



THE IMPACT OF WOMEN IN BASQUE COMMUNITIES



A collection of pictures and words

The impact of women in Basque communities is exceptional, and deserving of special acknowledgement.

On this day in October, 2023, the Basque Educational Organization (BEO) hosted a speaking series, “Euskal Andreen Egintza Amerikan,” to talk about the impacts women made before us, the inner strength Basque women possess, and the future of women in our local Basque communities.

The thing is, we didn't want the conversation to end there. So, we reached out to our greater community and invited everyone to contribute something special about a woman in their lives so we could create a collection of pictures and words. They poured in.

We are very proud of this project, and we are grateful for all the participants. Thank you for taking the time to share these women, their lives, stories, and personalities.

This is just the beginning. We believe every woman should have a page in this book and we are committed to continuing this project.

If we were to collect pictures and words about every woman in our greater Basque community, how many pages do you think this book would be?

Let's find out.



This is my Brave mother, Maria Julia Goyarola (maiden name Andonegui). She is christening her father's boat, The Amazonas, in Bermeo Spain circa 1963. She married my father Pedro Goyarola in 1965.

She moved to the San Francisco Bay Area without a friend or cousin living in the area or, for that matter, in the United States. Not speaking a word of English, she raised two daughters and made a warm home for family, cooking a hot meal every evening.



Elisa Vidasolo Ancona, President of Euskal Etxea New York (from 2019 to 2023)

First generation in the United States, Elisa was born in Brooklyn, New York. Her parents, Julian Vidasolo Renteria (from Bakio) and Maria Luisa Vidasolo Lamiquiz (from Ibarangelu Akorda), married and came to United States in 1955. Her father, former President of Euzko Etxea of New York (EENY) from 1973 to 1978 and again from 1985 to 1986, came to the United States at a young age, served in the Korean War, and established himself in New York.

Elisa is married to Robert Ancona Petschinek with two children, Christopher Ancona Vidasolo and Luke Ancona Vidasolo. Elisa enjoys spending as much time as possible in Euskadi and spends her summers at her home in Ibarangelu Akorda.



Her old friend Juan Legarreta, current Vice President of EENY, recalls when she was a young teenager and the New York Basque Club was invited to Washington, D.C. to celebrate the U.S. bicentennial in 1976. "Her mother provided special Basque food and Elisa and other Basque teens in local costumes performed Basque dancing. Her parents were very involved in the influence and transmission of the Basque culture in the U.S. and Elisa continued their legacy as an Euzko Etxea member, and especially in the last four years as President."

Under her leadership, the Basque center in New York has been transformed, thanks to a complete overhaul of the association's administrative and financial management. Thanks to the association's newfound financial health, the physical space has also been refurbished. The Euskal Etxea in New York, which Elisa's father helped to acquire in 1973, is now more beautiful than ever. We should also mention the regularly occurring and much-anticipated "Pintxo pote" events, which are more successful every quarter.



Thanks to her energy, passion, skills, and total commitment, the Euskal Etxea of New York is in good shape today, physically and financially.

On behalf of the Basque community in New York, we'd like to say a heartfelt thank you.

Eskerrik asko bihotz-bihotzez

The Mendiko Euskaldun Cluba would like to celebrate these women who were among the first to immigrate to Carson Valley in Nevada; they became central figures within the Basque community. These women either owned, supported, or operated a sheep ranch or Basque hotel, and were instrumental to the success and longevity of the Basque community in Gardnerville, Nevada. The hotels were the center of the Basque community and the thriving sheep industry was the catalyst; their business successes were deeply intertwined. Beyond their success, these women were our matriarchs ensuring the Basque culture endured.



Jeanne Trounday Etchemendy - with her husband, John, owned the East Fork Hotel in 1917 for a few years. They eventually bought the Overland Hotel in 1921, and she operated it until her death in 1949. Her husband continued to run the hotel until the 1960's.



Josephine Incaby Sario - upon her arrival around 1918, she worked for the Etchemendy's at the East Fork. After she married her husband Jose, they built a large land holding and sheep business, which eventually was named the Sario Livestock Company.



Trinidad “Trini” Arriola was born February 8, 1889 in Elanchove, Bizkaia. She came to the United States in 1910 and worked at the Arego and Letemendi boardinghouses in Boise, Idaho.

She met Eulogio Madariaga soon after arriving and they were married on October 10, 1910. Together, they managed the Overland Hotel in Boise, where their two oldest children, Joe (1911) and Sabino (1913) were born.

The couple purchased a home in Jordan Valley, Oregon and moved there in February of 1914. Eulogio worked as a bartender at the Jordan Valley Hotel. During that time the Madariaga’s added on to their home and converted it into a boardinghouse. They later purchased acreage that was previously a race-track and developed the land into a cattle, dairy and hog raising operation, which would supply their boardinghouse.

In Oregon, the Madariaga’s added an additional nine children to their family. These children were born and raised at the boardinghouse in Jordan Valley – Aurora (1914), Rosario (1915), Felisa (1918), Leonor (1920), Beatrice (1922), Aiden (1924), Richard (1927), Aleck (1930) and Mary Louise in 1932.

The Madariaga boardinghouse became well known for its hospitality and home-cooked meals by the people of the community and by those who traveled often through Jordan Valley. The Madariaga boardinghouse served as the location of the Jordan Valley Basques’ annual New Years Eve celebration. Trini cooked thousands of meals for her family, herders, miners, highway workers and any others who stayed at the boardinghouse over the years. She also served as a mid-wife, assisting Dr. Jones, with the many children born in their homes in the Jordan Valley, Oregon area. Trinidad passed away in 1969 at the age of 80.



I am honored to nominate my twin sister, Mia Arostigui, for her unwavering dedication to the Basque community and culture. Mia has spent her adolescence and college years passionately educating herself, our family, and others about the rich Basque heritage.

A proud graduate of the University of the Pacific in 2019, Mia obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art with her artistic focus being on our Basque culture. Demonstrating her passion and dedication, she received the prestigious Pacific Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship in 2016. Her research project on Basque mythology and folklore led to the creation of "Ikusi: Creatures Brought to Life," illustrating characters and scenes from our cultural folklore that had little to no depiction before. This work also helped show the connections from our past cultural lessons learned through mythology and folklore to our culture in the present day.

This work was showcased during the Basque Cultural Day event "The Millhouse Speaks: Basque Mythology & Spirituality" in 2017 and was also exhibited at a solo 2-day event at the renowned Basque Museum and Cultural Center in Boise, Idaho. Continuing her creative exploration, Mia later focused on illustrating stories from "Amatxi, Amuma, Amona: Writings In Honor Of Basque Women," showcasing influential women within our history and introducing their unique narratives to a broader audience.

In her last series, Mia has examined the similarities and differences between our Basque and Indigenous Mexican

cultures while addressing themes of belonging and identity. This work allowed her to speak on the experience our family had culturally and how that tied into the history of Basques in California and the strong Latino culture of California.

Her work depicting Basque themes and cultures has been shown in eight different exhibitions. Beyond her work as an artist, she shines a light on Basque culture in our every day lives to anyone she meets. From sharing our last name when people struggle to read her name tag, to posting photos online for Basque Diaspora day, to playing her favorite Basque punk bands for family and friends, to making Kalimotxos at parties and using them as a talking point to teach, to even the littlest things like showing off her Euskal Herria keychain and eguzkilore pendant worn around her neck. She shares Basque mythology like a grandmother and always has people walking away with a newfound appreciation for the Basque culture. She exemplifies the Basque spirit by constantly giving back to her community, raising up her culture, sharing Basque food and music, and even with her love of picking up heavy objects for fun. Mia has revived our family's connection to our Basque culture since the loss of our elders. We have a greater sense of who we are and can proudly educate others on it too. Without her dedication to learning about our culture and heritage, our family would likely not have been able to visit the various Basque Cultural Centers that unlocked 50 year old memories of our Basque great grandfather for our mother. For Mia, planting seeds of knowledge about the Basque people in just one person's mind is enough to bring joy and her constant learning keeps her flame bright.



Mayie Maitia was born in the beautiful village of St. Etienne de Baigorry on May 8, 1929. She was the seventh of nine children. Her father sent her to America with her oldest sister in 1947. He told his daughters that America was the key to the world. Her work ethic was extraordinary. Mayie and JB opened the Wool Growers Restaurant in Bakersfield, California in 1954. Throughout the years, Mayie has employed many Basques at her restaurant and has been an advocate for so many that were new to this country. She helped them transition to their new home. Thus, Mayie became known as the mother or big sister to so many.



She could play a waltz or fandango... offer advice with warm cookies... and make you feel like the most special person in the world.

To our beautiful family matriarch,

Born in 1923 and within that century, you have experienced all the changes the world has encountered with women leading the way and playing a crucial part to inspire future generations. And you have been an inspiration to your family as well.

You taught us the value and importance of family.

You grounded us in our values and provided unconditional love.

You guided us on how to pray and have faith in God.

You shared your pride and taught us about our Basque culture.

You have been by our side through the good times and bad.

You encouraged and have given us the strength to carry on when we needed it most.

No words could possibly express how much we appreciate all you have given and how much we love you.

You are truly a blessing from God.

Ikasi dugu zure ganik kuraiya eta fedea. (translation: We learned from you to have courage and faith.)



God Bless You Mama, Amatxi and Amatxi-matxi!





Betty displayed all the characteristics of an Euskaldun: perseverance, frankness, and obligation.

She was born in Chino, California, and grew up on a dairy to Basque immigrant parents, Ignacio Aguerre from Lekaroz and Manuela Erreca from Urepel.

She was a member of the Chino Basque Club and Southern California Basque Club. She owned a business in buying and raising calves, raised three children mostly on her own, bought her house when she was 52-years-old, and had a passion to play any and all games including tennis, mus, golf, bowling, and field hockey.

She was a person of doing, wasn't scared of competition, and always gave a full effort. For the Iriart/Aguerre family, she was an inspiration to us all. She loved being Basque and living her heritage, and she always personified the description of strength.



This is my Ama.

She was born in 1924 in Aldudes (Uhaldia) and was one of ten total siblings.

She came to the U.S. in 1947, joining two of her siblings who were in San Francisco at the time. She married Dominique Jambon in 1949 from Irissary (Erreteia) and they were married for 56 beautiful years.

She was a mother to three children, Michelle, Therese, and Pierre. She was an Amatchi and a great grandmother. She was an amazing person and we are grateful for her.

She lived life and loved all of us. And she loved technology and would say she might have been born too early!



Gloria Inez Miangolarra (Mingo) was born in 1926 in Mullan, ID. to Eugenio and Dominga, and was the fourth of five girls and one brother. The family owned and lived in a boarding house for Basque miners in Mullan.

At 16 during high school summer break, Gloria worked for Joe Albertson in his first store's small office before he expanded his business into an empire. After graduating high school, she moved to Boise, ID.

In 1947 Gloria went to Stockton, CA to visit friends and soon met a handsome young man, Jean Pierre (Pete) Laborde, who had just returned from the war where he was a fighter pilot in the Pacific. They were soon married in Emmett, ID. returning to Stockton to work in Pete's established sheep business. They had three daughters, Michele, Annette, and Denise. Gloria took care of the home and her family as well as supporting the business in any way she could. She regularly ordered and picked up cases of canned goods, supplies, and clothes for the herders. Gloria took the herders to appointments at the

Embassy in San Francisco, to doctors' appointments, and performed the many essential tasks for a well-managed business. She grew up speaking Spanish Basque, studied Spanish in school, and learned French Basque when she moved to Stockton, seamlessly switching between the languages as a translator for the working men.

She learned to cook from the shepherders and honed her skill with the help of a Julia Child's Cookbook; she became an excellent cook. Gloria prepared and schlepped delicious meals to the country to feed the herders during the busy times of shearing, shipping, and lambing. She was active in the Women's Guild, of the Wool Grower's, the Bo Peeps which promoted lamb, the PTA at the children's school and taught Catechism to the local public-school children.

Gloria and Pete ran a successful sheep ranching business until the death of Pete in 1982. Gloria is now 97, lives in her own home in Davis, CA, and still recalls fun, sometimes funny and interesting stories of her past.



These three Basque women were all married to sheepherders in the Fresno area - Yvonne coming from Aldudes, Theresa from Irissarry, and Jane was born in the U.S. They were all very hard-working, humble, and extremely faith-filled women. Growing up, I saw them for the amatchis they were - always cooking, cleaning, preparing large meals, and the center of all the Fresno Basque gatherings. As the years passed, they slowly started losing their husbands to various illnesses, but they found with each other a sisterhood that took them on road trips and adventures - spending hours at the Santa Fe playing cards and enjoying their golden years together. My brothers and I often referred to them and their other Fresno Basque lady friends - Marie Lastiri, Paquita Cleix and Helene Uhalde as the white-haired Basque mafia. They traveled in a pack, you didn't dare get in between them, and you certainly liked being on their good side as there was always a little fear of them, too. They just don't make women like this anymore, and their friendship with each other sustained them through the decades. The friendships they built served as the foundation of our Basque extended family here in the U.S.... giving us friendships over generations that always felt more like family than anything else.



Candida Echeverria truly embodies what it means to be Basque. In Chino, where she was the first female Basque Club president, she works tirelessly to create a welcoming and fun place for people of all ages to come together to celebrate being Basque. At the Basque Club, she is seemingly everywhere. She spends hours in the kitchen preparing for club lunches and events and will always be there to clean up the next day, but she can just as easily be found bartending, playing *pala* and *mus*, chatting with both the Club's oldest and newest members, and even cooking up fried chicken or *croquetas* for the late night crowd. Her dedication to the Basque community and to the people around her is an inspiration to us all.

Begoña Echeverria shares her love for Basque people and culture with both her community in Chino and with the world. As an accomplished professor, author, playwright and singer-songwriter, her work about Basque people reached a global stage when she presented her play about the aftermath of the bombing of Gernika before the United Nations Refugee Agency and the European delegation. While she has studied and written about many aspects of Basque history and language, she has a special focus on Basque women. Her historical novel, "The Hammer of Witches," focused on the struggles of Basque women accused of witchcraft in the early 1600s, and her singing group with friends Andréa Bidart and Cathy Petrisans, called NOKA, focuses on songs that use "noka," a form of address used in Basque between women. She has also taught Basque language classes and started the Chino Basque Club scholarship fund with her sister Candida. Basque people everywhere are lucky to have someone as dedicated to preserving Basque history and culture as Begoña.





My mother, Benita, lived a long and adventurous life. She was born in 1923 on a sheep ranch in Huron, California. Feisty and strong, she was a product of the challenging times in which she grew up.

As a young woman, she learned how to weld and in service to her country, went to work at the Stockton shipyards during World War II. Eventually, after many colorful adventures, Mom became an astute and hard-working businesswoman, operating and owning first the Yturri Hotel, then Santa Fe Hotel in Fresno, while rearing three children.

Benita played many needed roles at the hotel. She welcomed new Basque immigrants to this country, helping them get established. She would help newcomers obtain bank loans, social security cards, take them to doctors, etc. Sadly, when needed, she arranged for funerals for the lone elderly boarders when their time came.

She passed away four years ago, and although she and many she helped are no longer with us, our memories and our love for her remain steadfast.



Such an independent, strong, single woman. Perhaps she gained her strength from her Basque genetics, or perhaps because she is just that, an amazing self-starter who cherishes family above all. Anna is an incredibly multi-talented, hard-working, entrepreneurial woman. Born to Bernardo “Speed” Urrizaga and his bride, Evelyn Urrizaga. From the time she could walk, Anna was exposed to Basque communities and their festivals in Ely (Nevada), Boise (Idaho), and her hometown of Elko (Nevada).

Anna’s Basque family ensured she knew who she was from an early age. She was Basque, and that alone is truly something to be proud of, and to celebrate often.

The Urrizaga’s celebrated being Basque by being active members of both the Ely and Elko Basque clubs. When Anna was in elementary school, her parents bought her an accordion that literally was larger than she was at the time, and she practiced and took accordion lessons until she was accomplished enough to perform at the Ely Basque Festival at the tender age of 10. Anna learned to Basque dance during her school age years from dedicated masters like Ana Marie Arbillaga and Louie Etchegary. Anna was such an accomplished dancer in her teens, she won jota contests in Boise, Elko, and Winnemucca with her partner dancing and playing the castanets. As an adult, Anna became an active part of Elko’s Basque community. Along with raising her girls as a single mom, she helped to bring new and exciting events to the National Basque Festival. Elko’s “Running with the bulls” was the brainchild of Anna’s; even though so many said it couldn’t be done, she figured out a way to bring this event to Elko for years.

Anna, being the accomplished dancer she was, also gave back to the Basque youth of Elko by acting as the Basque dancing instructor for so many Arinak Basque dancers for years.

Anna, being a talented artist, designed and drew many National Basque Festival program covers. When the Basque club built the pilota court (1995) in the city park, it was Anna who was inspired to design, create, and hand paint the 30’x30’ mural on the court back wall that paid homage to those brave Basques who had left their homeland to build new lives in America, as her grandparents had done. This mural still greets visitors as they drive through Main Street in Elko today. Was it mentioned Anna also taught herself how to make the best Dutch oven-baked sheepherder’s bread? The contributions Anna has made the past 50+ years are so many, and those that only a determined, talented, and dedicated Basque woman could accomplish. However, if you ask her, she will tell you her greatest success has been raising her two beautiful Basque daughters, and sharing her life, Basque culture, and family strength with her three grandchildren, who have also embraced their Basque culture. Anna’s family have all witnessed firsthand the incredible strength of Basque women, from the example she has so unselfishly, yet fearlessly, demonstrated. As her loving Dad would say with that twinkle in his eye, “God Bless you ‘nanny’, you’ve made your family proud.”