

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the festival landscape of Jaialdi '95 as a tool for ethnic boundary maintenance and as a form of symbolic ethnicity. Major points from previous chapters are reviewed to provide a context for the analysis. The analysis focuses on: how the Jaialdi festival series has become an important ethnic institution for the American Basque community; how the landscape of Jaialdi '95 has contributed to maintaining the ethnic boundary for the American Basque community and the colony of Basques in Boise; and how the landscape of Jaialdi '95 has contributed to the symbolic ethnicity of assimilated Basques.

- **Ethnic Boundary Maintenance**

Ethnic groups in the United States, including the Basques, are social groups whose members perceive a sense of a common heritage and culture as the criterion differentiating their group from other groups. To remain a viable entity within American society, group members must create and maintain a social and cognitive boundary, an ethnic boundary, which separates them from others in society. The requirements for maintaining the ethnic boundary include members believing themselves to be part of the ethnic group, interacting and mutually cooperating with one another to achieve the common purpose of preserving their ethnic heritage, and minimizing the amount of contact with American society. As a way to meet these requirements, ethnic groups in the United States often have established social, economic, and educational institutions separate from American society.

### *American Basque Community*

Basques have been one of the most distinct groups in American society because no other ethnic group has become as closely associated with a single occupation as Basques have with sheep herding. The combination of migrating directly into the sheep districts of the American West rather than settling within cities and of practicing a transhumant sheep herding style has resulted in the Basques being insulated from and having minimal contact with the rest of American society. Because sheep herding historically has created a ready barrier separating Basques from American society, the American Basque community has had neither a pressing need nor an ethnic concentration to establish a wide range of ethnic institutions to maintain their boundary. However, the one ethnic institution that American Basques traditionally have relied on for both survival and maintaining the ethnic boundary has been the Basque hotel.

Although Basque hotels historically have been the most important ethnic institution for the American Basque community, the era of Basque hotels has ended as fewer Basques emigrate from the homeland and later generations of American Basques enter occupations other than sheep herding. As the replacement, the Basques have established a new ethnic institution, the Basque social club, which focuses on social activities such as *pelota* games, dance groups for younger Basques, and events such as members dinners and an annual festival. These annual festivals not only represent some of the few times when one colony interacts with another by directly participating as dance groups, musicians, or athletes, but also manifest the highly valued Basque characteristics of *indarra* and *sendotasuna*. Thus, annual Basque festivals have become another

ethnic institution by creating an opportunity for the various colonies of Basques to come together as an ethnic group to celebrate their culture.

Because Jaialdi festivals are celebrations of the diversity of the Basque culture and the common experiences of the American Basque community, the Jaialdi festival series has become an important ethnic institution in maintaining the ethnic boundary of the American Basque community. As a celebration of Basque cultural diversity, the Jaialdi festivals delicately balance French-Basque and Spanish-Basque cultural performances and symbols in the festival landscapes. For example, the Jaialdi festivals sponsor a wide range of events such as festivals, Masses, and cultural symposiums, to incorporate elements of the French-Basque and Spanish-Basque cultures. As a celebration of the common experiences shared among the American Basque community, the Jaialdi festivals include a melange of cultural performances and symbols to capture the essence of these experiences. For instance, the Jaialdi festivals often organize cultural symposiums to discuss the historical experiences of Basques in the United States. Thus, the landscapes of Jaialdi festivals have become highly structured productions to project a self-image of the American Basque community to both Basques as an ethnic group and the rest of American society thereby reinforcing the ethnic boundary for the American Basque community.

As a celebration of Basque cultural diversity, Jaialdi '95 sponsored a wide range of events to delicately balance French-Basque and Spanish-Basque elements. Jaialdi '95 held several festive events such as a block party, festival, and public dance along with a number of formal affairs including a special Mass celebration and a few cultural symposiums. This diversity of

events allowed Jaialdi '95 to incorporate the melange of cultural performances and symbols to present the sundry aspects of Basque culture. The Basque block party, for example, featured wood chopping contests, the favorite among French-Basques, and stone lifting competitions, popular with the Spanish-Basques. One event in particular, *Festa'ra*, consciously demonstrated the differences between the French-Basque and Spanish-Basque cultures. *Festa'ra* journeyed through the seven Basque provinces to exhibit a taste of the dancing and costume styles distinct to each province. The events of Jaialdi '95, therefore, provided a structure in which to incorporate a diverse collection of cultural performances and vast assortment of ethnic symbols.

Since Jaialdi '95 sponsored a wide range of events to present the sundry aspects of Basque culture, these events incorporated artistic, celebratory, dramatic, and ritual cultural performances into the festivities. Nearly all the events included artistic performances, such as musical entertainment and traditional dances, to present the high culture of the Basques. For example, Jaialdi '95 organized an extensive range of artistic performances for *Festa'ra* and the festival including performances by dance groups from across the United States and homeland as well as the world's premier *trikitixa* performers Tapia & LeTuria. During the festive events, Jaialdi '95 held celebratory performances such as the sporting competitions and public dances to show the playful aspects of Basque culture. For instances, the block party and festival featured wood chopping contests and stone lifting competitions, but the festival also had *bersolaritza* contests. As for dramatic performances, Jaialdi '95 arranged cultural symposiums to discuss the historical experiences of the Basques via Basque hotels and the contributions of the Saint Ignatius

of Loyola. Finally, Jaialdi '95 held a number of ritual performances such as the special Mass as well as the opening and closing ceremonies to present the leadership of the American Basque community, the Basque government, the Catholic church, and the Boise community. Thus, the cultural performances of Jaialdi '95 not only demonstrated the sundry aspects of Basque culture, but also showed the common experiences of the American Basque community.

In addition to a diverse collection of cultural performances, Jaialdi '95 integrated a vast assortment of ethnic symbols within the multiple festival landscapes to affirm, unify, and reinforce a broad range of conceptional and emotional significances for the American Basque community. Many of these symbols contributed to balancing French-Basque and Spanish-Basque elements in the festival landscapes. The costumes of the French-Basque performers, for example, displayed a green, white, and black color combination while the costumes of the Spanish-Basque performers were a red, white, and black combination. A number of other symbols generated connections with the Basque homeland. For instance, Jaialdi '95 placed the Basque national flag throughout the festival landscapes to evoke the patriotism of American Basques towards the homeland. However, the remaining symbols in the festival landscapes represented the experiences of the American Basque community within the United States. As an example, Jaialdi '95 included sheep wagon displays in the landscape of the festival which epitomized the historical experiences of Basque herders in the United States. The vast assortment of ethnic symbols in the festival landscapes, then, evoked a broad range of conceptional and emotional significance for the American Basque community.

The landscape of Jaialdi '95 contributed to the maintenance of the ethnic boundary for the American Basque community in a number of ways. Unlike the annual festivals that tend to reinforce the tripartite distinction of the American Basque community, Jaialdi '95 celebrated the diversity of Basque culture by delicately balancing both French-Basque and Spanish-Basque elements in the festival landscapes. Jaialdi '95 accomplished this balance by sponsoring a wide range of events to present the melange of cultural performances and symbols. In this melange of cultural performances and symbols, Jaialdi '95 also displayed the essence of common experiences shared among the American Basque community. The festival landscapes of Jaialdi '95, therefore, maintained the ethnic boundary by reinforcing the differences between the Basques and the rest of American society while also bringing together the American Basque community for the common purpose of celebrating Basque culture.

#### *Boise Colony*

The Jaialdi festivals, in addition to becoming an important ethnic institution for the American Basque community, have become an excellent opportunity for the Boise colony of Basques to re-assert their territorial claim over the Basque Block. In the United States, ethnic groups often delineate ethnic zones when they establish their ethnic institutions in a cultural area. This delineation of ethnic zones represents the notion of territoriality, which is a spatial strategy by a group or individual to affect or influence phenomena, people, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area (Sack, 1986). For example, Chinatown in San Francisco, California, is a section of the city which reflects the influence of the Chinese living

within this area. However, the spatial assimilation of ethnic groups decreases the ethnic population living within the zones which has encouraged other groups to encroach upon the zones. Ethnic groups have responded to these challenges for control over the ethnic zones by working together to transform the ethnic landscapes from the functionality of common landscapes to the experience of extraordinary landscapes. As the ethnic group members cooperate with one another to maintain control over their ethnic zone, the ethnic boundary likewise is being maintained.

The channeling of immigrants into specific occupations, according to Yancey *et al.* (1976), commonly resulted in residential concentrations of ethnic groups within American cities, but the involvement of Basques with the rural occupation of sheep herding typically prevented the residential concentration of Basques. Also, Basques relied primarily on the Basque hotel as their ethnic institution in the United States rather than establishing a wide range of ethnic institutions. Most Basque colonies in the United States, then, had neither the ethnic concentration nor desire to delineate ethnic zones within urban areas and create ethnic landscapes (Eagle, 1979). The Boise colony, however, was one of the few Basque colonies to delineate an ethnic zone and create an ethnic landscape. Since the opening of the first Basque hotel in 1903 and for the next seventy-five years, Basque hotels lined the streets of Grove, Idaho, Seventh, and Ninth to create “Basque town” in downtown Boise (Echeverria, 1983). In the late 1940s, the Basques added the Basque Center to the ethnic landscape to house the newly formed social club Euzkaldunak, Inc. During the late 1960s, the Basque hotels of Basque town started to close, leaving the Basque Center as

the only building still in operation by the late 1970s. While most of the Basque landscape of Boise lay in decay after the closing of the Basque hotels, the Basques of Boise banded together to reclaim a section of Basque town along the six-hundredth block of Grove Street. From 1983 to 1992, the Basques of Boise transformed this area into an extraordinary landscape to reassert a territorial claim over a section of their traditional ethnic zone.

Over the past several decades, ethnic festivals have become a popular means with ethnic groups experiencing spatial assimilation to reinforce their territorial claims. Ethnic festivals, similar to other kinds of festivals, are popular events within American society in which people consciously and openly take “time out” from their normal routines to attend including members who moved out of the ethnic zone. The attraction of the ethnic festival lies in its ability to provide a positive, memorable experience by transforming the everyday norms and values (Manning, 1983; Abrahams, 1987). The ethnic festival achieves this feat by transforming urban spaces, often within the ethnic zone, into “festival space” (Willems-Braun, 1987). Ethnic groups then not only utilize the extraordinary ethnic landscapes as a basis for the festival landscape, but also incorporated a melange cultural performances and symbols into the festival landscape to reassert their territorial claim as well.

Even though the different events for Jaialdi '95 produced an extraordinary festival landscape since the landscape changed location several times during the weekend to utilize venues with the best settings, the landscape for the block party in particular contributed to the territorial claim of the Boise colony for the Basque Block. For the block party, Jaialdi '95 transformed the

block into a festival space by placing barricades across the ends of the block to close this area from traffic and establish the boundary for this event. Also, Jaialdi '95 suspended the social orders of the public and private domains within this space. As an example, the Basque Center opened the bar section for the block party. Not only was the crowd allowed to venture into the Basque Center, but also was permitted to take alcoholic drinks from the bar out on the sidewalks and street. In addition to transforming the spatial order of this area, Jaialdi '95 included a variety of cultural performances including sporting exhibitions and symbols such as the Basque flag in the festival landscape. Jaialdi '95, then, created a festive atmosphere for the block party to generate a memorable experience among the crowd in order to substantiate the Basques of Boise claim over this geographic area.

- **Symbolic Ethnicity**

An ethnic identity, according to Li *et al.* (1994), is one of multiple identities which defines and categorizes an individual in relation to others. As one of these many identities, an ethnic identity focuses on the past of an individual such as the familial lineage, origins in the homeland, and history of the ethnic group as the criteria defining the relationships with others. The process of assimilation, however, has greatly affected the saliency of an ethnic identity for many individuals belonging to the later generations. Many of these individuals have married spouses from other ethnic groups, entered more specialized occupations, and moved out of ethnic zones, which has reduced the saliency of ethnic institutions or a single ethnic culture in their normal routines. Nevertheless, these individuals still want to express and maintain an ethnic identity in

suitable ways (Gans, 1979). Since symbols both embody the essence of the ethnic culture and reinforce a broad field of conceptional and emotional significances, one way in which these individuals have expressed and maintained an ethnic identity has been through ethnic symbols. This symbolic ethnicity, then, has allowed these individuals to experience the ethnic culture and feel intensity for an ethnic identity without having to abide by an ethnic value-system or spend extra time being ethnic.

Although a number of factors including the extensive involvement of Basques with sheep herding and the network of Basque hotels have delayed the assimilation of Basques, many from the later generations of American Basques are becoming more similar with the rest of American society. Also, the role of the oldest and, at one time, the most important ethnic institution for the American Basque community, the Basque hotel, has significantly changed as many Basque hotels have closed over the past several decades. As a result of this cultural, structural, and spatial assimilation, the later generations of American Basques no longer depend on the Basque culture or institutions, such as the hotel or social club, for survival in American society.

Since many American Basques from the later generations have been removed from the Basque culture, a Basque identity has little saliency in their normal routines making the culture more of a memory or exotic tradition. However, many of these American Basques still have a desire to express a Basque identity in suitable ways. Over the past number of decades, ethnic festivals in the United States have become a popular means for assimilated individuals to express an ethnic identity. Ethnic festivals are special occasions for which members of the ethnic group

and non-members as well take “time out” from their normal routines to celebrate the ethnic culture. Because cultural performances and symbols of the festivals evoke intuitive comprehension and manifest the essence of the ethnic group in discernible forms, ethnic festivals project a self-image of the ethnic group. As Basque festivals in the United States, the Jaialdi festivals delicately balance cultural performances and symbols in the festival landscape to integrate both French and Spanish elements to celebrate the total aspects of Basque culture. By emphasizing those cultural elements best representing the Basques as an ethnic group, Jaialdi festivals allow assimilated American Basques to experience the culture and reinforce their ethnicity on a short-term basis.

The multitude of festival landscapes for Jaialdi '95 balanced a diverse collection of cultural performances and symbols to celebrate the sundry aspects of Basque culture. The artistic, celebratory, dramatic, and ritual cultural performances condensed the complexities and finessed contradictions within Basque culture. For instance, the special Mass not only demonstrated the strong association between the Catholic religion and Basque culture, but also included liturgy dances common during the holiday Masses in the homeland (Ysura, 1995). While the special Mass presented ritual performances, the outdoor dance inverted the roles of the performers to create a celebratory performance. Jaialdi '95 organized the majority of artistic performances in the landscapes of the festival and *Festa'ra*, however, the outdoor dance inverted the performers roles permitting the crowd to become directly involved with the Basque culture. Also, the opening ceremonies of the events illustrated the contributions of Basques to the city of

Boise, the state of Idaho, and American society. As a result, the Governor of Idaho proclaimed July 24 through July 30, 1995 to be Basque Cultural Week to give recognition to the Basque culture (Jaialdi '95, 1995). The cultural performances of Jaialdi '95 highlighted particular elements to condense the complexities and finesse the contradictions in order to celebrate the sundry aspects of Basque culture.

Jaialdi '95, in addition to the cultural performances, organized a vast assortment of ethnic symbols in the multitude of festival landscapes to capture the essence of the Basque culture. These symbols represented sundry aspects of Basque culture through association, resemblance, or convention to manifest the culture within a discernible form. For instance, the sheep wagon displays in the landscape of the festival embodied the historic experiences of many American Basque families with sheep herding. Along with placing symbols in the festival landscapes reflecting American Basque culture, Jaialdi '95 arranged a wide variety of traditional symbols associated with the Basques. The various booths and kiosks within the landscapes of the festival and block party, as an example, sold souvenirs, such as *botak* and *txapelak* as well as cuisine including *chorizo* and *solomos* often affiliated with Basque culture. Furthermore, Jaialdi '95 had a number of symbols in the festival landscapes which epitomized the French and Spanish elements of Basque culture such as the costumes of the performers and color streamers. As the selections best representing the sundry aspects of Basque culture, these cultural performances and symbols condensed the complexities and finessed contradictions, thereby contributing to the symbolic ethnicity of many assimilated American Basques.

Jaialdi '95 provided a means, through a diverse collection of cultural performances and symbols in a multitude of festival landscapes, for many assimilated American Basques to express a Basque identity without having to live by traditional values over a long period of time. These cultural performances projected an image of Basques to themselves and the rest of American society by selecting elements best representing Basque culture. For example, Jaialdi '95 included a variety of cultural performances as well as a collection of traditional, regional, and American symbols to celebrate the Basque culture. As cultural performances condensed the complexities and finessed the contradictions in the culture, the symbols manifested the essence of the culture within a discernible form. Assimilated Basques removed from the ethnic institutions and culture then were able to experience the culture directly by taking a minimal amount of "time out" from their normal routines. The festival landscapes of Jaialdi '95, therefore, provided an opportunity for many assimilated American Basques to express a Basque identity symbolically.

- **Summary**

Jaialdi '95 was a dynamic socio-spatial phenomenon in which rationalized spaces in Boise were transformed into festival spaces and the cultural landscapes within these spaces were transfigured into metaphors of ethnicity. Through a diverse assortment of cultural performances and symbols, Jaialdi '95 contributed in a number of ways to the maintenance of the ethnic boundary for both the American Basque community and Boise colony as well as the symbolic ethnicity of many assimilated American Basques. For example, Jaialdi '95 as a celebration of the cultural diversity of Basque culture and common experiences shared amongst the American

Basques brought together the tripartite distinction of the American Basque community for a common purpose, thereby making Jaialdi '95 an important ethnic institution. Also, Jaialdi '95 reinforced the territorial claim of the Boise Basques over the Basque Block, a section of the traditional ethnic landscape of "Basque town". In addition, Jaialdi '95 generated an opportunity for many assimilated American Basques to express a Basque identity without having to abide by the Basque value-system or spend much extra time being ethnic, thus contributing to the symbolic ethnicity of these Basques. Thus, the festival landscapes of Jaialdi '95 were metaphors for Basque ethnicity.