of January)—I was very drowsy by this time, and gathered that the last day of January also entered into this complicated system. Vaguely I heard Basílico explaining that the twenty-four hours of the last day were paired in the same manner as had been the two-day units of las cabañuelas and the quarter-day units of los pastores, and that they entered into and figured in the calculations for the weather for the months of the year in the same sequence. I recall dreaming something about Einstein and pairs of sheep darting off in different directions, and the next I knew Basílico's voice was urging me to breakfast.

The coffee pot was hissing and the table was laid, my cup and saucer on one keg, his on another. The baked head of lamb lay on a pie tin, skinned, and broken into convenient pieces. The brain pan had been opened, exposing its steaming contents. Basílico had baked several loaves of *pan de pastor* (shepherd's bread), round loaves made of the same dough as the gordas, but baked in a dutch oven. This bread keeps, and sheepherders bake supplies of it when time cannot be spared to prepare gordas at every meal. The dutch oven sat close to the fire with hot grease smoking inside. "I left that for you to fix your liver to your own taste; I know nothing about that," said Basílico,

as he handed me the chunk of liver and a sharp knife. Like most of the rural people of New Mexico he would not eat liver, professing not to know even how to prepare it. (Some think this prejudice is based on the fact that sheep liver is very susceptible to disease.) I sliced the liver, which was soon fried, and heaping my saucer, joined Basílico. The meat of the jaw-bones of the sheep's head had a sweet, nutty flavor, and I also sampled the brains.

The sheep were beginning to move slowly out of the majada, the vigilant dogs posting themselves on the outskirts of the flock on higher points where they could catch the warmth of the sun. Basílico had already prepared his lunch. It was wrapped in a white flour sack and fastened around his waist with the long straps of the sling he carried, fitting close to the small of his back.

"I am going to graze the sheep toward El Rito de San Antonio (St. Anthony's Creek), where they will water, and where I can get water for the camp also. Do you want to come along?"

Two burros, already saddled and with water kegs hanging on each side, grazed close by. Basílico handed me a flour sack which bulged with a quarter of lamb. "Here is something for you." I could not refuse the gift, nor could I now say that I had originally come for a cabrito.

Since the small stream lay for a distance along my own route back to the stream, I followed the slowly moving flock. I noticed that the ewes were heavy, and mentioned this fact to Basílico. "Yes, we'll be lambing about San Domingo Day. Come and visit my camp at that time, if you wish to see us then. We will be on the north slope of El Rito de los Indios (Indians' Creek), where there is better shelter."

The dogs kept the sheep moving in the desired direction. I commented on the training they must have received.

"Do you remember that *melada* [honey-colored goat] I milked last night? Well she is the foster-mother of my two youngest dogs. I take young puppies, newly born—before their eyes are opened, and suckle them to a nanny goat. In this way I get dogs that think they are part goat, I guess, because they soon learn to love these animals and take care of them. They take care of the sheep also, but treat them with contempt, just like these *mocosas* [snot-noses] deserve, for they are a very foolish animal."

We came to a saddle in the low ridge along which we had been walking. Here Basílico and his flock would cross and go down the left-hand slope, while I continued along its length for some miles more. As the dogs turned the flock, pressing in on its right flank, its leader, a patriarchal billy goat, swung the first of the woolly wave over and down the slope. We stood to the

left and a little higher, like commanders of an army watching it pass in review. Basílico scanned the flock closely, seeming to take note of each individual mutton. "'Stá bien," he said to himself as the last sheep passed over. "You didn't count them, did you?" I asked. "Sí y no" (yes and no), he replied. "I counted my *marcadoras* [markers]; they were all there, so the rest must be." These marcadoras, he explained, were the black sheep in the flock—about one of these for every hundred of the others. Any *corta* (stray bunch) would be almost certain to include one of the black sheep. So if all the black sheep were accounted for, he could assume the whole flock was intact.

Many pastores cannot count beyond the number of fingers on both hands and must use counters. The old Spanish saying, "Carnero entregado, peso contado" (whether sold and handed over, a dollar counted out), means that the price is paid for each animal as it is sold because of the seller's inability to reckon the total. A full tally of the sheep is usually made by the owner, or *patrón*, on one of his periodical visits to the sheep camp. At that time the pastor may hand his patrón a tobacco sack full of pebbles. Some of these will be larger than the rest and are usually black. The pastor has made a count of his *rebaño* (flock) some time prior to his patrón's visit, and his count is recorded in these pebbles. The black pebbles show how many hundreds there were; the white ones, how many tens; the remainder are either committed to memory or shown by notches cut into the shepherd's staff. To account for sheep killed by wild animals, or dying from any other cause, the pastor skins and saves the pelt, ears and all, against the day when his patrón comes to count his sheep, because he is responsible for every one.

"Why don't you come over to the Springs to visit me?" I asked. "I shall be there for a week or ten days more."

"I will if the patrón sends me a *remuda* soon. But, amiguito, I have known those springs for many years. In fact, that was where I first started in [*sic*] to herd sheep. My father and I both worked for Don Mariano, who first owned those springs—that is, the grant on which they are located. He was muy rico, a man of many sheep and much land. We used to lamb in the grassy valley just above the springs and dip the sheep in troughs built just below the main sulphur spring; and we used nothing else except the very water from the spring to rid the sheep of scab and ticks. It was much better than this stuff we have to use nowadays. Don Mariano was a great patrón, a great fighter and eater, but of good heart. When he came to visit our camp to count the sheep, my father would always kill the fattest lamb, then open it while it was still warm, even before skinning it, and remove the paunch. This he would place to roast

on the *rescoldo*, a big bed of coals prepared beforehand. There was nothing Don Mariano liked better than paunch roasted thus; when it had been roasted sufficiently, he would cut it open with his *daga* [dagger], empty the half-digested contents, and cut up the paunch and eat it. He said that besides liking it very much, it was very good for a stomach trouble from which he suffered. ¿Quién sabe?"

By remuda, Basílico meant a herder sent up to relieve him. On such holidays, Basílico usually took all his burros and stopped at his patrón's house, where he left them. He then went about his own affairs. On such occasions, his attire varied from that of every day only by being newer and perhaps a little cleaner, and by a new black hat carefully brushed. This hat was kept at the patrón's home, and constituted the latter's annual bonus to his faithful servitor, a gift added to his wages. Each year the holiday hat was taken over for workday use, and soon became the battered affair, which Basílico doffed as we parted there on the ridge.

With many pastores, leaves meant drinking sprees or women, until, funds exhausted, they were rounded up by the patrón and set upon the sobering trail which led back to camp. For the married ones, while there might also be a spree, in most cases the arrival of the remuda was the occasion for a reunion with wife and children. So far as I knew, Basílico had never been married, and he was very reticent about what he did on his leaves. His patrón confided that Basílico would go to Santa Fe and return on the appointed day, with never a word as to his activities.

I shook hands with Basílico, assuring him I would be present at lambing time, if possible. He promised to have ready for me upon my return a pair of *teguas* (moccasins), which he would make for me. I had seen teguas worn by other pastores; they were, however, hybrid affairs, with handmade soles but with uppers salvaged from some pair of store shoes or boots. Basílico's, made of cowhide, with the neatest of stitching, close fitting, and undoubtedly very comfortable, were his own handiwork throughout. He was a master in working leather. He could braid quirts, belts, hat bands, *reatas* (ropes), and those long tapering whips known as blacksnakes. Next to the teguas, his neatest accomplishment were [*sic*] the *hondas* (slings) he made, like the one he now carried. They were shorter than those I had when a boy. The egg-shaped piece that carried the stone was larger, and on the end of each swinging string was a lash that cracked like a pistol shot after each throw. Basílico was amazingly accurate with it; he never hit a sheep or goat, but would fling a stone near a straggler to startle it back to the flock.

I returned to Basílico's camp the day before San Domingo Day. True to his prediction, a full moon appeared in the sky that night, and soon afterwards the thin bleats of newborn lambs sounded. Basílico, with three extra men who had been in camp since the first of the month, worked until morning. He or one of his helpers would appear at the campfire to drink a cup of coffee, then return to his labors.

I wandered over to the corral that had been built a few days before for *el ganado preñado* (the pregnant ewes). The bobbing lanterns revealed the whereabouts of the men. I spotted Basílico skinning a still-born lamb. Its mother stood close by baaing incessantly in that stupid manner characteristic of sheep. I said, "Surely you don't have to save the skins of such as those for accounting to the patrón?"

"No, no, I am fixing it so this *tonta* (fool) may have a foster son, tomorrow perhaps. There will be some ewes that will die tonight, leaving *pencos* (orphan lambs), and others that will have twins. I will take either a penco or a twin lamb away from its mother, tie this skin to his back, and fool the *vieja* (old woman) into adopting him. The ewes recognize their lambs by scent at first, and through this trick we save many lambs that would die otherwise." Several diminutive pelts hung around the corral, separated from each other so the scents would not get mixed.

In the midst of the confusion and noise and the constant blatting and bleating, the herder and his helpers moved from one birth to another. I asked one man how he could pair up the right ewe with each lamb pelt; they all looked exactly alike to me. He said there were differences of appearance, and besides, each ewe had a different note to her bleating, by which he could fix her in his mind. Listening to the bleat of one particular ewe, I was able, finally, to distinguish her baaing from the medley that arose from the corral. There were not many of these adoptions to be arranged. Basílico's flock had wintered well, and the ewes had reached the lambing season in very good condition.

It was close to four in the morning when I returned to the campfire. Above the commotion from the corral, the shrill yapping of coyotes could be heard. They seemed to know what the sounds issuing from the corral meant. I could imagine their slavering jaws and burning eyes as they pointed their slender noses to the sky.

In the morning, I accompanied Basílico in a round of inspections of the corral and the *chiqueros* (small brush pens). At the corral, we picked up the carcasses of the lambs that had been skinned the night before and tossed them over the side of a near-by bluff. At the chiqueros, in which the lambs

born the night before were kept while the flock grazed, Basílico paused to count again the lambs huddling together for warmth. He seemed satisfied with their number and general sturdiness. As we stood there, one of the extra men appeared with four more lambs; from time to time throughout the day others were added.

One of the men drove a small group of nervously bleating ewes close to the chiquero where the orphans and twins were segregated. With a lamb clothed in one of the pelts removed the night before, Basílico would head for a particular ewe. Sometimes a good deal of persuasion was necessary before it would allow the lamb to suckle. It would be held and forced to smell this odd-looking lamb with the legs of its strange covering dangling from its sides. The lamb on its wobbling legs would be butted and shoved aside, but would persist in satisfying its hunger, bringing its mouth again and again to the ewe's side, in spite of all rebuffs. When, after many attempts, accompanied by strong language on the part of Basílico and his helper, the lamb was accepted by the ewe, it would kneel to receive the milk, while its tail wriggled ecstatically just below the lifeless one of the lamb whose place it was taking. When it was finished, the ewe would move off to graze, still eyeing dubiously this mysterious creature that had the scent of Esau but the voice of Jacob.

That evening I left the camp after negotiating for a kid, which I held on the saddle before me. Also tied to my saddle were the teguas Basílico had promised me. Somehow during the busy days of preparation for the lambing rush, he had found time to make them. Basílico's helpers would depart in a few days, leaving him to the solitude that he seemed to prefer. I said I would try to get back again in a few days. "Yes, come back after these other ones have gone. Then we can talk." As I rode away, my cargo awakened the echoes of hillside and canyon along my back trail.

The next time I saw him was by chance. I was out riding around the hills below the lambing camp and on the slopes of the mountain that led toward the settlement on the Río Grande. Entering an open park, I happened onto a flock of sheep, obviously on the move from one camp to another. Four burros loaded with camp equipment grazed at the edge of the flock. I recognized the animals as Basílico's, and rode to the rear of the flock in search of him. I met him carrying a lamb in his arms; it had played out some time back. Its excited mother alternately grazed in erratic pauses close on Basílico's footsteps, then dashed towards him, baaing in a stupidly inquiring manner, evoking plaintive responses from the lamb.

"Where are you going with your ganado, is it that your patrón has sold it and you are taking it down for delivery?" I asked, for a movement of a flock from the summer range to winter range country at this time of year was unusual. "No, nada de eso [no, nothing like that]. The patrón has a shearing shed down here a little way, and I am driving the sheep there to be sheared."

As we crossed a small stream, Basílico stopped to pluck a green feathery plant which grew under the overhanging bank, close by some violets. "What is that?" I asked, as he thrust the fernlike wisps into his mouth. "It is *plumajillo* [sneezeweed], very good for the stomach. Try some?" It was bitter to the taste and should have rated very high in the locality, where the efficacy of any medicine is measured by the strength of its flavor. Basílico asked if I would bring him some *hediondilla* (bean trefoil) from the vicinity of Socorro the next time I was down there. I confessed that I did not know what that was, but from the name, which means 'stinking,' it could not be anything pleasant. I learned later that it was the creosote bush, a popular remedy for kidney ailments.

"You know much about herbs, no?"

"Yes, every pastór knows about *yerbas del campo* (wild herbs). It is well that he does, he is so much alone. Only a broken leg holds any terror for a sheepherder. I can name you a great number of herbs, and the particular benefits of each, but that would take a long time. Some other time I will give you some of each and directions for using them."

After the sheep had bedded down, as we sat smoking our after-supper cigarette, Basílico talked about herbs. He recited a list that would put an herbalist's catalogue to shame. The most prominent was osha, which is so highly regarded by native New Mexicans that it is considered virtually a cure-all. Others were *altamisa* (wormwood), *chimajá* (wild parsley), *chamiso* (sagebrush), *orteguilla* (nettle), *poleo* (penny royal), *yerba buena* (mint), *amole* (soap root), *canaigra* (dock root). The only way one could fix this list of names in mind would be, he suggested, to get a sample of each and record its properties in detail. While on the subject, Basílico also mentioned *pingue* (Colorado rubber plant) and loco weed from which the pastor must guard his sheep. Pingue is especially destructive in the month of October, or after the first frosts. It is more resistant to frost than grass, and stays green and tender after the latter has begun to dry up. For this reason the sheep turn to the pingue and great losses result, unless the pastor is careful to keep his flock away from infested regions during that critical period. Loco weed causes losses in the months of February and March. Stock that feed on it go "crazy"; it affects them like a drug; having once tasted it they cannot leave it alone. Eating

nothing else, they stagger along, their actions extremely erratic, and finally die from lack of nourishment.

In the morning the shearing crew arrived amid a cloud of dust in a small truck piled high with bedding rolls and other equipment. They were a noisy band of itinerants, shearing sheep on a commission basis all over the State [*sic*] and into Colorado. Basílico would have nothing to do with them, except for handling his sheep so as to keep the shearers constantly supplied. To prepare the sheep for shearing, he would drive about a hundred of them at a time into a small adobe room with but one opening. Here, closely confined, the warmth of their bodies caused "sweating," which makes shearing easier. To get them into the room, he used the patriarch of the small herd of goats he kept with his sheep. It was amusing to see how well the bearded old rogue knew his business. He no sooner entered the door with the sheep close on his heels, than he stepped aside near the exit. He knew that he must get out again and be ready for the next bunch. His whole demeanor showed his supreme contempt for the victims of his guile and his wish to escape close confinement with such idiots.

The sheared sheep, looking more foolish than ever in their nakedness, were held by the dogs in a corner of the hills, while Basílico took care of doling out the others to the shed, as required. I watched the shearers deftly turn their victims, the wool clip rolling off in a soft mat. As each was finished, a cry of "¡Uno!" (one) brought the boss, who acted as inspector. His "¡Bueno!" (good) permitted the shearer to release the animal as properly sheared. A metal disk was handed the worker, to be used at the end of the day in computing his pay.

The crew of shearers would be in the neighborhood for several days, since other owners had requested the use of the sheds for shearing their flocks. I knew Basílico hated to remain in their company any longer than was necessary. He would lose his temper under the bantering of the shearers, who treated all pastores with contempt. The crowning insult was that they persisted in calling him Basil Loco. I left that evening, atop a load of the huge sacks into which the wool was packed after shearing.

Basílico and his flock were at the shearing sheds again when I next saw them. The flock now seemed much larger. I thought at first more sheep had been bought, but I soon discovered that it was the spring lambs that made the increase. They were large now, sturdy, fat fellows weighing 70 to 75 pounds, a good average for this type of sheep.

Basílico's patrón had ridden in with a helper to aid in castrating and docking the lambs. In the first process the lamb was up-ended and held with his

head away from his captor. Sometimes, in the case of a particularly vigorous lamb, the forefeet were tied. Both hind legs were held in encircling arms, with hooves caught in the sheepman's armpits. An opened clasp-knife held in the right hand severed the tip of the lamb's bag, held in the left hand. The ends of the testicles showing were seized in strong teeth and withdrawn with a jerk of the head, to be deposited in a pan or pail close by. The men worked singly, as a rule, scarcely making a sound—perhaps because of their blood-smeared faces. The stain spread down the fronts of their overalls. An element of rivalry entered into this task, each worker trying to outdo the other in the number of lambs altered.

At this time, too, the ears of the lambs were marked with the patrón's distinctive crop or slit, or combination of both, and its tail was docked to within an inch of its base. The poor creatures, after undergoing this three-way treatment, stood dripping blood from many parts of their bodies, bleating disconsolately and shaking their heads vigorously, sending thin sprays of blood through the air.

At supper that evening I received my introduction to the so-called "Rocky Mountain Oysters," a big dutch oven full that had been fried, and a pile on a lard can lid that had been roasted over the coals. Both ways, I found, they deserved their fame as a seasonal delicacy.

"Yes, we had a very good hijadero (lambing season): about half and half ewes and males, and about 90 lambs for every 100 ewes, and very little loss. We will sell nearly 800 lambs, and the patrón has had me cut out very nearly 300 old and toothless ewes. These he is going to pasture on his home meadows, selling them to the Indians of the pueblos and his poorer neighbors. They are good for nothing else but meat now."

"I will stay here until time to turn the rams in with the sheep," Basílico went on. "This we will do the first of the Month of the Dead (November). I will winter with my sheep on the chamiso-covered flats between here and the Río Grande. During the month of December I have for many years taken the part of El Diablo in *Los Pastores*, that old play that deals with us shepherds, our life in camp, our language. It is directed by my compadre, Higinio Costales. I make a very good Diablo, wouldn't you think so?"

"Wonderful," I said, smiling, taking in his great dark head, wild hair, and angry-looking eyes under heavy brows.

"Come down to see me do it in the month of Noche Buena (Christmas Eve)."

I resolved to do so. Noche Buena was the month of *luminarias*, those small fires still lighted in New Mexico on Christmas Eve in commemoration of the

shepherd campfires long ago outside the town of Bethlehem. In *Los Pastores*, the Christmas play, with its scene laid near the town of Bethlehem, I would see this solitary Basílico, who lived all year with sheep, among his brothers.

Notes

1. The Federal Writers' Project, the Federal Theater Project, and the Federal Art Project—together commonly referred to as Federal One—comprised the most novel and controversial wing of the WPA's massive employment program. On average Federal One employed approximately thirty-seven thousand workers between the beginning of 1936 and the end of 1939. The FWP alone sponsored projects in every state of the union, and in New York City, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and Alaska. At its peak, the project employed just under seven thousand writers. Most, like Saul Bellow, "adored the Project." Unquestionably, the state guidebooks were the Projects' most famous product, but a spectacular range of output—perhaps most importantly oral life histories of ordinary men and women—characterized the Project. See Alan Brinkley, Foreword to *Survey of Federal Writers' Project Manuscript Holdings in State Depositories*, by Ann Banks and Robert Carter (Washington, D.C.: American Historical Association, 1985), v–vii; and Jerry G. Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935–1943* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972). For employment statistics see Dick Netzer, *The Subsidized Muse: Public Support for the Arts in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 55–56.
2. Ann Banks, *First Person America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), iii–iv.
3. Most recently, the collection *Remembering Slavery* has gained wide acclaim. Ira Berlin, Marc Favreau, and Steven F. Miller, eds., *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Freedom* (New York: The New Press, 1998).
4. Emphasis in original. Loren S. Greene to Joseph E. Parker, 3 December 1940, folder 7, box 9, MC 77, Work Projects Administration Records, Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena, Montana.
5. Rosenberg gained fame in the postwar period as the art critic for *The New Yorker* and as a member of Alan Bloom's intellectual circle.
6. Harold Rosenberg, ed., preface to "Men at Work: Stories of People at their Jobs in America," p. 1, Writers' Program, Work Projects Administration, 1941, folders 1 and 2, box A-852, Records of U.S. Work Projects Administration, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
7. The collection edited by Weigle and Briggs was not the first volume of Brown's writings to be published. In the early 1970s Brown put his recollections about his experiences in northern New Mexico down on paper. Combining them with two of his FWP manuscripts on the *Hermanos* (Penitente brothers), he published *Echoes of the Flute* under the name Lorenzo de Cordova. In Brown's case, he forfeited his strongest ties to his FWP work when he left his native New Mexico during the war years, especially when his personal collection of FWP manuscripts he had penned

burned in an Idaho fire. The three decades that passed between Brown's work for the FWP and his own rekindled interest in that work chronologically parallels a broader national trend: a general resurgence of attention to the WPA's arts projects. Charles L. Briggs and Marta Weigle, "Lorin W. Brown in Taos and Cordova: A Biographical and Ethnohistorical Sketch," in Lorin W. Brown, *Hispano Folklife of New Mexico: The Lorin W. Brown Federal Writers' Project Manuscripts*, with Charles L. Briggs and Marta Weigle (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), 32, ix–x. Lorenzo de Cordova, *Echoes of the Flute* (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1972).

8. Suzanne Forrest's research on the New Deal in New Mexico is the essential starting point and resource on all topics dealing with New Mexico in the 1930s. See her *The Preservation of the Village: New Mexico's Hispanics and the New Deal* (1989; reprint, with a foreword by William deBuys, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).
9. William deBuys, foreword to *The Preservation of the Village*, Forrest, ix.
10. Although I concentrate on the relationship between the symbols of work and workers and how those symbols were used by 1930s intellectuals, my analysis supports Forrest's similar conclusions about the place of the folk in Anglo American culture. Forrest notes of her broader investigation that the dynamics of colonialism in New Mexico "enabled some Anglo Americans to establish a special protective relationship over [both Hispanos and Indians]—one that assuaged [Anglo] guilt even as it enhanced their sense of themselves as socially and intellectually superior human beings. This special relationship, which reached its zenith during the 1930s New Deal, is the subject of this study." Forrest, *The Preservation of the Village*, xviii–xix.
11. Quoted in Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1997), xiv.
12. Michael Goldfield, *The Color of Politics: Race and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 176–230. *Men at Work*, by its very title, mirrors another aspect of workers' struggle for equality that the CIO addressed far less successfully: women's efforts to gain equal wages and opportunities in the workplace. For an excellent account of the gendered divide within the CIO during the 1930s, see Elizabeth Faue, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). On the way artists and dramatists gendered the presentation of work and workers in the 1930s, see Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991). For a discussion of similar trends among writers, see Barbara Foley, *Radical Representations: Politics and Form in U.S. Proletarian Fiction, 1929–1941* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993).
13. Denning, *The Cultural Front*, xv.
14. Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 107.
15. Brinkley, foreward to *Survey*, v–vii. Unlike radical writers of the 1920s who adopted an alienated posture toward America and who, in turn, often became expatriates, writers of the 1930s worked to find or more accurately rejuvenate the American

literary tradition. Modernism, which was at the core of the anxious relationship between writers and the nation in the 1920s, "ceased to be represented as a series of abstract and permanent losses . . . and came to seem a moment in narration" in the 1930s. Writers working during the New Deal effectively disentangled Americanism from capitalism—a relationship that had seemed utterly fused to the writers of the 1920s. Granville Hicks and other critics lent important support to this project by tracing within American letters a "great tradition" of protest against the "'mad advance' of capital." Caren Irr, *Suburb of Dissent: Cultural Politics in the United States and Canada during the 1930s* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 41–42.

16. Historians differ on the end point of culture and New Deal politics in the 1930s. On culture Denning, for example, argues that the Popular Front produced what he calls a "laboring of American Culture" that, to some degree, still resonates today. For differing views on the New Deal, see Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).
17. Irr, *Suburb of Dissent*, 14.
18. There had been an exception to this, he noted. Rosenberg wrote, "'Social' novels of the past few years have shown the worker's home life, his food, his clothing, his struggle to meet his needs, his organizations, and his friends." However, he concluded that these novels have all but ignored the "productive, and hence powerful and dynamic, core of [the worker's] existence." *Men at Work* sought to change that oversight. Rosenberg, ed., preface to "Men at Work," 4.
19. Rosenberg, ed., preface to "Men at Work," 1.
20. The decade of 1930s witnessed unprecedented success in unionizing workers. In many industries strikes were an essential element of the complex mechanism used to gain collective bargaining. Too often, however, strikes and other job actions are seen solely as an effort by workers to make gains on bread-and-butter issues like wages and benefits. Historically, strikes have more often centered on workers' desire to win control over what labor historians call shop-floor issues. First and foremost, they include the pace and conditions of work. It is no surprise, then, that Rosenberg stressed particular elements of Basílico Garduño's story.
21. Rosenberg, ed., preface to "Men at Work," 2.
22. During the 1930s Rosenberg espoused a Marxist perspective arguing that revolutionary change would come out of the organization of industrial workers.
23. On the promotion of the U.S. landscape and "native" culture as distinct from that of Europe, see David Noble, "Revocation of the Anglo Protestant Monopoly: Aesthetic Authority and the American Landscape," *Soundings* 79 (Spring–Summer 1996): 1001–20. As far as American exceptionalism's inherent blindness to American imperialism in the U.S. West and other locales, we can also trace the intellectual tradition taken up by some intellectuals in the 1930s back to the work of nineteenth-century American historians. William H. Prescott, John L. Motley, Francis Parkman, and Hubert H. Bancroft projected an image of America—what they defined as more or less the lands encompassing the current United States—as exceptional from those of Europe. Furthermore, each of these historians rationalized the conquest and colonization of the original inhabitants of the land by expunging them

from any version of the settling of America. If Native peoples were mentioned or if the problem of slavery reared its ugly head, the official line was that the oppressed deserved their oppression, that they in fact would be better off following the civilizing influence of Anglo Protestants. As Noble has shown, Prescott, in particular, took this line of reasoning in his creation of a narrative on the conquest of lands south of the United States.

24. Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998); and David Anthony Tyeeme Clark and Joane Nagel, "White Men, Red Masks: Appropriations of 'Indian' Manhood in Imagined Wests," *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West*, ed. Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau (New York: Routledge, 2001), 109–30.
25. Jean O'Brien has detailed a similar process in "'Vanishing' Indians in Nineteenth-Century New England: Local Historians' Erasure of Still-Present Peoples," (unpublished paper in author's possession). I would like to thank Jean O'Brien for sharing her work with me.
26. Captivated by the premodern lifestyles and what they saw as an authentic culture, numerous Anglos from the East had begun visiting for extended periods or even settling in Santa Fe during the 1920s. Frank Applegate and Mary Austin, and the artists Jozef Bakos, Walter Mruk, Fremont Ellis, Will Shuster, and Willard Nash—collectively known as the Cinco Pintores—as well as Aileen Nusbaum, who would serve as the director of the New Mexico Writers' Project for a period, were some of the key members of what has come to be known as the Santa Fe colony. Weigle and Briggs explain, "The landscape and ritual of Hispano villages proved particularly appealing to this crowd." Primary among these rituals were the public acts of penance performed by the Pious Fraternity of Our Father Jesus Nazarite, better known as the Penitentes. Besides the *Hermanos*, Brown's visitors had an abiding interest in the villagers of Córdova. Applegate, for example, struck up a friendship with José Dolores López, a Córdovan carpenter and carver, whom he urged to focus on religious iconography and sell his wares at the Santa Fe Annual Fiesta. Weigle and Briggs, "Lorin W. Brown in Taos and Cordova," 17–18. Ramón Gutiérrez has offered a sharp critique of the Santa Fe colony. Ramón Gutiérrez, "Crucifixion, Slavery, and Death: The Hermanos Penitentes of the Southwest," in *Over the Edge: Remapping the American West*, ed. Valerie Matsumoto and Blake Allmendinger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 261–67. Many of these Anglos held views shaped by Progressive Era politics and, thus, also believed that premodern New Mexico was a grossly inefficient society. See Forrest, *Preservation of the Village*, xviii, 103.
27. Because of his premature death, Lorin Brown Sr. was not a major influence on his son's life, but notably, he shared Vicente Martínez's belief in socialism.
28. Weigle and Briggs, "Lorin W. Brown in Taos and Cordova," 3–7.
29. In that time he produced a prodigious amount of ethnographic data, in his words, on the "various facets of Hispano or Spanish-American culture." His manuscripts number close to two hundred and include the transcription of numerous folktales and folksongs, field reports from his travels among the northern New Mexican villages he called home, and interpretive and impressionistic sketches of the life of the

people in these places. Brown, *Hispano Folklife of New Mexico*, ix–x. Brown did most of his fieldwork prior to 1939. He describes the first years as the most rewarding and difficult. The threat of dismissal was a constant companion; the New Mexico staff lost almost a third of its workforce in 1937.dropping from sixty to forty-two. Weigle and Briggs, "Lorin W. Brown in Taos and Cordova," 19, 23.

30. This opinion is advanced by Weigle and Briggs in "Lorin W. Brown in Taos and Cordova," 3–7, 9–10. Some contemporaries clearly did not agree with the New Mexico FWP's attention to Hispano and Indian culture. Forrest summarizes the history of Federal Arts projects in New Mexico in *Preservation of the Village*, 120–24.
31. "Basílico Garduño" is one of Brown's stories that takes place not in Córdova proper but in the surrounding countryside. El Cerro Redondo, now often called Redondo Peak on maps, under whose shadow Basílico Garduño was camped when Brown first happened upon him is forty-five miles, as the crow flies, west of Córdova and forty-five miles northwest of Santa Fe. The high grazing lands remained detached from the increasingly developed area around Córdova and thus served as an even more ideal locale than the village to investigate the premodern world.
32. Weigle and Briggs, "Lorin W. Brown in Taos and Cordova," 13–15. Much of Forrest's *Preservation of the Village* either directly addresses or alludes to these economic, social, and cultural changes.
33. In *Hispano Folklife of New Mexico*, Weigle and Briggs argue that federal relief programs prevented widespread starvation in these years and that the massive federal projects of World War II, particularly Los Alamos National Laboratory, and the service-sector jobs associated with these projects provided a permanent solution to Córdova's economic woes. Weigle and Briggs report that $1,143,051 in relief income came to the Hispanos of the upper Río Grande Valley in 1936. Weigle and Briggs, "Lorin W. Brown in Taos and Cordova," 14.
34. For Brown, "the WPA stories are all that remain" of New Mexico's earlier lifestyles and work ways. Brown, *Hispano Folklife of New Mexico*, ix–x.
35. One area rich for continued investigation is the role of ethnicity and race in the national- and state-level cultural imagination and how those imaginings impacted the material conditions of life for New Mexicans. Abundant today are signs that this investigation is increasingly of interest to historians. See, for example, the website "Sin Nombre: Hispana and Hispano Artists of the New Deal Era," http://wpasinnombre.org/; and Tey Marianna Nunn, *Sin Nombre: Hispana and Hispano Artists of the New Deal Era* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001).