
Basques leaving the Old World for the New drew upon a centuries old migratory tradition. While America was not their sole destination, many came to the New World to rescue themselves from the disgrace of selling the family home, which signified the end of a lineage, or as young sons who could not inherit property. Once in the New World, they made extensive use of Basque boardinghouses to adjust to American life in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In *Home Away from Home* Jeronima Echeverria skillfully challenges the image of a West won by the lone cowboy, or, in this case, sheepherder. The work, relying on the assumption that ethnic associations acted as incubators in American society to facilitate the assimilation of Basque sheepherders, uses meticulous research in city directories and archives, interviews with Basque immigrants, and personal reminiscences to produce a study that is truly Western in scope. Echeverria's work places the California experience in context by describing Basque boardinghouses in Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, and New York City.

Echeverria demonstrates how Basque boardinghouses facilitated the transmutation of Old World customs. The boardinghouses, themselves a "New World institution," transformed the concepts of Basque livelihood and mutual aid. Basques, unknown for shepherding in the Old World, became synonymous with it in the New World, and the boardinghouses became a central site for the recruitment of Basque sheepherders. The first neighbor tradition, a form of mutual aid, was similarly carried into and transformed in the New World. Instead of neighbors, hotelkeepers became the first line of mutual aid in the New World. In particular, female hoteleros, became the Basque immigrants' second mothers. As second mothers the women also broke the mold of the refined lady, loyal helpmate, or bad women characteristic of the West and helped provide the "elaborate support system" Basque sheepers and their families needed "in order to succeed." (228-229)

In the world of boardinghouses, not all boardinghouses played the same role, and Echeverria skillfully discusses the roles various boardinghouses played in facilitating the entry, travel, settlement, and entertainment of Basques by region and function. Moreover, Echeverria sensitively describes the larger changes in opportunities, public sentiments, and immigration and land-use legislation that affected the flow of Basque immigrants to the American West. Echeverria effectively demonstrates the impact of each of these trends on the rise and fall of Basque boardinghouses from the zenith of the American West boardinghouse between 1890 and 1930 to their fall after 1950 and the transformation of their purpose from the early years of the twentieth century to the mid-century.

At the same time the work does suffer from some weaknesses; mainly, that the case for cultural maintenance is more pronounced, and rather than telescoping the story of the boardinghouses, much repetition is produced by the focus in boardinghouses community by community. In particular, it is more clear how the boardinghouses maintained Basque identity than how the boardinghouses promoted assimilation.

The strengths and weaknesses of Echeverria's argument about Basque cultural maintenance and assimilation are symbolized in the life-story of Lenxto Echanis, who
arrived in America at the beginning of the 20th century and relied upon Basque boardinghouses to assimilate. Echanis' story introduces the book. Echeverria tells us that the boardinghouses provided Echanis with various services and introduced him to his wife, with whom he continued to occasionally stay at boardinghouses for over sixty years in order to socialize.

Ironically Echanis' adaptation does not equate to cultural assimilation. Echeverria notes that Echanis' pivotal job is provided by the Bastanchury ranch. When Echanis "assimilates" at the ranch, he becomes a foreman who speaks Spanish and English, but only after being asked by a Mexican "What kind of a Spaniard are you that you can't speak the language?" (10). Unnoted, moreover is the significant fact that the Bastanchuaries are a Basque family and that many of the marriages noted in the book are to co-ethnics, despite the fact that Echeverria asserts that in America the Basques discarded the Old World practice of marrying within their group. The process of cultural assimilation actually appears more clearly with one of the later and less noted interviewees, Nicasio Beristain, who states on page 175: "I learned to speak English talking to Vicki Letemendi's children." Beristain highlights the importance of stressing earlier the pivotal role that children, more than mothers, played as conduits to the larger American society, thus promoting cultural assimilation.

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