

# The Other Lonely Rangers: The Forgotten Lives of America's Basque Shepherders...

From the Archives of the Canyon County Zephyr

## CHARLES GLASS IS CLEARED OF MURDER CHARGE

Negro Cowboy Who Killed  
Basque Shepherd in  
Range Dispute Is  
Acquitted.

Charlie Glass, negro cowpuncher who shot and killed Felix Jesui, a Basque shepherd, on February 24 last as a result of a dispute over range matters, was acquitted of the charge of murder in the first degree shortly after midnight Sunday morning, after the jury had deliberated over the case about two hours. The verdict of acquittal was reached on the first ballot. The introduction of evidence was completed by the defense shortly after noon Saturday. The announcement by the defense that it rested its case came somewhat as a surprise, as it had been understood that the examination of witnesses would not be completed before Monday. The state failed to introduce any rebuttal testimony, and when the defense rested its case an adjournment was taken until 1:30 Saturday afternoon for the opening of the arguments. District Attorney B. W. Dixon made the opening address to the jury, and when he had concluded an adjournment was taken until 7:30 p. m. At that time Attorney C. A. Robertson opened for the defense, and was followed by Attorneys George J. Constantine and Leon Patterson. Attorney O. C. Bailey, special counsel for the state, closed the arguments, and after Judge Dillworth Woolley had read his instructions, the case was submitted to the jury at about 10 o'clock. Shortly before twelve the jury announced that it had reached a verdict. In spite of the late hour a large crowd of spectators were present when the verdict of acquittal was read. There can be no doubt that the verdict met with general approval on the part of those who attended the trial, and after Glass was discharged he received the hearty congratulations of many citizens who

It was the trial of the year in Moab, Utah. The courtroom was packed full by Ten in the morning, November 18th of 1921. Tensions had been brewing a long time between the cattlemen of Southeast Utah and the encroaching sheep herders from the south. The previous February, one shepherd had crossed the line. Or so the defense attorney argued before the assembled crowd.

Young Felix Jesui had brought his sheep onto land he knew belonged to the Lazy Y Ranch, near Cisco. The ranch was owned by the powerful Oscar L. Turner. When foreman Charlie Glass warned Jesui to withdraw his herd and cease his illegal grazing, Felix drew his gun. Glass, in defense of his own life, returned fire. He quickly turned himself in to the local sheriff, and was now under trial for the murder of Jesui.

Charlie Glass was no ordinary defendant. The foreman was widely respected in the small communities of Western Colorado and Eastern Utah for his skill with horses, his bronc-riding courage and his intimidating build, which he used to great effect in subduing the shepherders who threatened Turner's large cattle operations.

But Glass was an oddity. He was a black cattleman with a gun. And while highly regarded by his bosses and fellow ranch hands—Mr Turner had paid his bail and now financed his defense—it was difficult to predict how the local jury would treat him.

If Jesui had been another kind of victim—a fellow cattleman, for instance, or a white man—then Glass' fate would have been sealed. But Felix Jesui was neither. And Charlie Glass was soon acquitted of the charges against him. Glass returned to his work on the Lazy Y Ranch. He returned to his bronc-riding and his regular poker games. And probably, for him, the matter seemed safely in the past.

For sixteen years, both the trial and the shepherd were forgotten. Until the night Glass found himself in a poker game with two cousins of Felix Jesui. These two men knew precisely who sat across from them at the table. After the game had finished, that late night in Cisco, Utah, the two shepherders offered Glass a ride home. Charlie happily accepted.

The next morning, Charlie Glass was found dead, with a broken neck, after an apparent rollover accident in the pickup truck, which somehow left those two Basque men unscathed. And though no one could prove it for certain, the citizens of Moab wondered whether Felix had found his posthumous revenge.



*Charlie Glass*

### **The Lost War for the American Range**

*“...the sheepmen of the Sierra Nevada are for the most part a lot of irresponsible Basques, who own no other property than their sheep; they pay no taxes, evading them by moving.”*

*-The California Cultivator and Livestock and Dairy Journal. 1899*

Very little survives of the era of Basques in the American West. The fading stencil of the word “BASQUE” lingers on crumbling brick facades in Nevada. At scattered addresses throughout Idaho and California, a few curiously named hotels—the Pyrenees, the Noriega, Des Alpes—don’t seem to fit among the region’s otherwise identifiable ethnic blend of Cowboy White/Hispanic/Native American. All over the West, little artifacts of this strange “other” culture abound, but they’re easily missed.

Like the bakery in Bishop, California that sells a distinctive Basque bread. Or like a yearly street fair in Boise, Idaho that still celebrates San Inazio of Loyola. That most-revered saint of the Basques was born in the mountains of Catalonia, at Loyola, and he founded the Jesuit order in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, so why should he be celebrated in Idaho? Among other things, San Inazio described for his followers a practice of meditation and contemplation that could sustain a man’s mind through hours of solitude.

The man from Loyola must have provided some comfort for those thousands of his countrymen who settled in America—Basque sheepmen who called upon him from the peaks of the Sierra Mountains, from the quiet fields of Wyoming, or the lonely extents of the Nevada rangelands.



*Basque sheep herder who speaks broken English coming down from summer camp with pack animals. Adams County, Idaho. Photo by Dorothea Lange, 1939.*

Those isolated men tread lightly through the memory of the larger country. In the famous Range Wars between cattle and sheep, there is no doubt the cattle prevailed. The cowboy took the glory of the old West for himself, and the sheepherder passed into memory. But still, these Basques lived an extreme form of the quintessential American story. In a country that prized individuals, these were perhaps the most rugged and lonely of all.

### **The Arrival of the Dark, Lonely Men**

*There must be a hundred of these dark-faced strangers from Spain who lead the sheep through the Sierra range from Shasta down to Kings River. The valley folk call them gypsies in their ignorance. They are considered shiftless, roving fellows. Because they do not care to talk or to mingle with white men they are looked upon with suspicion. Yet everybody concedes that they are good shepherds. No other man would work all summer alone for so little pay .*

*– Washington Post, 1907.*

The first Basques to make their name in the West arrived at the time of the Gold Rush in California. Most, like Nevada's famous Altube brothers, Pedro and Bernardo—Pedro was later recognized as the “father of the Basques” in America—had already emigrated from Spain to Argentina. And these men had the gift, in the days before the Transcontinental Railroad, of traveling to California over land. This was quite an advantage over anyone hoping to travel from Europe or even the Eastern United States. With no easy way across the continent, ships traveling to California still took the dreaded “Tierra del Fuego” sea route which circled the entire continent of South America.

In Argentina, these Basque settlers had learned the art of managing large herds of cattle and sheep. Now they were lured both by reports of vast gold deposits in the Sierras, and also by the magnificent stretches of frontier country newly under contention. The ownership of the land of California and Nevada was uncertain after the U.S. victory in the Mexican War in 1848. American officials were reluctant to recognize the holdings of the old Spanish “Dons” who had previously established large cattle ranches in the newly won country. Men like the Altubes ventured north into the region to find their fortune among the confusion.

The certain profits these men discovered were not in mining gold from the Sierras but rather in supplying the mining camps. Men with the skills to raise animals could make a steady income selling meat and wool throughout the territories. While some, like the Altube brothers, pursued work on cattle ranches, years of drought had devastated many of the cattlemen in the Sierras, and sheep were generally considered a more resilient choice for the variable climate.

Through the 1850s and 60s, the Basque settlers made a name for themselves. They were particularly renowned for their skill at raising sheep. With time, and with growing herds, the men ventured eastward and southward from the San Joaquin Valley into Nevada and Arizona, and then into Idaho and Wyoming.

There was as much variation among the men raising sheep as in any other western profession. There were many Scots and Irish raisings herds, and Chinese families who found similar profits selling meat and wool to the mining camps. Utah was populated by families of Mormon shepherders and, to the south, Hispanics and quite a few herders among the Navajo Nation in Arizona and southern Utah maintained their own flocks. But, in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only the Basques became synonymous in the American mind with the herding of sheep.

This first wave of Basque settlement from South America, though, was only the foothold. As those Argentinian Basques found success with their herds, they wrote to their families back in Spain and France. They suggested to the young men of their hometowns that they too should attempt a life herding sheep out West. They promised adventure and unheard-of wages, at a time when so many towns of the Pyrennees were economically wrecked by years of war and disease.

These village boys would already have connections when they arrived—relatives and friends who spoke their Basque language—in Western towns that were already agreeable to their customs. As Basques, they would be prized in these towns for their reputed skill with animals. So, as soon as the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869, and the once unmanageable span of the American continent was finally bridged for travel westward, thousands of young Basque men responded to the call.



*Pedro Altube on his ranch in Independence Valley.  
Elko County, NV.*

### **The Journey from the *Baserriak***

The sheepman's journey began in small Catalanian villages like Orozco, or Zubieta or Azpeitia. Many came from rural farms, called *baserriak* in their native Basque language, places too ancient and insignificant to warrant a dot on a map. In Basque country, the custom of primogeniture ensured that property passed to the firstborn, and so many of the immigrating men were the country's younger brothers who could only hope for wealth gained elsewhere.

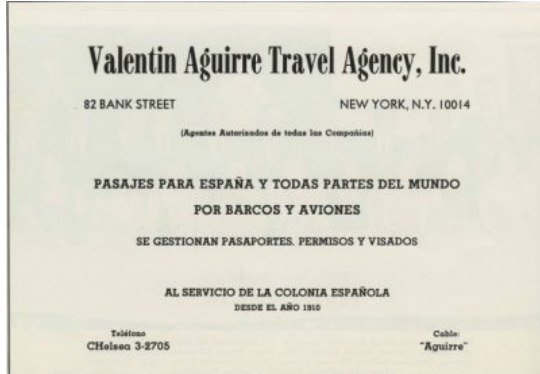
Their first adventure was in the journey to Bilbao or San Sebastian-Donastia, terrifying and enormous cities to the young farmboys, from which they could catch further transport to the French ports of Bordeaux or, farther north, Le Havre.

These young men were poor, and they were gambling all their meager funds on this journey. Their passage across the Atlantic was often on a cargo ship, not a passenger liner. And depending on the vagaries of the vessel, its

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itinerary and the weather, the journey could take anywhere from two weeks to a month. It would have been with immeasurable relief that they finally spotted the Statue of Liberty as they arrived in their new home.

If they were among the lucky who arrived at the docks of New York City after the establishment of Valentin Aguirre's *Santa Lucia* hotel, (also called the *Casa Vizcaína*) the seasick and exhausted Basque traveler might have heard a welcome call from the shore.



“*Euskaldunak emen badira?*” Either Valentin himself or one of his three sons would run alongside the boats, yelling out, “Are there any Basques here?”

“*Bai!*” the man on board would yell back, jubilant to hear his own language. “*Ni euskalduna naiz!*” (Yes! I am a Basque!) He would rush off the boat toward the man who could help him, pressing into his hands the folded and re-folded pieces of paper he had carried so carefully across the ocean. Among the papers would be written an address. A hotel in Idaho. A ranch in Nevada.

“*Bai,*” The Aguirre man, father or son, would have said. “*Etorri nirekin.*” (Yes, come with me.) He must have seemed like an agent of the divine to each man. Having just disembarked from his nauseating sea odyssey, the traveler still faced the journey of a continent to reach his destination. Imagine the tears that would spring to the Basqueman's eyes at the words “*Lagundu dezaket.*” (I can help you.)

And Aguirre would lead the man to safety—to an affordable room and a warm meal, the comfort of familiar words, and the company of men on his same frightening pilgrimage—back at the *Santa Lucia*, not far from the docks, on the cobblestoned corner of Bank and Bleecker Street.



*Hotel Santa Lucia. 82 Bank Street. New York, NY.*

**The Blessings of the *Ostatua***

The Basque was alone wherever he traveled in the world. He was isolated from the rest of humanity by virtue of his strange language, which is spoken only in the remote country of the Pyrennees, and is unrelated to any other European tongue. Though it uses the Latin script and alphabet, Basque has no Latin base and it has remained distinct from the surrounding romance languages. No one has yet explained this linguistic anomaly, but it contributes to the Basque sense of being unique, separate from his neighbors and prideful of his cultural heritage. Many Basque children, particularly in the remote villages, and in the years before the Spanish Civil War, weren't even taught to converse in Spanish.

As a consequence, the Basque traveler was immediately at a disadvantage. He couldn't share in the garbled conversations among the Spanish and Italian immigrants, or the Spanish and French immigrants, whose languages were similar enough to each other to create understanding. In time, over the course of his work, he would learn some English, and probably some Spanish too, but at first he could only find understanding among his fellow Basques.



*Valentin Aguirre and his staff at the Jai Alai Restaurant in the Santa Lucia Hotel.*

The traveler required things—food, boarding, and directions, above all else—and the network of Basque hotels, like the *Santa Lucia*, were his providers. Valentin Aguirre, who immigrated from Catalonia himself in 1895, along with his family and employees, would help to obtain train tickets for the men traveling westward. They would write out the locations of other Basque-owned boardinghouses and hotels along the route, and even pass along news of possible employment opportunities at their future stops to men who hadn't yet secured work upon their arrival.

Valentin's wife, Benita Orbe Aguirre, would pack a large basket of food—meats and cheeses, breads and fruits—to last them a few days into their journey, and often the men were guided by these new beloved friends all the way to



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their departing train car. The specifics of their travel were written in Basque for them on pieces of paper in their pockets; their full name and final destination written in English for train personnel, and attached by pin to their lapel.



*Winnemucca Basque Hotel. Photo by Paul Vlachos*

This network of hotels, or *Ostatua*, would come to the traveler's aid over and over again. When the train stopped in Ogden, or Boise, or Los Angeles, a representative of the local hotel often waited for him at the station. As he journeyed farther west, to places like Bakersfield, California, where the Basque culture was thriving, he need only step off his train and glance across the street to find a friendly place to stay. In Bakersfield alone, he had his choice of three *ostatua*, all within view of the train station—the Noriega, the Pyrenees, and the Metropole.

In each hotel, the traveler was welcomed in his own language. He ate food that reminded him of home, cooked and served by Basque women who had made the same perilous journey across the sea to find their new life, and possibly their new husband, among the shepherding men.



*A game of handball at Bakersfield's Noriega Hotel.*

The hotels even followed a standard architecture—two or three-story buildings, in which the first floor provided kitchen, bar, dining rooms and card rooms; the second and third stories, dormitory-style rooms for the guests with bathrooms at the near and far ends of a long hallway. Outside, many hotels maintained a court for the quintessentially Basque handball game of *Jai Alai*. The owners of the Royal Hotel in Ogden, Utah went so far as to

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construct an entire brick structure behind their hotel, of nearly equal size to the main building, for the handball game.

Crucially, the owners of the hotel guided the Basque man in his travels onward. If he had employment promised on a particular ranch or in another town, they helped to ferry him to his bosses. Or, if he arrived without employment, they set out to help him find work, often extending credit on his room and board until he could pay them back.

One *ostatua*, the Noriega Hotel in Bakersfield, became particularly famous for its generous owners. Gracianna and Jean Elizalde had gone to work in the Old Commercial Hotel of Tehachapi after losing their sheep herds to the market crash of 1929. They moved to Bakersfield and took over ownership of the Noriega in 1931. Gracianna, also known as "Mama Elizalde," was beloved among the Basque community for her many kindnesses. She loaned suits for shepherders to wear for weddings and funerals, arranged car rides for the stranded, and she cared for the old and disabled. She bought funeral plots for bachelor herders who passed away in her hotel.

One story, told by a former serving girl named Mayie Maitia, describes Mama Elizalde placing bets with all the Basques in town as to the gender of the child Mayie would bear. When the baby was born a girl, as Gracianna had wagered, she deposited all her winnings from the bet into a savings account for the child.



*A portrait of Grace Elizalde, hanging in the Noriega Hotel.*

The community provided by the local *ostatua*, and the various Basque-owned restaurants and ranches, would be doubly important for the man who had come to herd sheep. This community would cushion his transition into America, guiding him tenderly from the former life he'd known across the sea into this new, utterly foreign existence. The men would treasure the memories of that tenderness in the long seasons that awaited them.

For, in truth, while they may have been raised in rugged land with a farmer's understanding of hard work, most of the arrivals had no particular knowledge of sheep or the shepherd's life. They were unprepared for the inevitable moment to come—when they were dropped off alone at the crest of some mountain range, with a wagon for their new home, a rifle and some rudimentary foodstuffs, and only a bleating flock of sheep and a shepherding dog for comfort.

Most of all, they were unprepared for the intolerable stretch of time they faced. The many months of isolation in which they would become accustomed to the shepherd's life. What fear and desperate loneliness befell them with their boss's departure. They watched him recede at a horse's canter down the mountain, trailing promises of supplies to be delivered at regular intervals to the high country which the herder must now face entirely alone.

Many went insane.





*Basque shepherd camped on the range. Dangberg Ranch, Douglas County, Nevada.  
Photo by Arthur Rothstein. 1940*

### **The “Sagebrushed” Shepherd**

*“It is not to be wondered at that such a life often ends in insanity. It is said that the asylums are repleted year by year by a large contingent of these unfortunates. Indeed, their lot is a most pathetic one, and they sometimes even lose the power of speech and forget their own names.”*

*—Ethelbert Talbot, “My People of the Plains.” 1906*

The modern mind baffles at the thought of true silence or true loneliness. We can't imagine the complete withdrawal of human presence and human-created sound. But that was the life of the shepherd in those long months spent high in the summer ranges, among the aspen trees with his herd.

He found some comfort in the rituals of the days. The advent of light each morning into his wagon. The preparation of coffee on his cookstove. He could lose his thoughts among the steps of his daylight hours, threading his herd of sheep along their prescribed ranges. His lack of English mattered little to the sheep, or to his dog. And so communication would necessarily revert to its roughest form, whistles and grunted commands, the string of babble he might recite to himself, just to hear a human voice saying something friendly.



*Wyoming Sheepherder with his Wagon.*

But the mind seeks stimulation, and the sheepherders found ways of applying their jumbled thoughts toward activity. Many brought guitars to make music for themselves, or sang long, complicated tunes to their dogs. Some threw their time into endless solitary card games.



*Arborglyph. Boise State University, Special Collections and Archives.*

And the sheepherder's wagon could supply many excuses for invented work. The herder made repairs where he found faults, and he had endless hours to build and design and refine the little shelves and drawers and alcoves of his assigned home. In the long mournful period after the supply wagon's monthly departure, a man could dedicate his time to organizing the newly brought foodstuffs and tools into each specially designated nook and cranny.

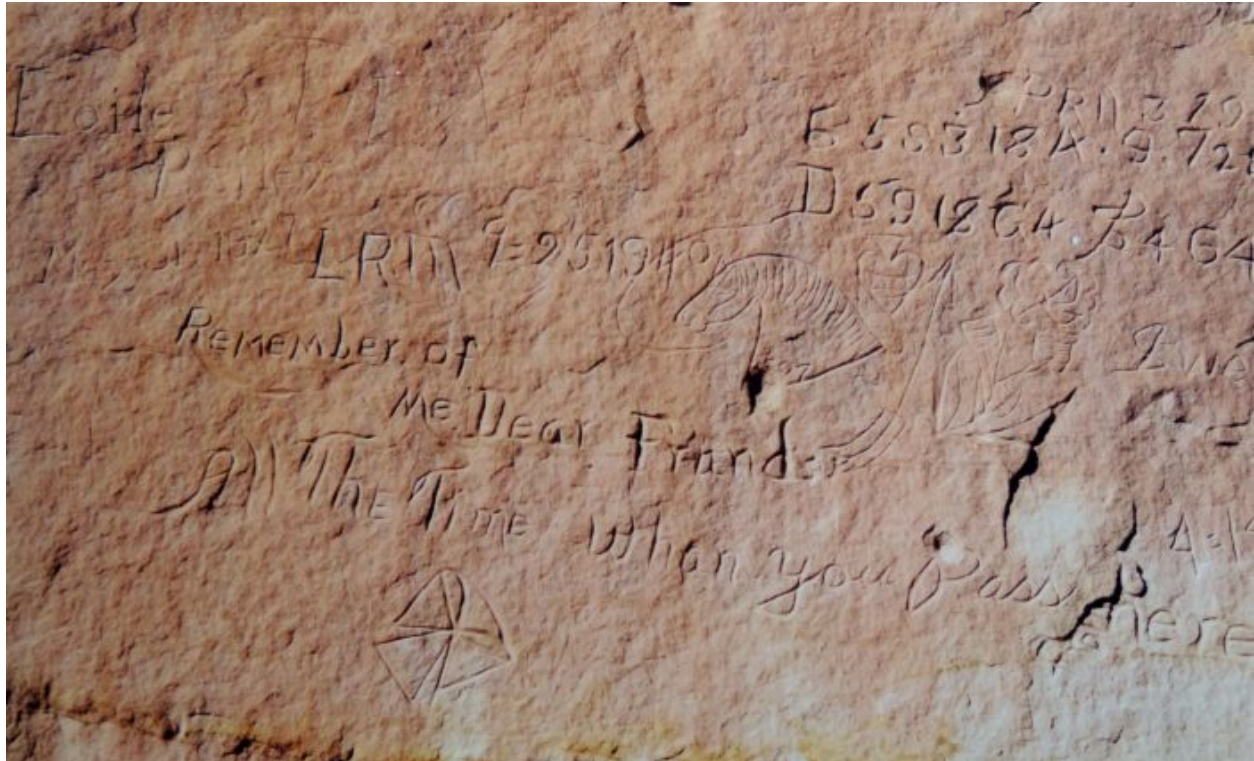
Many shepherds turned to creating a special kind of artwork—now known as *arborglyphs*—carving words and images into the pale aspen trees around their camps. The men likely wouldn't have called the activity "art," but the trees made for an obvious canvas when scratched with a carving knife or an iron nail. And they certainly set some creativity to the task. There's no record of the practice in Spain, so the first shepherds must have been experimenting in their endless free time. The later men, encountering the preserved thoughts of their countrymen in the wood around them, were moved to add their own impressions to the gallery.

They left images—women, of course, animals, and the occasional attempt at self-portrait. But mostly the men inscribed words. "The life of a sheepherder is a sad life," reads one carving. And sometimes the men

spoke to each other, responding to thoughts recorded years earlier. "Women and wine are good," wrote one man. And below, years later, another replied, "but hard on your pocket." Another man, clearly a veteran of many seasons with the herds in the Sierra Mountains, wrote, in Basque, "If life is what the old-timers told me it was, my balls are carnations."

The arborglyphs followed the paths of the sheep, through the mountains in the summer months until inevitably the seasons changed and the men began their descents toward the winter range. Another artifact of their passage were neatly arranged piles of stones, which the Basques called *harrimutilak* or stone boys.

The sheep would spend their winters in the low country. The Mojave, in California. Or the great basins of Nevada. In one winter range, outside Moab, Utah, a shepherd left his carvings in the sandstone. "Remember of me, my dear friend," he inscribed in English, "all the time when you pass here."



*Basque inscription near Moab Utah. "Remember of me, Dear Friend..." Photo by Jim Stiles.*

When their season ended, or they were given any break from their duties with the herd, the men were likely to return to the cradle of their nearest *ostatua*. Whatever wages they accumulated in their solitude could then be applied to the pleasures of company—to gambling and drinking, and visiting the local prostitutes.

The men who couldn't tolerate these cycles of intense loneliness spent those off-months searching. Some sought a way back home; others just looked for work that wouldn't leave them "sagebrushed," addled and speechless after each long stretch of months. They might endeavor to gain a more stable position at a ranch headquarters, or else be hired on by a hotel or restaurant in town. They dreamed of settling down, often with one of the hotel's maids or serving girls, and becoming regular members of the community.





*Elko, Nevada's Star Hotel, circa 1910. Northeastern Nevada Historical Society and Museum.*

Anything to avoid the lot of the lifelong lonely shepherders, who pushed through the hotel doors with the intervals of the herding seasons, maintaining little hope of any long-term friendships or romance. Those isolated souls who made shepherding their entire career often found themselves, upon retirement, taking their room in the same hotel. They died bachelors in the same dormitory bed that had held them when they first arrived in the country of their employ.

### **The Ill-Fated Bascos**

*"...wild, hairy men of little speech, who attested their rights to the feeding ground with their long staves upon each other's skulls...The shepherds have not changed more than the sheep in the process of time... they are hardy, simple livers, superstitious, fearful [and] given to seeing visions."*

*– Mary Austin, "The Flock." 1906.*

It's difficult to pinpoint a heyday of Basque shepherdry because the occupation came under continual threat even as it grew. The men fought constantly for the right to graze their sheep, battling with cattle ranchers in pidgin English for each blade of grass in the western half of the United States.

The federal government established the system of National Forests around the turn of the century. When they began doling out grazing permits, applications were screened by local boards comprised primarily of cattle ranchers, who were naturally unfriendly to the shepherds. This pushed small independent herds into higher concentrations among

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the few forested areas of the west that weren't under federal control, among them the thinly treed ranges of Idaho and Nevada.



*Basque shepherd. Dangberg Ranch, Douglas County, Nevada. Photo by Arthur Rothstein. 1940*

Then, the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934 essentially brought the remaining lands of the West under the control of the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM allotted grazing rights to those applicants who, firstly, owned land, and secondly, held U.S. Citizenship. No longer could a Basque sheepman hope to build and maintain a small roving herd for himself. After 1934, the Basques were necessarily under someone else's employ, earning wages to tend herds for the men with sufficient land and resources to qualify for those precious grazing allotments.

Meanwhile, back in the Pyrenees, life improved after the Second World War. Catalonia prospered, even more than the rest of Spain, and fewer boys braved the journey across the ocean in hope of wages they could now earn at

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home. Increasingly, when a shepherd's contract ended with a ranch in America, he preferred to buy his passage back across the sea and set his earnings toward a life among his own people.

There was never much promise of glory for the Basques who tended America's sheep. Though romantic in their solitude and roving ways, they never rose in cultural esteem to the level of the cowboys. One 1907 article in the Washington Post described them as "silent, dark visaged men who follow herds of sheep alone with their dogs."

"As the stranger rounds some sudden corner in the dusty highway," the article continued, "the sheep, blocking the road, divide and hurry by his buckboard. Then back in the dust of their hoofs the stranger sees the shepherd. The ragged man with the staff and the mongrel collie at his heels may raise his stick in mute salutation as he passes; he may slouch by without a word, though there be no other human being within thirty miles of the spot. A minute and he is lost in the wilderness around the turn of the road. This man is a Basque shepherd, one of the strange exiles from the Pyrenees who find a new home in the California mountains. He is content to live alone with his flocks and his dogs four months out of the year up in the cool meadows of the mountains, seeing no man save the casual traveler."

With his strange language and dark complexion, the Basque entered the American West at a disadvantage. Their ill fate grew every year, as they stirred the anger of cattlemen wherever they and their sheep wandered. Environmentalists despised their herds. John Muir called sheep "hoofed locusts." And no great force in politics would rise throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century to defend them. Over the years, the population of Basques, which had never reached overwhelming numbers, dwindled to practically nothing, as did the herds of sheep in all the mountain ranges of the west.



*Noriega Hotel. Bakersfield, CA. Photo by Anne Fishbein. LA Weekly.*

By the end of the 1970s, most Basque hotels were shuttered, or else they opened their business to the general public. Their meals catered less to Basque tastes and more to the palates of general tourists or the local townspeople. By 1989, even the famed Noriega Hotel in Bakersfield, under the ownership of Gracianna's daughter Janize Elizalde, held only three remaining Basques—retired shepherds who boarded in their familiar *ostatua* rooms and helped Janize with the gardening.

And so we're left to wonder about them, these dark shepherds who once dotted the territories. They left so little record of themselves, and we live in a country that continually sweeps away the dust behind its footsteps. Occasionally we're reminded of them, when we come upon their skillful carvings in the trees and rocks. We find



their consonant-heavy surnames threaded through the generations, and still catch sight of the faded and peeling signage of the dilapidated *ostatua*.



*Basque sheep herder leading pack train down from summer camp in Bear Valley. Trip takes thirty-five days going up, twenty days coming down. Adams County, Idaho. Photo by Dorothea Lange, 1939.*

These were the foils of our nation's cowboy past—the overmatched adversaries, like Utah's Felix Jesui, who shared poker games in the taverns at night. Rugged and lonely men, orphaned by geography, they never found a place in the mythology of their borrowed nation. But they did live and die in the West, and they knew the Western life as few others did.

The Basque shepherders traversed thousands of miles of Western ground. They rose each morning to the sun streaming through their wagons and guided their herds each day through embattled grasses. When they chose a life among the herds, they chose to be witness to silence and loneliness. And when they didn't die lonely and speechless in the bosoms of their beloved *ostatua*, then they often died in the grass, under the sight of some cattleman's gun. What end, truly, could be more Western than that?

**Recommended Reading:**

“Basque Sheep Herders of the American West: A Photographic Documentary.” By William A. Douglass and Richard H. Lane. University of Nevada Press, 1985

“HISTORY OF EUZKO – ETXEA OF NEW YORK.” New York Basque Club.

“CALIFORNIA-KO OSTATUAK: A HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA'S BASQUE HOTELS” by Jeronima Echeverria. 1988

(For more on Charlie Glass and Felix Jesui) “It Happened in Utah: Stories of Events and People that Shaped Beehive State History” by Tom Wharton. Rowman & Littlefield, Dec 21, 2018

“Sierra Basques” by Jennifer K. Crittenden. MAMMOTH LETTERS. 2016