

1.2 Intangible values of cultural routes.

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The tangible and intangible

The ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes (2008) underscores the importance of intangible values when identifying and working with cultural routes. Progress has been made in identifying, documenting, and protecting a cultural route's tangible properties such as buildings (e.g., churches, residences, public buildings) and structures (e.g., bridges, canals, and the actual roadbed itself). Equally important are the intangibles, and how tangible and intangible values are intertwined. Buildings and landscapes, after all, are containers of experiences, and routes are avenues along which these experiences that define the route are developed and expressed. Intangible values that inform a cultural route are infinite, and can comprise such reciprocal influences as "religion, ritual, language, festival, gastronomy, music, literature, architecture, dance, fine arts, handicrafts, scientific advances, technical and technological skills" (ICOMOS Cultural Routes Charter).

This presentation will present examples of intangible elements by using the trans-boundary cultural route of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (the Royal Road to the Interior) as an example, with the focus being their influences along the northern part of the route located in the United States. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro is part of El Camino Real Intercontinental system that connected the Spanish colonial networks of travel, (including terrestrial and maritime) during the 15th to the 19th centuries. Tying Spain's colonial capital of Mexico City to its northern frontier in distant New Mexico (USA), El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro spans three centuries, two countries, and 2,500 kilometers. The route was blazed atop a network of ancient trails by American Indians that had been used for millennia before the arrival of European conquerors/colonists. Three-quarters of the route is located in what is today Mexico with the northern quarter located in the United States. The political border that today bisects the camino was created in 1848 through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. For centuries prior to the creation of the political border, the reciprocal flow of ideas and

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traditions was unimpeded. But was this flow stopped with the creation of the border? This paper will show, using many of my own personal experiences, that intangible elements that initially helped define the route continue to evolve, despite the attempts by the government of the United States to erect a physical barrier. Many influences that have become part of United States culture can trace their roots to Mexico, Spain, and the north African and mid-Eastern countries using the Camino Real as the conduit. Particularly along the borderlands, these traditions have morphed into new forms, such as the melding of Spanish and English (“Spanglish”), music traditions, food, etc. Cultural routes comprise common heritage that goes beyond national borders, building blocks that are a substantive part of a whole. As the ICOMOS Cultural Routes Charter states: “The intangible aspects of a cultural route are fundamental for understanding its significance and its associative heritage values. Therefore, material aspects must always be studied in connection with other values of an intangible nature” (ICOMOS cultural routes charter)”.



Fig. 6 Map of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

Introduction

I grew up, along with my six brothers and sisters, on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro next to the Acequia Madre (mother ditch) in the village in which I was raised. It is a place called Mesilla, located next to Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA, fifty-six kilometers north of the U.S./Mexican border. I was one of two Anglo students in school (one quarter of my blood is Hispanic), the rest of the students being Hispanic/Latino - either recent immigrants or descendants of those settlers who had first arrived on this elevated tableland in the Rio Grande Valley during the mid-19th century to grow their crops and raise their children. Most of its inhabitants have roots in what today is Mexico or are descendants of mestizos (mixed European and American Indian ancestry) or indigenous populations who once lived farther north along the Rio Grande.

My father, J. Paul Taylor, grew up on a farm between Mesilla and the international border. The youngest of seven children, his father was descended from English and Scotch-Irish, his mother was Hispanic, being descended from Juan de Vaca who was a captain in Coronado's exploratory expedition of the U.S. Southwest in 1540, and from a number of settlers on Juan de Oñate's colonizing expedition to northern New Mexico in 1598, the first Euro-American colonizing expedition into what is now the United States (U.S.). My mother was descended from Irish-Catholic and German blood. She was raised directly on the banks of the Rio Grande on the U.S. side of the border on the edge of El Paso, Texas at the cement plant where her father was foreman. Daily life along the Rio Grande had a profound influence on her later work as a respected authority of border studies. My parents had each visited Mesilla in their youth and had both liked the small-town atmosphere. In 1951, they purchased the Barela-Reynolds property on the west side of the plaza, a former commercial establishment with an extensive residence in the back that figured prominently in the history of the Chihuahua Trail (the later version of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro) from the 1850s through the 1870s. This is the house in which I was raised.

What inspired me, in part, to choose the subject for this paper was the fact that my parents' inherent love of the borderland culture led each of them to write a paper on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in a 1999 publication.¹⁹ My mother wrote of Cura Ramon Ortiz, a priest of Spanish birth who was a Mexican patriot, who championed the poor and disenfranchized, and who was largely responsible for bringing families from the flood-stricken areas below El Paso del Norte (present day Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico) to settle Mesilla in the late 1840s. My father wrote an article titled "La Caravana – A vehicle for the transmission of culture" that is about the fluid exchange of intangible values along the camino real about which I am writing this paper.

¹⁹ *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, Volume Two*. Bureau of Land Management, Cultural Resources Series No. 13. 1999

So this was the cultural milieu in which I was raised, oblivious at the time of how life on the borderlands and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro would shape my life and how it has shaped the lives of millions over the past four centuries.

Intangible Aspects of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in the United States

Some examples of intangible elements that have influenced the U.S. section of the cultural route are presented below.

Religion and Rituals

Along with my brothers, I was an altar boy at our village church of San Albino located only a three-minute walk from our home, serving Mass for seven days a week for seven years in the 1950s and 60s. I assisted at baptisms, weddings, funerals that were conducted all in Latin and Spanish, and all bearing witness to centuries of tradition that had been brought up the Camino Real and mixed with indigenous rites of the mestizos and American Indians of the region, and with Anglo blood that had entered the valley in the mid-nineteenth century. The elders in the congregation were those who had been born when the village was originally settled in the mid-nineteenth century by mestizos downriver in the El Paso del Norte region – bringing with them an amalgamation of beliefs and passions formed by American Indians, mestizos, Spaniards, and mulatos (persons of mixed white and black ancestry).



Fig. 7 Example of family chapel with religious icons. Paul and Mary Taylor home, Mesilla, New Mexico, USA

I remember, annual processions such as the *Santo Entierro* (the holy burial) that took place around the plaza on Good Friday just before Easter, as well as processions on the feast day of San Albino and the blessing of the fields and *acequias* (ditches) in the spring. *Las Posadas*, a centuries old folk drama, would take place during the chilly evenings approaching Christmas where *bultos* (statues) of Joseph and Mary on a donkey would be taken from one household to the next until there was lodging found at the final home, all the while singing verses to *Las Posadas* in Spanish. Also, before Christmas, the drama of “*Los Pastores*” (the shepherds) was performed in communities along the route. The largest observance of Good Friday, just before Easter, in the southwestern part of the United States takes place near the Camino Real at Chimayo in northern New Mexico, a small village in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains where it was reported that a miraculous source of healing dirt was discovered that pilgrims today from throughout the region flock to for devotion and healing. Over 30,000 pilgrims take part in this annual observance.

The feast day of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Our Lady of Guadalupe) is celebrated widely throughout the United States by Hispanics (and Anglos as well) on December 12, as it is throughout the Western Hemisphere. The Guadalupe is the most widely revered version of Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. Her veneration merges Roman Catholic beliefs with those of the indigenous religions in the Americas. In the Mesilla Valley, it is celebrated by the indigenous settlement of Tortugas, leading pilgrims from the village up to Tortugas Mountain and back – a devout trek of fifteen kilometers. Similar devotions and pilgrimages are held up and down the camino real, and throughout the southwestern part of the United States, all as a result of the transmission and mixing of intangible values along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, and other historic roads emanating from Mexico.



Fig. 8 Santiago, a 19th century New Mexico religious santo.

Another example of religious devotion that has developed over 400 years by Hispanics in northern New Mexico is represented by the statue of La Conquistadora. This religious icon came from Spain across the Atlantic Ocean (a part of the Camino Real Intercontinental), possibly as early as the 1500s, and made its way up El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro in a 1626 caravan. During the 1680 Pueblo Revolt when all Spaniards were expelled by the mistreated Indian population in northern New Mexico, it was rescued from the burning church of San Miguel in Santa Fe and was taken by



Fig. 10 Pilgrims on top of Tortugas Mountain, Las Cruces, New Mexico, USA



Fig. 10 Altar with homage to Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Taylor home, Mesilla, New Mexico, USA

the fleeing colonists to El Paso de Norte, 530 kilometers south. There, the colonists remained in exile for thirteen years before returning to resettle northern New Mexico, with the statue, under different rules for co-existing with the native populations. The statue was named La Conquistadora and has been the symbol of Hispanic faith in northern New Mexico ever since. As a gesture toward continued efforts of reconciliation with the American Indian populations, many of whom over the centuries had melded their religious beliefs and customs with Catholicism, the statue was renamed Nuestra Señora de la Paz in 2002.

Language

Despite the establishment of the border separating Mexico and the United States in 1848, the flow and evolution of language has been ever-present along the transborder cultural route. This type of evolution is common anywhere in the world at the nexus of merging cultures, with cultural routes being a main agent for this change. In the early days of 17th century colonization, villages in northern New Mexico at the northern end of the camino real were settled by Spanish colonists who brought with them the Castilian Spanish language. These villages remained isolated until around World War II, continuing speaking the Spanish of their peninsular ancestors. Even today, words and *dichos* (sayings) from the colonial period that are not in use elsewhere in the former Spanish colonies and even rarely spoken in Spain, still surface in northern village conversations.

To underscore the importance of the Spanish language to our regional cultural identity, New Mexico was admitted to the U.S. as a recognized state, only after Hispanic state leaders (including some of my ancestors) insisted that Spanish be recognized as a language that could be used in official documents and that Spanish speakers could continue to participate in the political process and the education system would not discriminate against them. Ironically, when I was in elementary school in the 1950s, it was prohibited by Anglo teachers for students to speak Spanish in school, but almost everyone did at recess when the teachers were not within earshot. In the 1960s this attitude changed. My father was instrumental in introducing a program into the local school curriculum that became one of the main models for the national bi-lingual program. This program was an immersion of students in Spanish and English by using both languages to teach classes. There are also indigenous words from the northern Indian pueblos and Athabaskan Indian tribes that have merged into local dialects.

Along the borderlands throughout the American Southwest, a fluid form of Spanish has continued evolving. Colloquially called Spanglish, it is a mixture of Spanish and English and is common everywhere: grocery stores, restaurants, on construction sites, at homes, and in schools. I grew up hearing and speaking Spanglish, enhanced by a sing-song accent in expressing ourselves. Spanglish is frowned upon by many

purists, (both Anglos and Spanish) who believe it contaminates the original languages, but many understand that this is how language evolves over the centuries.

Literature

The earliest history of a geographic area in what is now the United States was written by Gaspar Pérez de Villagr  in his epic poem *Historia de la Nueva M xico*, published in Salamanca, Spain in 1610. The official historian of the Juan de O ate's first colonizing expedition of 1598, Villagr  published a thirty-four-canto epic poem that chronicles the hardships and brutal warfare of the expedition.²⁰

For those who could read during the Spanish Colonial, Mexican, and U.S. Territorial periods, books were important in shaping thoughts and philosophies. As an example, when Captain Manuel Francisco Delgado (my great, great, great grandfather) died in 1815 in Santa Fe, he left an extensive will that included a list of twenty-five books with such works as *Writings of Columbus*, *Flos Santorum* (Book of Saints), *Letters of Charles Week*, and the *Hebrew Monarchy*. From these titles, one can gain an insight into Delgado's values and beliefs – intangible elements that were part of northern New Mexico culture during the early 19th century. When the Santa Fe Trail (that could be considered a cultural route) was opened to New Mexico in 1821, there was much more printed material that came from the eastern part of the United States and northern Europe that also helped shape the values of those living along the camino real.

Festivals and celebrations

Quinceras, the celebrations of young women turning fifteen and coming of age, are practiced widely among Hispanic populations along the borderlands and up and down the camino real in New Mexico and west Texas. Typically, with young women dressed to their finest; mariachi music and lots of traditional food is shared with family, *compadres* (godparents), and friends. There are annual *Diez y Seis de Septiembre* fiestas on the plazas of towns along the camino. This date celebrates the 1810 launch for Mexican independence from Spain and is filled with music, food booths, dances, greased pole contests, and travelling carnivals. The town of Mesilla has celebrated the 16th of September fiesta probably since independence was declared in Mexico 200 years ago. *Matanzas*, the butchering of a pig to feed families on special occasions like weddings, political rallies, family reunions, are common along the camino real. Every part of the pig is used, and result in delicacies such as *chicharrones* and *chile colorado* cooked in *jarras* (large copper kettles).

²⁰ A History of New Mexico, G sper P rez de Villagr , Alcal —1610 | Hispanic American Historical Review | Duke University Press (dukeupress.edu)

Agriculture/ranching

Agricultural and ranching practices that are today prevalent in the United States have been greatly influenced by traditions brought up the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and other caminos emanating from Mexico during the 16th through the 19th centuries. Classic depictions of the western United States are represented by iconic images of rodeos, cowboys, cattle drives, roundups, and sprawling ranches. Many words associated with agriculture and ranching like alfalfa, rodeo, and corral that were introduced via the camino real are now considered part of the English language.

The horse transformed the Western United States by creating a much more efficient manner for populations to move from one place to another. Mules, burros, oxen, as well as sheep and cattle were part of these changes introduced in large part by the Spanish through the camino real.

The system of managing and sharing water in an arid environment, dating back thousands of years to the Mid-East and North Africa via the Iberian Peninsula, was brought up the camino real by the early Spanish colonizers and melded with the American Indian traditions of water management. In 2014, an unusual event took place when a number of members from the New Mexico Acequia Association, ancestors of whom have been carrying on the tradition of managing scarce water in northern New Mexico for over four hundred years, traveled to Valencia, Spain to reunite with fellow water managers and to receive the medal of honor from the Tribunal de las Aguas de Valencia. Valencia is the location of the oldest water court in the Western World, dating to the 10th century. Every Thursday at noon, at the Door of the Apostles of the Valencia Cathedral, members of the Valencia water tribunal meet to deliberate water cases. In 2010, UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) recognized the Tribunal de las Aguas de Valencia and the Consejo de Hombres Buenos de la Huerta de Murcia for enduring contributions



Fig. 11 Acequia in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA



Fig. 12 Watering the fields, El Rancho de las Golondrinas, New Mexico, USA

to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.²¹ This meeting of New Mexico acequia water managers and counterparts in Spain where the traditions emanated from, is an excellent example of intangible elements that were brought up the camino real and are still practiced in northern New Mexico.

Gastronomy

The gastronomy along the camino real in the United States is a mix of Hispanic and indigenous cuisines, along with Anglo influences that have continued to evolve through the centuries. Tomatoes, corn, and chocolate are early types of food and drink that came up from Mexico before Spanish contact. Chile has been grown and experimented with in the Mesilla Valley for centuries and during the 1900s, a man named Fabian Garcia from Chihuahua, Mexico was instrumental in developing strains of chile through his research at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces that today are distributed world-wide. Garcia was recently inducted into the U.S. National Agricultural Center's Hall of Fame, joining the ranks of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Eli Whitney.²² Today "Mexican food" permeates USA culture, ranging from fast food chains like Taco Bell to fine cuisine found in the best restaurants throughout the country.



Fig. 14 "Food truck" in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA



Fig. 13 Old friends enjoying red enchiladas at a restaurant in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

²¹ *The Hermanamiento of the Acequias of Valencia and New Mexico Green Fire Times*, Armando Lamadrid. Green Fire Times, Volume 7, Number 2. GFT-February-2015-V7N2.pdf (greenfiretimes.com)

²² <https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/news/education/nmsu/2019/08/31/fabian-garcia-nmsu-become-first-hispanic-national-agricultural-hall-fame/2178554001/>

Architecture

Even though formed adobe bricks were used well before the arrival of the Spanish in many parts of Latin America, their use in what is now the southwestern part of the United States was non-existent until the Spanish brought the concept to the region via the camino real. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in the U.S. Southwest, earth had been in use for thousands of years by the indigenous populations as a common building material using types of construction such as puddled and coursed adobe, and *jacal*. Earth, along with stone and timber, were the locally available building materials and defined the built environment for centuries before trade from the eastern part of the United States began with the Santa Fe Trail in 1821, and the subsequent flood of building materials that arrived with the railroad after 1880. Through the centuries, the melding of indigenous and European methods of building with earth has resulted in a regionally popular style called Spanish-Pueblo Revival. The Laws of the Indies; legislation enacted in the 17th century by Spanish monarchs to regulate the social, political and economic life of the American territories of the Hispanic Monarchy; dictated the layout of towns, the concepts of which were transmitted via the camino real system are still evident in townscapes today throughout the U.S. Southwest.



Fig. 16 Example of melding of indigenous and Hispanic adobe architecture, Taos, New Mexico, USA



Fig. 15 Making adobes in Mesilla, New Mexico, USA

Music and Dance

The music of northern New Mexico and along the borderlands in New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and California is vibrant and very much alive today, having been directly influenced by musical traditions brought up through the camino real system through the centuries. A recent exhibition at the acclaimed Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico titled *Musica Buena – Hispano Folk Music of New Mexico*, presents a resilient musical tradition influenced by early *alabados* (Spanish language hymns), plays (like the *Moros y Cristianos – Moors and Christians*), *corridos* (ballads), the *matachin* tradition performed with voice and instruments such as the guitar, mandolin, pito (whistle), accordion and violin in public venues such as *solones de baile* (dance halls), fiestas, and *resolanos* (jam sessions).

New Mexican's love of music and dance is also reflected in the fact that the largest and most active flamenco dance schools and troupes outside of Spain are located in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Taos.²³ The genesis of this fascination with dance and flamenco came, in part, from the fandangos that were written about by Anglo reporters after the arrival of the Santa Fe Trail following the independence of Mexico from Spain in the 19th century.

Other examples of Intangible elements

The arts and crafts in New Mexico have been heavily influenced by the traditions that were brought up the Camino Real. Museums have regular shows that exhibit the evolution of American Indian and Hispanic arts through the centuries. Today, there are annual outdoor events such as the Indian Market and the Hispanic Market that attract over 100,000 visitors, making up a substantial part of the annual income for the artisans, and associated hospitality services such as hotels and restaurants. This has created a Renaissance in traditions that include weaving, pottery, jewelry (filigree), religious art, and tinwork.

²³ <http://www.elpalacio.org/2015/12/flamenco-from-spain-to-new-mexico/>

Conclusions

This paper has focused on intangible elements that have flowed north to the United States. It should be mentioned that of equal consequence are intangible elements that have flowed south into Mexico from the U.S. including fast food, modified seeds, industry models, etc.

When we speak of the cultural route of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, does it continue being a living route serving as the transmitter of ideas, beliefs, desires, religions, traditions, and technologies? How has the exchange of cultural traditions and communication over the past centuries changed since the time a letter took up to six months to be delivered from Mexico City to the capital of New Mexico in Santa Fe? How has technology changed the aspects of reciprocal exchanges of thoughts, ideas, traditions, and customs? The examples cited in this paper illustrate that the flow of ideas and traditions that initially defined the route continue to evolve between Mexico and the United States, despite international borders and the passage of time. Santa Fe, at the northern end of the camino real, was listed by UNESCO as a Creative City. In many ways this designation happened because of the influences that flowed along the Camino Real through the centuries.²⁴ These creative juices in the United States continue to be nourished by what started with the camino real, and now are spread through interstate highways, plane travel, and virtual influences from the internet.

I believe the essence of cultural change is transmitted most effectively by individuals and families who physically travel from one country to another, in this case from Mexico to the United States or visa-versa. Whether this physical exchange be through commerce, or vacations, or permanently moving from one country to another, it is the human being who is the most effective transmitter of culture, augmented by technologies such as the internet and television.



Fig. 17 USA/Mexico border at El Paso, Texas – Juarez, Mexico

²⁴ <https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/santa-fe>