

Voices of Dixon: Preface

Preface

After my memoir, *Cidermaster of Rio Oscuro*, was published by University of Utah Press in 2000, friend and fellow choir member David Rigsby asked if I would consider doing a series of personal stories about residents and former residents of Dixon and Embudo. We talked about the project for several weeks. Gayle and I talked about making such a commitment while I was also in the middle of running the farm and going to farmers' markets. Then the three of us talked and finally put together a workable plan and a purpose statement:

The purpose of this project is to develop a cultural history of life in the Embudo Valley as seen through the individual memories of people who live and have lived and worked in the five villages that make up the Embudo community: Dixon, Embudo, Rinconada, Cañoncito, and Apodaca.

Process

Participants are interviewed and recorded on audiocassettes. The interviewer transcribes the interviews and returns the transcriptions to the participants who may add material, make corrections, and take out what is not appropriate.

I began in November 2002 by interviewing Betty Mascareñas who had come to Dixon as a missionary nurse at the Presbyterian hospital. Betty suggested I interview Faith Berghofer, another former missionary nurse, and Eulogio Ortega, former Dixon school principal. More names came up in the interviews and in talking with friends in Dixon. Some people wanted to tell their stories. Others knew neighbors who ought to be included. I did fifteen interviews. Only one person asked to withdraw his interview; his family urged him to write his own memoir.

These recollections and opinions are from the persons interviewed

on the date of the interview. Description of actual events are based on their recollections. The descriptions printed here are for historical purposes only and do not express the interpretations of the editor, the publisher, or anyone other than the interviewed. All were interviewed at their homes except for Ra Paulette who was interviewed at my home. The transcriptions of the interviews have been approved by the

person interviewed or their survivors. Within the transcriptions, comments of the interviewer appear in italics.

The project would not have been possible without David Rigsby's encouragement and support from the beginning.

I started out doing the transcriptions, but soon had to call on Connie Wood for help. She ended up doing most of them.

From 2004 till 2011 the project languished in a file drawer while I recovered from surgery. But it was not forgotten. Whenever I would bring up ideas for new projects, my wife would remind me, gently, that *Voices of Dixon* needed to be completed. Gayle and David helped me keep the faith. Then last year Robert Templeton offered his services as technical consultant. Together we came up with plans for an electronic text as well as a print text. David suggested line drawings along with the text, and Gayle has done those. Joan McDonald gave us permission to include her late husband Ken's painting of Lebeo's store, using the digital image Jeff Spicer had made for a card edition of the painting. In the end I have to say that Robert has been much more than a technical consultant; he has made it happen.

In the appendices you will find information about other voices of Dixon, including local writers who have published their own views of life in this valley. There are probably others that I have overlooked and certainly many who have never shared their thoughts publicly. Perhaps their voices will speak out in new volumes.

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