

## INTRODUCTION

*The present volume is the result of a seminar in Basque linguistics held in the summer of 1972 under the co-sponsorship of the Basque Studies Program of the University of Nevada System and the Idaho Office of Higher Education. Since these organizations are probably unfamiliar to most readers of this work, the editors have asked me to describe their history.*

*In the year 1961 the University of Nevada System created a research organization for the purpose of studying the ecology of the arid areas of the western United States. The new Desert Research Institute consisted of four laboratories —Atmospheric Physics, Water Resources, Desert Biology and the Western Studies Center. Thus the institute was designed to further research in climatology, hydrology, the physical environment and, through the Western Studies Center, the social history and anthropology of western North America.*

*Through the years the majority of programs within the Western Studies Center have focussed upon the prehistory, ethnohistory, and ethnography of the American Indian. However, at the recommendation of an advisory committee of anthropologists from the Universities of Chicago, California (Berkeley) and Colorado it was decided that the new studies center ought to focus upon the Basques of the American West as well. This was in recognition of the fact that the Basque sheepmen had contributed considerably to the history of the American West, yet their historical role was little studied and poorly understood. It was also felt that the center could make a contribu-*

tion to the study of the various ethnographic and linguistic problems posed by European Basque society. Finally, it was believed that the Basque Studies Program would be of particular interest to the 50,000 to 100,000 Basques currently living in the American West.

At that time Robert Laxalt, director of the University of Nevada Press, himself the son of a Basque sheepman, was asked to do the initial planning for a Basque Studies Program. His interest was long standing since he had authored the book *Sweet Promised Land*, a biography of his father's life in the American West. Robert Laxalt travelled to the French Basque area to spend a year collecting new materials for a book on European Basques. At the same time he contacted many scholars and institutions to discuss the University's interest in Basque Studies. The Basque scholar Phillippe Veyrin was particularly enthusiastic, and shortly before his death specified that the University of Nevada be given the opportunity to acquire his personal library. In 1967 the Veyrin collection became the nucleus of a growing Basque library at the Reno campus of the University.

Meanwhile, in 1967 William Douglass was named Coordinator of Basque Studies at the Western Studies Center. He was a social anthropologist who between 1962 and 1965 had conducted field work in the villages of Murelaga, Vizcaya and Echalar, Navarra. In 1969 part of the results of this work were published in the book *Death in Murelaga*. William H. Jacobsen, Jr., a linguist on the Reno campus, became the Coordinator of Basque Linguistics within the program. He has authored several papers on the subject. In 1968 Jon Bilbao, author of *Los Vascos en Cuba* and *Eusko-Bibliographia*, joined the staff as research associate and bibliographer. In 1969 Eloy Placer, author of *Lo Vasco en Pío Baroja*, joined the department of Foreign Languages on the Reno campus. In 1970 Yoshiko Hendricks, former student at the university of Pamplona, joined the staff of the Getchell library as cataloguer and undertook the organization of the Basque collection. In 1971 Linda Gastañaga joined the staff as research assistant.

In its several years of existence the Basque Studies Program has developed a number of activities. A Basque publications series was established in the University of Nevada Press in order to make available to the English-speaking audience a number of new titles and translations of classic works in Basque Studies. Between 1967 and 1972 the Program conducted a major archival and field study of the history and present condition of the Basques of the American West. The results are to be published in 1974. The Program also

*circulates a newsletter to five thousand subscribers, located mainly throughout the American West. The library collection presently includes approximately eight thousand titles. It has become a center of attraction for scholars from around the nation. At the same time the staff provides courses in Old World Basque Culture, Literature, Linguistics, History and Elementary Spoken Basque at the Reno campus. Less frequently courses are offered in rural communities of the State where there are large concentrations of Basques.*

*It was out of these courses that the idea of organizing a Basque Studies Summer Session Abroad emerged. The Program began to receive many inquiries from other states as to the availability of Basque courses. It was felt that there was sufficient interest to warrant organizing a summer course in the Basque country where the students would have first hand contact with Basque life and European Basque scholars could participate.*

*In the summer of 1970 a modest program with twenty-two American students (from nine different states) was held in Ustaritz. Jon Oñatibia taught a course in Elementary Spoken Basque, Eloy Placer taught Basque Literature, and Jon Bilbao and William Douglass taught Old World Basque Culture. The results were favorable and it was decided to repeat the summer school in future years.*

*Meanwhile, there was growing interest in Basque Studies in the State of Idaho. As early as the mid-1960's the University of Idaho at Moscow, at the urging of John Sita (linguist with a special interest in Basque linguistics), initiated a program of library acquisitions. The effort continues and the collection of Basque titles currently comprises about fifteen hundred items. Mr. Joe Eiguren, a Basque of the Boise area, published a language learning method and a short history of the Basques. He also taught the language at the Boise Basque Center. In 1971 the University of Idaho hired Richard Lane, an anthropologist (whose fieldwork was conducted among the Basque shepherders) and initiated a course in Old World Basque culture. In southern Idaho two former students of the Ustaritz program offered courses. Father Ramon Echevarria taught Old World Basque Culture at Idaho State University (Pocatello) and Miren Rementeria taught the language at Boise State College under the auspices of the Idaho Office of Higher Education.*

*In light of this developing interest in Basque Studies the Idaho Office of Higher Education resolved to petition the National Endowment for the Humanities for the necessary funds to sponsor*

*further activities. Several of the proposed projects, notably an exchange of personnel for lectures and courses and co-sponsorship of the Basque Studies Summer Session Abroad, involved a joint effort with the Basque Studies Program of the University of Nevada System.*

*The Idaho proposal was approved and provided sufficient scholarship aid to help needy students to attend the projected 1972 summer program. It also permitted organizing a special seminar in Basque linguistics designed to provide a number of qualified graduate students in linguistics with exposure to problems in Basque linguistics. Rudolf de Rijk of the University of Chicago and Luis Michelena of the University of Salamanca consented to teach the seminar. A national scholarship competition was organized and the students received assistance.*

*The following were the participants in the seminar, arranged according to the universities from which they came: University of California, Berkeley: Glenn Ayres, Sarah Baker, Carlos Zarabozo; University of California, San Diego: Quentin Pizzini; University of Chicago: Claudia Corum, Jeffrey Heath, D. A. Holisky, Charles L. Roll; University of Idaho: John B. Sita; University of Illinois: Jürgen J. Döllein; McGill University (Canada): Françoise Donzeaud; University of Nevada: William H. Jacobsen, Jr.; New York University: Ramón M. S. Bereicua Basauri.*

*The program was conducted as an intensive and semi-autonomous activity within the broader six weeks session of Basque studies. The time was divided between Ustaritz and the Convento de Aránzazu in Oñate.*

*The present papers constitute part of the results of the linguistics seminar. Those of us who are involved in furthering Basque Studies in the United States would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped make this year's program a success. We are hopeful that we will be able to organize future summer programs in an ongoing effort to bring Basque Studies to the awareness of the American academic community. It is our special desire that in future years the subject of the special seminar will touch upon other aspects of Basque culture such as its prehistory, folklore, social and physical anthropology.*