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## Basque Archive Feature: *Nor-Nun* and Boise State University's Special Collections and Archives

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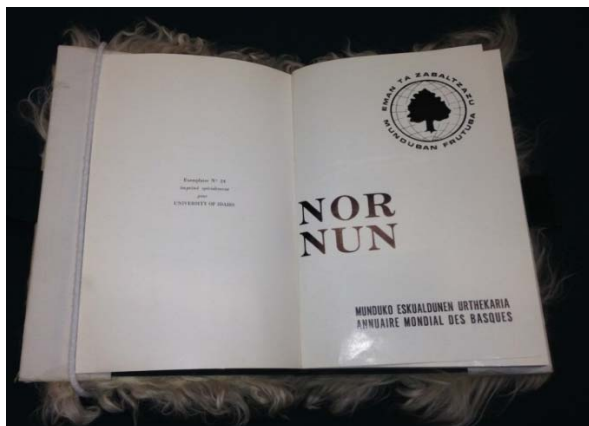
# BOGA Basque Archive Feature



*Euskal  
Agiriak*



*Editor's note. This is the first in a series of features to draw attention to the micro and macro of Basque Studies research opportunities. The micro is a distinctive Basque source (e.g., photo, book, article, artifact) while the macro is an archive where this source resides. While there is truth to the notion of Basques being the "mystery people" of Europe because of the lack of historical roots, there is plenty that can be found if we know where to look. Over time we hope to join with various Basque archives to make their holdings known and accessible.*



## Featured Basque Source:

Andre L. Darby, ed.,

***Nor-Nun: Official Biographical Listing of the Basque People.***

Reprint by the University of Idaho Press, 1970.

## Featured Basque Archive:

Basque Collection in the Boise State University Special Collections and Archives in Albertsons Library



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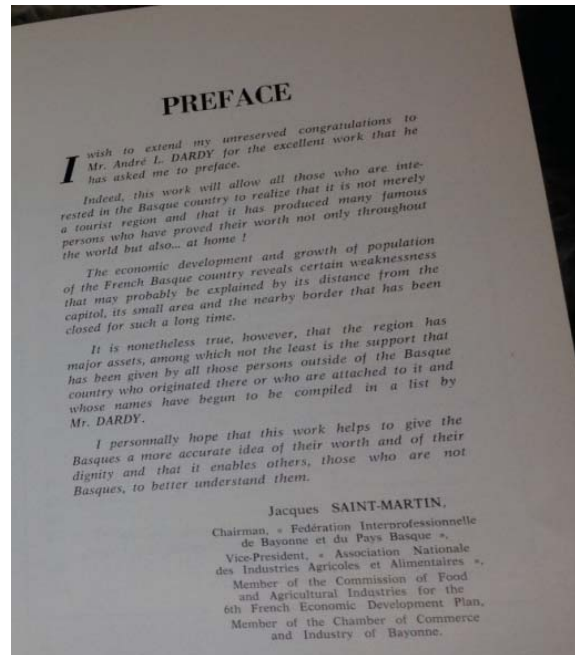
humbing through the shelves of the Basque section of the Special Collections at Boise State University, one book that immediately stands out is the American edition of Andre L. Darby's *Nor-Nun* ("Who-Where"). The immediate distinguishing element is its wool cover, so of course this deserves a closer look! This book is a special reprint by the University of Idaho Press back in 1970. They maintained the original's quad-lingual presentation (Basque, Spanish, French and English), but someone along the way came up with the idea of covering the book with sheep's wool. For anyone even partially familiar with Basques of the American West, it was no big leap to make the connection between Basques and sheep. For many Basques immigrants to the western United States, the sheep industry provided them their portal into America. Essentially unique among American ethnic groups, only in the American West did one group of people become so exclusively identified with just one occupation: Basques & sheepherding.



This is a good example of the cautionary warning of not judging a book by its cover: this book does not tell the Basque sheep story. Instead, published in Europe, it is part educational brochure, part apologia (see excerpt below), and part a "Who's Who" that profiles people of the Iparralde or northern (French) side of the Basque Country; Darby anticipated a later volume to feature Basques from the Hegoalde or southern (Spanish) side of the Basque Country. It looks to be a self-published project, where the author saw a need and possibly an opportunity to tell the Basque story. In the preface, Jacques Saint-Martin praised Darby's work, because now people would see that the Basque Country was not just a tourist destination, and that this land had "produced many famous persons who have proved their worth not only throughout the world but also... at home!"

The book was an attempt to introduce the Basques to a wider audience, where the Basques helped to tell their own story. Note that at the time of publication in 1970 that the Basques were largely subsumed into the national stories of Spain or France, where a Basque identification was essentially absent. Basqueness was profoundly challenged by the dominant Spanish and French cultures, a key aspect being the clear message that being Basque was somehow outdated and inferior, if not barbaric. Accordingly, the preface concluded with the "hope that this work helps to give the Basques a more accurate idea of their worth and of their dignity and that it enables others, those who are not Basques, to better understand them."

The English version of the preface by Jacques Saint-Martin, then the chairman of the Federation of Inter-Professionals of Bayonne >



**Publicity excerpt from the *Idaho State Journal* (27 November 1970).**

WE SUPPOSE there are more Basques or descendants of the Basques in Idaho than in any other state in the Union<sup>1</sup>. So you probably will be interested in a letter which an Andre L. Darby, a journalist on the Paris daily newspaper, "Le Figaro" has written us. He is getting out a dictionary of Basque people and wants a lot of free publicity.

Here is an excerpt from the letter: "The first WORLD DIRECTORY OF THE BASQUE PEOPLE, entitled "NOR-NUN" (WHO? - WHERE? in Basque), has just been published. This edition, in four languages (Basque, English, French and Spanish) is devoted to the Basques coming from the French Basque country (Labourd, Lower-Navarre, Soule), whatever country they may live in now. Among the six million Basques and their descendants throughout the world today, many are those who hold key positions in many countries and some have a determining influence in national affairs. Consequently, this edition of NOR-NUN, the genuine OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHICALS DICTIONARY OF THE BASQUE PEOPLE, provides basic background information on personalities of Basque origin in the world of literature, science, diplomatic affairs, politics, business and industry, among which may be found, persons such as: -- Paul LAXALT, Governor of the State of Nevada. -Michel Fourquei, French Army General Staff Commander -- Antouie SALA, French Admiral -Salvat ETCHART, writer, Prix Theophraste-Renaudot 1961 - His Eminence URTASUN, the Archbishop of Avignon -- Martin PLAA, former world tennis champion and many others."

In addition to the biographical list of the Basques, NOR-NUN contains: "--A panorama of the Basque country, in four languages (Basque, French, English and Spanish) with illustrations dealing with historical events, the economy, language and the Basque Influence throughout the world."

<sup>1</sup> According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the number of self-identifying Basques was around sixty thousand, with the greatest number (about 20,000) residing in California.

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Darby's *Nor-Nun* appears to have been largely a self-published book requiring financial support. Sprinkled throughout the book are numerous advertisements. Here on the inside cover is an ad featuring the popular Iparralde liquor "Izarra".





The Basque Collection, Boise State University Special Collections and Archives, Albertsons Library

## **BASQUE ARCHIVE**

Boise State University Special Collections and Archives in Albertsons Library holds more than 300 manuscript collections of letters, journals, diaries, scrapbooks, photographs, and other primary-source materials that document Idaho history, particularly the Boise and Southwest Idaho, Idaho's past and present political and environmental history, and the literary history of the state. Research topics include politics, environment, **Basque culture**, filmmaking, literature, ethnicity, gender, music, geosciences, and many others.

The University Archives is the repository for university publications and the official records of the President, Faculty Senate, ASBSU, administrative offices, and academic departments. Materials include the student newspaper, university catalogs, budgets, yearbooks, photographs, audio and video, books, posters, and other ephemera. Research topics include faculty, students, campus life, buildings, academic departments, athletics, student organizations, and university departments. Included in its holdings are the papers of the late Pete T. Cenarrusa, former Idaho Secretary of State, and long-time supporter of Basque Studies at Boise State University, and also the papers of the late Dr. Pat Bieter who initiated Basque Studies in 1975 with a study abroad program to Oñati in the Basque Country.

In 2008, the Basque Museum and Cultural Center in conjunction with the University of Idaho, donated more than 3,000 books about local and international Basque culture, people, and history. Books are in English, Spanish, French, and Euskera, the Basque language. The library actively collects books to support the Basque Studies program and interest in regional history.



< The Basque Collection at Boise State University stretches across many shelves. Its holdings are varied with volumes in multiple languages including Basque, Spanish, French and English.



< Helping to coordinate the Basque Collection at Boise State University is librarian Cheryl Oestreicher, who made access to *Nor-Nun* and the collection possible. Eskerrik asko--Thanks!

*EDITOR'S NOTE. The following is an excerpt from Darby's Nor-Nun, featuring an article written by the Basque academic Eugene Goyheneche, who at the time (1970) was an Assistant Professor at the University of Bordeaux. The choice of title is telling, since it appears to be written as a direct response to the cultural reality of the day where Basqueness was profoundly challenged by the dominant Spanish and French cultures. Critics asserted that Basques were not really worthy of special historical consideration since they had no history. Here is a forerunner to a "Wikipedia" style article, Goyheneche seeks to rebut that claim. He affirms via his title that "Yes, the Basques Have a History" even if Spanish and French nationalists refused to acknowledge it.*



## “Yes, the Basques Have a History”

Where does the Basque people come from? During the late upper Paleolithic era, as far back as prehistoric archeology has taken us, the Basques or their direct ancestors, lived in a region of which the center is the present Basque country. These people fought back all invasions, giving up some of its land and assimilating certain foreign influences but losing none of its own character.

Early in the Christian era, the Basque language was spoken from the Garonne River valley to south of the Ebro and, to the east, all along the Pyrenees. The Basques lived in peace with the Romans whose great roads passed through Basque territory. In some parts of the plains, Roman ways were assimilated whereas the mountainous regions resisted Roman influence.

### THE KINGDOM OF NAVARRE

Upon the fall of the Roman Empire, the Basques generally fought back successfully, the invasions of Germanic tribes (Franks, Visigoths) and the Moors. On August 15, of the year 788 A.D., the allied Basque tribes defeated Charlemagne at Roncesvalles. On two fronts, fighting against the Franks in the north and the Moors in the south, the Basques witnessed the birth of the Kingdom of Navarre. Under Sancho the Great (999-1035), all Basque lands to the Garonne and all the Christian kingdoms of Spain were united. Later, Sancho the strong led the Christians to victory at las Navas de Tolosa in 1212.

Upon the death of the last Basque king, the rule of Navarre fell to foreign dynasties due to the lack of male heirs giving rise to a few great kings but, through whose policies, the Basque kingdom was gradually broken up.

Castille and Aragon, originally part of Navarre, [now became dominant]. Guipuzcoa and Alava were given to the King of Castille and Viscaya, originally independent, was also attached to Castille when its feudal lord became its king. In the north, both Labourd and Soule, two viscountships founded by the King of Navarre were passed down to the Duke of Aquitaine, King of England. Whereas the southern provinces



were being reconquered and disputed by various dynastic families, the northern provinces were conquered by the French at the end of the Hundred Years War.

#### BASQUE INSTITUTIONS

In spite of allegiances to various sovereigns, the Basque provinces remained autonomous and maintained their institutions and ethnic character. Christianity, which was late in coming to the provinces, was encouraged by the Kings of Navarre and foundations were laid for its advent by the pilgrims going to Santiago de Compostela and traveling mainly from the Garris region to Logroño by way of Ostabat, Roncesvalles, Pamplona, Puente-la-Reina and Estrella.

The feudal system was rarely practiced as elsewhere. Basques, as free men with equal rights, had the privilege of bearing arms, fishing, hunting and farming very extensive communal lands. The "etxeko jaun" elected delegates to parish, valley and provincial assemblies which decided the affairs of the country. The assemblies were known as "juntas" from Biscaya to Guernica, "biltzar" from Labourd to Ustaritz and "silviet" in Soule. The sovereigns took oath before these assemblies to respect the "fueros" or Basque constitutions. The nobility which possessed no great wealth, had but few privileges and the clergy did not exist as a political body. Legal guarantees and economic independence were the basis for individual freedom.

The memory of the original unity of the Basque people was revived by the "faceries" or international treaties governing the use of pasture land and the "traites de bonne correspondance" which guaranteed peaceful dealings among Basques on the high seas.

#### AGRICULTURE AND FISHING

From Soule to Biscaya, an area composed mainly of forests and moors, sheep, cattle and particularly pigs abounded, due to the moving of flocks to other pastures and the freedom they had to roam over common land for livestock raising was the main resource of the Basque country along the Atlantic coast. The small farms of the area produced cider, millet, hay, walnuts and chestnuts. Along the Mediterranean coast, Navarre and Alava were areas of wheat fields and vineyards with cattle and sheep raising. The iron produced in Biscaya and Guipuscoa was both used locally and exported.

Fishing is the basic factor behind Basque expansion throughout the world. Whaling by small boats with from 3 to 6 men aboard was in contrast with the "balaena biscayensis." Biarritz, Guethary, Bidart, Fuentearabia, Pasajes, Ondarroa, Motriko, Lekeitio and Bermeo were nurseries for fishermen whereas Bayonne, St. Jean-de-Luz and St. Sebastian sheltered the fleet of trading ships and Bilbao founded the Consulate of Biscaya in Bruges. The relations between the Basque coast and England, northern Europe and the Mediterranean area paved the way to ocean travel.

#### THE RENAISSANCE AND THE ERA OF GREAT DISCOVERIES

In 1512, Ferdinand of Aragon invaded Navarre in defiance of the rights and patriotism of the inhabitants. Henceforth, the Basques were to be the victims in the rivalries between the French and the Spanish which, along with the religious wars, were to be the ruin of the country. However, the 16th century was a period of fame and glory for although Basque whalers in the direction of the north-west did not discover Newfoundland, they rapidly colonized it as well as the shores of Canada.

Many were the Basques who were among the members of the crews of Christopher Columbus in 1492. J. de Lakotza, a companion of Columbus, plotted the first map of the New World. J.S. Elkano, from Guetaria, one of Magellan's lieutenants was part of the crew traveling around the world for the first time and he brought back to Seville in 1522, the 18 survivors of the expedition, among them, 7 Basques. Charles V granted him a family coat of arms with the motto *Primus circumdedisti me*. Basque sailors around 1523 were probably responsible for introducing corn to Europe, a crop which transformed the economy.

On August 15, 1534 Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus. Among his first companions was Francis Xavier, the founder of missions and the first Basque missionary.

It was the golden age for intellectual endeavor. Dechepare published the first book printed in the Basque language in 1545, a book of his poetry. Lizarraga translated the New Testament. F. de Vitoria founded international law and condemned colonialism, etc. Humanism appeared at the University of Onate and in the College de Bayonne where Saint-Cyran and Jansenius were forging the tenets of Jansenism.

#### THE CLASSICAL AGE

The two centuries prior to the French Revolution were favorable to the Basque economy with the "Peace of the Pyrenees" (1659), cod fishing, the expansion of corn as a food crop and trade with the Americas. But the demands of representatives of the two Monarchies with regard to Basque rights led to revolts which broke out in Labourd, Lower Navarre, Soule (the Matalas revolt) and Bilbao (rebellion de la sal, 1631). The revolts were put down with great loss of life but proved the attachment of the Basque people to their constitutions. Yet, at the same time, crafts continued to develop with the fine work on the houses of Navarre and Labourd, the "casas torres" and "palacios" the discoidal steles, wood and stone sculpture, galleries in the Labourd churches, and carpentry and woodwork on ships as well as wrought iron work. With Echeberri and Atxular, Basque literature was a prelude to the rich literary production that was later to follow. During the 18th century, the "Caballeritos de Azcoitia" and the Vergara Seminary revived in intellectual investigation and Elhuyar discovered Wolfram.

#### THE 19th CENTURY

The French Revolution abolished the rights of the northern provinces' spite of the unanimous opposition of all the representatives of the Basque people and the eloquent protest of Garat. Basque opposition was put down with the deportation of the inhabitants of several villages of Labourd. With the renewal of the wars between France and Spain, Labourd, Navarre and Guipuzcoa were devastated and the continental blockade ruined the ports. Finally, the Jacobin ideas with respect to centralized government which were wide-spread in Spain, made what was originally a mere family quarrel, the Carlist wars, into an ideological battle. In order to defend the "Fueros" against the liberals, the Basques, led by Zumalacarregui, were among the finest of Don Carlos' soldiers. The Convention of Vergara in 1839, what was to be the lasting defeat of the supporters of Don Carlos in 1879, led to the almost complete abolition of the Fueros and the transferral of Spanish Customs from the Ebro to the Pyrenees. It appeared as if the Basque people was to lose, without any hope, its political identity.

However, the economy took on new aspects. Iron ore was exported from Bilbao in enormous quantities and the banks of the Nervion were being covered with steel mills and ship building yards, Basque ships were ploughing all the seas, Guipuzcoa was becoming industrialized, the port of Bayonne was modernizing its facilities in spite of the tidal bore and Boucau with the "Forges de l'Adour" (1881) was becoming an industrial center.

Mechanized industry replacing home industry in the rural areas, the concentration of farms, compulsory military service and the over-population brought about massive emigration towards the Americas. In 1854, the “discovery” of Biarritz by Napoleon III and Empress Eugenia ushered in a new industrial era and an era of tourism which today is one of the country's main resources.

Culture made great strides. After Humboldt and L.L. Bonaparte, linguists from all countries and among them, Basques, such as Azkue, anthropologists, historians and those historians specialized in prehistoric times, began to examine the “Basque phenomena” in the light of scientific methods. Written and oral literature were enriched by these efforts to bring “all things Basque” up to date. Sabino Arana Goiri proposed modern solutions to Basque political and social problems. Iparragirre, a veteran of the Carlist wars gave the Basque people its hymn, the Gernikako Arbola, or the Guernica tree, symbol of Basque rights.

The Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 devastated peninsular Euzkadi once again. Whereas the inhabitants of Navarre were within the zone of General Franco, the inhabitants of Biscaya and Guipuzcoa rallied around the government of Aguirre. The bombing of Guernica by the German air force (April 26, 1937) and the fall of Bilbao brought an end to resistance and started a new exodus towards America.

#### THE BASQUES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

Emigration showed the Basque qualities of energy, work and their ability to adapt to new situations. Basques have always looked far beyond their own borders for resources that their own poor land could not provide; in the Roman legions, in European ports, in France and Spain and everywhere throughout the Middle Ages. Basque sailors, accustomed to battling the storms on the Gulf of Biscay, invented the rudder-post “a la Navarraise” or “a la Bayonnaise” which allowed for foreign navigation. Mention has already been made of the part they played in the discoveries of the 16th century. Ever since the discovery of America, the Basques have played an important part in the administration of these new countries. Buenos Aires was founded by Garay, Asuncion, by Irala and Montevideo by Zabala. The Philippine islands were explored by Urdaneta, Manila was founded by Legazpi and Lope de Aguirre was the forerunner of America's liberators. In 1728, the 'Guipuzcoa Company of Caracas colonized Venezuela. In the 18th century, the first school for women in America, the “Colegio de las Vizcainas” was established in Mexico City. The Rio de la Plata and a part of Mexico were named “Nueva Viscaya”. In the early 19th century, Basques and their descendants were among the most famous “libertadores” and founders of American Republics: Bolivar, Elizalde in Ecuador, Urdaneta in Colombia and Iturbide, the first emperor of independent Mexico.

The young republics called for manpower and skills. Basques from both north and south responded massively to this call as of 1832, going first to the cattle regions of Uruguay and Argentina and then, to the silver mines of Mexico. Finally, most of the Basques in Chili became tradesmen and tanners. Many died of poverty but many more became wealthy and contributed significantly to the economic development of their adopted country in which they held the highest positions. Over 50 Basques became presidents of one or another of the Latin American republics within a century and a half. South American aristocracy abounds in Basque names, representing families whose origins were often humble.

The war with Spain led thousands of Biscayans and Guipuzcoans to Venezuela where they were among the main groups responsible for the extraordinary prosperity of that country after the Second World War.

In consideration for the part played by the Basques in the history of Argentina President Ortiz opened the country which had been closed to all other immigration, to them.

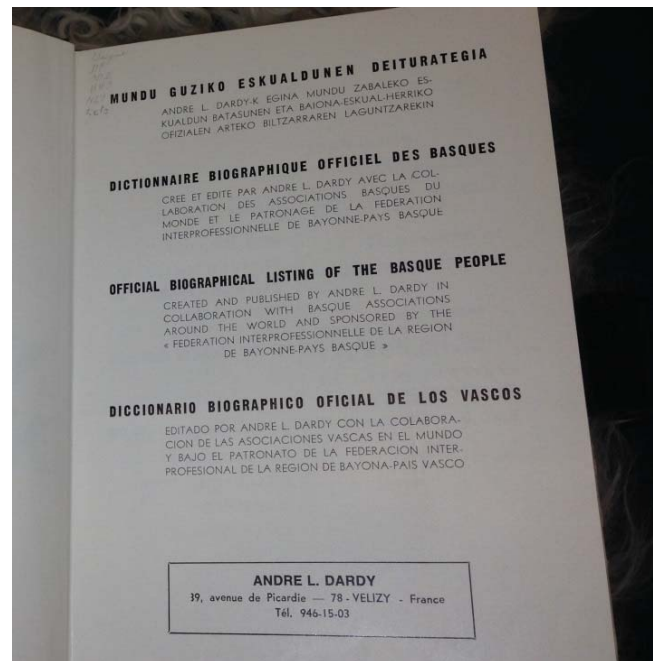
From the 19th century on, Basques of the mountain valleys left for the western United States (Idaho, Nevada, California, etc.) as shepherds. This emigration is still going on and providing the descendants of Basques settled in the United States with the continuous stream of new blood<sup>2</sup>. Here again, Basques starting from nothing, gained high positions. The present governor of Nevada is a member of the Laxalt family and, a Center for Basque Studies, similar to the one in New York, has been founded at the University of Nevada.

Basque cultural and social organizations maintain very close bonds with: both the old and new immigrants.

After St. Francis Xavier, a great many Basque missionaries evangelized India, China, Africa and the Indians of America. St. Michel Garicoitz sent his Betharramites to Argentina, and a large number of Basques are Bishops in the most distant countries. Msgr. Mugabure, Msgr. Labarhete, Father Candau and Father Chabagno are still revered in their adopted countries. Finally, among the list of Bishops representing South America at the Vatican Concile, there were 26 Basque names.

Thus, because of the effects it has had on the economy of the country and the fact that it has often revealed the qualities of the Basque nation to the Basques themselves and to the young nations they have served, emigration is not an outside factor but an integral part of our history, giving us pride and hope in the future.

Eugene GOYHENECHÉ,  
Assistant Professor University of Bordeaux



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<sup>2</sup> Alas, this is no longer the case. Soon after publication, the consistent flow of Basque immigration came to an end, as dynamics changed in the Basque homeland reducing the “push factors” of migration.