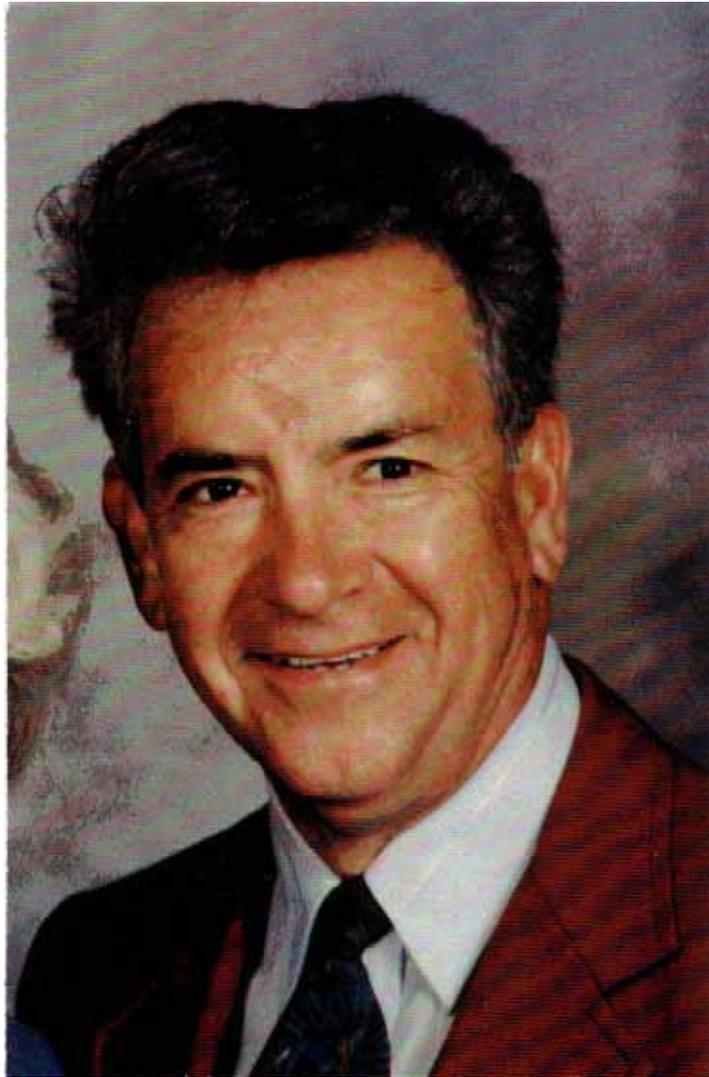


My Life Story



Reynaldo J. Gumucio



José L. Gumucio, Storykeeper

Acknowledgement

As we near the consummation of the Ethnic Life Stories Project, there is a flood of memories going back to the concept of the endeavor. The awareness was there that the project would lead to golden treasures. But I never imagined the treasures would overflow the storehouse. With every Story Teller, every Story Keeper, every visionary, every contributor, every reader, the influence and impact of the project has multiplied in riches. The growth continues to spill onward. As its outreach progresses, "boundaries" will continue to move forward into the lives of countless witnesses.

Very few of us are "Native Americans." People from around the world, who came seeking freedom and a new life for themselves and their families, have built up our country and communities. We are all individuals, the product of both our genetic makeup and our environment. We are indeed a nation of diversity.

Many of us are far removed from our ancestors who left behind the familiar to learn a new language, new customs, new political and social relationships. We take our status as Americans for granted. We sometimes forget to welcome the newcomer. We bypass the opportunity to ask about their origins and their own journey of courage.

But, wouldn't it be sad if we all spoke the same language, ate the same food, and there was no cultural diversity.

This project has left me with a tremendous debt of gratitude for so many. The almost overwhelming task the Story Keeper has, and the many hours of work and frustration to bring forth a story to be printed. I salute you.

To the Story Tellers, thank you for letting us share in your heart and soul. It is my prayer that some or many of the stories will influence many young persons to another level, to be enmeshed in the pursuit of learning of other cultures that make up our community and the world.

This has, indeed, been a project of "Many" for the Community. Thanks to the following who have played a role in helping to achieve the goal. The list is practically endless, first names only. You know who you are and what you did . . . sincere thanks to each of you:

Caroline, Charity, Charlotte, Bob, Dana, De Ann, Ed, Eric, Erman, Jim, Joha Oke, John K, John M, June, Kay, Kendall, Maria, Mark, Michelle, Myra, Norma, Pat, Rachel, Rob, Starr, Susan, Valerie, and special recognition to Jim Coombs, SMSU, Map Department.

Jim Mauldin
Coordinator
Ethnic Life Stories
'01 '02 '03

The Ethnic Life Stories Project...

...giving the Springfield community a window to its diversity through the life stories of ethnic elders.

Liewe Se Storie Afrikaanse	Afrikaanse (2)
ŌSŌ GAY HĀY WŌ TAN	Apache
قصص من الحياة	Arabic (2)
Ga-no-du Ka-ne-he-lv-s-gi	Cherokee
自傳	Chinese (2)
Life Stories	English (5)
Histoires De Ma Vie	French (2)
Lebensgeschichten	German
סיפור חיים	Hebrew
Mayer rah-Khaan Knee-Hindi	Hindi
生きてきた道	Japanese
나의 살아온 이야기	Korean
DZĪVES STĀSTS	Latvian
ജീവിത കഥകൾ	Malayalam
OPOWIESC ZŻYCIA	Polish
Imanawangtanan Wawanaycasjas	Quechua
Povestea Vie Ţii Mele	Romanian
Жизненные истории	Russian
Historia De La Vida	Spanish (8)
പ്രാർത്ഥന	Thai
Kuwento Ng Aking Buhay	Tagalog
CHUY-N [© T;Ā	Vietnamese
געשיחטע פון מאין לעבען	Yiddish

Birthplaces of the Storytellers

2001 2002 2003

Yohannan Abraham
Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India

Janet Akaike - Toste
Kofu, Japan

Tony Albuquerque
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Martha Baker
San Antonio, Texas

Grace Ballenger
Shanghai, China

Ruth L.V. Burgess
Poona (Pune), India

Sara Fajardo Calderon
Guatemala City, Guatemala

Olga Codutti
Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina

Claudine Arend Cox
Boulay, France

Adalyn Cravens
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Taj Farouki
Wadi-Hunayn, Palestine

Malca Flasterstein
Holon, Israel

Edgar Galinanes
Mayaguez, Puerto Rico

Reynaldo Gumucio
Cochabamba, Bolivia

John Hernandez
San Antonio, Texas

Yung Hwang
Okjong, Kyungnam, Korea

Madge (Jackie) King
London, England

Edward P. Ksara
Tangier, Morocco

Hyman Lotven
Kapulah, Russia

Regina Lotven
Nancy, France

Sterling Macer
Mason City, Iowa

Gwendolyn Marshall
Jackson, Mississippi

Maria Michalczyk-Lillich
Sandomierz, Poland

Edith F.L. Middleton
Glasgow, Scotland

Loan Vu Nigh
Thai Binh, Vietnam

Jorge Padron
Pedro Betancourt-Matanza, Cuba

Ruth Penaherrera-Norton
Archidona, Ecuador

Eric Pervunkhin
Moscow, Russia

Ioana Popescu
Bucharest, Romania

Josefina S. Raborar
Manila, Philippines

Juan Salazar
Tuman, Peru

Eligio Sanchez
Mexico City, Mexico

Tong Trithara
Audhaya, Thailand

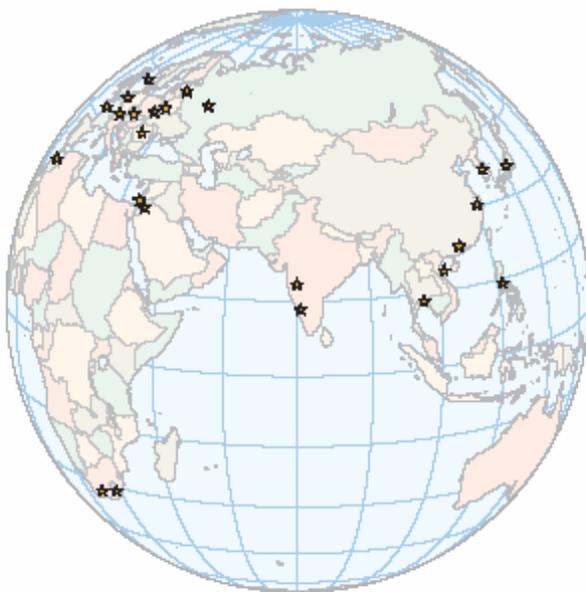
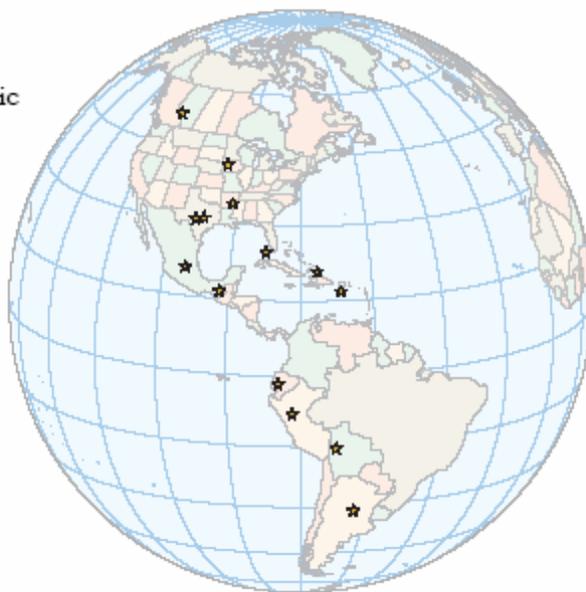
Cyril Vermooten
Beaufort West, South Africa

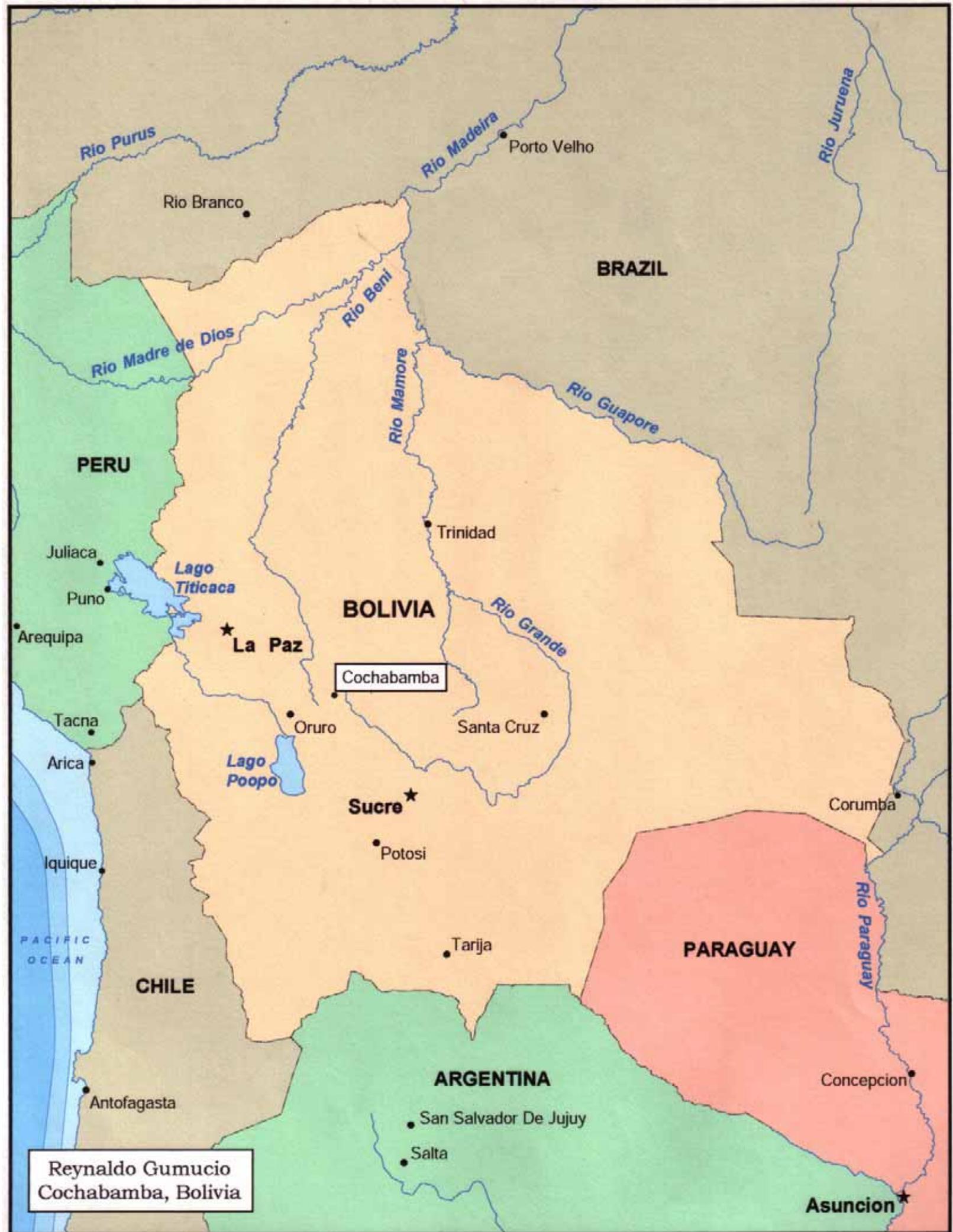
Joy Vermooten
Nqaberie (Natal), South Africa

Ilga Vise
Riga, Latvia

Hiltrud M. Webber
Domnau, Germany

Tobby Yen
Chung (Zhongshan), China





My Life Story ---- Reynaldo J. Gumucio

Chapter 1: Family History

Chapter 2: Earliest Memories of Childhood

Chapter 3: The Teen Years

Chapter 4: Adulthood

Chapter 5: My Springfield Experience

Chapter 6: Later Years

Chapter 7: Life Mission

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate the story of my life to:

- My parents, Jose Luis Gumucio and Maria Cardenas, for their love and sacrifices and for instilling in me the value of education and perseverance;
- My father and mother-in-law, Charles and Joan Whittington, who accepted me into their family and gave me support and encouragement;
- My wife, Billie, who has encouraged and supported me, stood by me and loved me unconditionally for thirty-eight years;
- My sons, Charles, Richard & Edward who have given me untold happiness;
- My daughters-in-law, Diane and Kady who accept my diversity and appreciate my idiosyncrasies;
- My fantastic grandchildren, Gabriela, Tristan and Cora who brings me unending joy.

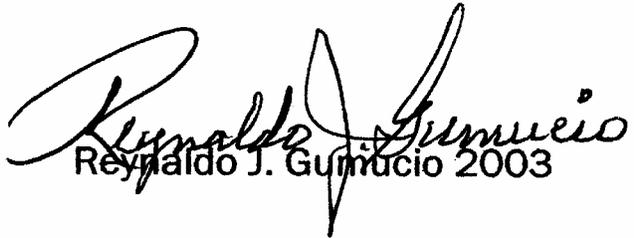
I would like to express my grateful thanks to my brothers and their wives, my sister, my sisters-in-law and their husbands, my nieces, nephews, cousins, and their families, and the many friends I have made during my life who have helped me and enriched my life by their presence.

A special thanks to José L. Gumucio, my “Story Keeper”, for his enthusiasm, interest, patience and help in telling my life story.

Thanks to Jim Mauldin for his curiosity about my background and for encouragement and pushing us to the final moments of this project.

I would like to encourage my children and grandchildren not to forget their roots and to take advantage of every opportunity they encounter to learn about and encourage diversity.

My sincere apologies to anyone that I have forgotten to mention. Each and every individual, who has traveled the road of life with me, no matter how briefly, has helped to form my character, enrich my life and make me who I am today. Thank you.


Reynaldo J. Gumucio 2003



CHAPTER ONE: FAMILY HISTORY

I arrived in this world in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in the heart of South America, on April 29, 1939, the youngest of thirteen children born to José Luis Gumucio and Maria Cárdenas de Gumucio. I was born at home, delivered by a midwife, two months premature and was only about the size of a "large ear of corn" so I have been told. I was baptized José Misael Reynaldo Gumucio Cardenas Hermosa Cespedes on May 30. My birthday was always celebrated on May 30 and it was not until I requested a copy of my baptismal records when applying for my American citizenship that I realized May 30 was not my actual birth date.

I was not named for anyone in particular but I had three first names and four surnames. I was given the name Reynaldo, which means counselor or ruler and is derived from the Spanish word Rey, which means king. When I was baptized I received the name of a saint, José, and a baptismal name, Misael, given by my godmother to honor her father. The four surnames are the family names of my paternal and maternal grandfathers, plus the family names of my paternal and maternal grandmothers. This is customary throughout South America and using all four family names makes it very easy to know to whom you are related and also to trace your ancestry. Legally, however, we use only the surnames of the grandfathers so my legal name was José Misael Reynaldo Gumucio Cárdenas.

Many people, including Italians, think the name Gumucio is Italian. It isn't. The name is Spanish and originated in the Basque region of northern Spain. My name has never been anglicized but when I received my American citizenship it was shortened to Reynaldo José Gumucio. Most people call me Rey and spell it Ray instead of Rey.

Bolivia is small for a country with a land area of 424,164 square miles, just a little smaller than Alaska. Bolivia is a landlocked country situated in the center of South America with the Andes Mountains on the west and the jungles of the Amazon Basin on the east. It can be divided into three topographical zones, (1) the Altiplano, which is a high plateau that crosses the country from the northwest to the southeast and splits the Andes into two mountain chains or cordilleras. The plateau cradles the highest navigable lake in the world called Lake Titicaca. (2) The Yungas are made up of sharply tilted mountain valleys that separate the higher plateau from the lowland plains. (3) The Llanos, the lowland plain, is in the southern region and is also a highly developed agricultural region, in addition to having Bolivia's major deposits of oil, natural gas and iron ore. To the northeast of the Llanos region, the plains form part of the Amazon River Basin containing tropical forests and dense vegetation mixed with open savannah.

The nine departments that make up Bolivia are as diverse as the many cultures that inhabit Bolivia, influenced mainly by their topographical location. Starting in the northwest region of Bolivia and traveling east to the jungles, then southeast to the fertile plains and valleys and finally southwest, and west to the Andean Mountains and plateaus, the departments are as follows (information in paragraphs followed by * is from Internet sources):

1) The Department of Pando: Cobija is the capital of Pando; it is a city with panoramic beauty. Pando's economy is based on the selling of chestnuts and latex. The rubber that is extracted from the forests of Pando is considered to be of the highest quality worldwide. Pando has a promising future in tourism because it has many places of great beauty and offers a wide variety of eco-tourism adventures. San Vicente (Acre River) is known for its hundreds of petrified fossils which have been preserved in an admirable condition. They seem to belong to large turtles whose shells were over four meters (12 feet) long. *

2) The Department of Beni: Trinidad is the capital of Beni. Beni has a rich cultural heritage steeped in aborigine traditions. It is noted for its abundant rivers and pampas. It has extensive virgin lands highly suitable for adventure tourism. It is an archeological center of the Gran Moxos culture. The name of the Mosestenes mountain range means, "Moxos as far as here." The main tributaries to the Mamore, itself a tributary to the Amazon, have Moxos names such as Chapare meaning "origin of waters." *

3) The Department of Santa Cruz: Its capital, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, is located in the Amazon area of Bolivia and has a natural wealth of extraordinary beauty. El Parque Noel Kempff Mercado is abundant with an extraordinary diversity of species of flora and fauna. Visiting it is a dream trip for the eco-tourist that will not be found in any other part of Bolivia. Here you will find a great variety of habitats gathered in one place, woody landscapes, plateaus and flood-prone zones, with waterfalls and wilderness, rivers and bays where one can watch the native fauna.*

4) The Department of Tarija: Tarija is famous for its beautiful landscapes, fertile land and abundant vineyards. It is known for the production of delicious and fine wines. One of the most important fish resources of the country is located in Tarija. Evidence of a large dinosaur population can be found in the Paleontological, Archeological and Historical Museum. This important national repository has over 700 fossils on exhibit, most of which have been found in the Quaternary Cave of Tarija.*

5) The Department of Chuquisaca: Sucre is the capital of Chuquisaca. Sucre is the Constitutional Capital of Bolivia and is the seat of the country's Supreme Court. Sucre remains one of the true colonial treasures left in South America. The meticulous preservation of these treasures has kept Sucre much the way it was during the colonial period. All the buildings within the city proper must be painted white and they all have tile roofs. It is sometimes referred to as the "White City." The Universidad Mayor, Real y Pontifica de San Francisco Xavier was founded in 1624; it is the third oldest in the Americas. Sucre was declared a "Monumental City of the Americas" by the Organization of American States in 1979 and in 1991 was declared a "World Heritage City" by UNESCO. *

6) The Department of Potosí: Located at a height of approximately 12,000 feet above sea level, Potosí is a colonial city that in 1650 was the most populated city in the world with 160,000 inhabitants, more than London, Paris, or Madrid and compared with them as important urban centers. With the discovery of silver it became the main provider of

silver in the pre-industrial European world and it became the center of an ostentatious, economically flourishing society. Casa de la Moneda, the national mint, was built in 1753. Its construction lasted 20 years. It is at present one of the most important repositories of the history of colonial mining. In Potosí, we find churches everywhere. All of them contain great colonial architectural value and they have recently been restored. One of the main natural attractions in Potosí is the Salar de Uyuni (salt deposits of Uyuni). This sea of salt is one of the largest in the world. It represents an unequalled natural attraction for its beauty and geological wealth such as the hot water springs, geysers and volcanic fumaroles.*

7) The Department of Oruro: Oruro is located on the Altiplano, a high Andean plateau. It is considered the folkloric capital of Bolivia and it is the center of ancestral culture. Oruro from its foundation was an important mining center, very rich in natural resources, and its economy is based on the production of lead, antimony, silver and tin. The main mining centers are San Jose Mining Company and Machacamarca, the latter being the oldest ore mill.*

8) The Department of La Paz: La Paz is composed of three distinct regions: a highland plain (El Altiplano), valleys and a subtropical zone (Yungas). La Paz shares ecosystems of the plateau and the tropics. Los Yungas in La Paz constitutes a beautiful example of a tropical area.*

The city of La Paz is a cosmopolitan city, which is both multiethnic and multicultural. It is shaped like a giant football stadium, surrounded by the Andean mountain range where the very prominent and majestic snow capped peaks of Illimani and Illampu dominate the landscape.*

Although the Aymara race is predominant in La Paz, there are a variety of ethnic groups coming from all areas of Bolivia. This is most evident during the religious feasts when people dress in their traditional costumes and perform very distinctive folkloric dances from the region of their origin.

San Francisco Cathedral is one of the oldest examples of colonial architecture and dates to the middle of the 1500s. On the narrow pebbled streets behind the church of San Francisco you will find Mercado de las Brujas (Witches Market). Here you will find herbs, powders, potions, and many other curious items used by the local medicine men and fortunetellers.*

Lake Titicaca is located in the Altiplano. It is one of the highest lakes in the world. It is located on the borders of Bolivia and Peru. It has important folkloric history because according to legend the Inca Empire had its beginnings on the Island of the Sun and the Island of the Moon. Another important island is Suriqui whose inhabitants are the builders of the Totorá reed boats. Using traditional techniques, one of the ship builders was recruited for the expedition of the Ra II for the Norwegian Thor Heyerdal in 1970. Built in Giza, Egypt with papyrus reeds, the ship made it all the way to Bermuda with a crew of seven.*

Copacabana is the most important center of Titicaca Lake. Copacabana was originally a pre-Columbian ceremonial and astrological observation center destroyed by the Spaniards. In its place, a Moorish colonial church with a wooden sculpture of the beautiful Virgin of Copacabana was built in the sixteenth century. Its altar is lined with gold and silver and the costumes of the small image are covered with jewels from the colonial period.*

9) The Department of Cochabamba: In the heart of Bolivia lies a beautiful valley called Cochabamba, a fertile, semi-tropical transition from the foothills of the Andes to the dense jungle of the Amazon basin. The climate in this valley is similar to that of Los Angeles with temperatures ranging from the upper forties in winter (July - September) to the mid-eighties in summer (December - January - March) -- no snow at Christmas! Cochabamba is considered to be the Garden of Eden of Bolivia, producing grains, vegetables, fruits, and some of the most beautiful flowers ever seen. Impatiens is considered a wildflower and grows just about everywhere. Poinsettias grow into trees and begonias grow into shrubs. For us, one of the most beautiful flowers is our national flower, the kantuta. It is a vine with large trumpet-shaped flowers similar to those of the trumpet vine. What makes the kantuta so special is that each of its flowers is tri-colored in red, yellow and green, the colors of our flag.

Bolivia gained its independence from Spain August 6, 1825, and is named for the liberator Simón Bolívar, a Venezuelan general who liberated five South American countries from Spanish rule. Bolivia is located in the center of South America, right between the Andes Mountains of Peru and the jungles of Brazil.

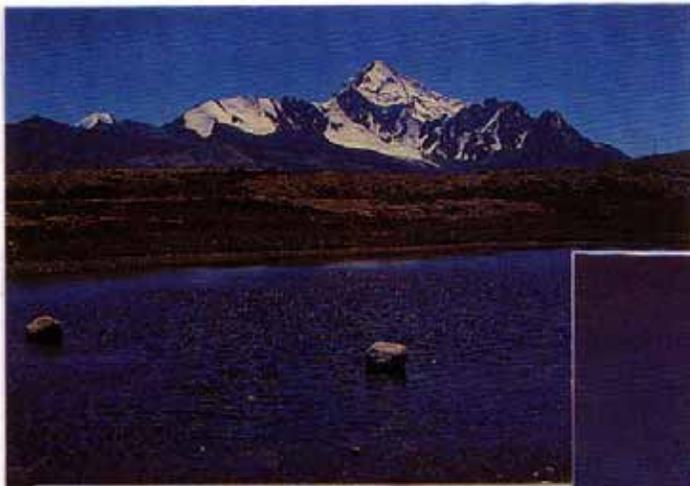
Before Bolivia gained its independence from Spain the Spanish usurpers removed millions of tons of silver from the mines in Potosí. Potosí was referred to as "Cerro Rico" meaning rich mountain. According to legend, silver was discovered at Potosí in 1544 by Diego Huallpa who had climbed a mountain in search of lost llamas. The Spanish, quick to investigate rumors of Indians with silver, took possession of the mountain peak and Potosí was founded in 1545. Within twenty-five years it was the largest city in the New World. With a population of 160,000, it was larger than London, Paris or Madrid. Riches poured out of the mountains into Spanish coffers, changing the financial status of Europe. Potosí itself was awash in wealth. Spanish aristocrats in Potosí built themselves palaces and dozens of baroque churches, but all this came at a terrible price of human misery. The mines were operated by enslaved Indians who died by the thousands in the depths of the earth. It has been estimated that enough silver was extracted from Cerro Rico in that period to build a bridge from Potosí to Madrid. Ironically, today Bolivia has little silver and has its coins minted in Spain.

Before the Spanish arrived, what is now Bolivia was part of the Inca Empire. Today approximately 75 to 80 percent of the population of Bolivia are Inca or pre-Inca descendents. The "campesinos," native Inca peasant farmers, speak Quechua, the official

PANORAMIC VIEWS OF BOLIVIA



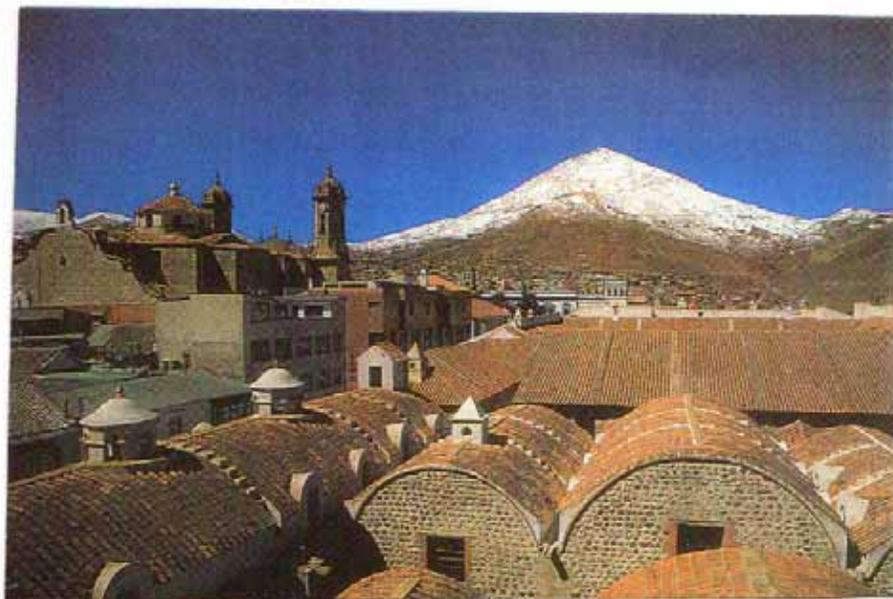
Sajama Mountain –21,424 ft.–Oruro



Illampu Mountain–21,200 ft.–La Paz

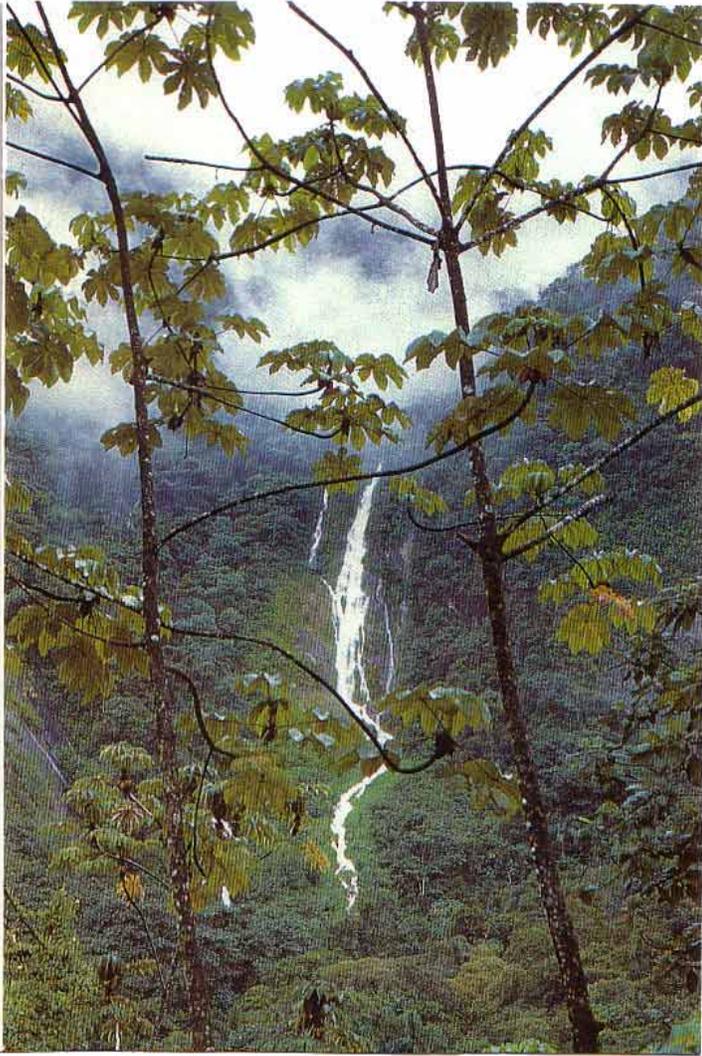


Hyuana Potosi Mountain–19,996 ft.–La Paz

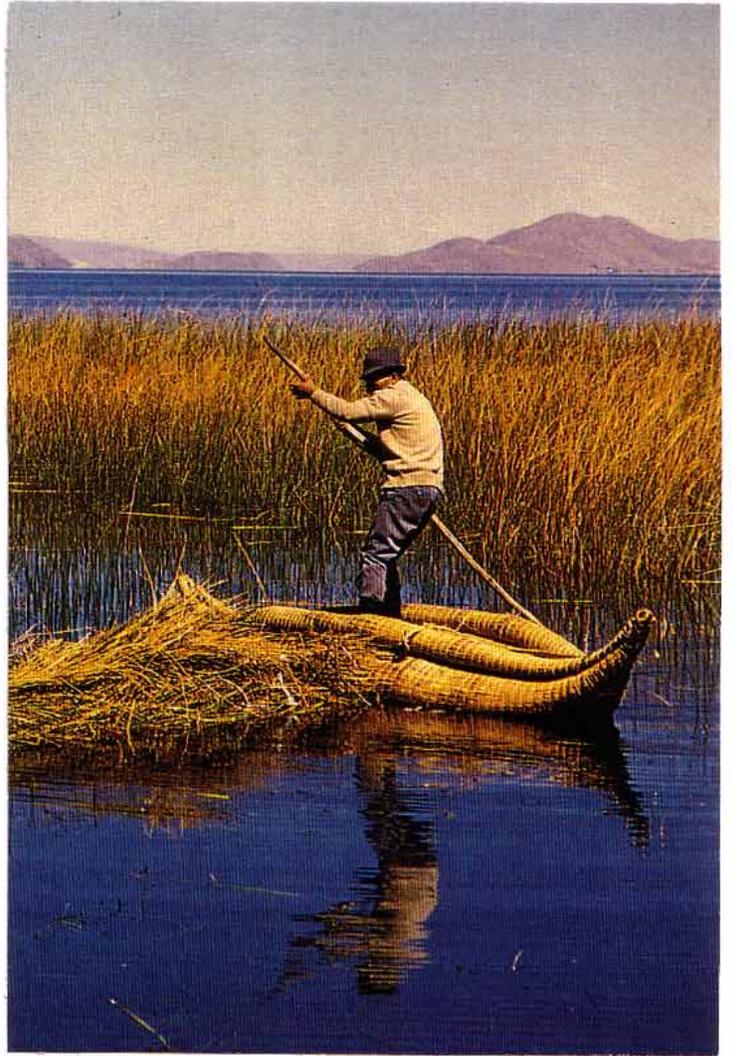


Potosi Mountain–“Cerro Rico”–15,925 ft.–Potosi

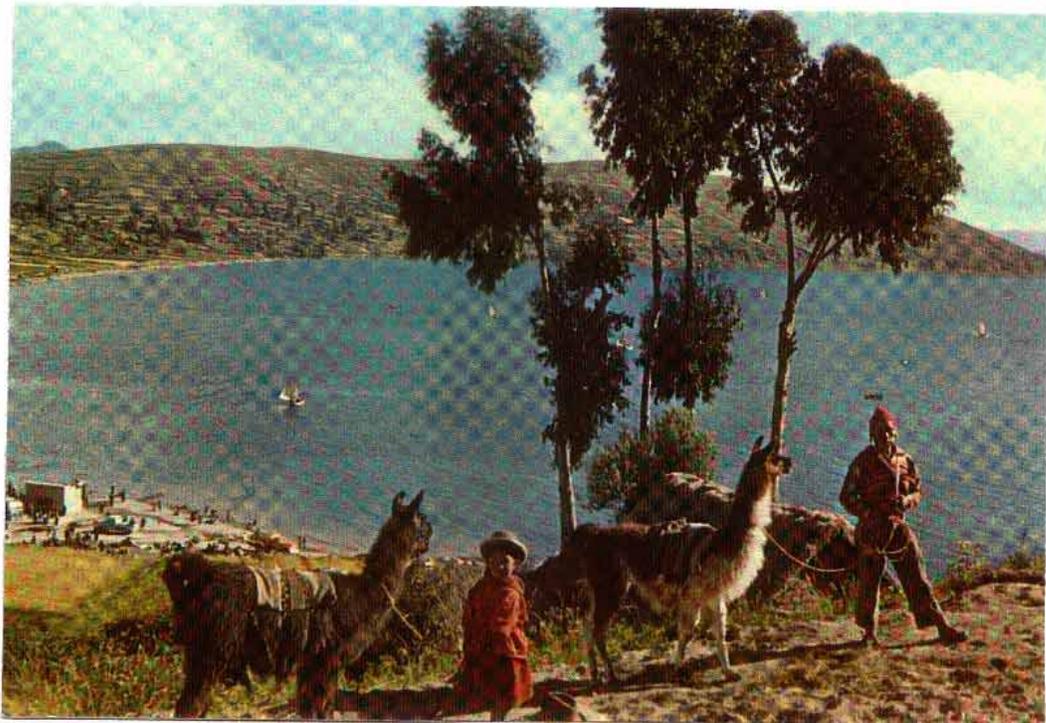
PANORAMIC VIEWS OF BOLIVIA



Chapare—Cochabamba



Totora Reeds—Lake Titicaca

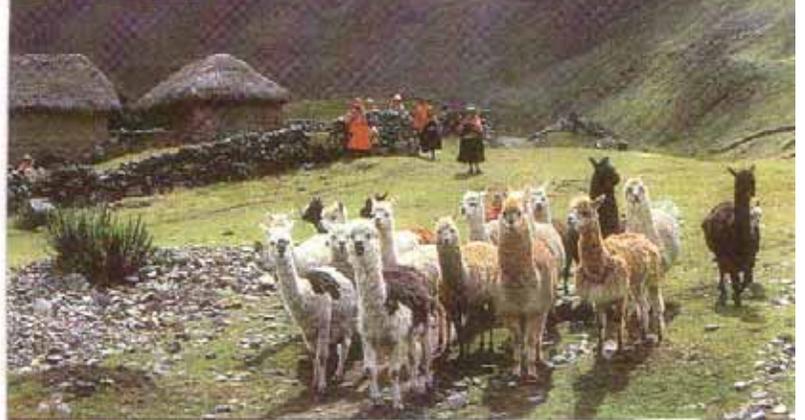


Lake Titicaca

PANORAMIC VIEWS OF BOLIVIA



Los Yungas–La Paz



Charazani–Home of the Kallawaya



Noel Kempff Park–Santa Cruz



Amazon River Basin–Beni

PANORAMIC VIEWS OF BOLIVIA



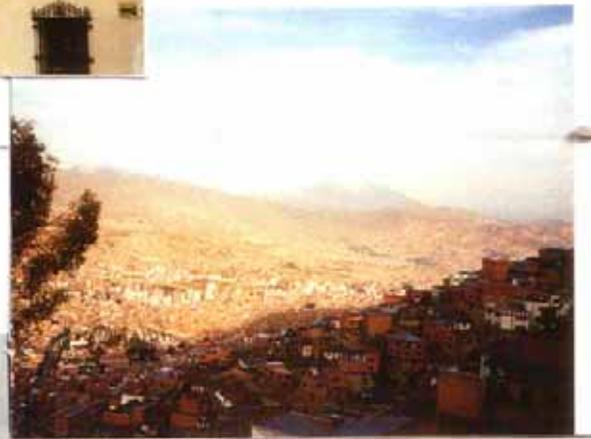
Panoramic Views of Sucre



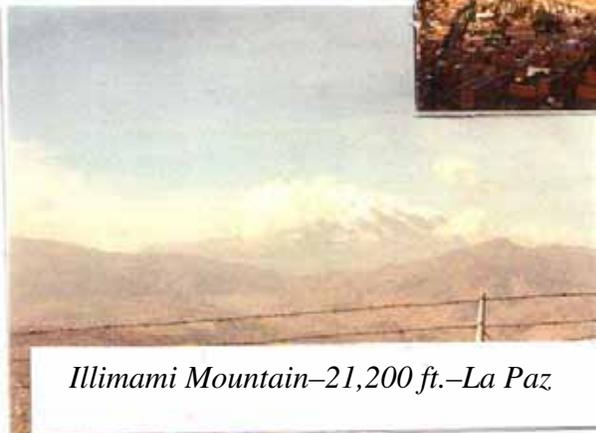
Colonial Church—Potosi



Colonial Architecture—Potosi



View of City of La Paz



Illimani Mountain—21,200 ft.—La Paz

language of the Incas, or Aymara, a pre-Inca language, while the Caucasian population speaks Spanish. Bolivia has the highest indigenous population of all the Latin American countries and for this reason has a very distinct caste system. In the past either you were a servant or you had servants. In the middle of the twentieth century a middle class emerged and is growing steadily. It is still common today for the upper class and wealthy Caucasians to have servants.

Beginning with the Spanish conquest, the territory now known as Bolivia belonged to the Viceroyalty of Alto Perú until 1776, when it fell under the dominion of Buenos Aires. In the aftermath of various Quechua and Aymara rebellions against the Spanish rulers, an independence movement dominated by South Americans of Spanish descent was initiated in 1809. The war of independence culminated in 1825 when, following General Sucre's victory in the Battle of Ayacucho, the whole region gained its independence. *

Bolivia's first symbolic president was Simón Bolívar, followed by Marshals Sucre and Santa Cruz. Sucre made a heroic attempt to establish a functional seaport. Santa Cruz did all he could to create a federation between Perú and Bolivia. Both visionaries were thwarted by conservative elites within Bolivia and by the vested interests of neighboring aristocracies. Following the breakup of the confederation between Perú and Bolivia in 1839, Bolivia was plagued by various civil and international wars. The war of 1879 between Chile and Bolivia cost Bolivia a large portion of its western desert, including the vital seacoast. In 1900, intrigues of the "rubber barons" caused Bolivia to cede its northern Amazon Acre region to Brazil. In 1935, a war against Paraguay fueled by the rivalries of foreign oil companies (the Chaco War) cost Bolivia a large part of its Chaco lowlands. In one hundred years following independence, Bolivia had lost more than half of its original territory!*

The economic and social events that shaped the second half of the twentieth century began with the Revolution of 1952, which nationalized the mines at a time when the business of Bolivia's three power mining magnates was already in decline. Universal suffrage was adopted between 1952 and 1953 and an ongoing agrarian reform broke up many of the large land holdings (*latifundios*). This revolution was triggered by popular movements among peasants, many of them veterans of the Chaco War, and miners, who worked under extraordinarily primitive and oppressive conditions and whose life expectancy was less than 40 years. These rebellions were legitimized and sometimes co-opted by Victor Paz Estenssoro and the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR).*

Following a succession of dictatorships between the mid-1960s and 1981, Bolivia's new democratic government was beset by a bizarre attack of hyperinflation (1984-85). Paz Estenssoro was then re-elected as president in 1985 and began to unravel the statist policies that he himself had begun, ushering in a period of orthodox, free-market economics which terminated the inflation but also widened the gap between rich and poor.*

The Popular Participation program, initiated in 1993, attempted to redistribute a part of Bolivia's wealth and enfranchise the country's heretofore abandoned rural municipalities.*

Bolivia's political instability and frequent military and civilian coups between 1964 and 1981 was part of a general trend in much of South America. In the early 1980s, Bolivia became a relatively tranquil and stable country, and in fact, the safest in all of South America for the foreign visitor.*

Bolivia offers exceptional geographic and cultural diversity, from the shores of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, continuing across the immense Altiplano to the eerie Uyuni salt flats and the multi-colored lagoons of Sud L pez, or from the great snow-capped Andean mountains whose runoff feeds and nourishes the Amazonian jungles 6,000 meters below. Between these two extremes are the eternal spring temperate valleys.*

Exotic plants and animals help define these regions; river dolphins, toucans, llamas, and condors give Bolivia the image of an offbeat paradise on earth. Equally impressive are the vestiges of the pre-Columbian Moje a civilization in the Amazon basin and the Tiwanaku temples on the Altiplano, as well as the opulent cities of the Spanish conquerors and the living cultures of today's indigenous peoples. If you've ever dreamed of hiking the roads used by the imperial Incas, exploring the sacred islands of Lake Titicaca, weaving through the mazes of Indian markets, navigating over the great Amazonian rivers, or simply sitting on a bench in the main plaza of an old colonial city, then Bolivia is the place for you.*

Even with its first State Constitution under Bol var, Bolivia admitted, in theory at least, its ethnic diversity. However, the notion of a Bolivian national identity is a recent phenomenon. During the Chaco War (1933-1935), several sectors of the indigenous population were incorporated into the army, which for the first time in their history gave them the feeling of belonging to a nation. But it was not until 1952 that the *pongo* system of servitude, Bolivia's version of feudalism, was definitively abolished. *Pongaje* had allowed the large landowners (*latifundistas*) and the tin barons to wield total power over the country.*

Today Bolivia continues in the hands of the same white "elite" mainly trained in the universities of North America. But in spite of this power structure, significant changes have developed in the dynamics between indigenous peoples and other sectors of society, within Bolivia and especially on an international level. The need for participation of native peoples in the social, economic and political life of the country is increasingly recognized.*

Already in 1953, with the agrarian reform and the nationalization of the mines, the people had gained a certain degree of access to power. But the most significant advancement in the history of indigenous peoples was achieved in 1993 with the election of an Aymara Indian, Victor Hugo Cardenas, as vice-president of the republic. The creation of the

Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia has triggered an unprecedented process in the defense of indigenous rights. Thanks to the impressive and inspiring 1990 "March for Territory and Dignity," in which Indians came on foot from as far away as the lowlands all the way to La Paz, government authorities responded with a number of new and enfranchising legal instruments, such as the Law of Popular Participation, the formation of "territorial base organizations," and the creation of a cabinet level Secretariat of Ethnic Affairs, all of which were intended to stabilize a foundation for development in native communities. Within this context, Bolivia's indigenous social reality has a new set of dynamics, making this country one of the world leaders in the defense of the rights of native peoples.*

Bolivia can be divided into large regions, which are also viewed as ethnic territories. These include the Andean region, the Santa Cruz *Oriente* including the Chaco, and the Amazon Basin. Culturally, the mid-altitude valleys and *Yungas* are often lumped together with the Quechua and Aymara highlands although these valleys enjoy a warmer, temperate climate and wedged within these transitional regions are pockets whose cultural affinities resemble the lowlands.*

The highlands (Andean region): The history of the peoples who inhabit the Bolivian highlands (the *Kollas*) lends itself to diverse interpretations because of its complexity and unanswered mysteries. Here we can merely provide a general outline.*

Nearly two million people speak Aymara while two and a half million are Quechua speakers. But these numbers are deceiving, for the ethno-cultural composition of the Andean highlands is much more diverse culturally, with various important ethnic enclaves such as the Yamparas, the Kallawayas, and the Urus. A certain degree of cultural homogeneity has developed with increasing assimilation between nearby communities, but more conservative ethnic groups help maintain Bolivia's cultural mosaic.*

Three important reflections are necessary in reference to the majority of the *Kolla* population. First, the number of *Kollas* actually exceeds the rural Andean population as a significant exodus from rural to urban areas has produced large numbers of Indian inhabitants in highland cities. Secondly, settlements of *Kollas* are found on the eastern skirts of the Andes, in some cases extending as far as lowland cities like Santa Cruz. Finally, as a consequence of these two phenomena, there is an escalating degree of ethnic and cultural mixing. This allows us to observe, in the cities, various levels of interaction between native indigenous peoples and white Creoles who may live and work side by side.*

But for obvious reasons, those Aymara and Quechua populations with the deepest traditional roots are found outside the large urban centers, in the rural Andean departments. Aymara and Quechua populations are distributed in practically all of Bolivia's departments since the process of colonization included a resettlement component, but the main historical roots of these cultures are found in the departments of

La Paz and Oruro (Aymara majority and Quechua minority) and Cochabamba, Chuquisaca and Potosí, where Quechuas greatly outnumber Aymaras.*

Introducing a few ethnic groups:

The Kallawaya ethnic minority (1,500 inhabitants)

This unique group is located to the northeast of Lake Titicaca in the region of Curva and Charazani. The Kallawayas' wisdom in herbal medicine and magic led to their incorporation into the Inca Empire. The Kallawaya language is on the verge of extinction as it is absorbed by the dominant socio-cultural context of Aymara, Quechua, and Spanish.*

The Uru Ethnic Minority (2,500 inhabitants)

The Urus are one of the most ancient ethnic groups in the Andean world, and perhaps in all of the Americas. Several Uru communities survive across the Altiplano, such as the Uru-Murato, the Uru-Iruito, and the Uru-Chipaya, with differences between them reflecting their habitats. The Urus have survived thanks to their extraordinary adaptation to the most inhospitable living conditions. In particular, the Uru-Chipayas in the Coipasa seemingly lifeless salt flat region have developed a clever water management technology during their centuries of existence.*

The Uru-Chipaya sub-groups

Isolated in the expansive high plains, this Uru sub-group deserves special attention. The Uru-Chipayas, or simply Chipayas, somehow managed to preserve their cultural identity even when being conquered by the Tiwanakotas, the Aymaras, the Incas, the Spaniards, and finally, the Bolivian republic. Today the Chipayas' primary threat comes from the pressures of foreign religions. Their unique language, *puquina*, their dress, and their funeral customs have been the object of several enlightening research projects such as Nathan Wachtel's *La Vision des Vaincus*.*

Afro-Bolivians (2,000 inhabitants)

Originally from Senegal and the Congo, men and women of African descent were forcibly shipped to Bolivia by the Spaniards to labor in the mines of Potosí during the colonial period. Brought from tropical lowlands to work in the cold highlands, the Africans who were fortunate enough to survive such an abrupt change soon became either foremen in the mines overseeing indigenous miners or peons on colonial *haciendas*, before finally dispersing throughout Bolivia during the onset of republican movements. At the end of the 19th century they regrouped in the Yungas region of La Paz, whose semi-tropical climate more closely resembled their native lands. Today some 2,000 Afro-Bolivians live in the area between Coroico, Chulumani and Chicaloma, conserving cultural expressions, in particular music and dance, from an Afro-Andean blend unique in South America.*

When South America was a Spanish colony none of the present day countries existed, for the most part the country was divided into viceroyalties. My great great great-grandfather Francisco de Gumucio migrated to South America, from the Basque region of Viskaya in northern Spain, in 1750, at the age of 17. His cousin accompanied him to the village of

La Plata in the Viceroyalty of Perú, which later became Sucre, the current capital of Bolivia. He developed mining properties for twenty-five years and became very wealthy. At the age of 42, after he had made his fortune, he married Juana Manuela de Claros in 1775. Her family had settled in Oropeza, the only other city that existed at that time and which later became the city of Cochabamba.

Their son, José Gabriel de Gumucio, married Maria de Los Angeles from the Viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata in what is now Argentina. They had eleven children. Their fourth child and oldest son, José Gil de Gumucio, born in 1820, married Maximiliana Theresa Matthews in 1852. Her father was the Commercial Attaché to the British Embassy in Chile. He was very disappointed that neither Maximiliana nor her sister, Bo, married Englishmen.

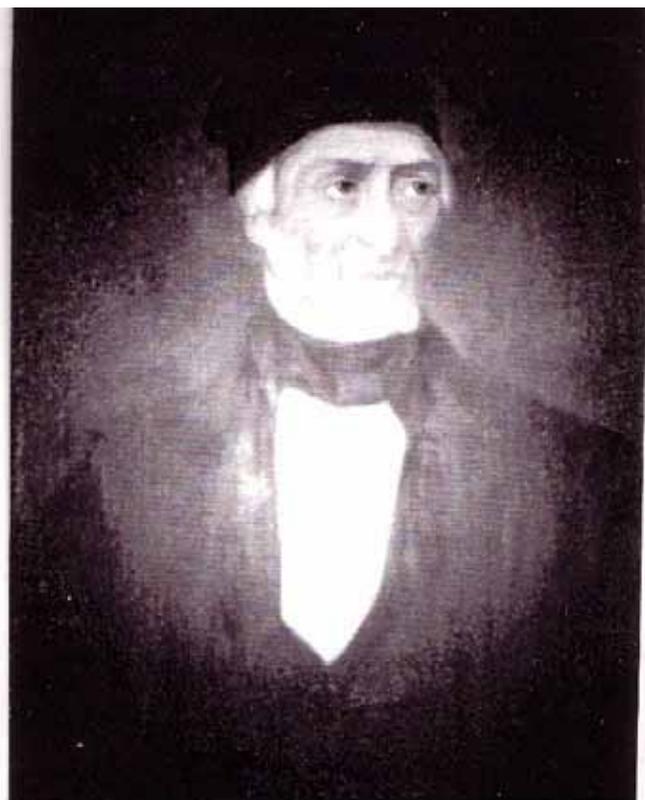
My grandfather, Gil Angel de Gumucio, the oldest son of José Gil and Maximiliana, was born in Valparaiso, Chile in 1854. He married Anna Casta d'Entenza Cespedes on June 6, 1890, in Valparaiso. Their only child, my father, José Luis Gumucio, was born on December 15, 1892, in Tacna, Chile (later Tacna, Peru). Anna died in 1896 during a worldwide epidemic of consumption (tuberculosis). Don Gil Angel de Gumucio, the widower, became known as quite a playboy and ladies man. He was swindled out of most of the family fortune in a worthless stock venture.

Having lost his mother at the age of four, my father, José Luis Gumucio, was raised by his maternal grandmother, Andrea Mariscal de Cespedes. He learned a carpenter's trade and by the age of twenty-six had already opened his own furniture shop when he married Maria Cardenas on December 15, 1918, in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Thirteen children were born to José and Maria but only six lived to adulthood. The infant mortality in South America was very high during the first third of the twentieth century, as it was worldwide. Being the youngest of their thirteen children, I don't know a lot about my parents when they were young. By the time I was born they pretty much worked most of the time so they could send money to my older brothers who were studying in Argentina, Brazil and the United States.

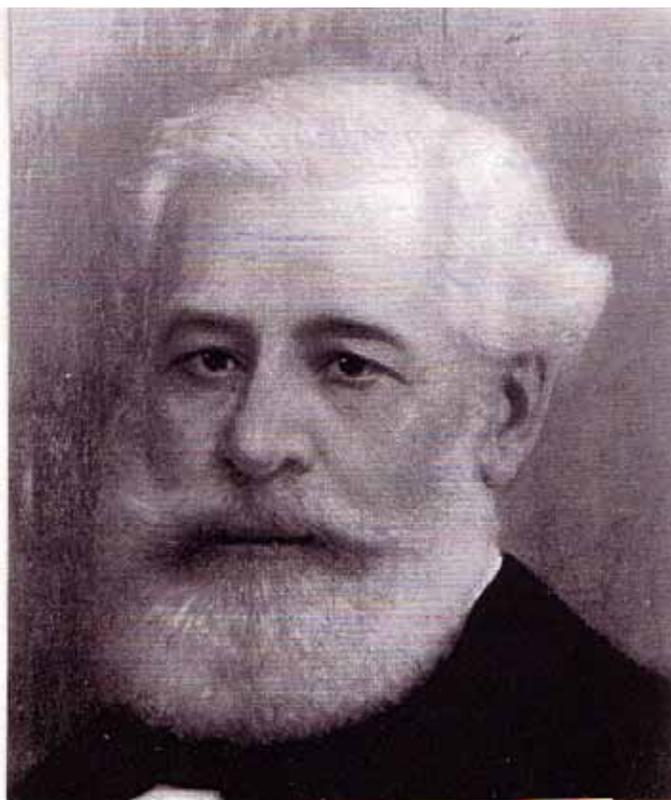
My father when I knew him, was a short, bald man with very expressive hazel eyes. He was an unpretentious, personable, and generous man who loved people and they loved him. I have been told that he liked to dance and that my parents always had big parties to celebrate their birthdays and anniversary (all in the month of December). They especially liked to dance a folkloric dance called the Cueca. The Cueca is a dance of courtship where the dancers dance around each other in a flirtatious manner, waving and twirling a handkerchief. My father was a very strict, honest and moral man, and his word was law. He was an excellent provider. He valued education and worked all his life to provide his children the opportunity for higher education and professional careers.

Although he started as a simple carpenter, he built up a good reputation, and eventually opened the first state of the art, electrically mechanized, furniture factory in Cochabamba with most of the equipment being imported from Germany and Switzerland. At the height of production, he had more than 50 employees. Besides furniture he made cabinets, doors

MY ANCESTORS



Jose Gabriel de Gumucio



Josef Gil de Gumucio



Gil Angel Gabriel de Gumucio

Ethnic Life Stories 2003



Jose Luis Gumucio & Grandmother

Reynaldo Gumucio

and just about anything you could think of. I consider myself to be very fortunate to have four side chairs that he made sometime in the 1940s. He was in every sense of the word an entrepreneur. He also invested in real estate and in addition to his home and furniture factory he owned houses in other towns as well as a small farm and orchard where we used to spend the biggest part of our summers.

My father basically spent all of his energy and wealth educating his children. I remember going to the bank with him every month to get cashier's checks so he could send money to my brothers for their tuition and living expenses. In July 1960 he was planning a trip to the U.S. to visit my brothers and me. I was attending junior college in Kansas City, Kansas, when he suddenly died. I was shocked and also angry about his death because it could have been so easily prevented. He died of a strangulated hernia, normally not life-threatening, but in his case, fatal, due to delayed medical attention. Having lost my mother only two years earlier, I was devastated by his death. I rushed home to Bolivia as soon as I heard the news but due to bad connections and flight delays I was too late for his funeral. Only when trying to organize his affairs and settle his estate did I realize how much his children's education had cost him. He had sold everything except our house in Cochabamba and the furniture factory.

My mother was a middle child; she had an older brother and a younger brother. Although she was fairly young when her father died trying to break up a street fight, she devoted herself to rearing her younger brother. My family was wealthy enough to have a cook, a housekeeper, and a nanny for the children which gave my mother the time and opportunity to pursue her own interest. When a friend of my father offered her a chance to sell yard goods at the local open-air markets she took advantage of the opportunity.

During this time, and even today, to a great extent, much of the retail business in Bolivia was carried out in open-air markets called "mercados." These are very similar to the bazaars one would find in Morocco. You can find everything in these markets, including fresh foods, packaged foods, fresh flowers, personal items, clothes, yard goods, sporting goods and hardware supplies, just to name a few. Each vendor has a kiosk or booth where they sell their wares. These kiosks vary in size depending on the type and amount of product being sold. They need to be simple and easy to set up because many of the vendors move from village to village as markets in the smaller towns are held only once a week.

My mother would sell her yard goods in the markets of the small towns surrounding Cochabamba. She sold a huge variety of fabrics from the most ordinary cotton muslin to the most lavish special occasion fabrics like brocades, silks and satins used for party dresses and wedding attire. She also sold fabrics to make men's suits. At that time most every one either made his or her own clothing or went to a tailor or dressmaker. Today many people continue to have dressmakers and the men, especially, still have their suits tailor-made from fine English woolens. Many of the fabrics my mother sold were made in Bolivia, but some of the fancier ones were imported from other Latin American countries, Europe and the U.S.



Father's Furniture Factory



Furniture made by Jose Luis Gumucio

*Main Plaza of Cochabamba
14 de Septiembre*



All these enormous bolts of fabric were packed into huge bundles and transported to market by truck. In those days not everyone had their own transportation and it was quite expensive to hire a private vehicle to transport all this fabric to the outlying towns. So, my father purchased a house in Cliza and a house in Punata so Mother would have a place to store her fabrics and also to make traveling easier for her.

In my early childhood I, accompanied by my nanny, always went with my mother to the different towns. When I was older, on weekends and during the summers, I used to help her set up her booth and carry all those bolts of fabric. Mother had an exceptionally large kiosk to display her wares. Some fabric was cut into "cortes," a specified number of yards typically needed to make dresses or jackets. These were displayed around the sides of the kiosk, arranged by color and type of fabric. The large bolts of fabric were piled three or four high on several long tables in the middle of the kiosk. They were usually purchased by dressmakers or tailors and people who needed more or less yardage than the standard "corte." Special occasion fabrics used for evening gowns, prom dresses, etc. were also sold on bolts by the yard. Some of the most beautiful and colorful bolts were unrolled and stretched upward and draped over overhead wires like banners. This type of display covered the entire back wall and was a kaleidoscope of beautiful colors, which enticed the ladies to buy the fabrics to make beautiful dresses.

When my mother first started selling fabrics, before I was born, business was good because people made everything. In addition to clothes, they made their own tablecloths, sheets, bedspreads, curtains, blankets, slipcovers, etc. After I was born, and in particular by the time I was a teenager, ready made textiles were more readily available so the demand for certain fabrics lessened and as the number of fabric vendors grew, my mother's business began to decline.

After a long day at the market, especially if it was late, we would sometimes go to our summer house at the orchard to spend the night. The women would talk about their day at the market while the men would be telling jokes around a crackling fire and we would have hot tea or hot milk with fresh baked bread and homemade cheese. It was a very peaceful time and I enjoyed being there with my family. The dancing flames of the fire always sparked my imagination and I would see all sorts of images as I sat and gazed into the flames. Somehow the tranquil environment of the summer home made me feel safe and secure. The times spent at the farm are some of my dearest childhood memories; it was a very special place for me.

My mother continued in this business until her health failed. In 1956 she had a stroke which left her partially paralyzed. A second stroke left her an invalid and she finally passed on in 1958. I was in high school at the time of her illness and although we had servants, I helped my father care for her. It was sad to see her so dependent and helpless just like a child. I used to help my father bathe and dress her, change her bed linens, and carry her to the bathroom. Caring for her made me realize that I was doing for her all the things that she had done for me when I was a child. Life had gone full circle and now the child was caring for the parent. My mother died when I was a senior in high school.

I never knew any of my grandparents but I had a wonderful nanny who made up for anything I may have missed by not knowing them. My nanny's name was Hilaria Mendez and I called her "Mama Hilaria" because she was always with me when I was little. She was hired just to care for me. She was of Inca descent and spoke Quechua. She understood Spanish but didn't speak it. Since I was in her constant care, I learned to speak Quechua before I learned to speak Spanish.

Mama Hilaria would accompany my mother to market and help her with her yard goods. Then she would spend the rest of the time watching over me while my mother conducted her business. Nanny always carried me on her back, papoose style, even when I was as old as four or five. Hilaria cared for me from the day I was born. She never married and devoted her life to our family. I was like her son and I must say she spoiled me rotten. In many ways she was like a mother to me and she gave me a lot of love and affection when my own mother was unable to be there.

In 1979 when my own family was living in La Paz, I brought Mama Hilaria to live with us and I was happy that my children came to know her. She died in 1983, the year after we returned to the U.S.

As I have already mentioned, only six of my parents' thirteen children lived to adulthood and my parents devoted their lives to educating them. We were educated abroad because my father felt that this was a much better education than we could achieve in Bolivia at that time.

My oldest brother, Juan Gumucio, is 15 years my senior and lives in Florida with his wife, Hilda. They have two sons, one is a dentist and one is a cosmetic surgeon. In Bolivia, John graduated from the military academy and pursued a military career. When he came to the U.S., John worked as a draftsman. He is very artistic and very meticulous. John did not want to go to the military academy but on the advice of my mother's brother, Uncle Martin, who was considered to be a wise man, he was sent anyway. "The oldest son should be in the military and serve his country," counseled Uncle Martin, and so John went!

The second son, Carlos, went to medical school in Brazil. He married a Brazilian girl of Italian descent. He came to the U.S. in the 1950s and joined the U.S. Army. He pursued a medical career in the army until his death. Carlos was a pathologist and ironically, while he was researching pancreatic cancer, he died from that same disease in 1974. Carlos and Irene have two daughters, both college graduates. One is a business major and the other is a dentist. Irene and both daughters continue to make their home in New Jersey where they were living when Carlos passed on.

The third son, Roger, came to the United States to study engineering in 1946. He went to the University of Missouri. He married an American girl and reared four children, three sons and a daughter. Roger, a professional engineer, pursued a career in mining and traveled extensively throughout the United States and South America. Although he was reared in the Catholic faith, in a strong Catholic culture, Roger converted to Mormonism

in his early adulthood. All four of his children graduated from Brigham Young University. Two of the sons served for two years as missionaries for the Mormon Church, one in Bolivia and one in Japan. The youngest son pursued a career in aviation and as an aeronautical engineer. Roger is the one most responsible for bringing the family to the United States. He sponsored all of the other siblings when they immigrated to the U.S. Roger and his third wife, Jennifer, are currently living in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The fourth son, Mario, studied medicine in Mexico. He married a Bolivian girl, Maria Luisa, but they were married in Kansas City, Kansas. They reared an adopted son who is a graphics design engineer. Mario is a well-known and respected internist in Kansas City, Kansas. He is on the board of St. Margaret-Providence Hospital and teaches in conjunction with the University of Kansas Medical School.

The fifth child, Maria Luisa, is the one and only daughter. She was educated as a surgical technician and came to the United States in 1957. She accompanied her soon-to-be sister-in-law because single Latin women were not allowed to travel by themselves. Malusa married Fernando Falquez, a Colombian who was in the U.S. Air Force. He studied to become an electrical engineer, and when he was discharged he went to work for Honeywell and the family moved to Florida. Soon after the move to Florida, Malusa and Fernando divorced, leaving her to rear their children, two girls and a boy. In 1978 she suffered an aneurysm and was disabled. During this time she also converted to Mormonism and managed to educate her two daughters at Brigham Young University. Her son was born blind and severely handicapped. She cared for him as long as possible but eventually he had to be placed in permanent professional care. Malusa recently moved to California to be near her oldest daughter.

In the early years in the United States the family was in constant turmoil, much of it caused by the diverse background and ethnic cultures of the spouses. Over the years, however, the rifts have been repaired and the siblings have made peace. My wife and I enjoy traveling around the country visiting with my brothers and sister and their children and grandchildren.

Another major influence in my life was my mother's younger brother, Martin Cardenas. Although he did not live with us, he spent a lot of time in our home. He was a bachelor and lived close by so we had a very close relationship. He usually had lunch and dinner with us and one of my morning chores was to deliver his breakfast to his house. My father used to say that Uncle Martin was like another son.

Uncle Martin was educated at the Teacher's College where he majored in biology. He later graduated from the University of San Simon in Cochabamba with a degree in agricultural sciences with emphasis on plant genetics. Uncle Martin was an internationally renowned botanist, and in Bolivia he was considered a sage of the highest caliber in his field. He classified over 300 different types of potatoes in Bolivia as well as flowers and cacti. I used to help him dry plants on our outdoor patio.



Orchard of summerhouse in Punata 1950



*Hilaria Mendez-“Mama Hilaria”
And Jose Gumucio at summerhouse*

*“Mama Hilaria” with Charles, Rick
and Eddie Gumucio in 1979*



Because of his status as an intellectual man, he was often consulted on educational matters concerning the children of José and Maria Gumucio. When he died, he was enshrined in the Central Cemetery of Cochabamba among other famous people who were born in Cochabamba. After his death, The Martin Cardenas Botanical Garden was created and dedicated to his memory.

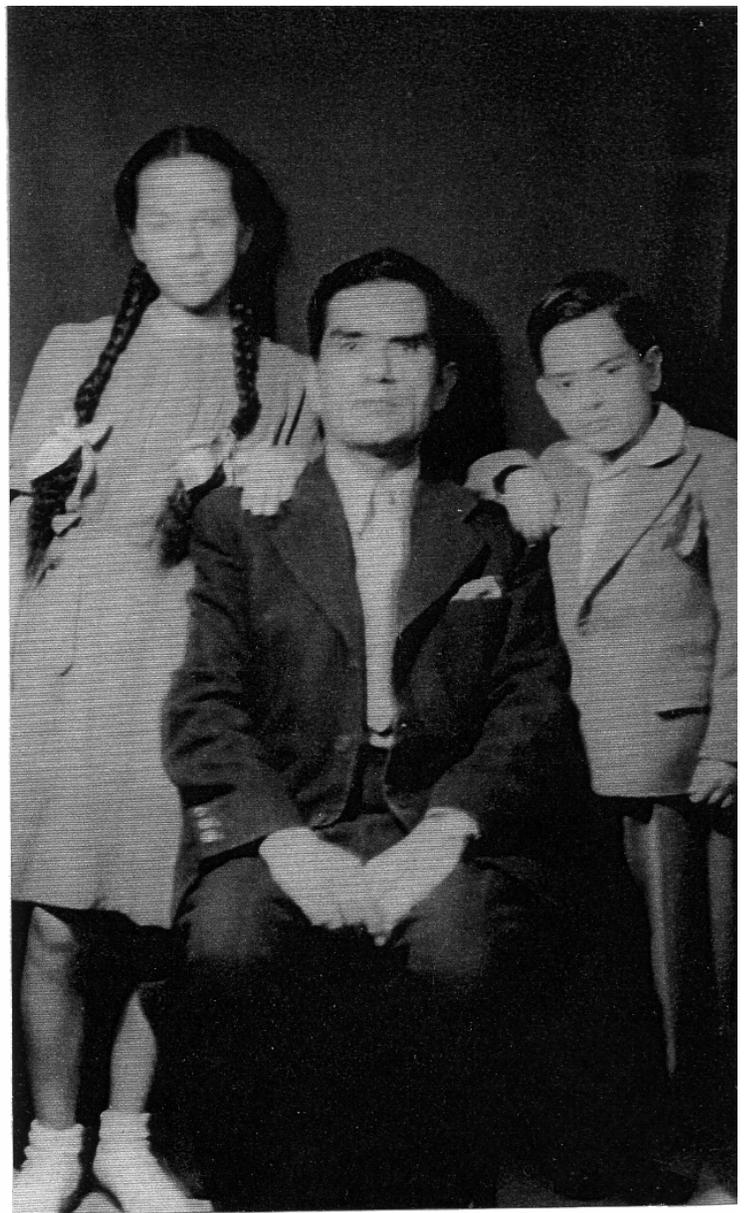
Other than short trips inside Bolivia, we spent our lives in Cochabamba until we were ready for college, then we were sent abroad to continue our education. Since my father was all alone after my mother's death, I wanted to stay in Cochabamba and study there, but he opposed that idea and I was put on a plane to the U.S. It was an enormous shock being separated from my family and friends, luckily I had brothers to help me adjust to the new environment and culture.

MY FAMILY

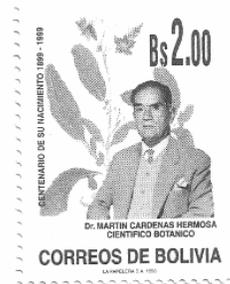


Me-Age 4

*r3: Carlos, Juan, Mario Gumucio
r2: Mom, Malusa (holding photo of Roger), Dad
r1 Me, c. 1950*



Uncle Martin Cardenas, Malusa & Me, c. 1945



*Martin Cardenas
Commemorative Stamp*

CHAPTER TWO: EARLIEST MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

When I was a small child I was often called "Reycito" or "Reiny" which are diminutive forms of my name. As a young child I spent most of my time in the company of my nanny. Since my brothers were between ten and fifteen years older than I, I was reared very much like an only child. My nanny was hired soon after I was born and was hired just to take care of me. I was with her constantly and she carried me on her back, papoose style, everywhere. Nanny always accompanied my mother to market or sometimes she would be solely responsible for shopping for the family meals. She always took me with her and she would slip me fresh peaches or grapes.

Due to limited refrigeration, shopping for meat and other perishable foods was done daily. Milk was sold door to door by "Lecheras," peasants who owned a few head of milk cows, and had to be boiled to destroy any bacteria. They also sold cheese and butter. Partly because of the altitude and partly because everything had to be prepared from scratch, meal preparation was very labor intensive. Breakfast was usually a light meal, bread or toast, butter, jam, cheese, fruit, sometimes oatmeal and milk or coffee with milk. As soon as breakfast was over the cook started preparing for lunch, which was the biggest meal of the day. A typical lunch would be a three or four course meal and would include an appetizer, soup, salad, and the main course. At 10:00 A.M. people usually took a break from work and had salteñas, a baked turnover type pastry filled with either beef or chicken, hard boiled eggs, olives and vegetables. After lunch was the time for a short "siesta." Shops were closed from noon to 2:00 P.M. Desserts and sweets were normally eaten at teatime, around 5:00 P.M. Dinner was also a light meal and was generally served around 7:00 P.M.

Latin American food is nothing like Mexican food. We eat a lot of soups and stews. Our steaks (asados) are much smaller, more like breakfast steaks instead of T-bones and sirloins. Meat is grilled hibachi style and usually includes a variety of meats, such as beef, pork, chicken, chorizos, and sweetbreads. We don't eat beans or tortillas at all. Typical "fast food" fare that wouldn't be prepared at home would be chicharron, cubed pork marinated in chicha (an alcoholic beverage made from corn) and fried a little crispy, served with motte (huge kernels of white corn similar to hominy) and cheese, or anticuchos, a kabob consisting of small onions, beef heart, and potatoes served with a peanut sauce. Hot sauce or "llajua" is made from tomatoes, hot peppers and "kilquiña," a spice peculiar to Bolivia, somewhat like cilantro. Bolivians eat hot sauce on just about everything and it ranges from hot to hotter.

My childhood home was located a block and a half from the main square or plaza. Homes of my childhood days were typical Spanish-colonial style. They were made of stucco with terra cotta tile roofs. Two story homes normally had a central patio and several balconies, usually overlooking the street. One story villas, such as ours, could have several patios and ramble on and on in many directions. It has always been the custom for the property to be walled-in. The typical wall was about six feet high and twelve inches thick. Broken glass on top of the walls discouraged anyone from trying to climb over. Surrounding walls such as these are as common in Bolivia as curbs are in America. Guard dogs were also common and let us know when someone approached.

We lived behind the furniture factory, as did most small business owners and shop keepers. It was a long narrow lot and there were several patios dividing up the living quarters. I slept in a large dormitory style bedroom with four beds off of one of the patios. It was like a private room unless one of my brothers was home and then I had to share it with him. My sister had her own room and my parents also had their own private room. The living room and formal dining room were located off of another patio and the everyday dining room, the kitchen, the store room and the servants quarters were located off of another patio in the back.

Etiquette, table manners and courtesy were very important when I was growing up. We had to wash our hands before every meal. We always asked to be excused from the table. We ate whatever the cook prepared because if we said that we didn't like something, my father would tell the cook to prepare that food for an entire week. Then everyone in the house was upset with you because they had to eat the same thing too. It didn't take long to learn to eat whatever was on your plate. Serving bowls were not put on the table. Each plate was prepared in the kitchen and brought to each person at the table. When I was a child growing up we never ate with our hands and we never ate sandwiches. You never entered a room without greeting everyone in the room with a hug and a kiss on the cheek. Standing in the doorway with a general, "Hi," meant to include everyone in the room just didn't work in those days. If you happened to interrupt someone's meal or walked past someone eating in a restaurant you always said "provecho," which means, "hope you are enjoying your meal."

Besides my home in the city of Cochabamba, I recall how I loved to go to our summer home, a small farm and orchard just outside the town of Punata. I remember climbing the peach trees and picking fresh peaches. After I found the best peach, I would sit on the limb of the tree, peel the peach with a small knife that I always carried in my pocket, and eat it right there, in the tree. My mother also loved the summer house and she would always take some coffee, sugar, or other hard-to-find staples to the caretaker and his family because they took such good care of it.

Taste and smell are very acute senses and usually create the strongest memories. Besides the great food associated with my childhood memories, I remember the smell that greeted us when we arrived at the summer house. Mother had jasmine, gardenias, and honeysuckle planted all around the front porch and there was always some sweet aroma in the air to greet us. There were beautiful roses and also dahlias. The dahlias grew at least eight inches in diameter and some of the really big ones were almost twelve inches across. I loved to listen to the birds singing and the wind blowing through the trees.

For me the summer house was a little piece of heaven and when I picture it I see myself surrounded by beauty, good smells, good food, and good companionship. I see a happy, tranquil place that nourished the soul. Every time I smell honeysuckle or jasmine I am transported back to that wonderful place.

We always had pets, usually dogs, around our house. Two of my favorites were named Bobby and Totino (bacon). Uncle Martin also had a dog named Dolly that I liked and used to care for when he was out of town. At the summer house we had some pigeons and some guinea pigs. I learned not to make pets out of them however, because we used them for food.

I started first grade at the age of seven. I had to wait a year because of my birthday falling after the beginning of the school year. At that time we didn't have kindergarten. We had to wrap all of our textbooks and workbooks in brown paper to help protect the covers and keep them from wearing out and getting dirty. We had to wear dusters, a type of white lab coat, to help keep our clothes clean. The primary school was only one and a half blocks from our house and the first year nanny usually walked me to school and also came to walk me home. After that I walked by myself or with my friends.

My best friend was Raul Espinoza; we went to school together, played together, and rode our bicycles everywhere. We were the greatest of friends all through grade school. When we graduated primary school and went on to secondary school, we were sent to different private schools and lost touch with each other.

I had my favorite teacher for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. His name was Mr. Arzabe and he was a great influence on me, always encouraging me to do my best and many times pushing me to excel. He helped instill in me the love of learning that my father considered so important.

The unstable political environment often affected our education. If there was a long or violent revolution, or uprisings that occurred close to the end of the school year, schools were closed. When this occurred, especially at the end of the school year, we were automatically passed on to the next grade without ever having to take final exams.

Special occasions, holidays, birthdays and weddings were almost always celebrated with a big party, a "fiesta." The party would include lots of food, alcohol, music and dancing. The more important the occasion, the bigger the party. Preparing meals and feeding guests is a welcomed opportunity to express the hospitality that is so much a part of Latin American culture. Most all fiestas were and still are family oriented and the kids play and dance right along with the adults.

Most wedding celebrations lasted all weekend and in the country they could last up to a week. In Bolivia there are two wedding ceremonies, a civil one, performed by a judge of the court and a religious ceremony performed by a priest in the church. It is customary to name "Madrinas" or Godmothers to help with the wedding. The godmothers furnish the items for which they have been named and this helps with the cost of the wedding. Godmothers are traditionally named to furnish the wedding rings, the veil, the flowers and the cake.

While funerals are generally sad affairs, there is also music and rejoicing. Even today there are no funeral homes in Bolivia and the family has to prepare the body for burial

themselves. They keep vigil and pray for the deceased all night prior to the funeral mass. After mass the funeral procession walks behind the casket to the cemetery. This is called a wake and it is normally preceded by a band playing a funeral march. Bodies are not buried in the ground, instead they are placed in a temporary niche for a period of about seven years, then the remains are removed and placed into a smaller casket and sealed in a permanent niche in a public mausoleum. Most people visited the cemeteries every Sunday after mass. In Bolivia people still wear black and observe a formal period of mourning which can be anywhere from six months up to a year or longer; the closer the family member, the longer the mourning period. Older people who lose a spouse sometimes wear black the rest of their lives. People hardly ever remarried after a spouse died.

Holidays in Bolivia can be classified as patriotic or religious with a lot of folkloric traditions mixed in. Bolivian folklore is one of the most colorful in the world and the local people celebrate many festivals each year. It is one of the richest countries in traditions, rites, costumes, dances and customs that have been maintained since the colonial days. There are over 200 different dances within our folklore and the most important festivals are the Carnival in Oruro, Gran Poder in La Paz, The Pilgrimages to Copacabana, Alacitas, and the Fiesta of the Virgen of Urkupiña in Cochabamba.

Another aspect of Bolivian folklore is its peculiar native musical instruments. Dancers sing and dance to the rhythm of their melodies to the delight of the spectators and the local dwellers alike. The most typical musical instruments are as follows: El charango, a 12-string mandolin-type instrument usually made from an armadillo shell; La quena, a wooden flute; El erke, a rustic coronet made of reed; El tamborcito, a small drum covered in goat skin; Las zampoñas, pan flutes made from reeds in a variety of sizes; and La matraca, a square wooden rattle.

Carnival in Oruro, and also Santa Cruz, marks the beginning of lent. It is celebrated for a week just like Mardi Gras in New Orleans. The festivities feature hundreds of dancers in elaborately decorated masks and costumes in a melee of colors. Groups of dancers perform dances with names like La Diablada (devil's dance), Morenada (Colonial Black Foremen's dance), Lllamarada (the llama-drivers dance), the Ahuatiris (the water carriers), the Tarqueada (a typical group of flute players and dancers), the Tinkus (native fighter-dancer), and many others. In every dance characters of colonial times, mystical beings, like the devil of the mines, and angels are represented. The Supay Tio, Devil Uncle, is the miners' god of the underworld. He must be placated if his mineral wealth is to be extracted and the miner is to return safely to the world of sunlight above. Even today coca leaves and cigarettes are left at his shrine as the miners exit. Three times a year there is a festival to honor the Virgen of Socavon, the protectress of those who enter caves, caverns or underground passages.

Semana Santa, Holy Week of Easter, is the most important Catholic religious festival in Bolivia. Semana Santa starts on Palm Sunday and goes through Easter Sunday. It celebrates the last days of Christ's life, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. It is observed with a wide range of celebrations, each day having its rituals, including vigils,

homages and processions through the streets. Most religious icons and statues in the churches are shrouded in black or purple. On Holy Thursday masses are held to celebrate The Last Supper. In the evening visitations and prayers are made to 12 or more churches symbolizing the Stations of the Cross. Around mid-day on Good Friday a procession called "Via Cruzes" is held to enact the 12 Stations of the Cross and the Crucifixion. Holy Saturday is spent in reflection and prayer and in the early evening there is a funeral procession with the Sepulcro, a statue of the dead Christ in a glass casket. Easter Sunday is a day of great rejoicing and happiness as people celebrate the Resurrection. Many people make pilgrimages to Urkupiña or Copacabana to do penance on the mountains known as "calvario."

Copacabana is one of Bolivia's most important religious shrines, a Moorish style cathedral built between 1610 and 1612. Many miracles have been attributed to the "Dark Virgen of Candelaria," a black wooden statue of Mary, the Patroness of Bolivia. The Altar is covered with silver and gold and the robes of the Virgin are encrusted with jewels, silver, and gold from the colonial period.

During Holy Week the faithful make a pilgrimage to Copacabana to climb the mountain known as "Calvario," or Calvary. The climb to the top is about an hour or longer, depending upon how much time you spend at the fourteen "Stations of the Cross" that line the path. At Easter many of the faithful climb the mountain on their knees, or carry heavy stones on their backs as a sign of suffering and penance.

Pilgrimages are made to Copacabana for many reasons. One of the more unusual practices is for owners of newly purchased vehicles to bring them to be blessed by a priest and then christened with champagne. We took our station wagon to Copacabana in 1978, one of the first trips we made after getting it released from customs. While we were waiting in line for the blessing (we were the next to be blessed), we were rear-ended by the inebriated driver of a jeep that had just recently been blessed itself!

During the colonial days in Quillacollo, Cochabamba, a little girl helped her parents by tending sheep. One day a beautiful lady with a baby in her arms appeared to the little shepherdess. They became friends. For the little girl, to talk with the lady, who spoke to her in her native language, Quechua, and to play with the baby was only natural. One day, on August 15, her parents and some neighbors unexpectedly appeared in the place where the little girl tended her sheep. They were surprised when they saw that the little girl was accompanied by the lady and her baby. Astonishment and disbelief overcame the people when they saw the lady with her baby son in her arms slowly rise up to heaven. The surprised people asked, "Where's the lady?" The little shepherdess happily answered, saying, "Ork'hopiña," which means in Quechua, "She's already on the mountain."

The festival of the Virgin of Urkupiña is celebrated from August 14th to 16th in Quillacollo, a province of the Department of Cochabamba. Pilgrims come from all over Bolivia and neighboring countries to honor the Virgin. The Virgin of Urkupiña is the patroness for national integration. The religious festival of The Feast of the Virgin of Urkupiña has turned out to be a traditional folkloric festival with people traveling long

distances to perform dances as a way of worshipping the Patroness of Urkupiña. Thousands of dancers wearing elaborate and eye-catching costumes dance to the rhythm of folkloric music, delighting watchers with varied and beautiful choreography.

Alacitas is a festival unique to La Paz. It is known as the feast of plenty and takes place in January. Everything can be bought in miniature: houses, trucks, buses, tools, building materials, dollar bills, suitcases, university diplomas, and much more. The idea is to have your mini purchases blessed by a priest and the real thing will eventually be yours. One of the most intriguing items for sale in the fair of Alacitas is the Ekeko, the god of good fortune and plenty. The Ekeko occupies a central position at the festival of Alacitas. He is a cheerful little chap with a happy face, a potbelly due to his predilection for foods, and short legs so he can run away. His image, usually in clay, is laden with various household items, as well as sweets, confetti, and streamers, staple foods, and a cigarette dangling from his lower lip. Believers say that these statues bring luck only if they are received as gifts, and not purchased.

The Fiesta of Gran Poder is one of the most important folkloric celebrations in La Paz. It is traditionally held at the end of May or beginning of June. The Fiesta of Gran Poder is also a festival of hundreds of costumed masked dancers, dancing in a parade-like manner through the main streets of La Paz. Although traditionally held to celebrate the power of the Almighty, the parade increasingly features Amerindian dancers from all parts of the country. This festival also celebrates the power of the Inca medicine men, "The Kallawayas," "the shamans," "the yatiris"; fortunetellers, witches and warlocks and soothsayers.

Patriotic celebrations are usually celebrated with parades, fireworks and fiestas. Besides the National Independence Day, August 6, people also celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the department. Cochabamba Day is September 14. On May 27, which is also Mother's Day, Cochabamba celebrates "Las Heroínas of Cochabamba," The Heroines of Cochabamba. During the war for independence, the women and young girls of Cochabamba fought off a Spanish attack and saved the city. Atop a hill overlooking the city a statue has been dedicated to the brave women of Cochabamba.

In June, "San Juan," the shortest day of the year, is celebrated with parties, dances, fireworks, and bonfires. This is the winter solstice, and is a celebration to welcome the beginning of the coming of spring. San Roave is also celebrated in June. I guess you could call it "National Pets Day." New and old pets alike are taken to the church to be blessed by the priest. Bolivians, in general, are happy, outgoing people who love to have parties, eat, dance, drink, and just have a good time. They never have trouble finding a reason to have a celebration.

Although I have many fond memories of all these fiestas and celebrations during my childhood, I also have some frightening memories. Bolivia, being a very unstable country politically, was always having revolts or military coups. There were also riots incited by the communists trying to gain a foothold in the country. I remember going out into the street after one of these clashes and seeing bullet holes in the wall surrounding our house

and puddles of blood in the streets. I was horrified and worried that I might get hurt in one of these fights since our house was only a block and a half from the Governor's office on the main plaza.

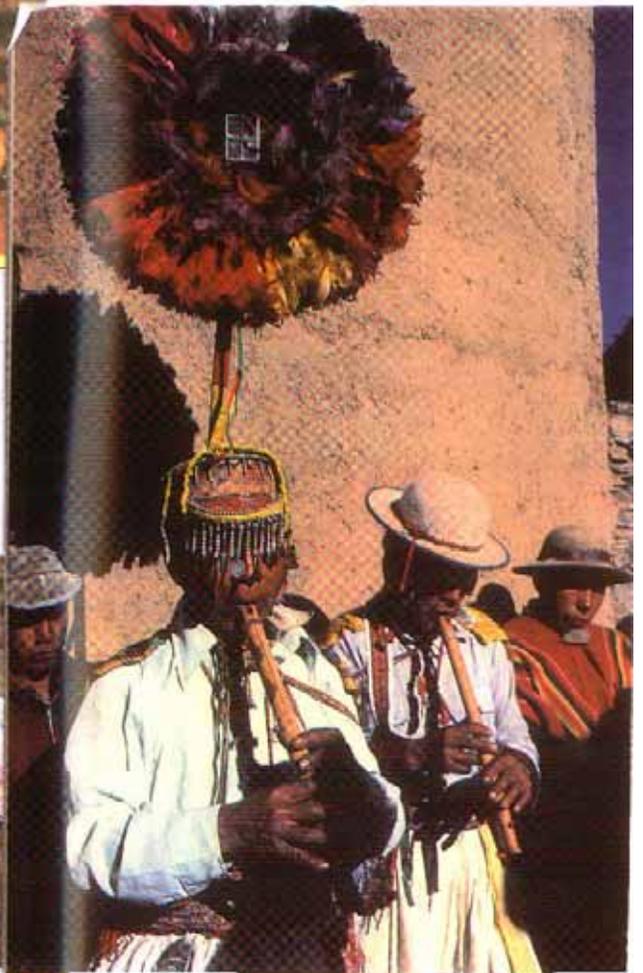
FOLKLORIC FESTIVALS



Carnival in Oruro



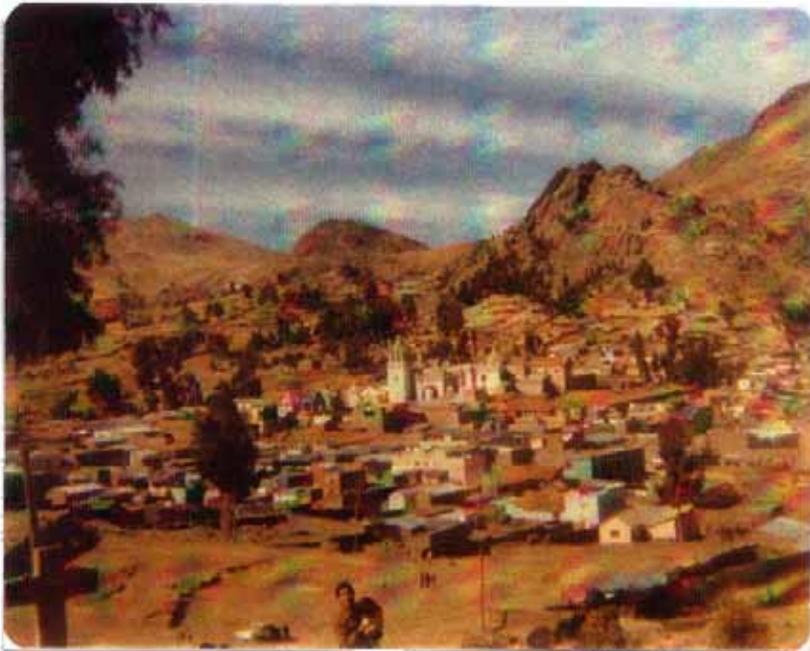
"Supay Tio"—Devil of the Mines



Folkloric Festival



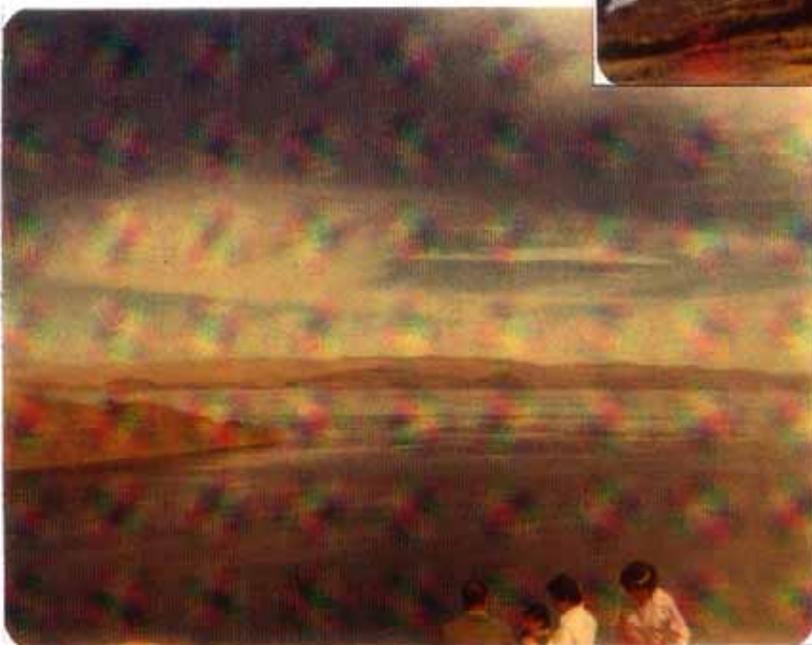
COPACABANA & CALVARY MOUNTAIN



City of Copacabana



*View of Lake Titicaca from the top of
Calvario Mountain–Copacabana*

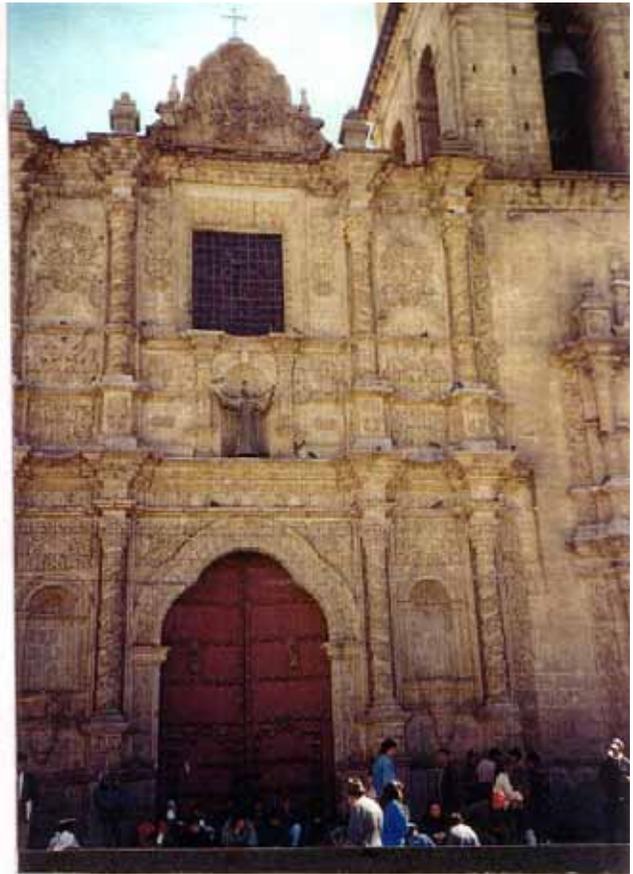


Calvario Mountain–Copacabana

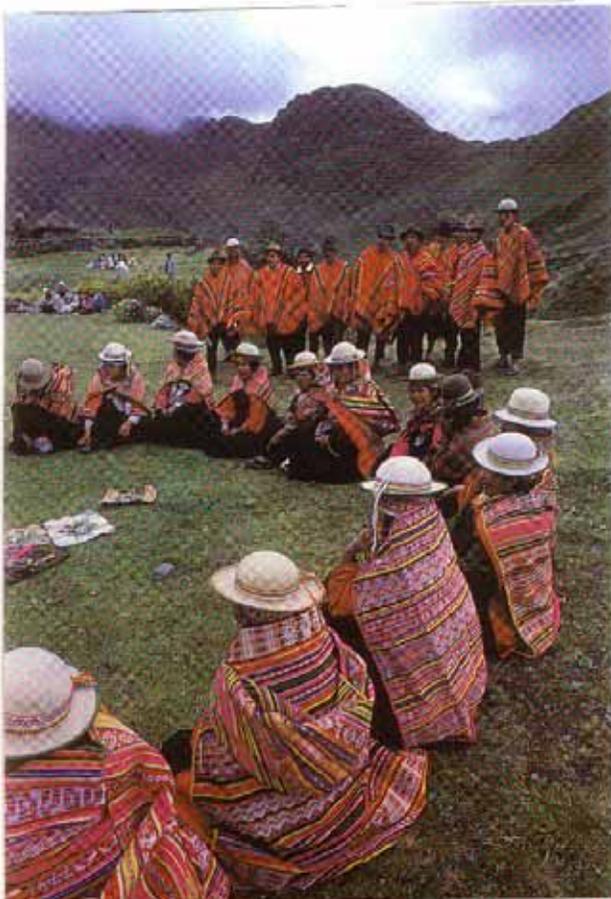
RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS & CEREMONIES



Religious Procession



San Francisco Church built in 1500s



*Kallaway Medicine Men Ceremony
Ethnic Life Stories 2003*



*Mercado de Las Brujas–Witches Market
Reynaldo Gumucio*

CHAPTER THREE: THE TEEN YEARS

When I was growing up in Bolivia, we had only primary and secondary schools. We were not required to go to kindergarten and we did not have junior high school. Primary school was grades one through six and secondary school was grades seven through twelve. Even though grades were classified as primary and secondary, they were usually all taught in the same complex. After I graduated from primary school I went to a private Catholic school named Colegio LaSalle. I went there only one year because it was so expensive and Father could not afford the tuition since he was sending so much money out of the country every month to my brothers. After that I went to the public school Colegio Secundario Simón Bolívar. Finally my senior year I was sent back to private school at Colegio Major Desiderio Rocha.

High school was a time when we were establishing our own independent social lives. It was customary to have a party when we turned fifteen called a "Quinceanero." This was a formal dinner-dance, very much like what Americans celebrate as a "coming-out party." Unlike a "coming-out party," which is for young women, the Quinceanero was for both young men and young women. We would go on picnics and to the movies as a group rather than as an individual couple. I enjoyed funny movies and one of my favorite actors was a Mexican comedian named Cantinflas. I also liked action movies like *The Three Musketeers* and *Fu Man Chu*. We would usually hang out at the plaza closest to our high school, drink Cokes or eat ice cream and visit.

Our senior prom was the only school-sponsored dance and was strictly limited to seniors. My senior year I crowned the Queen. My mother was still living at that time and cried when she saw her youngest child all grown-up in a tuxedo. I took a taxi that night to pick up the queen, Lourdes Aguirre. It was the first time I had taken a taxi by myself; this would be an equivalent experience to high school seniors today renting limousines. It was a typical high school prom for the late fifties. The boys were all dressed in tuxedos and the girls in elegant evening gowns. We had a live band and we danced until we were exhausted. It all started with a nice slow waltz with the queen. Then we broke into the typical folkloric dances like cuecuas, merengues, and salsas; Latin dances like tangos, cha-chas, and mambos, big band music like the swing and the hand jive, and of course the newest fad, rock and roll.

During my years at public high school I mainly participated in sports; soccer, and gymnastics. I worked out on parallel bars and high bars. I wanted to build muscles like all adolescent boys and my role model and inspiration was my older brother, Carlos, who looked exactly like Charles Atlas.

During this time I worked closely with my father at the furniture factory and helped him care for Mother. Working with him at the factory, we became close and he would tell me stories about my parents' lives when they were young. Sometimes late at night we would go for walks around the plaza. We often attended mass together and somehow I sensed how tired he was and how afraid he was of losing my mother. Many times I would see



*First year of High School—7th Grade
Colegio de LaSalle 1953*



Senior Prom Queen—1958

him deny himself some small insignificant item, stating that he needed the money to send to my brothers. I began to realize just how much he sacrificed to educate his children.

Between the ages of fourteen and sixteen I would usually help my father in the furniture factory after school and during the summers. I would help in the gluing process and in the assembly of doors, cabinets, tables, etc. I started out varnishing commode seats and then graduated to cabinets and furniture. When I was about sixteen, a Russian pianist and piano tuner came to visit my father's factory. He was impressed by how well I varnished and asked if I would like to work for him varnishing pianos. I worked for him one summer. Varnishing pianos was very labor intensive and required many coats of varnish to achieve the mirror-like finish that everyone wanted in those days. The varnish would stain my hands and when I would go home for lunch I would hide my hands in my pockets so no one would see them. Sometimes my hands would be stained for an entire week.

My senior year in high school was my most active and fulfilling. When I went back to private school I participated in student government and was president of the student body of my high school. I was also Secretary of Exterior Relations for the Federacion de Estudiantes de Secundaria, an organization of students from all the local high schools formed to lobby the government to improve secondary education by improving curriculum and equipment and helping out teachers. Besides school organizations, I belonged to the group Accion Catholica de Bolivia, which was a religious oriented political organization that formed to protect the Catholic doctrine against communism.

Communism had been spreading throughout the world after World War II and South America was no exception. The communists were trying to gain a foothold in Bolivia, the center of South America, so they could branch out to other countries. In the early fifties, Bolivia had many political parties including a socialist party and a communist party. The communists used to hold rallies and spread propaganda against the Catholic Church. Because so many people, even the socialists, were devout Catholics, riots would break out. Communist organization was strong in the universities and was slowly spreading into the high schools. As high school students opposed to communism, we would often come to blows over some inflammatory remarks made by the communists against the church. Fistfights would break out in the streets and sometimes the police would come with tear gas to break them up. The clashes between the university students, the labor unions, and the communists were much more violent.

During my high school years we had visits from two of my brothers who brought their families home to meet my folks. Carlos came home from Brazil in 1951, after graduating from medical school, with his wife, Irene, and a three-year-old daughter, Sonia. Irene was a very petite woman even for a Latin. We had difficulty trying to understand her at first because of her accent. She was of Italian descent and her native language was Portuguese, so her Spanish came out with an Italian-Portuguese accent. However, Irene was a very kind, good-natured person and we became very fond of her. They stayed in Cochabamba for about six months then returned to Brazil. In 1955, they went to the United States and Carlos joined the U.S. Army in 1956.

Roger had become an American citizen and he and his wife, Peggy, came in early 1953, with their four-year-old son, Dante. My father rented a very luxurious, completely furnished house for them to stay in while they were in Cochabamba. Peggy was tall and slim. She was very beautiful and the men always used to stare at her when she walked town the street. Roger came home with the idea of making his permanent home in Bolivia; however, he could not find employment and Peggy had a hard time adjusting to Bolivian life. They stayed for the wedding of my brother, Juan, in November, and returned to the States after Christmas in early 1954.

Roger sponsored my brother, Mario, and he went to the United States from Argentina in 1954. In 1956 when Mario decided to marry his Bolivian sweetheart, her parents would not allow her to travel to the U.S. alone and unmarried. They were married by proxy in Bolivia, with my father standing in for my brother, Mario. Still her parents wouldn't allow her to travel alone, so my sister accompanied her to the U.S. to meet her new husband. They had their religious ceremony in Kansas City, Kansas. Irene arranged for a cake and a small reception. Shortly after Mario's wedding, Carlos and his family were sent to Germany. My sister stayed in the U.S. and went to work at Bethany Hospital as a surgical technician.

As I mentioned before, I was very involved in student government and got caught up in the whole anti-communist movement. I thought I would like to go to law school at the University and go into politics after I graduated. My mother had passed away by that time and I pleaded with my father to let me stay in Bolivia and go to law school. Besides, I didn't want to leave him all alone. Maybe it was because politics in Bolivia were so unstable, or maybe it was because I was so involved with the anti-communist movement, or maybe it was because he really thought I could get a better education elsewhere, he said "no" and put me on a plane to the U.S.A.

CHAPTER FOUR: ADULTHOOD

When I left Bolivia I was very sad because I didn't want to leave my father all alone. We took the train to La Paz and spent the night with the family of my father's cousin. La Paz is located on one of the high plateaus of the Andean Mountains. It is about 10,000 feet above sea level and is one of the highest cities in the world. Early the next morning we took a taxi to the airport. I remember seeing my father through the window of the airplane. He seemed sad but at the same time had a look of pride and satisfaction about him, probably because he was sending his youngest child off to receive a foreign education, just as he had done with all the others. I could not possibly have known that this would be the last time I would ever see him.

The trip to Miami was a long, grueling sixteen-hour flight with a stop in Lima, Peru and a stop in Panama City, Panama. We arrived in Miami around 9:00 A.M. and I was amazed by the hugeness of the Miami airport. I got through customs without any problem and was met by Mario Paz, the brother of one of my sisters-in-law. I spent the day with Mario's family and they took me to the bus station around 5 P.M. to catch a bus to St. Louis, Missouri, where my brother Roger was to meet me.

I arrived in Miami on May 30, 1958, my 19th birthday. I was excited to be in the U.S. but at the same time, a little apprehensive. I had never been completely on my own. I was all alone, spoke no English, and was beginning a trip that would change my life; little did I realize how much. Mario and his family taught me how to say three words in English, "hamburger, milk, and apple pie" and that was what I ate for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for two days on my way to St. Louis. The bus trip to St. Louis was the first time I had ever really had much contact with black people. They seemed just like everyone else to me, and I was surprised to discover that there were separate restrooms for blacks and whites.

Roger met me in St. Louis, Missouri, and drove me to his home in Independence. I stayed with Roger and his family for about a month then moved to Kansas City, Kansas to share an apartment with my sister. I noticed when I took the bus in Kansas City, Kansas that the black people always sat in the back. I guess that was when I first became aware of discrimination.

My brother, Mario, was working at Bethany Hospital and helped me get a job as an orderly. I was making \$1.25 an hour and made enough money to pay my tuition at Kansas City, Missouri, Junior College where I enrolled for English classes.

My education was interrupted by my father's unexpected death. I returned to Bolivia in July 1960 and stayed until just before Christmas. After I returned to the U.S. I realized that my father's death had left me without money for my tuition and that I would have to earn the money for my own education. I worked two jobs and saved enough money to start school in the fall of 1961. I graduated from Junior College in 1962. I worked and attended college part time until 1965 when I got a full time job with Chemagro Corporation, a division of the Bayer Corporation, as a research technician. I also married

in 1965 and our first son was born in 1967. I finally graduated from the University of Missouri at Kansas City with a degree in biology in 1968.

It took me ten years to get my degree. There were times when I thought it was too demanding and that it would be a lot easier just to quit school and work full-time. Then I would remember how important education had been to my father and how he had sacrificed to educate his children, and I would continue for a while longer. I have to admit I had an enormous sense of accomplishment when I received my degree. I also realized that if I could persevere this long to get my degree that I could accomplish anything that I really wanted.

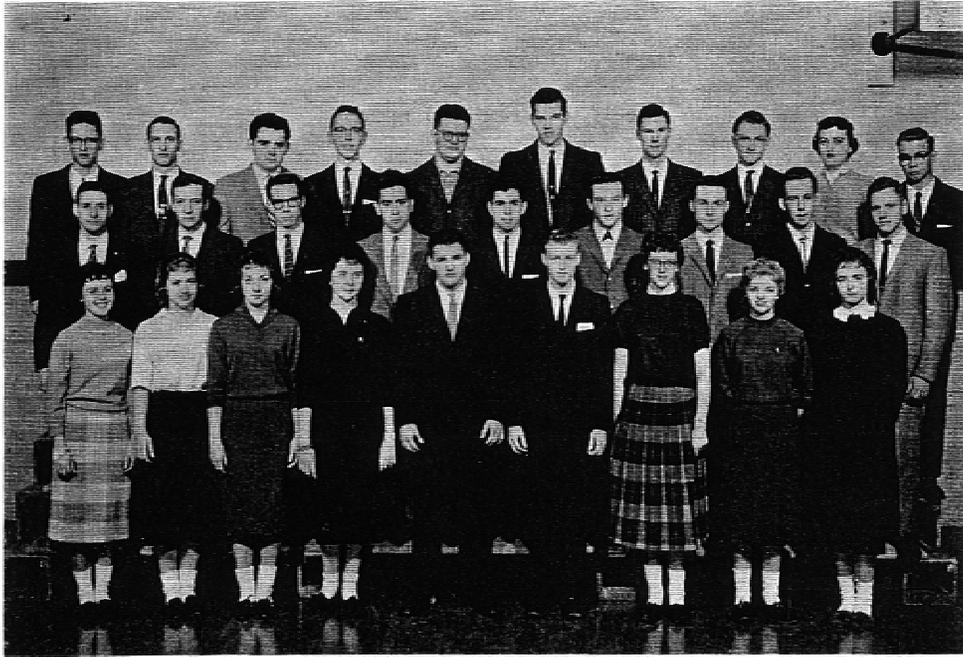
In the two years from 1958 to 1960 my life and my goals for the future changed drastically. In Bolivia, I had wanted to go to law school and go into politics. When Father sent me to the U.S. I thought I would like to become a doctor. I had always liked to help people. When my father died my goals changed again. In the end, all I wanted to do was get my degree so I could earn a good living and support a family.

My wife, Billie, and I were married in 1965. We had met one and a half years earlier when she was moving out of a house and my roommates and I were moving in. She had left a TV at the house because it was too large to fit into her car. After checking us out with the landlord, she and her roommate stopped by the house to see if one of us could help her move it. I was just coming home from work, in my hospital whites, when I noticed a car parked in front of our house with two young women sitting inside. I approached the car and asked if they needed any help. Billie explained the situation to me and I volunteered to help move the TV. One thing led to another and before you knew it we were married. She later told me that when her roommate mentioned that she thought I was cute, Billie said, "Forget about it, he's mine!"

Our courtship was quite stormy. We were both trying to make our way in the world and, I might add, having a pretty rough time doing it. I was working, going to school, and trying to manage problems that came up from time to time regarding our property in Bolivia. She had only come to Kansas City two months earlier, had already moved twice, had changed roommates, and was trying to get acclimated to the new city and her new job. We both appeared pretty independent on the surface and had our share of disagreements. I didn't think I was ready to get married and as it turned out, I proved to be quite jealous. This proved to be a big problem, but she had a lot of patience and a year later I proposed.

It was understood that we would have a Catholic wedding. She wasn't Catholic so she was required to take instruction classes giving her an overall view of the Catholic Church and its doctrine. She also had to agree that our children would be reared in the Catholic faith. Catholic and non-Catholic marriages are considered mixed marriages. They are performed in the church but not at the main altar. It was very important to me to have a traditional Catholic wedding so I petitioned for a special dispensation (permission) and it was granted. We were married at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church, 39th and Broadway, Kansas City, Missouri, on September 4, 1965. The wedding was beautiful and it was everything I had expected. We were married at the main altar during a full mass.

FRESHMAN

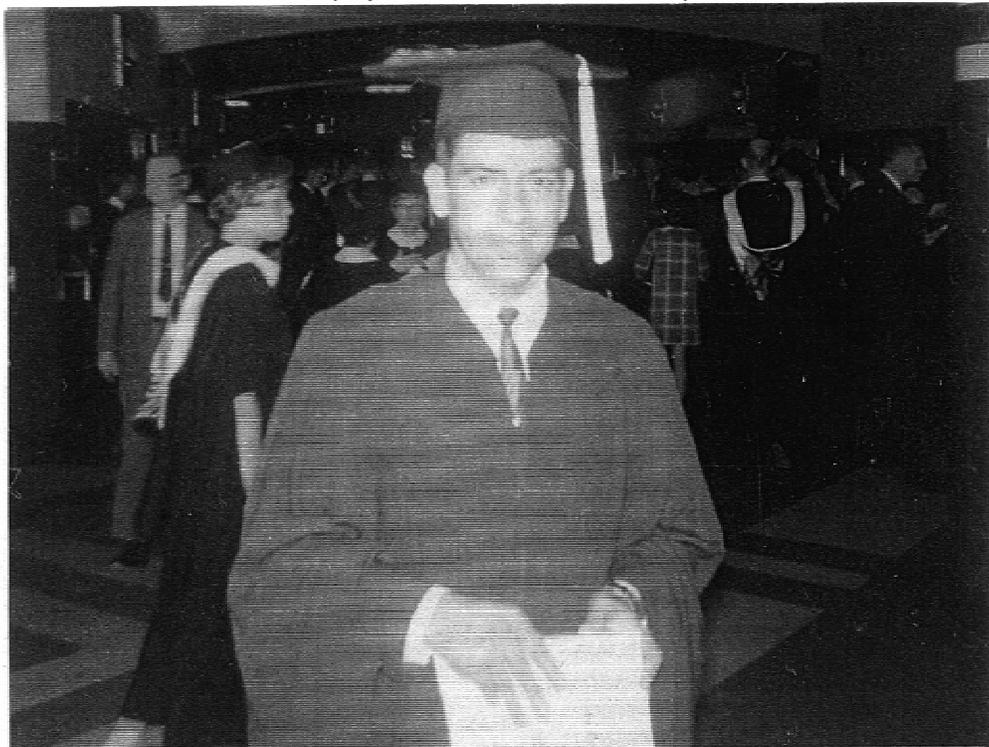


Group V

ROW 1: Darlene Crane, Sheree Dolcater, Betty Streeper, Judy Griffie, Kenneth Mathis, Bill Kloiber, Glynis Gilbert, Janice Kaff, Karen Spillman. ROW 2: LeRoy Spurgeon, Albert Einhellig, Wayne Walden, Reynaldo Gumucio, Jesse Rodriguez, Don Stroup, Don Jones, Larry Hanson, Larry Vincent. ROW 3: David Pinkelman, Jim Reynolds, Don Garrett, Herbert Hesser, Larry Smith, Bob Belt, Don Woosley, Vern Leiker, Linda Wait, Gerry Glynn.

Kansas City, Kansas Junior College 1960

University of Missouri at Kansas City 1968



Our ceremony, however, was a little bit longer than usual because we were married by an elderly priest, Monsignor Devine, and he kept losing his place. He kept asking, "Did we go through the part where I say this or that?" and we would say, "Yes, Monsignor." Then a little bit later we would go through the same thing again. This happened about four or five times during the ceremony. My brothers, Roger and Juan, were my groomsmen and Billie's sisters, Bobbie and Pattie, were here bridesmaids.

In a few weeks we will celebrate our thirty-eighth wedding anniversary. Billie is a very loving and giving person. She has more patience than anyone I know. We have lived most of our married life trying to figure out exactly what our roles are. We are what I call the transition generation. We were reared in the old tradition where father was the breadwinner and mother was the homemaker. But when we got married the roles started changing, and they continued to change throughout our married life. What was expected of the husband or wife was often unclear. When I look back on our life I now realize that when it came down to making career choices, it was she who always made the ultimate sacrifice. She is very intelligent and extremely artistic, she could have had her choice of several great careers but she chose to devote herself to our children and me. I would not have been able to do some of the things I have done in life if she had not been there supporting me. I am the idea man and she takes care of the details. We have our differences but we make a good team.

We have three sons. They were all born during our years in Kansas City, Missouri. I must mention that when the boys were small we lived in Bolivia for about six years because this definitely influenced who they are today. They are all bilingual. They are all people-oriented, friendly, and outgoing. They all enjoy meeting people from other cultures and have friends of different nationalities. They love to travel but family is important, too, and they make it one of their top priorities. I will describe them the way they describe each other.

Charles, the oldest, is very intelligent and has a fantastic memory. He loves to read and would make a great "Jeopardy" contestant. When he was at home and we wanted to know something about geography, history, sports, current events, or directions, we just asked him. He marches to his own drummer and is not concerned with what is considered "the norm," nor with accumulating material possessions. He has pretty definite ideas of how things should be and has his own way of doing things. He has had a long struggle to find himself and find his niche in the world. He is married to a lovely girl named Kady and they live in Columbia, Missouri.

Rick, the middle son, is the "jock" in the family. He played high school football and loves sports. He still plays a few sports but is fast becoming a spectator athlete. He works for a trucking company as Vice-president of customer relations. He is over the southwest region of the U.S. and Mexico. He is married to his high school sweetheart, Diane, and they have three wonderful children, Gabriela, Tristan and Cora. Rick is very patient and kind of laid back. He does his share of child care and household chores and makes a great father.

Eddie, the youngest, is sort of a mix of the other two. He has backpacked extensively throughout Europe and South America. He works as the manager of the music department in a retail store so he can pursue his love of music. He is a struggling singer-songwriter. He has recorded one CD and is presently working on a second. Eddie is still single, he feels he should establish his career before he marries, and it is a constant struggle trying to decide which one he wants most.

Most of the events that greatly affected my life were unexpected. But I must say that one of the most pleasant was the chance to return to Bolivia in 1976. I was offered a position to work with Aquila S.A., a company formed under the Andean Pact of 1969 to manufacture pesticides in Bolivia. I was to help develop and oversee the quality control laboratory of a pesticide plant in the altiplano, the Andean plateau.

The Andean Pact was formed in 1969 between Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela "to establish sectoral industrial development programs." Under the programs, "various member countries would be involved in the production of a manufactured product not already produced... that when fully completed, would then be traded among the Andean Pact states free of tariffs and import restrictions."

I accepted the offer and went to La Paz in November of 1976. In January I came back to Kansas City, Missouri, to accompany Billie and the boys to La Paz. We lived in La Paz for six years. The opportunity was a two-fold blessing. First, I was able to work in my country on a project that would be of enormous economic benefit for my countrymen. Secondly, my wife and children had the opportunity to experience first hand the culture and environment of my youth.

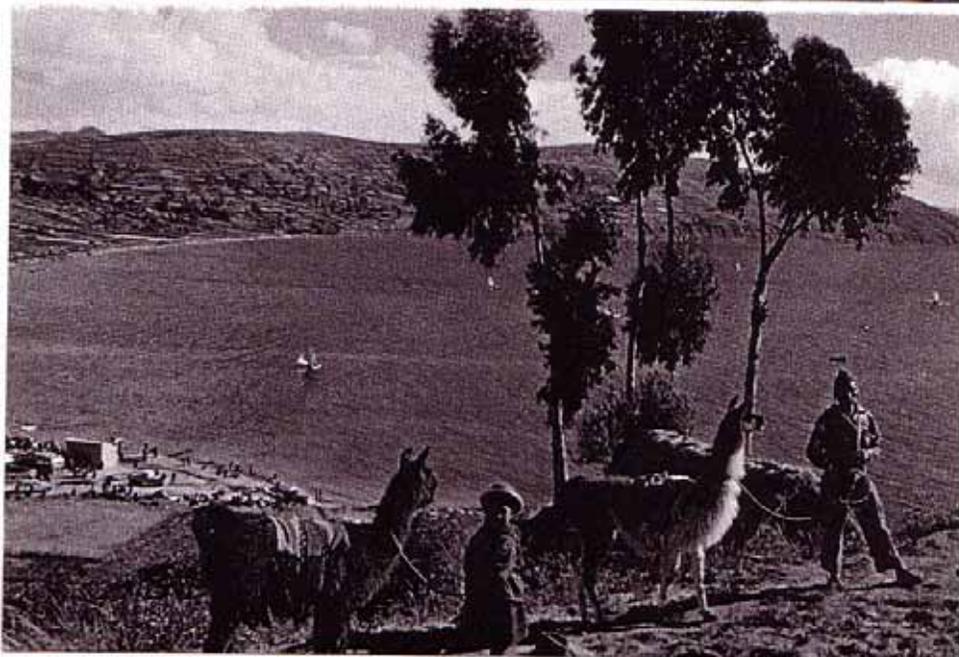
Actually, Billie and the boys adjusted to life in La Paz much easier than I did. Maybe my expectations of returning to Bolivia were unrealistic, clouded by my childhood memories, or maybe it was due to the fact that when I left Bolivia I was a youth and now I was returning as an adult with the responsibilities of a family, or maybe it was the apprehension that the family would not like Bolivia; whatever the reason, I had a much more difficult time in the beginning than they did.

Since I had not had the time to teach either Billie or the boys Spanish, I am sure that upon their arrival, they felt much the same as I did when I arrived in Miami. The boys started school two days after we arrived, not knowing a word of Spanish, what a shock it must have been. They all adjusted quickly and picked up the language within a few months. They soon came to love the country and the people just as much as I did. Most of all they loved the food. Now when we recall our years in Bolivia, most of our memories seem to concentrate around the great food.

On the surface, Bolivia had developed a great deal since I left. But where it truly counted, in the political structure and the educational system, it was still pretty much the Bolivia of my youth. Communism was no longer a threat but power hungry, greedy politicians were. After six years the pesticide plant had failed to materialize and my dream of doing something worthwhile for my country was unrealized. Due to a failing economy and

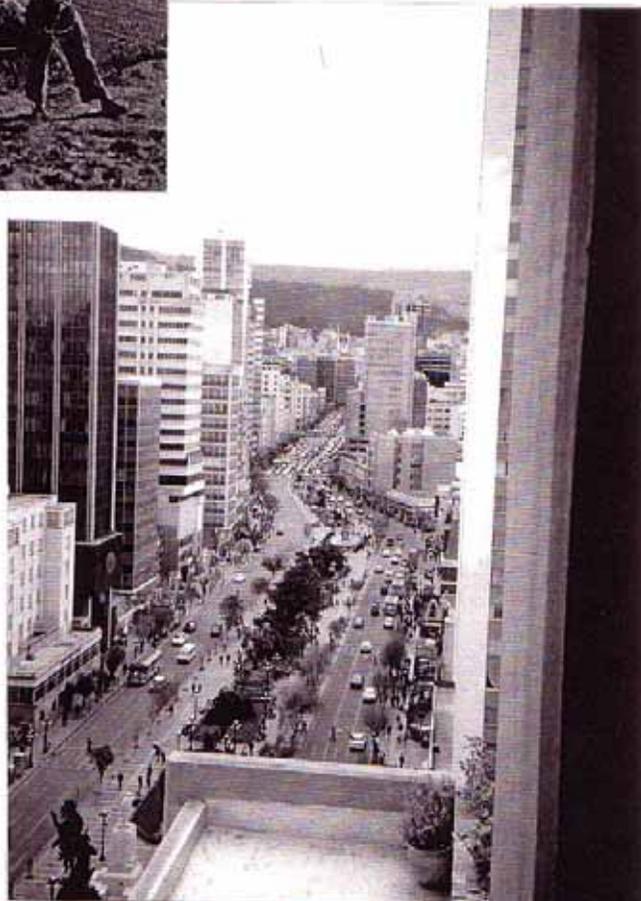


*Blessing the car at
Copacabana 1978*



Lake Titicaca

View of downtown La Paz 1979



aging children we decided to return to the U.S. in 1982. However, my family loved Bolivia and I think that they considered it their home just as much as I did. That meant a lot to me. They each have their own stories about their life and experiences in Bolivia, but that is another story.

Since it had been more than three years from my last trip to the U.S. my visa had expired. First we applied for a new visa, then in June of 1982, we sent the boys to Springfield to live with Billie's parents. We had decided we did not want to go back to Kansas City, Missouri, because of the rising drug problem in big cities and also because the Kansas City, Missouri school system was having a lot of problems.

The boys were 15, 12, and 10 when we put them on the plane to Springfield in 1982. When I saw them board the plane early that morning, I instantly recalled my trip to Miami and recalled my father standing there seeing me off. Now, I was the father and I was sending my children to the States and who knew how long it would be before I would see them again. They had only one stop, Panama City, and a cousin of mine, who was on the board of directors of the airline, instructed the senior stewardess not to let them disembark in Panama City. When they arrived in Miami a representative from TWA met them in customs and escorted them to the TWA boarding gate. They arrived in Springfield without the slightest problem but Billie and I were nervous wrecks until we heard from her parents telling us that they had arrived safely.

While we waited for my visa, we sorted out our belongings and decided what we wanted to ship back to the States and what we wanted to sell. Then we began the process of selling what we didn't need. We asked to be paid in dollars since the value of the peso was so deflated. It was changing two or three times a day. The official exchange rate was forty-two pesos to the dollar. The only dollars available for purchase were on the black market and they were floating at about three hundred pesos to the dollar. When we were paid in pesos we had to ask for more, then go down to the black market to buy dollars as soon as we possibly could. I finally received my visa in August 1982 and we packed what we had decided to keep and came to Springfield. We even brought our family pet, a Belgian Shepherd named Whiskey. We rented a U-haul, picked up our household goods at U.S. customs and drove to Springfield. It took us two days.

I felt confident that I would be able to find employment in Springfield because I had worked in the field of pesticides for both Chemagro Corporation and Aquila S.A. Between Chemagro and Aquila, I worked for the Kansas City, Missouri Water Department for seven years as a laboratory chemist. In September of 1982, a taste and odor problem caused by a high concentration of algae in McDaniel Lake provided the opportunity for a part-time position in the laboratory of Blackman Lab of City Utilities Water Department. I worked there part-time until April 1983, when I became a full-time employee. While I was working part-time at city Utilities I was also working full-time for French's as a quality control inspector.

During my years with City Utilities I had the opportunity to work on the Springfield area watershed projects. Between 1984 and 2003, Norman W. Youngsteadt and I co-authored

and published seven studies of compiled data on the limnological dynamics for the watershed areas that include McDaniel, Fellows, and Stockton Lakes plus the James River Basin.

The work at Blackman has been interesting and at times challenging. I have enjoyed working at the Blackman Laboratory and am thankful to City Utilities for giving me an opportunity to expand my professional knowledge. They are a progressive company that is willing to institute the latest technological advances. They have given me an opportunity to learn more about conservation and protecting the environment through the watershed management studies. This year, 2003, I celebrated my 20-year anniversary at City Utilities.

McDANIEL-FELLOWS WATERSHED DATA, 1982 (IN PART) - 1992

**Selected Physical, Chemical, and Biological Water
Quality Parameters with Hydraulic and Weather Data**

**COMPILED
BY**

**NORMAN W. YOUNGSTEADT
REYNALDO J. GUMUCIO**

**CENTRAL LABORATORY
OPERATIONS & ENGINEERING**

**CITY UTILITIES OF SPRINGFIELD
P.O. BOX 551
SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI 65801**

CHAPTER FIVE: MY SPRINGFIELD EXPERIENCE

We came to Springfield in August 1982 not really knowing what our future would hold. We had always lived in larger cities and our friends were of diverse cultural roots. During our years in Kansas City we developed friendships with Italians, Iraqis, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Hindus. Besides working together, we would get together and share food from our respective countries and talk about our immigration and acclimation to the U.S. It was very interesting and enlightening.

In La Paz, besides family, we had American friends connected with the U.S. Embassy. In addition to the Argentine, Colombian, and Bolivian people I worked with, we met people from Germany and France through my work at Aquila. We met and became friends with English, Irish, and Swedish people through Billie's work at The American Cooperative School. We met people from World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. One man in particular that we met had traveled to every country in the world except two. We met him at an outdoor restaurant and ended up spending the whole afternoon and evening together. The next time he came to Bolivia, he brought me a set of horseshoes. Most all of the Europeans we knew spoke at least four languages and some of them spoke as many as seven. We had had an exceptionally active social life in La Paz, so did the children, and that was one of our concerns about coming to Springfield.

We had family in Springfield, the school system was highly rated, the drug problems were minimal, and it was a lovely city with lots of trees, close to the lakes and really not that far from Kansas City, so we decided to give it a try. This was the third time in our life that we had started over and we knew it would be difficult but we were confident that we would make it.

We arrived in Miami late in the afternoon on a Thursday, due to mechanical problems in Peru. We made our way through customs and collected the family pet, Whiskey, a large longhaired Belgian Shepherd. He had the coloration and appearance of a German Shepherd and a very deep growl that would scare even the bravest of souls. He had been given Valium at the beginning of our flight and again in Peru. He was just starting to come out of it and was thoroughly confused and disoriented, barking furiously and scaring everyone around him. He had been checked out by a veterinarian in La Paz before the trip and been given a clean bill of health. He had his papers so he didn't have to spend any time in quarantine. We collected him, but it was too late to collect our household goods from U.S. Customs, so we went to a motel.

Early Friday morning we rented a U-haul and picked up our belongings from the customs warehouse. Some of the containers had been opened and a few of the items had been broken. We had no recourse for an insurance claim because the containers were wrapped in yellow tape with "inspected by U.S. Customs" written on them. The containers had been opened and some items broken to check for drugs being smuggled in from South America. We were tired and angry but we loaded up our belongings and started out toward Springfield, Billie, Whiskey, and I. We were so looking forward to seeing our boys. It had been almost two months since we had sent them to live with their

grandparents. They had been enrolled in summer school and we were anxious to see how they had adjusted. The trip took two days and Whiskey did not eat during the entire trip. When he finally got out of that truck and saw the boys I think he was as happy as Billie and I were. Now that we were all together again we were ready to conquer the world, or at least Springfield.

We had rented the truck for a week so we parked it in my father-in-law's driveway and on Monday morning we started looking for a place to live. We found a house on Wednesday, signed a lease, unloaded the truck, and went shopping for beds. Now we were ready to set up house. During this week we also enrolled the boys in parochial school.

The boys started school the last week of August and Billie and I started looking for employment. By the middle of September, which seemed like a lifetime, we were all disenchanted and depressed. The boys didn't like school because they didn't have any friends and they missed their old friends in Bolivia. I hadn't found employment and I was also ready to go back to Bolivia. This was turning out to be much harder than I had thought. We had decided that Billie would stay at home until the boys were settled in and felt comfortable with their new life. We had a family meeting and Billie suggested that we wait six months and if we were still unhappy at the end of the six months, then we could go back to Bolivia. I think she knew we wouldn't want to go back after six months, but I also know that she would have gone willingly if we had decided to do that.

Although the boys were all born in Kansas City, they were pretty young when we went to Bolivia and that was basically all that they remembered. They started school there, Eddie in kindergarten and Ricky in first grade. That's where they had made their friends. They felt like outsiders, not just because they were going to a new school, but because the whole culture was different. In a way, they were treated as foreigners. Charles, the oldest, was in high school. The move to Bolivia had been the hardest for him, and the move back had been just as hard. Being more introverted, he didn't make friends as easily as the younger boys did. It seems everything is more difficult when you are in high school.

While I was waiting to hear from City Utilities, I was offered a position as Quality Control Inspector at French's. Due to the taste and odor problem the city experienced with their water in early September, they offered me a part-time position in the laboratory of the Blackman Water Treatment Facility in October. I worked both positions until July of 1983. By the fall of 1983, we were pretty much settled in, no more talk about returning to Bolivia. The younger boys joined the Boy Scouts and everyone was doing well. Billie went back to work and we bought a house. I was eventually inducted into the Boy Scouts as an assistant troop leader. I had never had much camping experience and I learned right along with the boys. I was a good cook, however, and my "Condor Eggs," an omelet whose main ingredients were tomatoes (red), eggs (yellow), and green peppers (green), the colors of the Bolivian flag, were requested at every campout by young and old alike. I was able to travel to Philmont Boy Scout Ranch in New Mexico with the troop and had a wonderful experience there backpacking through the mountains.

I worked, Billie worked, the boys went to school and we enjoyed life in Springfield. It was a different lifestyle than what we had in Bolivia but it was good. I would say that in Springfield most of our life and concerns centered around our children and their education, just as my parents had done with their children. Billie was always concerned about the children's education, too, and that is one of the primary reasons we came back to the U.S. During the early years in Springfield we depended on family for most of our social life. Billie's older sister and her husband became our best friends and remain so today. They more or less incorporated us into their social circle and that worked fine for the early period. The boys made friends, some of whom are still close friends today. The two younger boys eventually became Eagle Scouts and they all made us very proud.

As time passed we found many opportunities to enrich our lives and share cultural experiences with our friends. An important part of our lives were people we met right here in Springfield. Two of our closest friends, Jack and Shari, were a Jewish couple who came to Springfield from California. We enjoyed each others company for several years while they were here and we still keep in touch now that they have returned to California. Shari taught journalism at SMSU and always invited us to the International Students Festival, which included dinner and entertainment. The food was something typical from the international student's country, and folkloric dances were the principal type of entertainment. Several Asian countries were represented, as well as some Central American and African countries. These dinners were very enjoyable.

When we learned there were several Bolivian students in the Springfield area we invited them all over for a Christmas celebration. We also invited a Bolivian family, the Vegas, who lived in Monett. We decided to have Bolivian food because we thought the students were probably homesick for some typical food. Abel Vega was a fantastic cook and prepared most of the meal. It was fantastic and we had a great time. Sadly for us, the students have all moved on and Abel has returned to Bolivia.

When Eddie and his two best friends returned from a backpacking trip to South America, which included Bolivia, Argentina, Paraguay, the Falls of Iguazu, and Chile, we invited their parents and other friends over to see pictures and served some typical Bolivian food. Everyone who has tried it really likes a Bolivian soup called Chairo. One of the main ingredients is a dehydrated potato called "chuño." Chuño is made through a repetitious process of freezing and thawing until the potato becomes dehydrated. It usually turns black during this process. Whenever the boys' friends come to visit they always ask, "Mr. Rey, do you have any of those dried up, black potatoes to make Chairo?" If we have any on hand, we will make up a batch of soup.

I would have to say that my experience in Springfield has been very happy. I have encountered very little discrimination and most of the people I have met seem to like me. At least, none of them have ever been openly hostile. Everyone's situation is unique, and I would say that three things helped me to acclimate myself easier than a lot of people; the first is that I came when I was at a young age when I was very adaptable, the second is that I received part of my formal education here, and the third is that I am married to a

North American. I think that people who immigrate with a family have a much harder time than I did.

No matter where you live there are going to be some people who don't like you because of your nationality. There will also be people who automatically like you because of it. Billie experienced the same situation in Bolivia. The two younger boys, of all things, had an encounter with a high school Spanish teacher from Ecuador who consistently told them that they didn't know how to speak Spanish! I am happy to say that most of the people I know like or dislike me for who I am and not because of "where I was born."

Because of our unique family background and our love of knowledge and new experiences, I feel that we have given our children a more tolerant perspective of the world. Being a Hispanic father of three all-American boys is a unique experience in itself. Since they have grown up, they all have had the opportunity to travel and meet people from different cultures and religions in their life. The oldest lived in Florida for several years, worked in Yellowstone National Park for a season where he met a lot of foreign tourists, is well versed in Catholicism, Mormonism, Buddhism, and the Muslim religion. He speaks English, Spanish and Japanese. He has had close friends from many different cultural backgrounds.

The middle son received a degree in international business and works for an international trucking company. He is in customer relations and travels to Mexico several times a year. He is doing a good job of exposing his wife and children to other cultures as well. One of his closest friends, Matt, immigrated to Springfield from Poland with his parents in 1982, the year we came back from Bolivia. They became good friends during their high school years, they stood up for each other when they got married and they remain close friends today.

The youngest son did an internship at Walt Disney World in 1992 where he met students from all over the world. He made some great friends that summer and looked them up when he backpacked through Europe in 1993. He has also backpacked through South America. He is a singer-songwriter and sings his songs in both English and Spanish.

My sons often tell me that generally speaking, they feel that people in Springfield are very narrow minded. I tell them that people often have a hard time understanding what they don't know, and that people who have the opportunity to travel appear to be more open minded than people who don't. You will find both kinds of people everywhere in the world, not just in Springfield. It should be their mission in life to educate the narrow minded through examples of friendship and tolerance.

I decided when we came back to the U.S. that I would apply for citizenship. My wife and children were U.S. citizens. I had lived here for a long time before I went back to Bolivia. Now I decided that if I were going to make my home here, I wanted to participate in all aspects of the American experience, including voting for local issues that would affect my life directly and voting for the presidential candidate that I thought would be the best leader. I applied for and received my American citizenship. In October 1991, my wife,

sons, a future daughter-in-law and I drove to Kansas City for the ceremony. A few of our life long friends from Kansas City also attended the ceremony, not just because it was for me, but because they were truly interested in experiencing the whole citizenship ceremony. I remember the judge who gave us our oath of allegiance to the U.S. said that, for him, this was one of his most fulfilling duties. Later, we found out that this same judge went to St. Louis two days later to give the oath of allegiance to uphold the U.S. Constitution to a group of young attorneys, among whom was a niece's husband. As it turned out, this was another of the judge's most fulfilling duties.

My family was spread out all over the U.S., from New Jersey to Florida to Utah to California and we had had very little personal contact since our return from Bolivia.. Sometime after receiving my citizenship the idea of having a family reunion occurred to us. We sent out letters to determine if people were interested. There seemed to be a genuine interest and we began organizing it. Besides my immediate family we contacted some cousins living in the U.S. who informed their families in Bolivia and it started to grow. We had wanted to have it on Memorial Day before the weather got too hot, but as luck would have it, the reunion was on Fourth of July weekend because that was most convenient for everyone.

We had almost fifty people in attendance at our home in Rogersville. My brothers and their wives came from New Jersey, Florida, and Utah. Nieces and nephews and their families came from New Jersey, Utah, and California. Cousins and their families came from Virginia, New York, Kansas City, and Bolivia! One nephew, whom we had not seen since he was born, had just finished boot camp in Utah and was being transferred to Illinois. As soon as he got settled, he hitchhiked a ride to the nearest airport, flew into Kansas City then rented a car and drove three and a half hours to get here. Two cousins and their families flew in from Bolivia. This was really exciting for us. We had been in Springfield for ten years and had had very little personal contact with our Spanish family.

The weather didn't cooperate at all. We had one of those famous severe, hot, humid summer thunderstorms. Our oldest son, Charles, was working in Branson at the time and his car broke down. Billie drove down to Branson to get him while another son, Rick, and I battled the wind and rain trying to put up a cover over the patio. I believe there were even tornado warnings out that night. The trip to Branson, normally a forty-five minute drive one way, ended up taking four hours because of the storm. The youngest son, Eddie, flying in from Florida, was grounded in Memphis for the night due to the weather. Friday morning the storm had passed, but the not humidity lingered. Eddie made it into St. Louis around noon and as he was boarding the flight to Springfield, he noticed a young woman with a small baby who was having difficulty with all her bags. He offered to help her and soon discovered that this was his cousin, Anita, whom he hadn't seen in thirteen years, who was coming in from Utah.

People began arriving Friday evening and we were overjoyed to see each and every one of them. We had a couple of six-foot party subs (sandwiches) from Subway and to this day our Bolivian family talks about those gigantic sandwiches. We had a combination of American and Bolivian food, got "caught up" on what was going on with everyone, shot

off fireworks and just had a really good time. My eighty-four year old aunt, Lastenia, had come all the way from Bolivia and we were thrilled to see her. She had been one of Billie's favorites when we lived in La Paz and Billie often referred to her as "my other mother."

Reporters from *The Springfield News-Leader* showed up and interviewed me about how I felt about this being my first Independence Day celebration as a U.S. citizen. They took a group picture and a family picture. The article appeared on the front page of the Sunday newspaper and when the whole group went to Sunday mass, taking up three rows of pews, everyone knew who we were and congratulated us. Following is an article that appeared in the *News-Leader* on Tuesday, July 7, 1992.

SPRINGFIELD NEWS LEADER
JULY 7, 1992

OUR VIEW

Memories of Fourth worth recalling

The Issue:

Two Independence Day celebrations in the Ozarks included observations about America from a new United States citizen from Bolivia and a visitor from England.

We Suggest:

Native-born Americans should be challenged and instructed by Fourth of July comments about our country from new citizen Rey Gumucio and British visitor Harry Robinson.

A view of The News-Leader Editorial Board

Even with nature's fireworks, it was a glorious Fourth of July for the Ozarks.

Most of us are back at work, the sunburn generated between thunderstorms fading or peeling. Memories will endure. Rey Gumucio's memories of Independence Day 1992 will be special. Gumucio, 50, has been an Ozarks resident for a decade, but a U.S. citizen for only nine months.



The lab analyst for Springfield's City Utilities picked the Fourth to have 45 relatives help him celebrate his U.S. citizenship.

They ranged in ages from one month to 84 years and some came as far as 3,000 miles from La Paz, Bolivia, Gumucio's home city.

Gumucio's words should be a ringing challenge to native-born Americans: "I love this country as much as my home country. When I became a citizen, it was something I had to consider deeply. It's like marriage. When you make the commitment, it lasts forever. You do this forever."

Amen. Gumucio's citizenship celebration came 44 years after another Ozarks ceremony linking the United States and Bolivia.

On July 5, 1948, President Harry Truman joined Romulo Gallegos, president of Venezuela, in dedicating a statue of Simon Bolivar in a park in the Polk County seat community named for the South American liberator.

Marshfield's traditional Independence Day event drew 5,000 Saturday and recalled last year's bigger crowd because of



Gregory Chittenden/The News-Leader

Charles, Rey, Ricky, Billie and Eddie Gumucio, from left, gather at Saturday's reunion.

the visit of President Bush. It looked back 102 years to when a cyclone destroyed much of Webster County. The original celebration was a patriotic path to bringing the town back together.

The Marshfield crowd included a visitor from Nottingham, England. Harry Robinson, biking across the United States to raise funds to fight cerebral palsy, diplomatically ignored the irony of an event

marking the U.S. independence from his native land.

"This is America, actually," he said. "I got a warm, friendly reception. I like the small town experience."

Happy Independence Day memories, everyone. And to new citizen Rey Gumucio and visitor Harry Robinson, welcome and thanks for reminding us what we have in the United States and the Ozarks.

CHAPTER SIX: LATER YEARS

I am looking forward to retirement in a few more years. Hopefully, Billie and I will have a chance to do some major traveling in Europe, Asia, and Australia. We have done a lot of traveling in the U.S. since 1996 and have also returned to Bolivia for a visit as well as Machu Picchu in Peru, and Mexico. We have received warm, friendly greetings everywhere we have gone. People always ask, "Where are you from?" or "How long have you lived here?" Whenever we encounter Hispanics in our travels I always speak to them in Spanish and ask where they are from, etc. Billie is very interested in crafts and we sometimes attend local craft fairs. I was surprised to find a musical group named Runa Pacha performing at some of the craft fairs. Runa Pacha is a group of musicians from Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru who play Andean folk music. I have even seen them at the Ozark Empire Fair. People enjoy their music and there is always a crowd standing around listening to them play. Music is one of the greatest bridges between cultures. It is something to which everyone can relate.

During my college years in Kansas City, I belonged to an international organization called People to People. They were very instrumental in helping me to acclimate to life in the U.S. Shortly after I arrived my brothers and sister went their separate ways. Carlos was sent to Germany with the Army, Mario went to Mexico to study medicine, Malusa got married and moved to Rome, New York, with her husband who was in the U.S. Air Force. Roger was traveling a lot with his business, so I was pretty much left on my own. Through People to People I met other immigrants of all nationalities. We would get together and discuss our experiences and problems. Sometimes they would help me with a problem I had encountered and sometimes I would be able to help someone else. It was a good feeling to know that you were not alone in your struggle to adapt.

I feel fortunate now to have time to do some volunteer work and help less fortunate people. Helping people is something I always wanted to do. It makes me feel good and it makes me appreciate what I have. I feel that I have struggled a lot to get what I have. If I can lessen someone else's struggle, I enjoy that. I always volunteer to be a participant in "Day of Caring" and am fortunate to work for an employer that encourages community service.

I am a member of Grupo Latino Americano, an organization for Hispanic people living in the Springfield area. This started out primarily as a social organization so Latinos could get together once in a while and have a good time with other Latin people in Springfield and the area. Through good organization, insightful leadership, and a lot of hard work Grupo Latino Americano has become an important voice for diversity in the area. We give Spanish classes to English speaking people. We teach English to Spanish speaking people. We help new Hispanic arrivals find employment and housing and offer financial assistance if necessary. We offer translation services for doctor, hospital, and emergency room care when needed. We sponsor social functions like the Mexican Ballet Troupe from Mexico or the Bolivian musical group from St. Louis, who plays South American folk music using instruments typical to the region, to expose the people of Springfield to the diverse cultures of our members.

My faith has always played an important part in my life. It has sustained me through some very hard times. As a teenager, I was very involved in church activities. After coming to the U.S., I attended services but somehow never seemed to find enough time to actively participate in church sponsored groups or activities. Now I have more time to devote to the church by taking an active part in the services, usually at eleven-thirty mass, as either a greeter or an Eucharistic minister. On Saturday mornings I conduct Scripture Study at the Federal Medical Center for the Spanish-speaking inmates.

Most of all, I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren who live here in town. Gabriela is six and Tristan is four. They are a joy and really keep me on my toes. They like to go for walks in the woods and we find all kinds of creatures and flowers that they have to bring back to the house for Grandma. When I retire, our big project will be to build a tree house. They have really been a blessing in our lives. They keep us young, and they keep our minds sharp. I look forward to seeing them grow and hope that I will be around to dance at their weddings.



Rey, Roger, Malusa and Mario Gumucio 1999

The Gumucio Family 2002

r1: Kady, Billie, Diane

r2: Charles, Tristan, Gabriela, Rick

r3: Rey and Eddie



CHAPTER SEVEN: LIFE MISSION

My mission in life was always to fulfill my father's dream and get a good education. When I succeeded and received my B.S. in 1968, I think that was one of the high points of my life. I had seen how hard he had worked and how much he had sacrificed to educate his children and even though he died right after I came to the U.S., I wanted to succeed for him. This dream kept me going and sustained me through a lot of hard times.

Then I got married, and my mission changed. My new mission was very similar to the old one but this time it was for my own children. I worked hard so that they would have the opportunity for a good education. I wanted them to know my background and appreciate my culture. I am grateful to my loving wife who supported me, encouraged me and helped me to accomplish both of these goals in my life.

I have lived in different cultures. I have struggled to accomplish dreams of both my parents and myself. I have tried to provide opportunities for my children so they could appreciate people of different cultures and be tolerant of life. However, the most rewarding aspect of my life has been to be part of a family who loved me; my parents, my brothers and sister, my wife, my in-laws, my children, my daughters-in-law, and my grandchildren have all given me their unconditional love and support. Whether I succeeded or not, I always knew that I was loved!

I think we have made great strides in accepting cultural and religious diversity. I hope that future generations will continue the integration of different cultures into their lives. When we reach the point that we can accept an individual for who he is, his likes and dislikes, his ideas, his dreams, or his actions, and not even consider where he was born, then we will be truly diverse. I hope this comes sooner than later, and I hope it comes without a lot of war and bloodshed.

We often feel that we are insignificant and cannot change things around us. If we are good parents and educate our children to be good citizens and to be tolerant of cultural diversities, and they in turn pass this on to their children, we will have made a difference. By educating one person at a time, we can overcome the hate and mistrust of ignorance.



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Ethnic Life Stories Project

<http://thelibrary.springfield.missouri.org/lochist/els/menu.cfm>