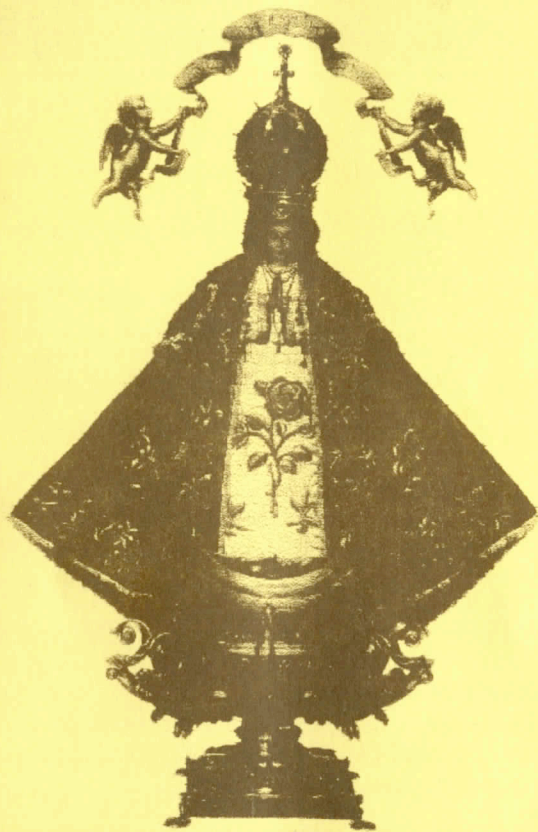


Southern Anthropologist



The Virgin of San Juan (see page 16)

Summer

Volume 27, No. 1, Spring / Summer 2000

Southern Anthropologist

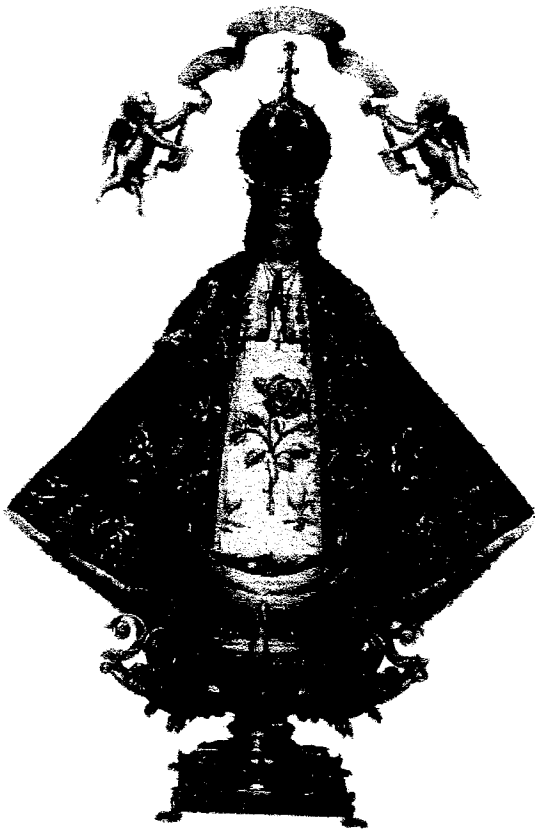
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Spring 2000]

Southern Anthropologist

Volume 27 Number 1
Spring 2000

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The *Southern Anthropologist* is normally published twice a year (Spring and Fall) and is distributed as a benefit to the membership of the Southern Anthropological Society.

Annual membership dues are per year:

Regular: \$40.00 per year

Students, Retired, Unemployed: \$20.00

Joint: \$40.00 (Joint members receive only one copy of the Proceedings)

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"Gigabyte" Johnson

Editor's Corner

Welcome to the much delayed Spring/Summer issue of the *Southern Anthropologist*, devoted mostly to publishing the winning graduate student papers as presented at the meetings in Mobile. The publication of this issue has been delayed by the senior editor becoming indisposed for a while after he fell off a ladder and broke his hip. He should be back to being an upright (rather than prone) bipedal primate by the time you read this, but the issue languished while he enjoyed the facilities at a local hospital.

Feature articles

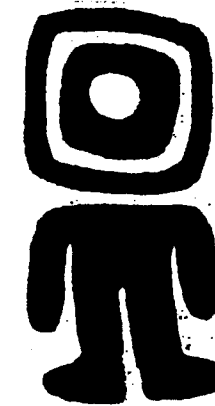
The two feature articles are graduate student papers resulting from a tie for first place. (The winning undergraduate paper, by Shelly Tarkinton, will be published in the Fall issue.)

Jennifer Coleman Nixon's paper, *Some Things are Worth More Than Money: The Continuity of Traditional Values Among the Tuscaroras*, leads off this issue. Next is Malinda Posey's *The Pilgrimage for Our Lady of San Juan del Valle*, which was presented as a talk illustrated with numerous

projected digital photographs; this text version has several selected images and may not look as good as the originals! Both papers represent the high level of scholarship brought to the Society by its graduate student members, and a reminder that one of the benefits of the Society is high student involvement and encouragement!

Humor

Our ever-alert roving reporter, Wally Balloo, with his nose for the anthropological slant on everyday events, scored a coup when he was studying the archives of a major Christian denomination and found the transcript of an interview with none other than JC himself! That interview, originally on an old reel to reel tape, was painstakingly transcribed and edited by Wally himself, and the results round out the offerings for this issue.



The future

The Fall issue should bring us the undergraduate student paper from the Paper Competition, in addition to an article on the importance of goats. As I said before, I am still awaiting more of you to actually write down your responses to the "Threads" articles in a recent issue, so that I can publish them!

If you have other articles you think I might be interested in, please contact me;

see below for ways to do this!

Keep in touch!

Ways to reach me:

(1) Voice mail at (336) 334-7894 at my office, or (336) 274-7032 at home

(2) E-mail via the Internet at *johnsond@ncat.edu*

(3) My email "handle" to home is: *gigabyte@nr.infi.net*

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If you wish to submit materials to the Anthropologist, my preferences are (in rank order) and if possible in more than one form:

(1) text of MS Word file or RTF file on a Macintosh floppy, along with hard copy

(2) text or word processor file on 3-1/2 " IBM (MS-DOS) disk with hard copy

(3) e-mail to address above; try RTF file format.

(4) fax and/or hard copy

Material that is sent already in electronic format is less likely to have my errors in it!

My deadline for the Fall 2000 issue of the *Southern Anthropologist* is tentatively October 15.

Southern Anthropologist Staff:
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American Society for Ethnohistory

2000 Annual Meeting

Call for Papers/Notice of Meeting Dates

18-22 October, 2000

Four Seasons (Sheraton) Hotel

London, Ontario, Canada

Theme:

Ethnohistories of So-Called Peripheries

Presidential Address by Marshall Sahlins on "The Polynesian War, with Apologies to Thucydides"

for details see conference website at <<http://www.ethnohistory.org>>

Announcements of Award Winners:

The 1999 Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin Prize for best book length work in ethnohistory was awarded to Thomas Alan Abercrombie for *Pathways of Memory and Power: Ethnography and History among an Andean People* (Univ of Wisconsin, Madison, 1998)

The 1999 Robert F Heizer prize for the best article in the field of ethnohistory went to Kevin Terraciano for "Crime and Culture in Colonial Mexico: The Case of the Mixtec Murder Note," *Ethnohistory* 45(3): 709-745 (1998)

**SAS Endowment Campaign
for
Education and Outreach in the South**

The Endowment is now in its sixth year of fund-raising towards a \$30,000 goal.

The purpose of the endowment is to:

- support student participation in the meetings and the student prize competition,
- expand the knowledge of anthropology in and of the South and to smaller colleges and universities which do not yet offer courses in anthropology,
- bring the message of our discipline to minority institutions through a dynamic speakers bureau,
- encourage minority participation in the field and at our meetings, and
- reward outstanding scholarship in the anthropology of the South with the annual presentation of an enhanced James Mooney prize.

At present the Endowment is about one-third of the way to the goal, so your contributions are needed!

Please take time to make a campaign pledge or donation and send it to:

Dr Max E White
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Winning Entry 2000 SAS Graduate Student Paper Competition

**Some Things are Worth More than Money:
*the Continuity of Traditional Values Among the Tuscaroras***

by Jennifer Coleman Nixon

East Carolina University

Abstract:

The contemporary Tuscaroras have maintained unique cultural features despite their eighteenth-century migration from North Carolina and resettlement in New York, integration into the larger Iroquois Confederacy and recent challenges to political sovereignty. Concepts of land and family are central to Tuscarora culture on the contemporary reservation. Cultural values in the twentieth century have been expressed through the maintenance of a communally held land base and the preservation of an autonomous political system. Data from recent fieldwork are used to discuss the significant symbols of Tuscarora culture and their relationship to the maintenance of traditional values and lifeways.

Tuscarora acculturation and resistance to assimilation over the past two centuries have been directed by the maintenance of traditional concepts of land and family. The origins of these traditional values can be traced to the impact of the Tuscaroras history in precontact and colonial North Carolina and the historic influence of Iroquois culture. The communal land practices and clan-based political system of the Tuscaroras are based on traditions that preserve political autonomy, self-rule and national sovereignty. This paper will demonstrate that the preservation of these traditions in modern form are key to Tuscarora ethnogenesis. Hill defines ethnogenesis as a synthesis of a peoples cultural and political struggles to exist as well as their historical consciousness of these struggles (1996: 2). Ethnogenesis provides an appropriate framework for evaluating precontact and historic continuities in Native American cultures. The Tuscaroras, like other Native American groups that have remained intact since colonization, have done so by successfully negotiating patterns of acculturation while establishing and sustaining a unique ethnic identity.

This paper will describe the historical significance of land ownership and kinship organization in order to demonstrate the importance of tradition and continuity with the past in a contemporary indigenous community. Data from recent fieldwork are used to discuss the significant symbols of these aspects of Tuscarora culture and their relationship to the maintenance of autonomy and cultural identity. During June and July of 1999, I conducted fieldwork on the reservation of the Tuscarora Nation in New York State. The primary intent of the project was to use in-depth, open-ended interviews with tribal leaders and other residents to identify and describe the political establishment. The second intent of the proposed research was to compare these data with archeological data and ethnographic histories in order to identify the cultural continuities or traditions that establish a connection between contemporary, historic and precontact Tuscarora culture.

The Tuscaroras in History

The Tuscarora reservation in Lewiston, New York is home to the sixth nation of the Iroquois people, the Skaruhreh, or shirt-wearing people of the Longhouse. Unlike many Native American groups that are identified with a specific geographic region, the Tuscaroras are relative newcomers to this territory. Native to the region that is now eastern North Carolina, the Tuscaroras once occupied lands between the Neuse and Roanoke Rivers. In 1715, following the devastating losses of the Tuscarora War, many Tuscaroras migrated to the Great Lakes region to seek refuge with the powerful Iroquois League of Nations. Although the Tuscarora left the region well before the creation of the Iroquois League of Nations, they recognized a consanguineous relationship with the Iroquois. Thus, upon their return to the northern region, the Tuscaroras were granted refuge from the war in Carolina and eventually entered the existing Iroquois League as the sixth nation (Morgan 1901, vol. 1: 23).

There is no way to reconstruct the northward migration of the Tuscaroras; we know only that they left North Carolina in the spring of 1713 and were formally taken into the Iroquois Confederacy in 1715. Defeated by the colonists, divided by inter-tribal loyalties, exhausted by travel and seeking refuge, the Tuscarora were allocated a marginal geographic position on the southernmost border of Iroquois territory. On this new land, the Tuscaroras were forced to adapt to climatic and geographic changes as well as subsistence variations in the available plant and animal life. However, as the figurative little brothers of the Iroquois Confederacy, the Tuscarora could look to the Mohawk, Onondaga and Seneca nations for guidance and support. The most important instance of this assistance came in 1799 when the Senecas deeded one square mile of land in western New York to the Tuscarora Nation, thus establishing the contemporary reservation.

The Tuscarora reservation in western New York has been the political and cultural center of the Tuscarora nation for over two hundred years. Contemporary Tuscarora culture is very much rooted in this northern region. Upon their inclusion into the Iroquois League, the Tuscaroras became an autonomous Iroquois nation. As such, the Tuscaroras in New York have interacted extensively with the state and federal governments as well as the surrounding white and other Iroquois communities while maintaining their status as a unique ethnic group. The Tuscaroras determination to define themselves as a distinct people can be understood as a process of ethnogenesis or the historical emergence of a people who define themselves in relation to a socio-cultural and linguistic heritage (Hill, 1996: 1). The Tuscaroras efforts to define the terms of their existence began in the seventeenth century as colonization brought fundamental challenges to Native Americans in the southeast.

The historian James Merrell describes the new world that Europeans brought to Native Americans as a dramatically different milieu demanding basic changes in ways of life (Merrell 1992: 60). Like other indigenous groups in the region, the Tuscaroras had to construct new forms of culture to cope with the social disruption that resulted from European diseases, slave raids and land acquisition. Despite military defeat, displacement and inclusion into the Iroquois League, the Tuscaroras have maintained a distinct and intact society defined by the preservation of traditional kinship organization and land ownership. The maintenance of a communally held land base and an autonomous clan-based political system are the focus of Tuscarora ethnogenesis, their historic struggle to establish sovereignty and identity through a connection with the past.

Kinship organization of precontact Tuscaroras

Archeological research in eastern North Carolina can partially reconstruct Tuscarora sites as well as some facets of Tuscarora culture. Phelps has integrated the ethnohistoric data collected by archaeologists in eastern North Carolina into a model of the cultural history of the region from 12000 BC to the post-colonization historic period (Phelps, 1983:17). The Jordans Landing site, 31BR26, represents a permanent village site on the Roanoke River near present-day Williamston, North Carolina. This small palisaded village site included a refuse ditch, several cooking hearths, post-mold patterns indicating longhouse structures and burials. Radiocarbon dates of AD 1425 ± 70 were obtained for the Jordans Landing site (Phelps 1980, 76). As such, this site provides the best representation of a Tuscarora village before sustained contact with European colonists. The ditch, hearths and post-mold patterns suggest that the site was a permanent village.

The Jordans Landing site contains two types of burials: ossuary and single inhumations. The typical ossuary burial contains between two and five individuals interred as secondary bundled burials (Phelps 1983: 46). The relatively few numbers of individuals interred indicates that these ossuaries are family interments rather than community burials (Phelps 1983: 46). The family burial could correspond to a clan-based kinship structure in which members of the same clan are buried with one another. The four individual inhumations may also be indications of a maternal clan system. Two of the four single burials contained an adult female; the remaining two held infants. Single burials have been interpreted as indicative of elevated status or position within the community. The female burials suggest that women held special positions in pre-contact Tuscarora communities. Infants are also likely to hold special status in communities that recognize hereditary

rank; therefore, while the sex of the infants cannot be determined, it is possible that they were the children of clan mothers or chiefs. While the clan-based political system of the Tuscarora was undoubtedly shaped by their eighteenth century adoption into the Iroquois League, this archaeological evidence suggests that kinship organization among precontact Tuscaroras may also have been based on clan organization.

Land patterns in the colonial era

At the time of contact and sustained European colonization, the Tuscaroras occupied the northeastern corner of the Carolina colony. To the east, Algonkian groups inhabited the coastal region while Siouan people populated the Piedmont lands to the west of the Tuscaroras. As a result of this advantageous geographic position, the Tuscaroras developed and maintained trade networks between the people of the coast and the people of the mountain regions. After researching the relationships between the Tuscaroras and other indigenous groups in the southeastern region, historian Thomas Parramore concluded that the Tuscaroras in colonial North Carolina were conscious of their own burgeoning power and prosperity (1982: 312).

Even as they extended and strengthened their trade networks, the Tuscaroras attempted to expand their territory as well. Parramore suggests that during the seventeenth century, the powerful tribe sought to expel or absorb neighboring Algonkian tribes as a means of extending their territory to the east (1982: 307). The invasion of European colonizers impeded this expansion and tension between the Tuscaroras and colonists began to mount as English settlers pressed into Tuscarora territory. A treaty between the Tuscaroras and the Albemarle government, agreed to in 1672, affirms that the hostilities between colonists and natives were beginning to escalate a mere two decades after established contact (Parramore 1982: 313). As

peaceful negotiations failed, the Tuscaroras turned to more extreme measures to ensure their continued existence.

The conflicts escalated in 1711 with the beginning of the Tuscarora War. Two years later, the Tuscarora were defeated at Fort Neoheroka by forces from South Carolina. According to Tuscarora oral history, the survivors of the final battle made immediate preparations to migrate to the Five Nations. Shortly thereafter, Tom Blount petitioned the North Carolina government for a reservation in which the remaining Tuscarora could live unharassed by whites. In 1715, the colonial government of North Carolina created a reservation for those Tuscarora who remained in North Carolina under the leadership of Blount (Saunders 1968, vol. 2:283). Thus, by 1715, the once-powerful Tuscarora were politically factionalized, militarily defeated and removed from the greater part of their original homelands.

Ethnogenesis: the creation of a reservation

On their return to the Great Lakes region, the Grand Council of Iroquois chiefs initially assigned the Tuscaroras who migrated to the Iroquois region a tract of land in Oneida territory. In 1785, under the conditions of the Treaty of Fort Herkimer, the Oneidas ceded 64,000 acres to the state of New York, including the area occupied by the Tuscaroras (Turner 1849, 1974: 307). The Tuscaroras then relocated a second time to Seneca lands near the mouth of the Niagara River. In 1799, the Senecas signed the Treaty of Big Tree and lost most of their territory in western New York. Rather than relocating a third time, the Tuscaroras asked the Senecas for a deed to the land they were now occupying. Thus the original portion of the contemporary reservation was deeded to the Tuscarora Nation as a gift from the Senecas. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the Tuscaroras sent a wampum belt, a traditional

Iroquois form of communication, and a letter to the United States War Department asking for more land for a growing population. The War Department forwarded the letter to the Holland Land Company, who granted the Tuscaroras two additional square miles (Turner 1849, 1974: 183). In 1803, the Tuscarora purchased an additional 4,329 acres from the Holland Company, using money from the sale of former reservation lands in Bertie County, North Carolina (Grimes 1911: 5; Turner 1849, 1974: 183). These transactions demonstrate that in the century following the Tuscarora War, the Tuscaroras prioritized the creation and preservation of a land base in order to maintain their distinct identity.

The capacity of the Tuscarora in identifying land as a shared objective of utmost importance has allowed them to maintain traditions that are often lost in forced relocations of indigenous people. Maintenance of an intact land base has been the most important strategy for preserving political autonomy and resisting assimilation. The establishment of a communally owned reservation has provided the physical and political space needed to implement and maintain self-government while experiencing acculturation pressure from both Iroquois and American cultures.

While the Tuscarora modeled their traditional government on the Iroquois model, residence and burial patterns reflected the influence of white society. The contemporary Tuscarora reservation is arranged in a European fashion, with grid-like roads, single family residences and a central, shared cemetery. While residences are mostly single-family homes, women continue to own the land and thus most young couples build homes on land belonging to the wife or her mother. This is one example of how the Tuscaroras acculturated to a dominant society but did not assimilate. Similarly, a central cemetery was established, yet plots were organized according to clan membership, not nuclear family relationships. Ownership of the reservation lands

allowed the Tuscarora to maintain important aspects of traditional culture while providing time and space to work out adaptive acculturation strategies. Thus, while the contemporary Tuscarora reservation is not their ancestral homeland, it is still very much the homeland of the contemporary Tuscarora.

Contemporary culture

Although the Dawes Act of 1887 allowed Native Americans to individually own and sell land, the nations of the Iroquois have never accepted or exercised this right (Act of February 8, 1887, referenced in Washburn 1973 vol. 3: 2188-2193). Under Tuscarora law, only enrolled members of the nation can possess usage rights to reservation land. The title to the land is held jointly by all members of the nation. Therefore, no part of the reservation can be sold or mortgaged to a non-Tuscarora. This land policy has allowed the Tuscaroras, in essence, to retain their land holdings and remain a communal society. Although they exist within the borders of a large, capitalist system, communal ownership of land has made it possible for them to remain politically autonomous from the U.S. government.

Similarly, Iroquois nations reject the Citizenship Act of 1924, a law that gave all Native Americans citizenship in the United States (Act of June 2, 1924, referenced in Washburn 1973 vol. 3: 2209). The Iroquois deny these statutes on the principle that no independent nation can make laws that affect the citizens of another nation. No member of any nation of the Iroquois Confederacy can participate in both Iroquois and American political systems: to be an Iroquois is to reject American citizenship. Like the citizens of other Iroquois nations, members of the Tuscarora Nation do not vote in local, state or federal elections. Merely registering to vote is grounds for removal from the nations roll. The governing body of the Tuscarora, the council of chiefs, is the central

political authority on the reservation, representing the nation at Grand Council meetings of the Iroquois League of Nations and the interests of the Tuscarora nation in negotiations with the U.S. government.

Like the other Iroquoian nations, the internal social organization of the Tuscarora Nation is based on a matrilineal kinship structure composed of clans. According to Gellner, a clan is a cooperating set of family groups that articulates and emphasizes its cooperation in terms of a kin myth (1987: 168). Among the Iroquois, this kin myth takes the form of a shared female ancestor. A clan mother, who is chosen by the women of the clan, manages the affairs of the clan. The clan mothers hold regular meetings, mediate disputes among clan members and appoint one or two chiefs to represent the clan on the Tuscarora council. Currently, a council of eight chiefs governs the Tuscarora Nation. Although most Iroquois nations have adopted an elected form of government based on the American model, the Tuscaroras have maintained a traditional political system. The primary responsibilities of the council are to uphold the sovereignty of the Tuscarora Nation, maintain the communally held land base and act as a liaison with the local, state and federal governments.

Symbols of tradition

The importance of a land base is visually represented on the contemporary reservation through the growing and consumption of corn. The Tuscarora corn is notably different from other varieties grown by the Iroquois (Fenton 1968: 43). Several individuals on the Tuscarora reservation continue to grow a particular strain of corn that is used in traditional Iroquois ceremonies. The ability to produce such a unique and necessary resource contributes to the distinct identity of the Tuscarora. Other Iroquois Nations visit the Tuscarora reservation to request corn for ceremonial

purposes. While the Tuscarora reservation does not have a traditional Longhouse and thus cannot host ceremonial thanksgiving rituals, the people of Tuscarora contribute to the thanksgiving by growing the corn used in the ceremonies. Additionally, the corn grown on the Tuscarora reservation is used in the preparation of two traditional Iroquois foods, corn soup and corn bread. The cultivation, preparation and consumption of corn are material affirmations of Tuscarora national identity.

Clan membership, however, is the sole determinant of Tuscarora identity and membership. Since clan affiliation is passed through the mother, children of Tuscarora fathers and white mothers have no clan and thus are not considered members of the Tuscarora Nation. They are not included on the national rolls, permitted to hold the deed to Tuscarora land or allowed a voice in government. Individuals without a clan are not allowed to attend clan meetings or council meetings. Clan membership, then, is both a symbol of an individual's right to participate and be represented in Tuscarora government and a very real criterion for inclusion on the national roll. Clan membership is communicated visually through representations of clan animals. Individuals express their clan association by wearing clothing or jewelry with visible clan symbols. Additionally, many families indicate clan affiliation by displaying a clan symbol on or near the primary residence. Most importantly, clan membership is expressed and exercised through participation in clan meetings and involvement in political disputes.

Challenges to Tuscarora ethnogenesis

Culture change on the Tuscarora reservation has been shaped by efforts to maintain political autonomy and a unique cultural identity. These objectives are not mutually exclusive; to be a sovereign nation is to have a unique identity both within the Iroquois League of Nations and in

relation to the United States. When the Tuscaroras were formally adopted by the Iroquois in 1726, they were granted this political status in successive degrees. The Tuscarora tribe was adopted as a figurative child of the original five nations and subsequently promoted to positions of increasing responsibility within the League (Hewitt 1912: 16). According to a motion made in an Iroquois council meeting, the Tuscaroras were taken in as nursing still swathed to the cradleboard . . . and hastily [became] a peer, having the right of chiefship in the council on an equal footing with the chiefs of the other tribes (cited in Boyce 1987: 159). The Tuscaroras were never absorbed into the population of another Iroquois nation; instead, they became the sixth nation of the existing League.

Political autonomy within the larger United States, however, was more difficult to achieve. In 1831, in response to a Cherokee request for an injunction against the state of Georgia, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Indian tribes of the United States can best be denominated [as] domestic dependent nations (The Cherokee Nation v. The State of Georgia 30 U.S. 1, referenced in Washburn 1973 vol. 4: 2554-2602). Although this ruling did little to aid the Cherokee in their struggle against Georgia's legislature, this legal characterization has been important to the Iroquois nations in maintaining autonomy from the U.S. government. Today, the Six Nations of the Iroquois exist on the premise that they are separate nations and not subject to U.S. laws and regulations. The Tuscarora Nation has maintained political autonomy from the United States by creating a system of sociopolitical organization that embodies traditional ideals, alludes to the precolonial status of the tribe and effectively provides a system of social organization and political leadership for the nation.

Recent challenges to the Tuscaroras struggle to establish and maintain a distinct identity and autonomy have come in the form of external

threats to the land base and internal disputes regarding the political system. The most serious threat to the Tuscarora Nation came with the development of the Niagara hydroelectric project. In 1957, the New York State Power Authority began a campaign to acquire Tuscarora land for the creation of a reservoir. After a series of protracted legal battles and fruitless negotiations, the Tuscaroras refused a three million-dollar offer for the land. The case eventually reached the United States Supreme Court, where a majority of justices ruled against the Tuscaroras. The ruling was based largely on the specific definition of a reservation. In passing the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. B 796), Congress defined reservations as

national forests, tribal lands embraced within Indian reservations, military reservations, and other lands and interests in lands owned by the United States, and withdrawn, reserved, or withheld from private appropriation and disposal under the public land laws; also lands and interests in lands acquired and held for any public purpose (referenced in Washburn 1973 vol. 4: 2805).

This definition clearly identifies reservations as those lands held in trust for Native Americans by the United States government. Because the Tuscaroras hold the title to approximately nine square miles of land, the land is not legally considered a reservation. Thus, in 1960, the Tuscaroras lost a significant portion of their total land base to the State Power Authority. In the dissenting opinion, Justice Black wrote, It may be hard for us to understand why these Indians cling so tenaciously to their lands and traditional tribal way of life. The record does not leave the impression that the lands of their reservation are the most fertile, the landscape the most beautiful or their homes the most splendid specimens of architecture. But this is their home their ancestral home. There,

they, their children, and their forebears were born. They, too, have their memories and their loves. Some things are worth more than money and the costs of a new enterprise. (Federal Power Commission v. Tuscarora Indian Nation 362 U.S. 99; 1960, referenced in Washburn 1973 vol. 4: 2811).

During the fight to maintain their land, the Tuscaroras held that their political autonomy would protect them from the planned encroachment of the New York State Power Authority. The Supreme Court decision allowing the State Power Authority to construct a reservoir on Tuscarora lands was devastating to the community. The symbolic loss of land and the very real loss of homes and farms led to resentment within the community, directed at both the United States government, the SPA and those individuals who received SPA compensation for their farms. After more than two centuries of ownership and occupation, established settlement and farming patterns were disrupted as many families lost productive farms and were relocated to other parts of the reservation. Internal political dissension also persisted as political factions that formed during the SPA negotiations continued to divide loyalties among the Tuscarora people.

Political dissent among the Tuscaroras often takes the form of clan disagreements. One way that members of the Tuscarora Nation enter into the political sphere is by actively engaging in disputes about clan legitimacy and authority. When Morgan visited the Tuscarora community in 1877, he obtained a list of the clans, later published in *Ancient Societies and the League of the Iroquois*. Morgan's list is as follows: Gray Wolf, Bear, Great Turtle, Beaver, Yellow Wolf, Snipe, Eel, Little Turtle (Morgan 1877: 70). Morgan names only one Bear clan and no Deer clan, but two Wolf clans. In interviews conducted during recent fieldwork, no member of the Wolf clan could recall any historical split. This is likely evidence that clan disagreements are a temporary focus of political expression.

Although the majority of Tuscarora agree that the traditional form of government is best for their nation, they currently debate as to whether or not the system is an egalitarian one. Controversies regarding equal political representation are expressed in terms of clan controversies. There are nine clans recognized within the Tuscarora community. All members of the community recognize the Snipe, Wolf, Turtle, Eel and Beaver clans. The Eel clan is extinct and has no living members. Members of the Tuscarora community also recognize two split clans: the White Bear/Black Bear clan and the Sand Turtle/Deer clan. The divisions in these clans correspond to community disagreements about equal political representation.

The clan system, like many aspects of Tuscarora government, is a dynamic system, open to periodical modification. This is because the Tuscarora Nation, like other Iroquois communities, has relied largely on an oral tradition to record the procedures and operations of the council. Political differences and alliances are expressed as disputes regarding clan names, membership and legitimacy. Once these disputes are resolved, the controversial issue seems to be largely forgotten.

Some Tuscaroras fear that non-natives will misinterpret these disputes as the result of acculturation and loss of traditional knowledge. Therefore, they are reluctant to engage in clan rhetoric with people who are not Tuscarora or do not live on the reservation. In recognizing that non-Tuscaroras can potentially misunderstand this traditional system of government, the members of the community have identified a possible obstacle to their struggle for continued existence. Although members of the Tuscarora Nation understand the nature of these political disputes as a dynamic aspect of the traditional government, some fear that the disputes could be interpreted as a loss of tradition. In this light, clan disputes could be used to support the idea that an elected board of officials would be more effective than the traditional clan-

based council.

In the last decade, a more immediate threat to the traditional government of the Tuscarora Nation came from within the community. In the 1980s, during a period of political unrest, a group of Tuscarora formed an elected council, the General Council, with the intent of replacing the Council of Chiefs. The individuals involved with the formation of the General Council stopped attending clan and council meetings and expected that other members of the community would soon follow. Although the General Council presented an actual threat to the traditional government, it was not ultimately successful because very few people attended the meetings. Members of the Tuscarora community recognized that attendance communicates support, and failure to attend General Council meetings symbolized confidence in the traditional government. Although there was no referendum on the form of government, the people of Tuscarora voted overwhelmingly with their presence at clan and council meetings. Although many people were dissatisfied with the decisions and leadership abilities of the chiefs in the 1980s, very few were willing to reject the traditional form of government. As the Tuscarora people continue to operate under a traditional system of government, they reaffirmed their commitment to traditional values in the modern world.

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Winning Entry 2000 SAS Graduate Student Paper Competition

The Pilgrimage for Our Lady of San Juan *del Valle*

by Malinda Posey
Louisiana State University

In South Texas stands the Basilica of the National Shrine for Our Lady of San Juan *del Valle*. People journey from all over Texas to visit the large Catholic shrine, which houses the diminutive Virgin. While the devotion began as a satellite to the original Virgin of San Juan in the state of Jalisco, Mexico, the Texas site appears to be in the process of situating itself as an independent site. Behavior at the church, such as objects left at the Virgin's altar, language use, and style of services, contributes to the unique quality of the shrine.

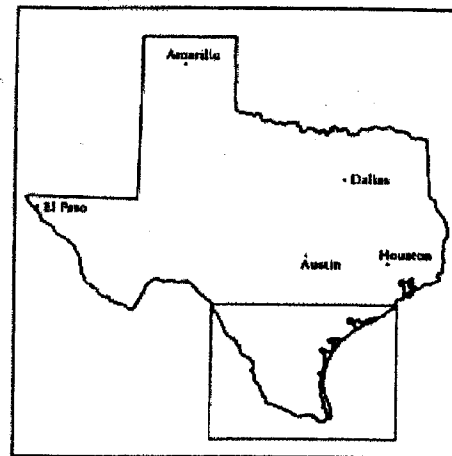
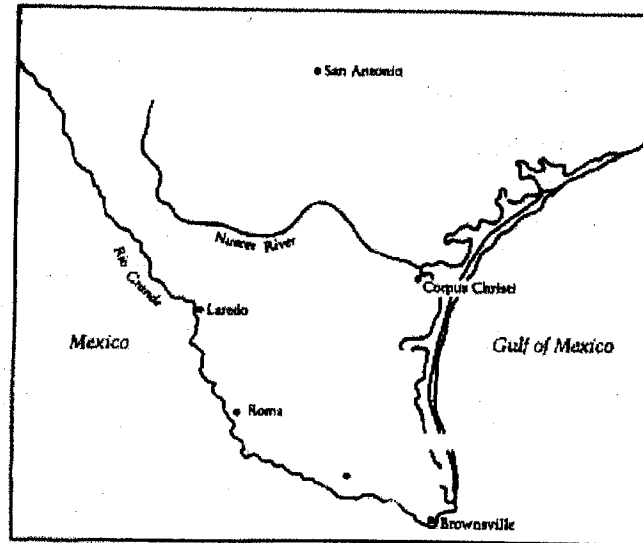
People constantly enter the church on this busy Sunday. While the crowd swells around mass time, throughout the day the faithful will make their way down the side aisle of the church to the Virgin's altar and her *Milagro* room. A man in his early thirties enters the church carrying a brown paper sack and candles. He approaches a staff person standing near the back of the church, an older man identifiable by his shrine badge. Excitedly he asks, "Sir, sir, where do I go to fulfill my *promesa*?" When the staffer hesitates, the man effortlessly switches to Spanish and poses his question again, "Is there somewhere special or can I just do this anywhere?" The staffer somewhat gruffly indicates a sign pointing to the Virgin's altar. The younger man thanks him and hurries off with his family.

Although pilgrimage may be common in Mexico, the practice exists only in limited expression in the United States. One U.S. pilgrimage destination, the Basilica of the National Shrine for Our Lady of San Juan *del Valle*, stands near the Mexico-Texas border (Figure 1). An estimated 20,000 people visit the basilica each week in large part to fulfill promises or *promesas*. One of only two national shrines in the United States, the church recently received further distinction when Rome bestowed the title of minor basilica (Long 1999). While certain aspects of the pilgrimage system directly reflect the Mexican pilgrimage tradition (Crumrine 1991; Dobyns 1991; Harvey 1991; Nolan 1973; Turner 1974; Turner and Turner 1978), Our Lady of San Juan *del Valle* lies north of the border. Those who worship here reinterpret the pilgrimage custom in its American context. This paper will review the site, its history and the current activities of those who journey to the site with a focus on the U.S. cultural influence on the Texas Virgin and her basilica.



Figure 1: The Basilica for the National Shrine for Our Lady of San Juan *del Valle*

Three separate trips provided the information for this study: a preliminary visit in July, 1999, a weekend pilgrimage trip with a group from Houston, Texas in October, 1999, and three weeks at the shrine during December, 1999 and January, 2000¹. The majority of the research consisted of hours spent in observation in the church and at the Virgin's altar, along with attending masses and cataloging artifacts left by people at the site. Questionnaires completed by shrine visitors supplemented interviews with the shrine staff.



South Texas

Figure 1: Map of South Texas
[Limón 1994:1]

2:

History

In the tradition of Victor Turner's processual analysis method (Turner 1974), the social and historical context of the Texas Virgin and her basilica provide a background necessary for understanding the current interaction with her pilgrims. Locals refer to the region of the Rio Grande River valley, from Roma in the north to Brownsville in the south, simply as "The Valley" or "El Valle" (Figure 2). The Valley exists in the everyday mingling of Spanish and English language, of Hispanic and Anglo cultures, of rich and the poor peoples producing a unique zone of hybridity, a borderland.

The Spanish settled the northern region of Mexico, from the Lerma River to the Nueces River in the early 1700s. Although sparsely populated, the area was home to the nomadic, fierce Chichimecans. The Spanish referred to the area as *La Gran Chichimeca* or *La Tierra de Guerra*, the Land of War (West and Augelli 1989). As the Chichimecans were controlled, the Spanish culture took root in a way different than the *mestizo* blend of Spanish and native cultures in the core of Mexico. The settlers were granted large tracts of land for stockraising (Alonzo 1998).

The U.S. Mexican War in the mid-nineteenth century made the lands from the Nueces River to the Rio Grande U.S. territory. Without any change other than in name, the *Mexicanos* north of the Rio Grande became *Tejanos*. Anglos began to establish large ranches on "deserted" lands, referring to the area as a "no-man's land." The *Tejanos* complained that lands were abandoned only under duress. (Alonzo 1998). Today, the complaints are that the English language version of Valley history largely ignores the Mexican settlement of the valley (Alonzo 1998; Limón 1994). The Valley also developed a reputation as a place of discrimination and racism suffered by the Mexican and Mexican American majority at the hands of the Anglo minority (Anzaldúa 1999; Gomez-Pe'a 1993; Limón 1994; Maril 1992).

Jose Limón in his ethnography of South Texas identifies a subtle distinction between Hispanic communities in the Valley. In contrast to the established landgrant families, the *juere'os*, or outsiders, arrived in the area in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, fleeing the harsh Mexican leader at that time. The *juere'os* were a "refugee peasantry...accustomed for generations to work for *patrones*..." [Limón:1994:86] who provided the labor for the agri-business of the Anglos pouring into the Valley at the same time. Limón argues that both are resented for the erosion of the old South Texas Spanish culture. Brownsville in the Lower Valley is associated with the "landgrant" families while Hidalgo County in the mid-Valley is the legacy of the laboring *juere'os*. The basilica is located San Juan, in Hidalgo County.

Up until the late 1940s, San Juan was home to a small undistinguished parish church. Around this time, a woman in the area divined an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe in a rock. People began to come in great numbers to see the stone (Nolan 1973). Throughout Mexico, diminutive and highly formalized representations of Mary are found in Catholic churches. Certain statues are considered miraculous and develop followings (Crumrine 1991; Dobyms 1991; Harvey 1991; Nolan 1973; Turner 1974; Turner and Turner 1978). The local Oblate priest who served the area decided to redirect the homage from the stone to a Virgin in this Mexican tradition. Due to the name of the small Texas town, the Texas priest selected the Virgin of San Juan (Figure 3), who had originated in the early 1600s in the town of San Juan de Los Lagos, Mexico. This particular Virgin's reputation for favoring the northerners of Mexico (Nolan 1973) might have also influenced the priest's decision to select this particular *patrona* as well. He commissioned a replica of the diminutive statue from Mexico, which was placed in the San Juan church. During the trip to acquire the statue, the priest lost control of his car on a mountainous highway. After coming within a few feet of crashing over a steep cliff, his safe passage was regarded as a miracle. The priest pledged to build a shrine for the Virgin, which was dedicated in

1954. In 1970, a local man purposely flew into the church with his small plane. Although a large number of priests were inside the church conducting mass at the time of the crash, no one was injured except the pilot who was killed. The main sanctuary burnt to the ground but the Virgin was safely removed. Worshippers took the accident as a miracle, which strengthened their faith in the Virgin's works (Basilica brochure).

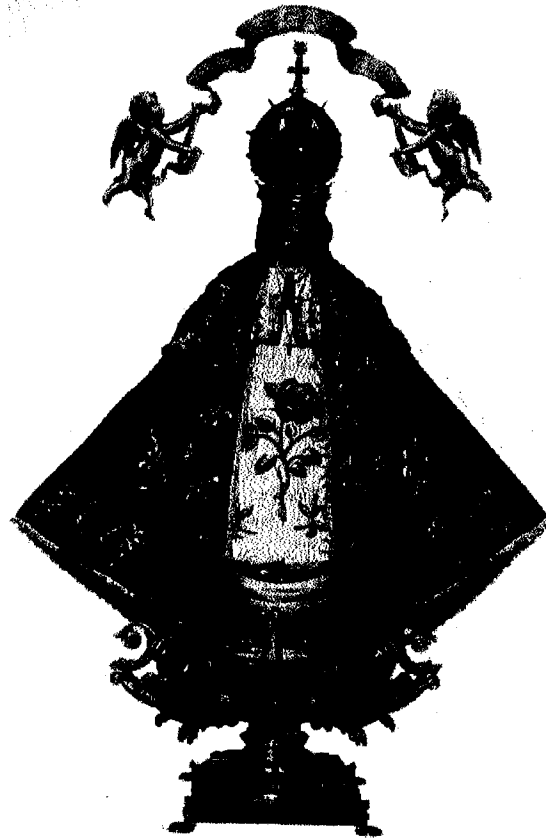


Figure 3: The Virgin of San Juan

The Shrine Today

Growing popularity of the Virgin convinced the parish to separate from the shrine. With donations collected from pilgrims, a new \$5 million sanctuary was dedicated in 1980 and continues as the present day shrine. In November 1997, despite public concern, the Diocese of Brownsville took over the administration of the shrine from the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Romero 1997). Currently the Texas San Juan shrine complex includes a hotel, a nursing home, a facility for retreats and conferences, a bookstore/gift shop and a cafeteria. Life-sized statues commemorating the Stations of the Cross surround the main sanctuary. To the right of the brass sanctuary doors, an image of the Virgin adorns a fountain, which provides holy water to the worshippers. People fill gallon containers from the faucets; several informants named holy water as the reason for their visit to the basilica. A forty-five foot mosaic on the back exterior of the sanctuary faces the expressway. The image of Jesus in the clouds with the Virgin statue over agricultural lands is entitled, "Jesus Presents His Mother."

Today the shrine functions largely as the place for people to come and pay their *promesas*. As in the Mexican tradition of pilgrimage, when people ask for help from the Virgin they promise something in return. The promise might be to make the trip to the basilica in honor of the Virgin or to leave the newborn's clothes as testament to her help in having a healthy baby.

The Virgin statue sits within a relief sculpture, 20 feet up on the back wall of the sanctuary occupying the central focus of the space. The small statue sits in a circular relief sculpture mural whose figures represent the people who call on her for help as well as those who have been called to serve the church. The forms include the sick, a farm worker, the elderly, a migrant family, a priest, nun and bishop. Her altar is at the back of the church and accessed down either side aisle of the church. A half wall separates the activity at the altar from the front raised stage area of the sanctuary. The *promesas* at times include approaching the Virgin humbly on knee. The faithful make their way down the side aisles or perhaps the center aisle when mass is not in session. During my three week visit, pilgrims honored the Virgin in this way almost daily.

The kneeling altar in front of the Virgin is covered with candles. A sign taped to the wall asks visitors to use only shrine candles, which fit the special carts designed to hold the racks of burning candles in the Candle room. People largely ignore the sign and bring in candles normally found in grocery and convenience stores. These non-shrine candles are often imprinted with images various saints and Jesus as well as the image of the Virgin of San Juan. Worshippers constantly arrive with silk and fresh flowers to fill the shelves and cover the floor beneath the Virgin. A bench along the back of the altar area provides a place for reflection or to wait for a turn at the altar. On busy weekends people line up three and four deep to wait to kneel and light their candles.



Figure 4: Offerings left in the *Milagro* Room

The articles that people leave to the Virgin in fulfillment of their *promesas* are called *milagros*. The shrine has set aside space for these items in the *Milagro* Room (Figure 4). Loose photos are the most numerous items along with frames holding notes and pictures. The notes are addressed to the Virgin of San Juan as well as the Virgin of Guadalupe, to Jesus, and to other saints. Leaving hair is very common, usually in a braid. Other items recorded were sports trophies, photo albums, children's clothes, and wedding flower arrangements. The items left might tell a story or give no indication of why they are left there. Momentos may be in remembrance of someone who has passed away. Racks on the walls are full of crutches, walkers and canes. A clothes rack holds beautiful dresses from weddings and *quincineras*, the traditional Mexican celebration for a young woman on her fifteenth birthday, and hospital gowns. Another type of clothing known as *habitos*, was also found. Informants had described an old custom in which the person making a *promesa* would wear an article of clothing during the period while waiting the fulfillment of the favor. Traditionally this clothing was in the style of a nun's habit and therefore was referred to as *el habito*. Most informants thought this custom had died out but a teenage boy entered the church one day in such a frock. Later this article appeared on the clothes rack with a note referring to the frock as *mi habito*.

Information on the pilgrims' point of origin was collected from a sign-in log at the shrine as well as through direct questioning. While not a random sample, this information provides a "snapshot" of locations from which the basilica draws its visitors. Most pilgrims came from the Valley and border areas. Visitors from

distant locations usually had a local connection, such as family in the Valley. The vast majority of pilgrims travel to the site individually in private autos but organized groups also make the trip on chartered buses throughout the year. While hard to judge the frequency, shrine staff reported that people do still walk to the site. One day, a group of three young men in their mid-twenties arrived walking from Donna, a town ten miles away. Apart from the infrequent walking pilgrims, the questionnaires completed by shrine visitors indicated that little emphasis was put on the actual trip to the site. The distinctive customs generally associated with pilgrimage travel (Galanes 1991; Morinis and Crumrine 1991; Nolan 1973; Nolan and Nolan 1989; Turner 1974; Turner and Turner 1978), such as difficult journeys over rough terrain, specialized artifacts or smaller chapels and shrines along the route were not a part of the travel of the San Juan pilgrims.

In addition to being a place to fulfill *promesas*, the shrine conducts daily mass. The several well attended services on Sundays fill the shrine to capacity and beyond. Most services are in Spanish but daily bi-lingual masses are offered. Language use in the masses varies with the priest conducting the mass. Both languages commonly find their way into the mass in varying degrees, in a prayer, response reading, or song. When the priest switches from English to Spanish in elements that require a congregational response, the majority of the crowd responds in that language.

The mass services have several unusual features especially when the current rector of the shrine leads the service. A *mariachi* band provides the music. At the beginning of the mass, the rector recognizes birthdays of the week and couples celebrating wedding anniversaries, calling people to the stage and handing out roses. He then ask for people to raise their hands if they are visiting from New York, Jalisco, Monterrey, or California as the *mariachi* band breaks into a theme song for each place. They play *New York New York* by Sinatra and the classic *mariachi* tune, *Guadalajara*, among others. Constant movement reigns in the shrine even during mass. A number of pilgrims come not for mass but only to make their way to the Virgin's altar; other arrive and depart from the mass continually. Either because the shrine's style is different from their own parish church or because they are not frequent churchgoers, the crowd is not familiar with the order of service. Most people do not participate in the songs; responsive readings stumble along. In between mass services, people go down front and pose for pictures.

The shrine also holds a healing mass on the last Saturday of each month. After several testimonials from the crowd, the entire congregation works their way to the front of the church to have a priest pray and lay hands on them. Most worshippers experience "falling," a free fall backwards, when the priest finishes praying. Twenty or so men work in a line to catch those who fell, making sure none of the faithful are hurt. The "fallers" recover, and then file across the front stage to touch the cross on the altar.

The Stations of the Cross of the shrine are life-sized statues on the landscaped grounds surrounding the basilica. A sidewalk connecting the stations is roughly a mile long and each station is surround by trees and flowering bushes. Children run up to climb on the statues while parents snap photos. People also pull flowers from the bushes and place them on the points of Jesus' crown of thorns, in his palms where he is nailed to the cross or in the statues' hands. The trees around the stations are marked with names carved into their bark. During the week after work, people use the path as a walking and jogging track.

Retired seniors from the northern U.S., who winter in the Valley, the winter Texans, comprise a distinctly different group visiting the basilica. These seasonal residents come to the shrine to sightsee and to worship. The English and bi-lingual masses have the greatest number of these visitors, who are often incorporated into the service as readers. One day, a bicycle club of winter Texans requested a tour of the basilica.

A Separate Identity?

One of the original research questions of the project was, is the Texas Virgin becoming a separate entity from the Mexican Virgin of San Juan? Three different factors were used to evaluate a separation of identity for the two Virgins: miracle stories, the Texas pilgrimage as fulfillment of a *promesa* and the *milagros* left at the site.

Miracle stories attributed directly to the Virgin of San Juan del Valle would be considered evidence of her having a separate identity. However, collecting miracle stories proved difficult. Most informants did not readily volunteer such stories or mention them in response to direct questioning. Further, specific questioning as to which Virgin performed the miracles was not fruitful. The official position on the relationship of one Virgin to another is that all are representations of the same Virgin. Signs do exist that the Virgins are thought to be separate such as the different names, different images and different personalities attributed to the Virgins. Additionally, certain Virgins are thought to be sisters while others are not.² However, in direct questioning, most informants answer that all Virgins are one and the same. Thus, when pushed for clarification about which Virgin performed which miracle, the answer would be that the same Virgin performed them all.

The second criterion included distinguishing if people were traveling to both Virgin of San Juan sites. For many years, the Texas shrine existed as an auxiliary location for the Mexican site. Informants indicated that if someone promised to make the trip to the Mexican Virgin but was having difficulty keeping that promise, he or she might journey to the Texas Virgin to pay homage. However, that same person would likely feel the obligation or desire to complete the "real" pilgrimage to the Mexican San Juan when they could. The informant interviews at the basilica indicated that today most people did not express a need to go to Mexican site in addition to visits to the Texas site.

Third, *milagros* addressed specifically to the Texas Virgin were considered evidence of a separate identity. While such *milagros* existed, so too were found many addressed to numerous saints and Virgins, as well as to Jesus or *El Señor*. By the fact that so many of the petitions are addressed to a variety of entities, the singular focus of the Virgin of San Juan seems somewhat diluted. Additionally, the *milagro* room holds on permanent display numerous objects other than the Virgin of San Juan. These items are both objects put in the room by the shrine as well as objects brought by the pilgrims. Such objects include Jesus laying in the tomb as well as statues of Jesus, St. Jude and St. Martin. A large, framed poster of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and a folk-style painting of the trinity, also occupy prominent places in the room. The shrine would seem to represent a generalized shrine for people to fulfill *promesas*.

Conclusions

From its humble beginnings, the shrine for Our Lady of San Juan has emerged as a major point of pilgrimage in the United States. The Texas shrine reflects the Mexican heritage of the Virgin and her pilgrims in the Valley area. This influence is evident in the predominance of the Spanish language, the *mariachi* band and the style of the Virgin statue. The shrine also diverges from this tradition in several aspects. Little emphasis on the travel to the site and the mass has developed in an elaborate performative style.

The shrine for the Texas Virgin is at once diverging from the Mexican site while also emerging as a generalized location for the faithful to fulfill *promesas*. The primary evidence of a divergence from the Mexican shrine comes from the pilgrims' lack of awareness and lack of obligation to visit the Mexican site. The *milagros* left at the Texas site support the notion of the generalized character of the shrine with *promesas*

addressed to several different figures. Additionally, the vast majority of items left are textless photos addressed to no one and candles bearing the images of many saints and Virgins as well as of Christ.

Notes:

1. Partial funding for the 99/00 Holiday research trip was provided by the Robert C. West Field Research Grant, Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University.
2. For example, three Virgins in the state of Jalisco, Mexico are sisters, San Juan de Los Lagos, Talpa de Allende and Zapopan, but none of these Virgins is sister to Guadalupe, who is not very geographically distant.

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An Interview with JC
(discovered, edited and arranged by Wally Balloo)

(Editor's note: the following is a transcript of an interview between one Jesus of Nazareth and a recruiter from a large Christian denomination; it has been edited for clarity.)

Interviewer: First off, Mr Jesus, or whatever your name is, I think it is important that I mention that you need to edit down your resume. The four "Gospels" that you sent me were much too wordy... I would say that your resume needs to be no more than two pages, emphasizing your most recent activities and your job skills. Since the "Gospels" are so long, I am going to ask you some questions to help you focus your attributes so that we can both get a clearer picture of your readiness for the position that we have open.

Jesus: (inaudible)

Interviewer: Now as to your name. You say your first name is Jesus. We have a lot of people with that name applying with us. What is your last name?

Jesus: Some call me the Christ.

Interviewer: I see, so your name is Jesus Christ. Do you have have a middle name?

Jesus: None.

Interviewer: Ah? OK, I'll put down "N" for "None." So your name is then Jesus N Christ. OK. And what religious background do you come from?

Jesus: I was born and raised a Jew.

Interviewer: A Jew? So you're not a Christian?

Jesus: That's correct.

Interviewer: Yet you are described as a leader of the Christians.

Jesus: That's what people say I am.

Interviewer: There is no mention in the Gospels about your seminary training. Where did you do your seminary work?

Jesus: I didn't go to seminary.

Interviewer: But didn't you follow someone named John?

Jesus: Yes, that's true, John the Baptist went before me and was the one who identified me as...

Interviewer: You say, 'John the Baptist.' Does that mean he was a Baptist? Was that a Southern Baptist, or what kind of Baptist?

Jesus: He was called that because he baptized people into the faith.

Interviewer: Of course! That's why the denominations are called "Baptist," for their members are baptized as part of their initiation into the church. So you don't remember which kind of Baptist he was?

Jesus: He was the only one at the time. I can't say whether it was Southern or Northern or whatever.

Interviewer: Hmm. So was he running a seminary?

Jesus: No. He was a lone voice crying in the wilderness.

Interviewer: That's no place to locate a theological school! So you are saying that he wasn't

running a school?

Jesus: That's correct.

Interviewer: So you haven't been to any seminary at all?

Jesus: I studied with the Scribes some when I was young, but my parents were too poor to send me for more education.

Interviewer: So, in other words, you haven't completed elementary school, much less seminary?

Jesus: Yes.

Interviewer: So you have no credentials that fit you for a job with our church?

Jesus: I have the blessing of God, my Father.

Interviewer: I see. Well, let's switch topics. Now, can you briefly describe your present position?

Jesus: Well, my disciples and I have been traveling around the Holy Land preaching the Word of God and...

Interviewer: Yes, I remember the description of the disciples; they seem like a fairly inept group. And how many of them are there?

Jesus: Twelve.

Interviewer: That's all?

Jesus: Yes.

Interviewer: So the largest number of people you have worked with then is twelve? Were any of them specialists, as in Youth Work, or Choir leaders?

Jesus: There are only twelve, and no, we don't have any specialists, for they have all helped with the Lord's Work. And, besides, I think calling them "inept" is too extreme. Perhaps...

Interviewer: Call them what you will. Now, when you say 'traveling around,' does that mean that you don't currently have a church?

Jesus: That's correct; we travel to where people live, and take the Word...

Interviewer: Yes, yes, I've heard that. But have you ever led the same congregation for some period of time?

Jesus: My congregation is the whole world, and I have been attempting to lead it for some years now, but (sighs) many are chosen but few keep following.

Interviewer: So in effect you have been unable to sustain work in the same parish or congregation for any length of time; I believe some of the Gospels refer to you and your group being run out of town. That doesn't sound like a good recommendation for your ability....But let's get back to your Disciples. You say there were only Twelve of them?

Jesus: That's correct.

Interviewer: And how did you select these Disciples?

Jesus: I selected them when I met them on my journeys spreading the Word.

Interviewer: Do I remember that some of them were fishermen?

Jesus: Yes. I asked them to come and be "fishers for people." I thought that was a rather good upbeat way to think about their new vocation.

Interviewer: So they were primarily working class?

Jesus: I would say so, yes; after all, all of us are working class.

Interviewer: Umm. Yes. So they were not graduates of any leadership training program or diversity issues seminar?

Jesus: That's correct. Those weren't available when I started my preaching.

Interviewer: And they were all male? So far as I can tell, there was no diversity principles involved in your selection of them.

Jesus: That's correct. But they are all that I need to spread...

Interviewer: Yes, yes, I know; 'spreading the Word of God.' I think that is a commendable goal, but so far as I can tell so far, with your small, apparently haphazardly chosen, staff and lack of consistent congregation, I would have to say that you lack administrative experience and haven't had much luck leading large congregations.

Jesus: There was the time I fed and taught the five thousand...

Interviewer: Yes, I do remember that. But were they your followers or did you just recruit them at the time and place?

Jesus: They followed me to that location, eager to hear my preaching after I performed some miracles for them.

Interviewer: I'm puzzled about those miracles, and will return to them later. Now the Gospels are silent about where the food came from for the multitudes. Can I assume that the narrative doesn't mention the staff work that must have been involved, the cooperation with the food service people, and the other organizing that must have been done beforehand?

Jesus: No, no! The Lord provided the food, not the food service.

Interviewer: Umm. You are certain of this? I appreciate your perspective, but I've never been at a church food function that didn't have a major involvement with the appropriate Assistant Minister, along with significant laity and Ladies' Auxiliary. But, as I said already, it seems that organization is not your strong suit.

Now as to those miracles. You are described as healing the sick, helping the blind to see, freeing the lame from crutches, even raising one Lazarus from the dead. That's quite an impressive list. Have you had any medical training? How do you account for your successes?

Jesus: The Spirit of the Lord has given me strength to do these good works, and through my belief in Him I have accomplished many things.

Interviewer: Umm. Yes. So you really don't have any idea how the miracles were accomplished. I'm also assuming that the Gospels are only reporting the successful cures. What has been your overall success rate on cures?

Jesus: All those who have come to me have been cured.

Interviewer: So you claim 100%? That's extravagantly high! Our experience has generally only been on the order of 25% or so, but we—like you—make a lot of noise about the successes!

Interviewer: Now, to return to your preaching. Other than the Gospels, which I have already spoken about, do you have any other literature about your preaching? Any training

manuals, hymnals, Common Prayer books, or other materials? Any videos?

Jesus: No; we preach the Word as the My Father gives it to us.

Interviewer: Your Father must be a highly organized guy, from what you've been saying about him. But I'm not so sure about his Son.

Well, Okay. Do you have any other experiences that you'd like to highlight at this time?

Jesus: No.

Interviewer: Well, then, to wrap up: you are not a Christian, but want to lead them; you have no seminary training yet are preaching; you have no staff or administrative experience, nor any experience running a parish, and you cannot account for your successes with miracles. In addition, you have little usable documentation to show about your experiences. (Sigh)

I thank you for your time, but will have to get back to you on your future prospects with us.

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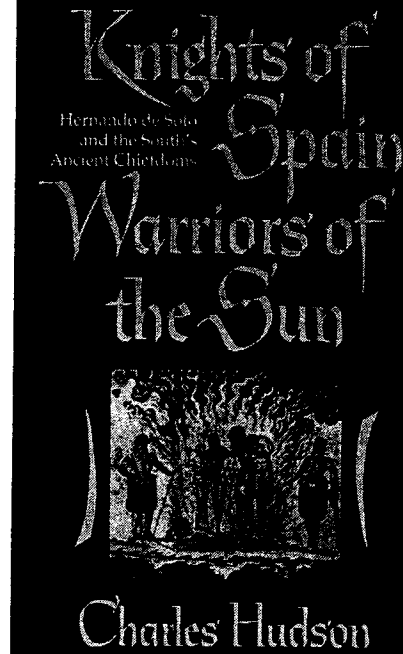
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