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## Guide to the Basques of Harney County, Oregon, Oral History Collection, 1976-2001

### Title

Basques of Harney County, Oregon, Oral History Collection (OH 04)

### Dates

1976-2001 (inclusive)  
1976-1978 (bulk)

### Creator

Jackson, Royal G.

### Summary

The Basques of Harney County, Oregon, Oral History Collection consists of transcripts and audiotapes of 15 oral history interviews conducted in 1976 as part of an inventory of historic sites in Harney County. Basque shepherders immigrated to southeastern Oregon from the 1890s through the 1920s and worked as itinerant herders on the mountain ranges of Harney County until the 1930s.

### Quantity

0.5 cubic foot, including 28 audiotapes (2 boxes)

### Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research.

Oregon State University Libraries, University Archives  
121 The Valley Library  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, OR 97331-4501  
Phone: 541-737-2165  
Email: [archives@oregonstate.edu](mailto:archives@oregonstate.edu)  
Web: <http://osulibrary.oregonstate.edu/archives>

Finding aid prepared by Elizabeth Nielsen, 2008.

## Historical Note

Basque sheepherders immigrated from northern Spain and southwestern France to southeastern Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada from the 1890s until the early 1920s. They worked as itinerant herders on the mountain ranges of Harney County until the 1930s and often spent the winters in Basque boarding houses or hotels, such as the Star Hotel in Burns. The Taylor Grazing Act, drought, and the depression brought an end to the sheep industry in Harney County.

The Basques of Harney County, Oregon, Oral History Project was part of an inventory of historic sites in Harney County conducted by Royal G. Jackson and Jennifer A. Lee in 1976 and was funded by the OSU Research Council and the Harney County Oral History Program. Jackson was an Associate Professor in the Department of Resource Recreation Management at Oregon State University; Lee was a student in that department fulfilling an internship requirement.

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged in two series: I. Audiotapes and II. Transcripts. Some of the interviews were previously assigned individual numbers; the OH04 item numbers were assigned by the Archives and the 986- numbers by the Horner Museum.

## Content Description

The Basques in Harney County, Oregon, Oral History Collection consists of audiotapes and transcripts of oral history interviews conducted in 1976 by Royal G. Jackson and Jennifer A. Lee. The collection includes audiotapes and transcripts for 14 interviews and a transcript only of the interview with Alsna Barainca.

The oral histories address a variety of topics pertaining to the Basques in Harney County, including their work as sheepherders; Basque food and festivals; use of the Basque language; discrimination and prejudice against Basques; the Basque community in Burns, Oregon; other towns in the region, including Nampa, Idaho, and McDermitt on the Oregon-Nevada border; and Basque hotels and boarding houses including the Star Hotel and the Commercial Hotel in Burns.

The interviewees ranged in age from 30 to late 70s at the time of the interviews in 1976. Most of the interviewees were born in Spain and came to the United States in the 1910s and 1920s; five of the interviewees came to the United States between 1954 and 1970. Several interviewees were born in the United States.

## Preferred Citation

Basques of Harney County, Oregon, Oral History Collection (OH 04), Oregon State University Archives, Corvallis, Oregon.

## Custodial History

The audiotapes and copies of the 1977 transcripts were deposited by the interviewers with the Horner Museum and subsequently transferred from the Horner Museum to the Archives in 1996.

## Related Material

This collection is a component of the [Oregon Multicultural Archives](#), which documents the lives and activities of African American, Asian American, Latino and Native American communities of Oregon. Other materials pertaining to Harney County are available in the [Extension Service \(RG 111\)](#) and [Agricultural Experiment Station \(RG 25\)](#) Records and the [Edwin Russel Jackman Papers](#).

## Subjects

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the OSU Libraries Catalog. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons, or places should search the catalog (<http://oasis.oregonstate.edu>) using these headings.

## Organizations

### Topics

Basque Americans--Oregon--Harney County--Interviews.

Basque language--Oregon--Harney County.

Cookery, Basque.

Folk dancing, Basque--Oregon--Harney County.

Shepherding--Oregon--Harney County.

### **Geographical Names**

Burns (Or.)

### **Forms of Materials in the Collection**

Audiocassettes.

Oral histories (document genres)

### **Other Creators**

Harney County Oral History Program (Or.)

Lee, Jennifer A.

Oregon State University. Research Council.

Purkey, Amanda B.

## **Series Outline**

Series I. Audiotapes, 1976

Series II. Transcripts, 1977-2001

## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Box

#### Series I. Audiotapes, 1976

The audiotapes include an original field recording of the interview and a duplicate use copy. Use copies of the unnumbered interviews were made in 2001.

- 2 OH04:01; 986-1-45. Santos Arguinchona [Arguinchona was born in 1900 in Spain and came to Winnemucca, Nevada in 1918. The Arguinchona interview provides information about shepherding and camptending, Basque festivals, the Star Hotel in Burns, Basques in Burns, Argentina, and McDermitt.]
- 2 OH04:02; 986-1-46. Carlos Ereno [Ereno was born in Mampa, Idaho, in 1922; his parents came to Idaho directly from Spain in the 1905 (father) and 1909 (mother). The Ereno interview provides information about Nampa, Idaho; Spain; and Spanish politics.]
- 2 OH04:03; 986-1-47. Jean Harrit [Harrit was born in France in 1914 and came to Oregon in 1939 to join his brother who was a shepherd. The Harrit interview provides information about Basques in Burns, shepherding, the Hines Lumber Mill, and the Crane Land Sheep Company.]
- 2 OH04:04; 986-1-48. Martina Larraneta [Martina Larraneta was born in 1901 in Spain and came to San Francisco in 1916. In 1920 she married a shepherd and moved to Oregon. Martina Larraneta's interview provides information about Basques in Burns, Basque social activities, the Commercial Hotel in Burns, and San Francisco.]
- 2 OH04:05; 986-1-49. Mike Larraneta [Mike Larraneta came to Winnemucca, Nevada, from Spain in 1920, at the age of 22 years. Mike Larraneta's interview provides information about working as a carpenter; Winnemucca, Nevada; and Spain.]
- 2 OH04:06; 986-1-50. David Mallea [David Mallea was born in Jordan Valley, Oregon, in 1922. His parents came to Idaho from Spain in 1902 (father) and 1905 (mother). His father worked in the mines for several years and then as a shepherd. The Mallea interview provides information about Jordan Valley, Spain, and Basques in Burns.]
- 2 OH04:07; 986-1-51. Marguerite Stevens [Marguerite Stevens' parents came to Nevada from Spain in the early 1900s; her father was a shepherd. The Stevens interview provides information about Basque food and social events.]
- 2 OH04:08; 986-1-52. Cecilia Urizer [Urizer was born in Spain in 1898 and immigrated to McDermitt, on the Oregon-Nevada border, in 1916. The Urizer interview provides information about McDermitt, Andrews, the Star Hotel, Basques in Burns, and Spain.]
- 2 Maria Baraibar [Maria Baraibar came to the United States from Spain in 1970. Maria Baraibar's interview describes her arrival in the United States from Spain; learning English; Basque families and friends in Burns; and children learning culture and language.]
- 2 Nicholas Baraibar [Nicholas Baraibar came to the United States from Spain in 1955, at the age of 16, to be a shepherd. Nicholas Baraibar's interview includes information about shepherding, Basque hotels in Burns, Basque friends and family, and Basque festivals and social events.]
- 2 Josephine Ebar [Ebar came to the United States in 1921 from Spain. The Ebar interview provides information on shepherding; the Central Hotel in Burns and other Basque hotels; traditional Basque dances; and Basque food and cooking.]
- 2 Marcelino Osa [Marcelina Osa was born in Spain in 1921 and came to Oregon with his family when he was five years old. Osa's interview describes growing up in Burns as a Basque; speaking Basque, Spanish, and English as a child; shepherding; traditional Basque dances and festivals; Basque prejudice in Burns; Basque hotels and boarding houses; Native Americans; and the importance of the preservation of Basque culture and language.]
- 2 Nicholas Vidando [Vidando came to the United States in 1954 at the age of 21. The Vidando interview provides information about shepherding; Basque traditions, dances, and games; and misunderstandings among Basques in Burns.]
- 2 Joe Zabala [Zabala came to the United States in 1957 when he was 10 years old. The Zabala interview provides information about his family's arrival in Burns and acquisition of the Star Hotel; the Star Hotel's transformation into a private residence; the decline of shepherding; discrimination in Burns toward Basques; Basque festivals and traditional dances; and the Basque community in Burns.]

**Box****Series II. Transcripts, 1977-2001**

Nine of the interviews were transcribed soon after they were recorded, probably in 1977, and published in a 1978 volume. Logs and transcripts of six interviews were made in 2001 by Amanda Purkey.

- 1 OH04:01; 986-1-45. Santos Arguinchona, 1977
- 1 OH04:02; 986-1-46. Carlos Ereno, 1977
- 1 OH04:03; 986-1-47. Jean Harrit, 1977
- 1 OH04:04; 986-1-48. Martina Larraneta, 1977
- 1 OH04:05; 986-1-49. Mike Larraneta, 1977
- 1 OH04:06; 986-1-50. David Mallea, 1977
- 1 OH04:07; 986-1-51. Marguerite Stevens, 1977
- 1 OH04:08; 986-1-52. Cecilia Urizer, 1977
- 1 OH04:09; 986-1-53. Alsna Barainca, 1977 [Alsna Barainca came to Oregon from Spain in 1961. The Barainca interview provides information about Basque food and festivals and Spanish politics.]
- 1 Maria Baraibar, 2001
- 1 Nicholas Baraibar, 2001
- 1 Josephine Ebar, 2001
- 1 Marcelino Osa, 2001
- 1 Nicholas Vidando, 2001
- 1 Joe Zabala, 2001
- 1 Transcripts of confidential information deleted by interviewer from selected interviews, 2001
- 1 *The Basques of Harney County, Oregon: an oral history*, by Royal G. Jackson and Jennifer A. Lee, 1978