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# Yo soy Colorado: Three collaborative Hispanic cultural heritage initiatives

Beverly B. Allen

Colorado State University - Pueblo, beverly.allen@colostate-pueblo.edu

Dana EchoHawk

University of Colorado, Denver, dana.echohawk@gmail.com

Rhonda Gonzales

Colorado State University - Pueblo, rhonda.gonzales@colostate-pueblo.edu

Fawn-Amber Montoya

Colorado State University - Pueblo, fawnamber.montoya@colostate-pueblo.edu

Mary M. Somerville

University of Colorado, Denver, msomerville@pacific.edu

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## *Yo Soy* Colorado: Three Collaborative Hispanic Cultural Heritage Initiatives

Beverly B. Allen ([Beverly.allen@colostate-pueblo.edu](mailto:Beverly.allen@colostate-pueblo.edu))  
Colorado State University-Pueblo

Dana EchoHawk ([Dana.echohawk@gmail.com](mailto:Dana.echohawk@gmail.com))  
University of Colorado Denver

Rhonda Gonzales ([Rhonda.gonzales@colostate-pueblo.edu](mailto:Rhonda.gonzales@colostate-pueblo.edu))  
Colorado State University-Pueblo

Fawn-Amber Montoya ([Fawnamber.montoya@colostate-pueblo.edu](mailto:Fawnamber.montoya@colostate-pueblo.edu))  
Colorado State University-Pueblo

Mary M. Somerville ([Mary.Somerville@ucdenver.edu](mailto:Mary.Somerville@ucdenver.edu))  
University of Colorado Denver

### Abstract

Collaborative activities that reflect ‘ethnicity as provenance’ benefit from collaborative, interdependent relationships among archives, classroom, and community. Examples from Center for Colorado & the West at Auraria Library (University of Colorado Denver) and the Southern Colorado Ethnic Heritage and Diversity Archives and the Voices of Protest Oral History Project (Colorado State University-Pueblo) illustrate collection development practices that advance joint ownership of archival materials by the archives and the originating cultural population. Concluding reflections offer transferable principles for working collaboratively with cultural communities on creation, identification, interpretation, and preservation of photographs, videos, documents, oral histories and ephemeral material reflective of culture, achievements, conflict, and legacy.

Keywords: Multicultural archives, Participatory archives, Oral history

### Introduction

“Frameworks for the selection, collection, arrangement, and description, preservation, and accessibility of archives are ... closely linked to societal processes of remembering and forgetting, inclusion and exclusion, and the power relationships they embody.”<sup>1</sup>

Collaborative creation and preservation of cultural legacy collections require inclusive processes that advance shared ownership of archival content and foster sustained communication about collection usage. Experiences at the Center for Colorado & the West at Auraria Library (University of Colorado Denver) and the Southern Colorado Ethnic Heritage and Diversity Archives and the Voices of Protest Oral History Project (Colorado State University-Pueblo) illus-

trate that collaborative relationships can yield authentic interpretations and narratives of the past and present, thereby influencing construction of the future. As illustrated in this paper, robust campus-community collaborations give voice and cultivate pride among underrepresented populations.<sup>2</sup>

### Center for Colorado & the West at Auraria Library

In the fall of 2009, Anthony (Tony) Garcia, the founding director of the Chicano theatre company, El Centro Su Teatro, in Denver, Colorado asked Dr. Mary M. Somerville, University Librarian and Co-Director of the Center for Colorado & the West, for photographs from the Auraria Library to visually enrich a musical





Photo 1. Interior view of St. Cajetan's Catholic Church, 1190 Ninth Street, in the Auraria neighborhood, Denver, Colorado. Lupe Morales and Gene Vigil (shown), kneeling at the altar during their marriage in the 1950s. Family and friends, most likely from the Auraria neighborhood, are in attendance. Photo courtesy of the Denver Public Library Digital Collections #AUR-2001.

theatre production. Titled *Westside Oratorio*, this original work honors the sacrifices made by Displaced Aurarians, a predominantly Hispanic community evicted in the early 1970s to permit construction of a tri-institutional higher education campus in downtown Denver.<sup>3</sup>

The Auraria Library, which occupies the center of the former Auraria neighborhood, had no photographs of the former Auraria neighborhood in its special collections. Consultation of the nearby Denver Public Library's online photography collection of over 100,000 items revealed that this Western history repository also contained no Auraria content. Rather, only 136 of the 100,000 digital images *might* represent Hispanic experiences in Colorado. The individuals in those photographs were described in the

online library catalog as "may be Hispanic or may be Italian."<sup>4</sup>

In response, initial efforts, funded by the University of Colorado (CU) Office of the President's concerning "Diversity and Excellence" employed a Displaced Aurarian to identify, describe and catalog 75 images for digitization. This community-curated collection was used to enhance the *Oratorio* production and also supplement the Denver Public Library online collection. A year later, a grant from the Metropolitan State College of Denver funded graphic design and printing services for *Where the Rivers Meet*, a compendium of Displaced Aurarians' photographs and interviews that includes a recording of Su Teatro's *Westside Oratorio* musical theatre production. The book cover features a painting

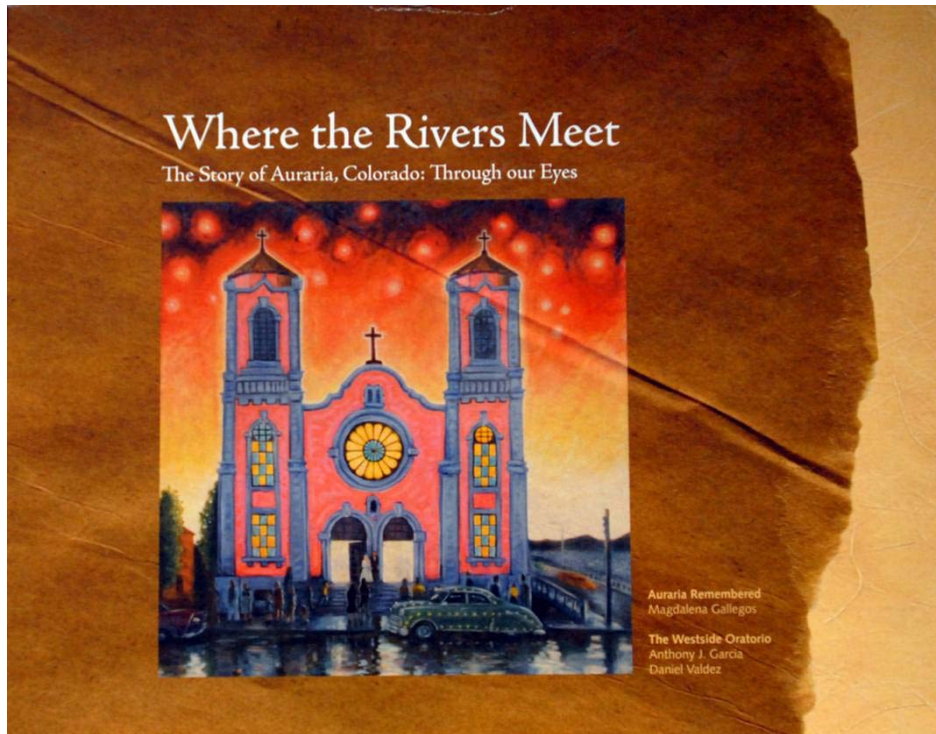


Photo 2. Cover of *Where the Rivers Meet: The Story of Auraria, Colorado through Our Eyes*, by Magdalena Gallegos and Anthony J. Garcia

by Metro State art professor, Carlos Fresques, that depicts St. Cajetan's Church, a decommissioned Catholic church that once served as the cultural center of the Auraria community. Significantly, the canvas shows Aurarians returning to campus, symbolic of the re-unification outcomes furthered by this cultural heritage project. Book co-authors, Tony Garcia and Magdalena Gallegos, and book cover artist, Carlos Fresques, are all Displaced Aurarians.<sup>5</sup>

This request from the extended Displaced Aurarian community established the 'provenance' principle for the Center for Colorado & the West (CC&W) at Auraria Library, founded as an official "Center" of the University of Colorado Denver in 2009. The term 'provenance' acknowledges the importance of the originating source (individual, family, or organization) that created or gifted the collection. As illustrated above, both the online images initiative and the print book project honor essential aspects of origins, context, and integrity that explain how material is gathered and accessed.<sup>6</sup>

The enthusiasm of the Displaced Aurarians community members prompted pursuit of other grant funded cultural legacy projects for creat-

ing collections, advancing interpretations, promoting awareness, and furthering usage. Expressive of the larger Hispanic community's desire to preserve cultural memories and generate authentic knowledge, a multiyear 'Hispanics in Colorado' initiative honored the diverse populations' 'informed'<sup>7</sup> perspectives. With funding from two Library Service and Technology Act (LSTA) grant awards, Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funding was distributed by the Colorado State Library for curation, digitization, and hosting of a 600 image photograph collection which demonstrates "that people everywhere have a way of life, a culture of their own, and if we want to understand humankind, we must take these cultures seriously."<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to the 136 images in the Denver Public Library (DPL) online photograph collection which might represent a Hispanic experience – as suggested by the descriptors "unnamed person" or "may be Hispanic or may be Italian," the 600 image CC&W collection includes names, dates, locations and other significant historical information. This metadata was co-created by a University of Colorado Denver graduate student under the direction of project manager, Dana

EchoHawk, and working collaboratively with Hispanic photograph owners. Now a sub-collection in the DPL online Western history collection, these digital images and related metadata express the voice and convey the knowledge of photograph owners.

With each photograph collected, countless stories and memories emerged – reflecting that “a photograph is not just a recording: it constitutes the event.”<sup>9</sup> As eyewitnesses to the past, these primary sources conveyed the diversity of Hispanic experiences excluded from general treatments of Colorado’s public history. The timeliness of this project also became clear. An elderly man, who had heard about the project while recovering from a stroke, delivered one day a box of photographs and other ephemeral material to the project manager. Many items predated Colorado’s statehood to when the area was part of the New Mexico Territory. During his recovery, this gentleman realized these precious memories would be lost at his death given that his only child placed no value on the collection. In subsequent visits, he shared the stories that helped greatly in creating metadata. Another elderly Hispanic participant reconnected with four relatives who discovered her name on the Internet after her photograph metadata was added to the online image collection.

In addition to contributing personal photographs from scrapbooks and shoe boxes, Hispanics from around the State provided interview content for educational videos (<http://coloradowest.auraria.edu/?q=videos>) that honor and advance everyday cultural knowledge. ‘Conversations on history’<sup>10</sup> conducted by Dana EchoHawk provided the raw footage, which was then crafted into educational videos by faculty and students in the Metropolitan State Department of Technical Communication and Media Production. Throughout the editing process, community members viewed and critiqued the products in order to ensure authentic cultural interpretations of primary photography sources and insights into historic events from the perspectives of those whose ancestors experienced them. In addition, a research guide, the *Hispanic Colorado Studies Resource Guide* (<http://coloradowest.auraria.edu/?q=guides>),

was collaboratively developed by campus and community experts who recommended culturally authentic scholarly resources. Project symbiosis depended on forging sustainable relationships with many individuals and organizations within Colorado’s regionally diverse Hispanic communities. Colorado Society of Hispanic Genealogy, the Denver Latino Commission, and REFORMA Colorado provided especially significant referrals to photograph owners.

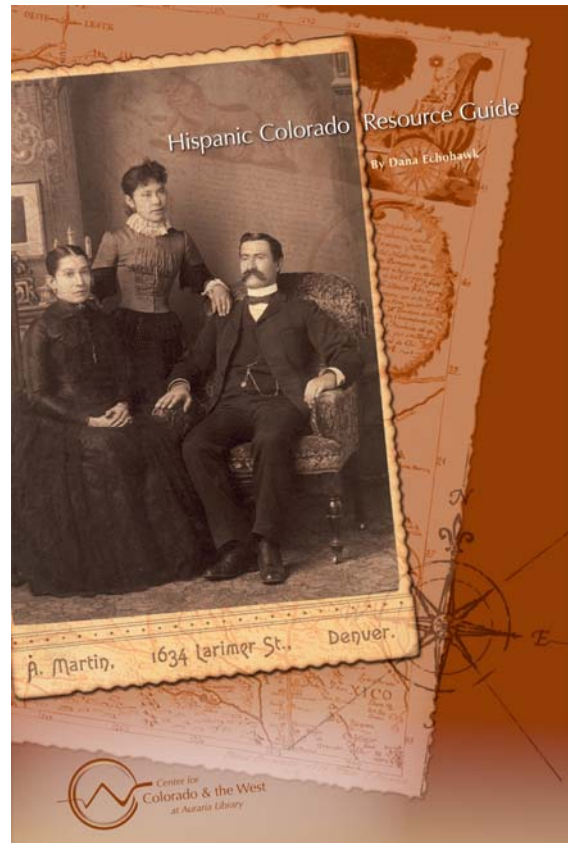


Photo 3. *Hispanic Colorado Resource Guide*, by Dana EchoHawk

In addition, project outcomes and impact required forging sustainable partnerships with cultural and educational organizations. The Denver Public Library provided digitizing, cataloging, and hosting services. History Colorado (formerly the Colorado Historical Society) created the project website and produced annotated classroom curriculum. “Teaching with Primary Sources @ Metro” offered two “Hispanics in Colorado” in-service workshops for rural and urban Colorado third and fourth grade teachers, with funding from the Library of Congress.

Content is now jointly promoted and accessible through website links at the Center for Colorado & the West at Auraria Library (<http://coloradowest.auraria.edu/>), the Denver Public Library Western History and Genealogy Division (<http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/>) and History Colorado (<http://www.historycolorado.org/educators/hispanic-history-resources>).

As the educational videos and digital images initiatives illustrate, community members determined 'significance'<sup>11</sup> for the CC&W cultural heritage collections and interpretations. For traditional Hispanic culture, *cuenteros* or storytellers served this role. Now, in the digital age, cultural community members work together with faculty and students to preserve cultural memories and teach memory preservation through a particular cultural heritage lens. For this project, knowledge collection and interpretation activities were guided throughout by certain value principles in authentic community information: receive the information with accuracy; store the information with integrity beyond doubt; retrieve the information without amendment; apply appropriate judgments on the use of the information; and pass the information along appropriately.<sup>12</sup> In this way, community-generated judgments on cultural 'significance' connected form, content, and context for digital content viewers with and for the aim of fostering vital and affirmative understandings of the past and visions for the future.

This collaborative digital curation and interpretation initiative is timely because, as Sean Cordes of Western Illinois University suggests, "we stand today at a critical point in the history of information. The means for creating and consuming information are increasing and evolving. The amount of information is rapidly expanding, while processes we used to qualify information truth are shifting from centralization to broader civic participation."<sup>13</sup> Our rich anecdotal evidence suggests that engaged Hispanic

participants experienced significant validation of their collective knowledge. As Hispanic contributor José Lara stated, "The projects you have instigated this year are ... everywhere, accessible, inspiring!" Moreover, content provided by participants in this Hispanic cultural project has challenged the hegemony of the dominant "legacy of conquest"<sup>14</sup> memories recorded typically in standard textbooks on the American West. As rural and urban Colorado history teachers grew to understand during in-service training provided by "Teaching with Primary Sources @ Metro," preserving stories and images will not only have a great impact on student learning in the future, this will also save cultural heritage and memories that may have been forgotten.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, this initiative has corroborated both the significance of the construct and also the efficacy of heritage organizations, suggested by Shilton and Srinivasan, as conveners of conversation<sup>16</sup> "with all groups who claim a role in society as keepers of collective memory ... The consequences of not doing so will be narrow and structured remembering, which will fail to reflect the rich diversity of cultural life and will heighten the threat of collective amnesia."<sup>17</sup>

### **CSU-Pueblo Southern Colorado Ethnic Heritage and Diversity Archives**

Pueblo, Colorado, and Southern Colorado possess an incredibly rich ethnic heritage, unique to Colorado, due to the multitude of ethnic groups who settled here in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Most of the Italians, Croatians, Slovenians, Mexicans, Germans, Greeks, Japanese, Hispanic-Americans, and African-Americans who came to Southern Colorado found employment at the Colorado Fuel and Iron's steel mill in Pueblo and in mining camps throughout Southern Colorado. They raised families and created unique and thriving communities.





Photo 4. Chicano student occupation of TB-1, University of Colorado-Boulder, ca. 1970s. Photo courtesy of CSU-Pueblo University Archives and Special Collections, Jose Esteban Ortega Papers.

Although several initiatives exist in Pueblo to document this history, including collections at the El Pueblo Museum, the Bessemer Historical Society, and the Southeastern Colorado Heritage Center, the cultural heritage of the region was still at risk of being lost because no one institution had a mission to specifically focus on preserving archival collections documenting the history of cultural communities in Pueblo.

In March of 2008, the Archives and Special Collections of the Colorado State University-Pueblo (CSU-Pueblo), with a generous donation from David and Lucile Packard Foundation, launched a new program, the "Southern Colorado Ethnic Heritage and Diversity Archives" (SCEHADA). SCEHADA's mission is to provide a permanent and secure repository to collect, preserve and make accessible the records, papers and manuscripts of the individuals, families and organizations of the racial, ethnic, and cultural groups of Pueblo and Southern Colorado.

The University Archives intended to reach out to a number of underrepresented groups in the

community to partner with them in collecting and preserving archival materials documenting their important histories. In so doing, the Archives also planned to develop primary source collections that CSU-Pueblo students could use in their own curriculum-driven research. This student learning initiative developed into a truly collaborative effort that has succeeded largely due to the symbiotic nature of the relationship between the Archives, the community donors, and university students.

While a number of community groups expressed interest in working with the University on this project, unexpected opportunities came from one group in particular. As a result of the press release about SCEHADA and a resulting newspaper article, the University Archivist was approached by a group of community members interested in working with the University to preserve important collections that they owned related to the Chicano Movement in Colorado. These individuals had been active participants in the Chicano Movement from its inception through the present day and their collections were very extensive and unique.



The first donation came from Juan Federico “Freddie Freak” Miguel Arguello Trujillo and included approximately 5,000 slides, numerous motion picture films, videos, reel-to-reel tapes and audio cassettes, and documents related to the Chicano Movement and the boycott against Coors Brewing Company. Following this initial donation, the Archives received several additional donations and the Colorado Chicano Movement Collection became the fastest growing portion of SCEHADA. The aforementioned Packard grant provided funds for equipment, supplies, and outreach that enabled production of other authentic cultural resources. The Archives, in collaboration with Dr. Fawn-Amber Montoya of the Chicano Studies program at CSU-Pueblo, began collecting oral histories from Latino veterans, focusing in particular on Vietnam veterans.

The Archives has also reached out into the community in other ways, partnering with a community center and the El Pueblo Museum to host outreach events and participating in local celebrations such as Cinco de Mayo. Rather than holding all events on the University campus, bringing the collection to the community was the priority. Each event included music, food, and guest speakers from the Chicano community in addition to providing collection information and soliciting input. The events were seen as efforts to educate about the Chicano Movement in collaboration with established members of that community.

One challenge Archives staff encountered was gaining the trust of community members. A sense of mistrust was heightened by past, often negative, experiences with educational institutions and by the fact that the Archivist, Beverly Allen, and Library Dean, Rhonda Gonzales, were seen as outsiders to the community and the Movement. As a result, CSU-Pueblo staff was forced to confront their own biases. While wanting to believe they were honest brokers, staff came to realize that decisions concerning collections cannot help but be affected by the mindset of those doing the collecting, especially when those making the decisions are from a different culture. Since archives tend to reflect the attitudes and values of their curators, it is thus

essential to have the viewpoints of the creators of the records represented on a continuing basis as a counterbalance.<sup>18</sup> As Shilton and Srinivasan observe, “successful appraisal decisions rest on understanding the value of particular narratives and records to a community.”<sup>19</sup>

As the CSU-Pueblo staff embraced the role of stewards rather than custodians of the records, they grew to respect and value the continuing role of the ethnic community in curation of the cultural materials and to realize that an important part of its role was to maintain context insofar as the community understands it, this being “the first step in a participatory model for multicultural archives.”<sup>20</sup> Staff researched the archival literature for other collaborative efforts that had been undertaken to create ethnic archives across the country and a guiding principle eventually emerged. As suggested by Wurl, archivists working with multicultural archives need to shed their roles as gatekeepers and owners of the archival content they collect and develop a collaborative relationship with potential donors and community leaders that promotes stewardship rather than custodianship and acknowledges the primary role of stakeholders in the creation, acquisition, and dissemination of ethnic archives.<sup>21</sup>

In the journey towards joint stewardship of the records, several other strategies were developed to continue to build trust with the stakeholders, including creating a community advisory board called “The Colorado Chicano Movement Archives Advocates.” To date, members of the group have helped acquire records recognized as having value to the Chicano community along with providing valuable information about their context. The mission and role of that group as well as its membership are still in development. The group plans to expand its membership to bring in representatives from other segments of the Chicano community in order to widen its collective circle of experience and influence.

Another important move was to hire community insider, Reyes Martinez Lopez, CSU-Pueblo graduate student and son of Chicano activist Francisco ‘Kiko’ Martinez, to work with potential donors and to process collec-





tions. Not only did Martinez Lopez have broad knowledge of the Colorado Chicano Movement, he also had the academic perspective, and so served as a useful liaison between the community and the University. Martinez Lopez and the Archivist acted in tandem, with Lopez frequently making the initial contact in the natural course of interacting with the community, providing the introduction to the Archivist who would then follow up on these contacts. They crafted jointly-signed letters to potential donors. Martinez Lopez frequently brought the archives into the community by doing initial inventories of materials in the homes and offices of donors before these materials were transferred to the archives.

Another area of archive development involved negotiations concerning a shared understanding with the community advocates about the role of the Archives in relation to the ongoing Chicano Movement. There were splits and factions within the Colorado Chicano Movement and each group had an investment in preserving the version of the Chicano Movement with which they agreed. The Archives sees its primary role as that of providing preservation and education and the institution resists taking a political stand. The Archives has strived for balance in its collecting efforts, in order to present a wide and representative view of the Colorado Chicano Movement, but this remains a challenge.

The current situation in Colorado is not as immediate and urgent as the situation Wurl faced in reference to the L.A. riots following the trial of Rodney King when, "[it felt] anachronistic and academic for us to be contemplating the issue of documenting minority cultures when just down the road, society was breaking apart along racial and ethnic faulty lines."<sup>22</sup> Our Archives staff has had a relatively easier time defining its role and distinguishing it from that of active members of the Chicano Movement. However, it became apparent that promotion of the collection was inextricably linked to the ongoing efforts of members of this grassroots political movement. Open dialogue about this issue with the community advocacy group is ongoing.

Another difficulty has been the pressure to meet the expectations of donors for quick processing and digitizing of the collections with limited staffing and budget. To date, Archives staff have organized, described, and re-housed the majority of donated materials. Thousands of photographs have been digitized and a limited number of these have been placed online in the institutional repository and on the Archives website. The Archivist has also created online finding aids that are accessible from the website and through the Rocky Mountain Online Archives. The community, however, would like to see more.

The Archives has tried to address this issue by educating stakeholders about professional archival practice and by involving them in processing and identification projects as opportunities arise. Realizing that important context may be lost without the participation of the stakeholders, the Archives continues to devote considerable effort in this area.<sup>23</sup>

Some challenges that the Archives has encountered include building trust relationships with the Chicano community, formalizing the relationship with the community advocacy group, and articulating the University's role in the ongoing Chicano Movement. Archives staff will continue to approach these issues with open communication and respect in order to further develop this collection. The effort to overcome cultural differences and to share information has resulted in preservation of and greater access to valuable cultural resources.<sup>24</sup>

As the Archivist continues to work with the local community to develop this collection, she intentionally seeks and fosters joint ownership. The community members continue to retain a clear stewardship role over the materials in the collections. They assist the Archivist in identifying potential donors and in publicizing the collection. In turn, the Archives provide resources to organize, preserve, and provide access to the collections. In the future, more active involvement of community members in interpretation and identification of content in the collections is planned.



Developing the Southern Colorado Ethnic Heritage and Diversity Archives, and the Colorado Chicano Movement Archives in particular, has brought successes as well as challenges for CSU-Pueblo. By recognizing from the outset that this project would be a collaborative effort between the University and the community, the Archives has been able to achieve many of its objectives. It has succeeded in collecting and preserving a previously undocumented history of one of the underrepresented groups in the Southern Colorado community. It has also been able to use this project to build closer relationships with that community. One of the most interesting developments for the University has been the involvement of students not only in using the collections for research, but also, under the direction of Dr. Montoya, in creating content that becomes part of the collection. This unique collection has become truly integrated with the curriculum of the Voices of Protest course taught on campus, discussed below.

### **The Collaborative Process in the Classroom at CSU-Pueblo**

The attempt to create a symbiotic relationship between the Archives and the academic classroom has taken shape in an upper division Chicano Studies course called, The Voices of Protest. The idea behind the course is to give students a broad overview of the multicultural character of the history of the United States through additional readings in Colorado History, an oral interview with an individual involved in the Chicano Movement, and a project related to this interview. Resources for teaching multicultural America and Colorado include the texts, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America* and *Enduring Legacies: Ethnic Histories and Cultures of Colorado*.<sup>25</sup> These texts assist students in thinking outside of the traditional paradigm of American history. The course consists of a reading and writing intensive aiming at developing critical thinking skills. These texts serve as the academic background for students to be able to create their own primary documents within the context of the course.

One particular text that students read for the course, George Mariscal's *Aztlán and Vietnam*:

*Chicano and Chicana Experiences of the War*, includes a number of pieces of creative fiction and autobiographical accounts of the Vietnam conflict.<sup>26</sup> These recount stories from Chicano authors like Roy Benavidez, whose work is part fiction, as well as a series of letters from young men to their parents and from parents to their children. This text allows students to think more in detail about what a primary document is and how it connects with them as students differently than the previous secondary sources.

As part of the course, students conduct an oral interview with a veteran or a family member of a veteran. Most of the interviews are obtained from Vietnam veterans, but other individuals who want to participate in the interview process have not been turned away. The main reason for the desire to focus on the conflict in Vietnam was that there seemed to be few voices for the archives that focused mainly on events and struggles of the Chicano movement in the U.S. The Archivist and Dr. Montoya also wanted to capture the voices of those who found the Vietnam War to be a catalyst in their participation in the movement when these veterans returned home. The intention for this piece of the course was to have students to feel connected to the archives and to think about how primary documents were created and what they could do with the documents available to them in the University Library's Archives. As the Chicano Archives grew, Dr. Montoya and the Archivist wanted to be able to illustrate to CSU-Pueblo faculty and administration how valuable archives are for primary research.

In preparation for the interviews, the professor contacted the local branch of the American GI Forum<sup>27</sup> or other individuals who had already participated in the interview process, seeking their recommendations. The potential interviewee was informed about the interview process, the role of the Archives, and how the students in the Voices of Protest course would use their interviews for a class project. After informing the potential interviewee of the process and intent of the interview collection, they were then invited to participate in the oral interview.

In order to prepare students for the interview process, the University Archivist visited the



classroom and showed examples of interviews and provided samples of interview questions that were posted on the Archives' website. After the presentation and a class discussion, the students prepared a list of questions. Sample questions for the interview included a focus on biographical details, early days of service, war time service, experiences of returning home, and/or reflections on the war.<sup>28</sup> All questions were ultimately approved by the instructor at which time students were free to conduct the interviews. The students have found that sitting down with the veteran allows them to see history in action and they feel a stronger connection to the individual and come to understand more fully the complexities of the Vietnam conflict and the Chicano Movement.

Examples of interviews that have stood out to students include one with Larry Montoya, a man who served in the air force. When asked what his experience was like when he came home from Vietnam, Mr. Montoya replied that when he returned from war there was no one to meet him at the airport. In the interview, the viewer could see that Mr. Montoya was visibly shaken by this.<sup>29</sup> In another interview, Butch Chavez spoke about returning to the United States and having feces thrown at him and being called a baby killer.<sup>30</sup> These poignant experiences deeply impressed our students and became central to their understanding of the primary source document.

The oral interview process allowed students to think more in-depth about the text that they read earlier in the semester and what types of resources the authors used in the creation of those texts. It also connects them to the Archives in that material that they helped to create is now part of their institutional experience at CSU-Pueblo and has a permanent place in the library. This also resulted in students becoming more invested in the creation of a piece of secondary material related to the interview. As students began to interpret their interviews and place them in the format of a mini-documentary, they gained a new perspective on oral history and began to critically think about the perspectives of the interviewee and how best to reflect ideas

and experiences in a visual format. After the interview, students meet in groups to discuss the ideas and information that emerged during the interview process. In groups of three to five, students begin the work of transitioning from the creation of a primary document to creating a piece of secondary material that offers an interpretation of the primary source material. As students start to interpret the interview, they are instructed to think about the role of the individual in the interview process—they are encouraged to interpret it in the light of not just a Vietnam story, but as a Colorado story and as a Chicano story. Students then have the next month to work further in groups in order to complete the documentary. The following are just a few of the themes that the documentaries have focused on: the role of families in the experience of Vietnam veterans; the role of post-traumatic stress disorder in the veterans' lives; the impact of the Vietnam conflict on the Chicano Movement. Upon completion, the documentaries are also housed in the archives. In this process, students transition in role from being participants collecting a primary document, to creators of secondary material, to interpreters of the content that then allows them to think about the interview in a broader historical context. Moreover, in conducting additional research through the Library of Congress, students use primary documents that help them connect their own primary documents to a broader history of the United States.

Throughout the course students continually discuss the fact that this approach to history is something new to them. As they discuss the multicultural history of the U.S., they are able to break down some of their pre-existing ideas and think more critically about their past and the world around them. Having students create a primary resource document and use it in creating a secondary source material is the key to academic excellence. In effect, it allows students to become part of a symbiotic relationship with the Archives. Ultimately, as students come to understand the individual interviewee, they





Photo 5. Larry Montoya being interviewed by Laura DeHerrera, October 13, 2010, Colorado State University-Pueblo. Photo courtesy of CSU-Pueblo University Archives and Special Collections, EVOP, Voices of Protest Oral History Collection.

develop a closer connection to primary actors in that history.

### Concluding Reflections

These University of Colorado-Denver and Colorado State University-Pueblo projects have challenged the dominant social construct and power base that represent a particular version of reality and view of truth that regulate “what is said and written and passes for more or less orderly thought and exchange of ideas.”<sup>31</sup> Such codified knowledge is viewed as ordering and structuring the world, including that represented in the collection, organization, and interpretation of knowledge within libraries, archives, and other memory institutions. Traditionally these organizations have served a “powerful and influential position as keepers of eternal truth, shapers of memory and guardians of sanctioned knowledge”<sup>32</sup> posited in print media. Today, these institutions must change to also ensure the recognition, survival, and preservation of cultural knowledge in digital form. Within this broader mandate, shapers of policies and practices of these institutions must challenge comfortable assumptions by asking: “Whose social val-

ues?” “Which voices would determine them?” “Which interpretations should be deemed valuable?”<sup>33</sup> This larger mission recognizes that “the process of creating, locating, evaluating, and using information in various forms does not happen in a vacuum, away from community contexts where meanings and values are in play.”<sup>34</sup> To this end, it is necessary for cultural institutions to approach the collection, organization, and preservation of collections documenting underrepresented ethnic communities as collaborative stewardship.<sup>35</sup>

Some transferable principles affirmed in these projects promote and govern working collaboratively with cultural communities in the creation, preservation and interpretation of photographs, videos, documents, oral histories and ephemeral material that reflect “a deep knowledge of the context, cultural use, and meaning.”<sup>36</sup> These include:

1. Collaborative relationships among libraries, archives, and museums can fruitfully engage cultural community members in collaborative construction of digital knowledge.

2. Traditional practices of appraisal, arrangement, and description can be rearticulated as participatory, community-oriented processes.
3. Inclusive community-generated digital knowledge activities can shape interpretations and narratives of the past and present, thereby influencing construction of the future, as community members express their contexts, concepts, and truths.
4. Libraries, museums, and other cultural memory organizations must seek ways forward that engage and feature, rather than dismiss or append, cultural and local meaning.
5. Student learning can be furthered through interactions with cultural community members who offer significant curation details and authentic interpretation.

Such principles, along with a clear and deep commitment to the processes, have helped make the three archives collections ones that are truly shared with the communities that have been integrally involved in their creation and development.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Sue McKemmish, Anne Gilliland-Swetland and Eric Ketelaar, "Communities of Memory: Pluralising Archival Research and Education Agenda," *Archives and Manuscripts* 33 (May 2005):146-174. See: <http://infotech.monash.edu/research/centres/cosi/projects/mct/prato2006/mckemmish-gilliland-ketelaar>.

<sup>2</sup> Portions of this paper were originally presented as peer-reviewed conference papers: Mary M. Somerville, Rhonda Gonzales, Fawn-Amber Montoya, and Dana EchoHawk, "Yo soy Colorado: Two symbiotic Hispanic cultural heritage initiatives," [Papers Presented, REFORMA National Conference/RNC IV (REFORMA: the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking), Denver, Colorado, 2011]; Mary M. Somerville, "Recuerdos Hablados /Memories Spoken: A Cultural Heritage Educational Initiative," [Paper Presented at 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Confer-

ence for National Association for Multicultural Education, Chicago 2011].

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller account of the identity and issues of this group, Displaced Aurarians, see: <https://www.cu.edu/sg/messages/5606.html>

<sup>4</sup> Mary M. Somerville and Dana EchoHawk, "Recuerdos Hablados/Memories Spoken: Toward the Co-creation of Digital Knowledge with Community Significance," *Library Trends* 59, no. 4, Winter/February (2011): 654.

<sup>5</sup> See: *Where the Rivers Meet: the Story of Auraria, Colorado through Our Eyes* [Denver, CO]: Su Teatro, Inc. 2011. "Originally published in 2005. It is a compilation of two works: Auraria Remembered, a 1991 oral history by former residents of Denver's Westside Neighborhood compiled by Community College of Denver staff and [H]onors Program student, and Westside Oratorio, a musical written in 2004 by Anthony J. Garcia and Daniel Valdez." <http://prospector.coalliance.org/search~S0?/t/where+the+rivers+meet/twhere+the+rivers+meet/1%2C3%2C5%2CB/frameset&FF=twere+the+rivers+meet+the+story+of+auraria+colorado+through+our+eyes&1%2C%2C2>

<sup>6</sup> Joel Wurl, "Ethnicity as Provenance: In Search of Values and Principles for Documenting the Immigrant Experience," *Archival Issues* 29, no. 1 (2005): 65-76.

<sup>7</sup> Christine S. Bruce, Hillary Hughes, and Mary M. Somerville, "Supporting learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century," *Library Trends* 60, no. 3 (2012): 533-534.

<sup>8</sup> James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation*, (n.p.: Thompson Learning Academic Resource Center, 1980), v.

<sup>9</sup> Eric Ketelaar, "Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 223.

<sup>10</sup> See: "Conversations on History", a series of videos portraying the experience of Hispanics in Colorado.

<http://coloradowest.auraria.edu/Video/culture/Hispanic>



<sup>11</sup> Annemaree Lloyd, "Guarding Against Collective Amnesia? Making Significance Problematic: An Exploration of Issues," *Library Trends* 51, no.1, Summer (2007): 58-65.

<sup>12</sup> W. Winiati, "Repositories of Röpü Tuku Iho: A Contribution to the Survival of the Māori as a People," [Keynote address, Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) Annual Conference, Wellington, 2002], 7.

<sup>13</sup> Sean Cordes, "Broad Horizons: The Role of Multimodal Literacy in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library Instruction," [Paper Presented at the World Library and Information Congress: 75<sup>th</sup> IFLA General Conference and Council, August 23-27, 2009, Milan, Italy].

<http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/papers/ifla75/94-cordes-en.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest – The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton and Company, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> Yesenia Robles, "History Diversified: Teachers Go to Class to Learn How to Integrate Latino Perspective into Lessons," *Denver Post*, December 18, 2010, Denver & the West section, [http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci\\_17418588#ixzz1EK4seMtA](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_17418588#ixzz1EK4seMtA).

<sup>16</sup> R. David Lankes, Joanne Silverstein, Scott Nicholson, and Todd Marshall, "Participatory networks: The library as conversation," *Information Research*, 12, no. 4, October (2007), n.p., <http://informationr.net/ir/12-4/colis/colis05.html>

<sup>17</sup> Lloyd, "Guarding Against Collective Amnesia," 64.

<sup>18</sup> Karen M. Mason and Tanya Zanish-Belcher, "Raising the Archival Consciousness: How Women's Archives Challenge Traditional Approaches to Collecting and Use, or What's in a Name?" *Library Trends* 56, no. 2 (2007): 348.

<sup>19</sup> Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan, "Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for

Multicultural Archival Collections," *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 93.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Wurl, "Ethnicity as Provenance," 72.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>23</sup> Shilton and Srinivasan, "Participatory Appraisal," 93.

<sup>24</sup> The symbiotic relationships expressed in the CSU-Pueblo projects arose organically as relationships between archives and community evolved, thereby offering two additional models which emerged independently of the CU Denver model.

<sup>25</sup> Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multi-Cultural America* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2008) and Elisa Facio et al, *Enduring Legacies: Ethnic Histories and Cultures of Colorado* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> George Mariscal, *Aztlan and Vietnam: Chicano and Chicana Experiences of the War*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> The American GI Forum is a Mexican-American veterans association.

<sup>28</sup> Colorado State University-Pueblo Library, "Research Guide CS 420," <http://guides.library.colostate-pueblo.edu/hist420>.

<sup>29</sup> Larry Montoya, interview, 2010, EVOP, Voices of Protest Oral History Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, CSU-Pueblo.

<sup>30</sup> Butch Chavez, interview, 2010, EVOP, Voices of Protest Oral History Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, CSU-Pueblo.

<sup>31</sup> Wurl, "Ethnicity as Provenance," 55.

<sup>32</sup> Robin Boast, Michael Bravo and Ramesh Srinivasan, "Return to Babel: Emergent Diversi-



ty, Digital Resources, and Local Knowledge,"  
*The Information Society* 23 (2007): 397.

<sup>33</sup> Somerville and EchoHawk, "Recuerdos  
Hablados/Memories Spoken," 650.

<sup>34</sup> Shilton and Srinivasan, "Participatory  
Appraisal," 87.

<sup>35</sup> Somerville and EchoHawk, "Recuerdos  
Hablados/Memories Spoken," 650.

<sup>36</sup> Boast, Bravo and Srinivasan, "Return to  
Babel," 401.

