

# **Report on Latino Culture and Traditional Arts in Tennessee**

by

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prepared for the

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November, 1999

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## PREFACE

No accounting of trends in Tennessee can afford to ignore the explosion of our state's Latino population and its current and future impact on our Tennessee's cultural landscape. As Latino artists and cultural activity have increasingly come to my attention in the work of the Folk Arts Program, I've felt growing concern that government and cultural networks need to pay more attention to the Latino presence in Tennessee. As a specialist in more indigenous varieties of southern culture, I've felt ill-prepared myself to deal with a new language and unfamiliar, but exciting and clearly vibrant, cultural forms. I also come to recognize that within "Latino culture" there is a great deal of diversity, spanning wide differences among various nationalities, social classes, and ethnic backgrounds. Through the Folk Arts and the Arts Access Programs, the Tennessee Arts Commission is committed to addressing needs of underserved and traditional arts constituencies. Recognizing that issues facing Latino culture in Tennessee relate to the overlap of our programs and reflect the wider ethnic experiences in our state, Director of Arts Access Lisa Hester and I felt the need to develop a process for assessing those issues and establishing better contacts in Latino communities statewide.

We were lucky to obtain the services in this effort of Dr. Norma Cantú, a nationally recognized Latino cultural authority and advocate. Our plan was to bring her to Tennessee for a week to conduct regional meetings with a representative cross-section of Latino community activists and other interested parties and to seek out additional insights through site visits along the way. She also conducted research in advance, used a questionnaire for input from individuals unable to attend our meetings, and engaged in telephone interviews and follow-up, all of which factored into the assessments and observations presented in this report.

Developments since Dr. Cantú's visit in April have proven how timely this effort is. We have tried to lend TAC support to a similar Latino initiative by the Office of Minority Health in the Tennessee Department of Health, where Patricia Totty's efforts have launched the process of

organizing a statewide Tennessee Latino Network. Those meetings have promoted the sharing of many specific agendas—from the areas of health care, legal services, migrant education, migrant daycare and other social services, as well as the arts and culture concerns of our project. They've made it clear that for Tennessee Latinos, all these areas have common goals, face common problems, and require related solutions.

The TAC issues this report at a promising point, when many new directions, future partnerships, and other new opportunities are possible. We hope that its contents meet the expectations of those who helped us produce it, that it will encourage improved Latino contact and involvement with the TAC and other cultural entities, and that it will productively raise awareness of the concerns it summarizes.

Robert Cogswell  
Director of Folk Arts  
Tennessee Arts Commission

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been possible without the help of the individuals who attended and participated in the meetings and shared with me their knowledge, their information and their dreams. Also in the three communities, thanks are due to individuals and organizations that provided assistance, hospitality, and space: In Memphis, the Latino-Memphis Conexión, and Martha Kantor with Family Services of the Mid-South at Jackson Avenue United Methodist Church; in Nashville, Comunidad Hispana and Historic Travellers Rest; and in Knoxville the Catholic Hispanic Ministry and Brent Cantrell and his staff at Jubilee Community Arts.

## **Report on Latino Culture and Traditional Arts in Tennessee**

### **SUMMARY**

As we enter the next century, the United States faces challenges and opportunities similar to those the country faced a hundred years ago when the population made a dramatic change as immigrants from Europe and the Americas transformed who we are as a nation. In Tennessee the current dramatic change includes an intra-migratory population as well as an international migration of Latinos, from the most heavily Latino populated states of California and Texas in the former and from the various countries of the Americas in the case of the latter. As the population changes in the country, artistic traditions also undergo change and are revitalized through the inclusion of traditional artists who have settled in the United States or who are moving from one area of the country to another. Cases in point are the Hmong and Laotian textile artists relocating in the northeast and the Mexican American musicians moving from Texas to Portland, Oregon or Chicago. Tennessee's population is changing and so are the cultural forms found in the state. The Latino population in the state, mostly of Mexican origin, have brought with them a large repertoire of artistic traditions. This report concludes that there are certain critical needs of this Latino community in the state that the Tennessee Arts Commission needs to address. Through focus group meetings in three locations in the state and through questionnaires, data that answered three major questions revealed the extent of 1) existing assets, 2) obstacles to cultural activity in the state, 3) short term goals for such activity and finally, 4) long-range goals for the Latino community's cultural activity in the state. Finally, as a synthesis of these discussions and responses

with what I have learned about other factors at work in the cultural environment, the report closes with specific recommendations for improving the current state of Latino cultural activity in Tennessee.

## INTRODUCTION

As the State of Tennessee prepares to enter the next century it must assess where it stands in critical areas of service to all who live in Tennessee. One of these areas is the arts. In an attempt to describe the lay of the land, as it were, for traditional arts and related cultural issues of the Latino<sup>1</sup> community in the state, the Tennessee Arts Commission hired me to conduct a fact-finding mission, meeting with representative members of Latino communities and seeking out other information, in each of the three parts of the state that I learned could be considered three distinct regions—West, Middle, and East Tennessee. The meetings occurred during the week of April 19-23, 1999, in Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville. In traveling between cities with TAC Folk Arts Director Robert Cogswell, I was also able to stop along the way in smaller communities with Latino populations. Three things struck me as we visited the various communities: the youthfulness of the Latino population, their resourcefulness, and the strict adherence to cultural values and representation. In addition, I felt a dynamism and an incredible explosion in Latino cultural activities, evident in many things I saw and learned about—from social dances in Knoxville, to festivals across the state for Cinco de Mayo and Dieciseis de Septiembre (Mexican Independence Day), from the wide-ranging goods consumed by Latinos in their communities' fast-growing businesses, to the prominent

expressions of ethnicity and pride evident in the restaurants and other public establishments that cater to this community.

This report compiles the data I gathered in the meetings held in the three sites and incorporates personal conversations, observations, and research conducted on the Internet and in various print resources. The data gathered via the questionnaires distributed in the meetings is also part of the report. However, full documenting of the traditional artistic expressions and surveying the extent of activity was not the purview of this report and such work remains to be done. Concomitant to these yet-to-be-achieved tasks, I would add, is making sure that these communities have access to the services of the Tennessee Arts Commission and other state agencies. As the Latino/a denizens of Tennessee—either the recent immigrants from Mexico or California or Texas or those who are long-time residents and natives to the state—contribute to the quality of life in the state, they are shaping its future.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In my fact-finding mission I had three goals: to establish contact with the Latino community in each site, to gather information for purposes of this report, and finally, but perhaps most importantly, to play a role in introducing these communities to the Arts Commission and its work in the traditional arts. The objectives were a bit more specific. To fulfill the third goal, our objective was to make sure that all in attendance became aware of the Tennessee Arts Commission's presence, that everyone received printed

materials about the Commission and its Arts Access Program, and that everyone contacted had an opportunity to request placement on the TAC's mailing list. We also distributed the TAC Folk Arts Program's publication, *A Handbook for Tennessee Folk Artists* to all who attended the meetings. Our other objectives were tied to a questionnaire that asked particular information about existing cultural resources and needs within the Latino Community. The questions set before the groups were:

- In your opinion, what are the best existing assets and resources for Latino cultural activity in Tennessee?
- What are the major obstacles and needs which have to be addressed in improving Latino cultural activity in Tennessee?
- In the short term, what would you most like to see accomplished toward improving Latino cultural activity? What would most help your efforts right now?
- Eventually, what greater goals would you like to see addressed?

Our objectives were to gather information on the kind of programs and services the Latino community would like to see in the three distinct areas of the state. Everyone who participated filled out a questionnaire and some took some blank forms to be distributed and filled out by others who had not participated in the meeting.

The first part of this report presents the historical and statistical demographic information of Latinos in the country and in Tennessee in particular. Then follows my brief reflections on the meetings and site visits, a summary of responses to the



questionnaire, and, finally, a set of recommendations and observations. The appendices include various contacts and resources identified in the project.

## **HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

In 1848, the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the U.S. Mexican War, and land that had formerly belonged to the nation state of Mexico became part of the United States. Most of this land is what is now the Southwestern states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas and Colorado. Tennessee, already part of the United States, was not within the territory covered by the Treaty, but it and other Southern states began to experience limited influx of Mexican populations even then at this point.

It took over 100 years, however, for there to be significant international migratory movement of Latinos into this area. It wasn't until the mid 1980s that many of the Central American refugees, fleeing their war-torn countries through the assistance of religious organizations, found their way into the South. Other Latino international migration from Spain, and from Latin America also occurred during this period. Mostly, as it is now, jobs and education attracted these immigrants.

Internal migration had an earlier history, from 1900 until the present. During the 1930s and for about fifty years after, most of the Latino population came to Tennessee from U.S. border states to do seasonal work as migrant laborers. But in the 1960s and through the 80s the permanent Latino population increased as a result both of out-of-state job relocation by employers and of the independent pursuit of better employment

opportunities by groups of individual workers. By 1999 the presence of Latinos, mostly of Mexican origin, is an increasingly significant factor in Tennessee demographics.

Through information gleaned from the personal narratives of the people I met, I learned that many had come to the state in the 1980s either from California or Texas. Salvador came from his native Venezuela to study in Memphis and stayed to work as a professor. Javier came to Brownsville in the early 80s when his employer relocated the company he worked for in California. María, a waitress in Nashville, just arrived in March from Mexico to be with her husband who has been in the state for four years. Tennessee is a microcosm of the migrant stories from across the country, as people relocate within the country and people move here from other countries.

In looking at the Latino population in the United States as recorded in the U.S. Census statistics we can discern patterns of population shifts and predict future trends. These statistics show that in 1997, an estimated 29.7 million Latinos resided in the United States, representing 11.1 percent of the total population. Of these, more than half (55.8 percent) were born in the United States. Because the Latino population in Tennessee has consistently grown in the last decade, and at an increasingly rapid rate, I am including some data on projections for this growth into the next century. For each year from 1997 to 2050, it is projected that less than half of total U.S. population growth would occur to the combined Black and White non-Hispanic populations. Similar to projections for Tennessee, nationally, the race/ethnic groups with the highest rates of increase would be the Hispanic-origin and the Asian and Pacific Islander populations with annual growth rates that may exceed 2 percent until 2030. In comparison, even at the peak of the Baby Boom era, the total U.S. population never grew by 2 percent in a year. Every year from

now to 2050, the race/ethnic group adding the largest number of people to the population will be the Hispanic-origin population. In fact, after 2020 the Hispanic population is projected to add more people to the United States every year than will all other race/ethnic groups combined. By 2010, the Hispanic-origin population may become the second-largest race/ethnic group. Although this trend will not necessarily apply to Tennessee, the Latino population growth in the state will be significant.

## **TENNESSEE'S POPULATION PROJECTIONS<sup>2</sup>**

In looking at the demographic projections, for the state, I make the argument that the arts community must respond to and be prepared for the future state of Tennessee. In 1995, Tennessee had a population of 5.3 million people and ranked as the 17th most populace of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. At that time it was projected that by the end of the century, it would be the 16th most populous state with 5.7 million people and that by 2025, it would be the 15th most populous with 6.7 million people, with a total increase of 1.4 million people. In 1995, the state's net gain ranked as the 13th largest among the 50 states and District of Columbia, and its rate of population change, at 26.8 percent, ranked as the 19th largest. From 1995 to 2000, the state was projected to have a net increase of 401,000 people, which would rank it as the 9th largest net gain in the nation.

The increase, however, has been far greater than these 1995 projections indicated, and analysts and demographers expect the 2000 census to reveal a much more

vigorous growth, much of it due to both international and national migration into the state. In 1995, projections indicated that Tennessee was expected to gain 97,000 people through international migration between 1995 and 2025, placing it 29th largest among the net international migration gains among the 50 states and District of Columbia. The 2000 Census is expected to increase this number. Another factor affecting population growth is internal migration, that is the relocation of people from within the United States. In 1995, the projected growth due to internal migration to Tennessee would rank the state 6th largest among the 50 states and District of Columbia in the number of persons gained through net internal migration between 1995 and 2025, gaining 845,000 persons. Again, it is anticipated that the 2000 Census will indicate a far greater gain due to internal migration.

1995 projections for birth and death statistics, another factor for population growth, indicated that during the 1995 to 2025 period, Tennessee could have 2.2 million births and 1.9 million deaths. Among the 50 states and District of Columbia, the state could rank 19<sup>th</sup> largest in births, 13<sup>th</sup> largest in deaths, and 13<sup>th</sup> largest in terms of its natural increase (birth minus deaths). But, again, with the changes in international and national migration increase, these numbers would also change. Given that the Latino population moving into the state has a high birth rate and it is relatively young, this critical figure is expected to alter dramatically. And Tennessee's rank among the 50 states and District of Columbia as having the 37<sup>th</sup> largest proportion of youth in 1995 will also advance beyond the earlier projection of having the 43<sup>rd</sup> largest proportion of youth in 2025.

Another factor that will affect the population projections in Tennessee as in the rest of the country is the aging Baby Boom generation (those born between 1946 and 1964). As the growth of the elderly population (65 and over) accelerates rapidly, the size of the elderly population is projected to increase in all states and the District of Columbia, reaching unparalleled levels by the year 2025. In the 1995 projections, the proportion of Tennessee's population classified as elderly was expected to increase from 12.5 percent in 1995 to 20.3 percent in 2025, but with the influx of a much younger population the percentages may in fact be less. On the other hand, Tennessee's dependency ratio—the number of youth (under age 20) and elderly (ages 65 and over) for every 100 people of working ages (20 to 64 years of age)—could rise from 67.2 in 1995 to 79 or higher by 2025. The 1995 and the projected 2025 ratios rank the state as the 39th largest and 40th largest, respectively, among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. These figures include all the population of the state. But if we examine the statistical data for particular race and ethnic groups the demographic trend that is changing the profile of the State's population is much more evident.

## **RACE AND ETHNIC GROUPS**

According to the 1995 data the percentage of non-Hispanic Whites living in the state by 2025 will be down from 82% in 1995 to 78.6%. For the sake of comparison I am including the figures for the other ethnicities as reported in the Census figures, and not all of them are projected to increase: Non-Hispanic African-Americans would comprise 18.2

percent of the state population in 2025, up from 16.2 percent in 1995. Non-Hispanic American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleut would comprise 0.2 percent of the 1995 state population and 0.2 percent of the 2025 state population. Non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders would increase from 0.8 percent of the 1995 state population to 1.4 percent of the 2025 state population. The number of Latinos, who may be of any race, was projected to increase from 0.9 percent of the 1995 state population to 1.5 percent of the 2025 state population. But in particular areas of the state the actual rate of growth has already been higher than projected.

If we translate these figures to actual numbers, we can appreciate how the gain will result in numeric terms. Between 1995 and 2025, the number of non-Hispanic Whites residing in Tennessee was projected to increase by 932,000, compared to a gain of 366,000 for non-Hispanic African-Americans, a gain of 5,000 for non-Hispanic American Indians, Eskimos, and Aleut, a gain of 48,000 for the non-Hispanic Asians and Pacific Islanders, and a gain of 57,000 for persons of Hispanic origin. But these figures, based on demographic data from the 1990 census with updates in 1995, are already too conservative, for if the 2000 Census figures reflect the higher figures, there is no doubt that the increase by 2025 will also be higher.

Noting that these figures are conservative, it is important to point to the projections for numeric change in Tennessee's ranking from 1995: The non-Hispanic White population projected for the period from 1995 to 2025 ranks as the 6th largest gain among the 50 states and District of Columbia. In a breakout by ethnicity, the Hispanic population change was highest, ranked as the 34th largest gain. In the same period, the non-Hispanic African-American population change ranks as the 12th largest gain, while

the change for non-Hispanic American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleuts as well as for the non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander population change both rank as the 28th largest gain.

During the 30-year period, Tennessee's non-Hispanic White population is projected to grow 21.6 percent. The non-Hispanic African-American population growth projection is 43.1 percent, that of the non-Hispanic American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut population is 50 percent, that of the non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander population is 112.9 percent, and by far the largest growth, even with the conservative numbers, is for the Hispanic population with a projected growth of 125.1 percent. In comparison to the 50 states and District of Columbia, Tennessee's rate of growth for non-Hispanic Whites ranks 14th largest. The non-Hispanic African American growth rate ranks 30th largest, while the non-Hispanic American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut growth rate ranks 20th largest. Only the non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islander growth rate, which ranks 36<sup>th</sup> largest, is higher than the Hispanic growth rate which, in 1995 ranked 31<sup>st</sup> largest.

Population numbers, demographic projections and data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau, however, cannot ever offer a real picture of the population; these are projections, estimates, and ultimately rely largely on surveys, which because of the nature of the legal status of many of the Latino population in Tennessee may not offer a true picture. In fact, the flourishing business community is perhaps a better indicator, if an unofficial one, of the rate of growth. I was especially impressed by the vitality of local Latino business and community activity reflected both in the *Páginas Amarillas Hispanas / Hispanic Yellow Pages* of Nashville, and in *Las Páginas Amarillas de Memphis/The Spanish Yellow Pages of Memphis*. Invariably, during the meetings held in the State in April, 1999, I heard participants comment on the increase of businesses and

of the greater numbers of Latinos in their communities. Several other indicators also point to the large number of Latinos in certain areas of Tennessee and to the needs that this increasingly permanent population has. Our visits to the three sites in April confirmed much of what the data indicates. But, we were also looking for evidence of how these Latino communities maintain cultural practices and traditional arts.

### **THE SITE VISITS**

**Memphis.** In January, 1999, shortly before my visit to Memphis, LULAC (The League of United Latin American Citizens, a national Latino organization founded in the 1920s) issued a call for a town meeting where issues pertinent to the Latino community, which they cited at 10,000 in Memphis, would be addressed. The town meeting was to deal mostly with issues of under-reporting of crime in the Latino Community and the unpreparedness of the official agencies to deal with civil rights issues. Other concerns included the unmet demand for information in Spanish and the need for Spanish language capabilities on the part of various agencies and services, such as 911 telephone emergency lines.

Another entity addressing Latino concerns in Memphis is Latino-Memphis Conexión, a relatively new organization that has emerged under sponsorship of the Memphis Interfaith Association (MIFA). Latino-Memphis Conexión helped the TAC organize the Latino Culture Project's April 20 meeting in Memphis at the Jackson Avenue Methodist Church, hosted by Martha Kantor of the Family Services office. Eight



of the invited participants attended, representing Latino-Memphis Conexión and MIFA, the ESL program of the Memphis City Schools, Buekman Arts Center, and the Instituto Latinoamericano de Cultura (a joint program of the YMCA and Rhodes College), as well as the perspectives of practicing artists in dance and music.

After the meeting, we were taken on a tour of the Memphis Latino community by José Guerrero, a retiree from the Armed Forces and a native of Texas who directs an annual Latino Fiesta in September under sponsorship of Latino-Memphis Conexión. We visited Gaisman Park, the site of the fiesta, and various residential areas, record and clothing shops, restaurants, and video stores. At one stop in south Memphis, we visited a grocery run by the Valenzuela family, three brothers and their father who perform as Mariachi Guadalajara. The group travels widely, regularly performing engagements in Mexican restaurants not only in Memphis, but as far away as Little Rock and Birmingham. Later we visited Memorial Park cemetery, which contains the largest assemblage of sculpture by Dionicio Rodríguez outside of his hometown of San Antonio. A traditional artist working as a migrant in the Memphis area in the 1930s, Rodríguez was commissioned by the cemetery's founder to create the impressive Crystal Grotto using quartz from Arkansas as well as a number of other concrete sculptural features including his signature faux-wood bridges and benches.<sup>3</sup>

The next morning, Dionicio Cantú, owner of Cantú Bakery served us breakfast – pan dulce and Ojarascas coffee—as we visited with him and he told us about his business, located in a strip mall alongside some other Mexican-run stores. Cantú competes with another popular bakery, la Espiga, for the trade of the local Mexican community. He's added a pool table and game machines, which help make his bakery a

popular place for day workers to congregate in off-hours. Cantú told the story of how he became a baker: One day two years ago, the INS raided his business and took his baker away. Faced with a huge mound of dough, he became a baker—it took him from around noon until 5 or 6 p.m. to finish baking it all. But, he claims, by the end of that day, he was a baker. He was baking rolls for tortas while we were there, a special order for a another entrepreneur's store opening.

**Brownsville and Bells.** We stopped in Brownsville and visited with Mario Maldonado, Hispanic minister at First Baptist Church of Brownsville. Maldonado came from California a little over a year ago to serve the church's growing Latino membership, and as part of his work he has launched a low-wattage Spanish-language radio station (WNWS, 1520 AM) to serve the Haywood County area. Brownsville's regular AM station helps host this daytime station, which Maldonado programs with limited live broadcasting in the mornings and Christian music in Spanish throughout the day.

One of Rev. Maldonado's parishoners, Javier García, joined our conversation and suggested several names of musically and artistically talented individuals in the local Mexican community. We also discussed Mexican presence and cultural activity in other parts of West Tennessee including Jackson and Union City. Agricultural industry work has created Latino communities throughout the region that do not maintain particularly close ties to what goes on in Memphis. Mr. García's experience provided an interesting example. He first came to Brownsville in 1984 when his employer, Lasco Fittings, Inc., transferred him to Tennessee after a plant closing in California. He was among the second group of Latinos moved into the area by Lasco. Some did not stay, but he and

others who did form the local core of a stable Mexican community, some of whom have gone into business for themselves. His wife Socorro runs the New Image beauty shop.

We stopped in Bells, where seasonal employment by the PickSweet company has drawn a sizeable presence of migrant Mexican workers. During the summer, Bells is referred to locally as “Little Mexico,” a term we had also heard applied to the Jackson Avenue strip in Memphis. In Bells, Mexicans predominate during the agricultural season of May to September, but their impact on the town is evident in the older commercial district near the railroad tracks. At one point mostly deserted, the historic storefronts now house a variety of businesses and service entities for Mexicans: a grocery and dry goods store, a video rental place, a Mexican restaurant, a Chinese restaurant catering to Mexicans, as well as offices for church programs, daycare operations, and service agencies.

**Nashville.** In Nashville, we visited some of the numerous Latino stores and restaurants in the Nolensville Road area, and there we found the same kind of products. One interesting establishment, Billares San José, is owned by Ramón Arellano—an ex-boxer who is now training his son as a fighter. Only two young women were there when we arrived – one who talked the other just observed. At dinner at La Hacienda, one of the most successful local Latino businesses, I talked a length with our waitress, who had arrived in Nashville from Tabasco four months before to join her husband.

Our Middle Tennessee meeting was held on Thursday, April 22 at Historic Travelers Rest in Nashville. There were twelve people in attendance, including representatives of the Metro Nashville Schools ESL program, The Tennessee Foreign

Language Institute, the Tennessee Humanities Council, Scarritt-Bennett Center, the Comunidad Hispana translation and related services business, the Nashville Independent Film Festival, and concerned rural clergy. Perspectives were also contributed by a visual artist and a person hoping to develop Latino cable television programming.

After the workshop we met another member of the community, Martín Gómez whose friend Patricia Paiva had been at the meeting, over lunch at El Mariachi restaurant, which was formerly owned by Abel Flores of the locally active Mariachi Olímpico. They told us about activities at St. Edwards Church and provided background about previous organizational efforts in the Nashville Latino community. I was struck to see how the restaurant murals were so similar to those at La Hacienda, and found out they were both done by an itinerant painter from New York. The paintings were reproductions of images framed in the bathroom, depictions of Mexican film stars Jorge Negrete and Maria Félix in folkloric dress by a balcony and by a river.

**Monterrey and Crossville.** Our travel to the east included stops in two small towns on the Cumberland Plateau that illustrate the extent of Latino presence even in unlikely sections of Tennessee. In Monterrey we visited a local grocery which serves as a social center for the small Latino community and a point of contact for printed announcements about activities and available services. Our conversations with the clerk and a Latino high school student disclosed that the community includes both Guatemalans and Mexicans, most of whom work for a food-processing plant.

In Crossville, we stopped in at Speedy Gonzales Arte Mexicano, a shop on the town's main thoroughfare offering a variety of imported craft objects and video rentals, but not groceries. We gained a sense that the Latino community in Crossville was not particularly large, but that the store serves a customer base spread out among surrounding rural counties.

**Knoxville.** Knoxville's Latino community appears to have less business development and less obvious neighborhood concentrations than the other cities. It is also an urban center for large surrounding rural areas with sizeable presence of Mexican agricultural labor. Some in East Tennessee suggested that this part of the state, including the Chattanooga area (from which there were poor responses to our project's efforts), has more contact and continuity with migration patterns and Latino populations in Georgia and Florida to the south than with parts of Tennessee to the west. We had dinner at the El Charro restaurant which, like fast-growing Mexican food businesses across the state, enjoys a very healthy Anglo customer base. Interest in Mexican youth soccer activity was very much in evidence.

Our Knoxville meeting on April 23 at Jubilee Community Arts had the benefit of excellent help in contacts from the Catholic Hispanic Ministries program. Twenty participants were in attendance, representing various programs from the University of Tennessee (including programs in migrant assistance, legal aid, education, and Latino Studies), Grupo Hola (a Knoxville Hispanic social organization), Club LatinoAmericano (a Kingsport-based organization which was one of the few legally registered Latino non-profits identified in the project), radio station WETS at East Tennessee State University

(Johnson City), Knoxville City Schools ESL program, Catholic Hispanic Ministries, and the Highlander Center. Individual artist involvement represented visual art and literature. Perhaps indicative of strong university affiliations at the meeting, viewpoints reflective of fine arts and non-Mexican Latino backgrounds were even more prominent than in our other meetings, and issues related to Mexican culture and migrant populations tended to be raised by non-Latino service-providers.

**Observations about folk arts from the meetings and visits.** My questionings with meeting participants and Latinos encountered at site visits uncovered the fact that various forms and variants of Mexican traditional arts are indeed being practiced throughout Tennessee, but that the community that actively practices them was not well-represented at the gatherings. Folk-based foodways, music, needlework, ephemeral arts like piñatas, and festive decoration and occupational arts, like traditional baking, are cultural expressions of people who were not among the leadership and organizational contacts invited to the meetings. Conversations I held outside of the meetings verified for me that the existing infrastructure and organizational activity in Tennessee's Latino communities may not yet lend itself to working effectively with folk arts, despite considerable traditional arts activity on some levels within these communities.

During our travels it became apparent that we could not possibly do an adequate survey of Latino traditional arts in Tennessee without widespread and time-consuming fieldwork. But I was struck in my conversations with the recurrent indications both that such arts, especially Mexican folk arts, do exist here and that the artists are largely under-served and invisible to the wider community. For example, in

almost all of the grocery stores that we visited, there were large selections of special herbs used for cooking. Restaurants and bakery activity in these communities further attest to the vitality of foodways and traditional food preparation—always a strong indicator of ethnic cultural strength and independence. Many of the herbs are also used in healing, and it's likely that folk medicinal practice and folk healers play a role in these communities alongside or instead of the services rendered by the medical profession.

Music groups and traditional musical traditions, both in commercial venues, such as dance halls, restaurants and concerts, and in church and informal community contexts are evident in concentrated areas of Latino population, especially in Nashville and Memphis. Isolated traditional musicians and singers are surely practicing within migrant enclaves in other parts of the state that I did not visit. I learned, for example, of the brothers Francisco and Salvador Flores, guitarmakers from Michoacan who were for several years practicing their craft part-time in the Bybee area of rural East Tennessee.<sup>4</sup>

Social dances occur in almost all parts of the state with a Latino presence. I saw dance clubs in Memphis and Nashville, and larger commercial venues there host big-name touring performers from Mexico in concert programs that are well-attended exclusively by Latinos. These events are undoubtedly linked to sales in the many Latino record shops, where music events are advertised. Two weeks before our Nashville meeting, the norteño group Los Tigres del Norte drew a local audience of over 3,000 at Municipal Auditorium, and two weeks later another concert/dance event headlined by La Sonora Dinamita featured four acts representing different Mexican musical styles, some of them traditionally grounded.

In other areas, including Knoxville, sponsorship of social dances tends to be an important function of organizations. In the Tri-Cities, social dances are organized by the Club LatinoAmericano. Usually they hold 4 to 6 dances a year: in February for Valentine's day, in the Spring for Cinco de Mayo; in the Fall around Halloween; and a Christmas dance that has been held since 1991. In addition to commercial venues and this example of a community organization, there are the familial celebrations where dancing occurs: quinceañeras, weddings and other family celebrations. Usually for these the music is provided by groups called Mariachi, but which in this context is really an ensemble of no more than five musicians.

Celebratory traditions involving music and dance are carried on both by migrant populations coming from Texas and other states in the summer, and by more settled communities throughout the state. The latter host performances in churches around December 12 celebrating the Virgen de Guadalupe and the numerous religious traditions around such liturgical celebrations as Christmas and Day of the Dead (All Souls Day). Alongside the secular celebrations of Cinco de Mayo and Dieciseis de Septiembre, there are rites of passage – weddings, quinceañeras, and baptisms—that surely generate business for seamstresses, flower makers and arrangers as well as for caterers and musicians. I would not be surprised to find that the music groups make a lively business on Mother's day offering the traditional "mañanitas" at dawn. Events that celebrate community in any way are important focal points for traditional artistic expression, and my conversations verified their existence among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in Tennessee. Yet they reflect in many ways, a different layer of Latino culture than the ones accessed by our meetings.



## RESPONSES AND OPINIONS

Our fact-finding process did result in a productive sampling of opinions and concerns relating to Latino culture in Tennessee. The intensity of the open discussion at the meetings provided a clear indication that the Latino participants, and their wider community, cared deeply about the issues being raised and welcomed the opportunity to discuss them.

At each gathering we encountered a lack of familiarity with the programs and support potential of existing cultural agencies, specifically for the Tennessee Arts Commission and the Tennessee Humanities Council, but also for most local public cultural agencies and resources as well. Organizationally, the Latino community is very under-developed, even at its more prominent and socially established levels. The workings of American non-profit organizations and funding structures, as opposed to the for-profit sector, are not well-understood. Most of the organizational activity that exists is still unchartered, and specific arts or cultural agendas are not yet prominent as part of that activity. But there is a strong sense of exclusion from non-Latino cultural circles. Despite the presence of Latino artists and cultural communities in the state, the artists in particular feel marginalized and overlooked by the arts mainstream.

So many concerns surfaced that it was frequently difficult to structure the flow of the meetings around a sequence of topics. The questionnaire did afford the participants another chance to summarize their concerns. Requests for other contacts on the

questionnaire also led to its wider circulation in the weeks following the meeting, and additional responses to the opinion questions also came in. The following sections summarize responses and opinions obtained from the participants in our process.

**Existing Assets and Resources.** Recognition of assets was not an area of strong response, although discussions in the meetings prompted more identification of existing resources and accomplishments. The most readily identified asset tended to be the emergence of various media to serve Latino communities—especially radio stations and newspapers (see Appendix III). Some pointed to existing organizations and support efforts such as Unámonos in Nashville and MIFA’s sponsorship of Latino-Memphis Conexión in Memphis. The potential of Latino people and their growing communities in Tennessee was also cited. The momentum of both group and individual accomplishments was suggested by the respondent who cited, *“Restaurants, other businesses, media, etc. People involved in leadership roles in existing organizations.”* Another insightfully balanced an asset with an obstacle in noting, *“We have musicians, painters, craft people, but they are not part of a 501(c)(3).”*

**Obstacles and Needs.** In both discussions and written responses, participants repeatedly recognized lack of communication and of understanding as a source of many of the obstacles they face. Some respondents noted communications obstacles on more than one level. Others stressed problems separating Latino and mainstream culture. The need for translation services and similar solutions to language barriers was identified, as in the response *isolating “Language issues—Americans to learn Spanish and Latinos*

*learn English.*” Others suggested that some problems resulted from more than language, but also *“cultural differences and lack of understanding of ways of getting things done.”*

The relationship of communication and education needs was suggested by some responses. One noted, *“Latino community needs to educate the mainstream culture about who they are—not the other way around.”* Another participants commented upon *“a lack of education and the apathy which is often the result of this deficiency. The lack of knowledge and pride related to their own Latino heritage.”*

Communication and organizational problems within the Latino community were also cited in several ways. Some comments hinted that co-operation might be part of the need for *“an umbrella organization that brings together all the different sections of the Hispanic Community.”* Similarly, one respondent cited the need as, *“Organizing the Latino community. Pulling different Latino groups together.”* Another noted a *“lack of networking among Latino organizations.”*

The general social and legal circumstances facing many Latinos were also cited as problems. The simple and persistent fact of racism was mentioned in several connections. *“Clandestine”* aspects of life in some Latino communities because of work circumstances and immigration legalities were identified as inhibiting healthier cultural life and contacts with the mainstream. One response described an obstacle for cultural activity as being *“immigration law and fear of it.”* Another cited problems arising from *“the people and the fears they live with, which prevent them from networking.”*

Few responses dealt with issues particular to the practice of arts or cultural life, perhaps underscoring the importance of these larger social issues. One discussant did elaborate on financial obstacles to utilizing talented musicians from other places, noting

that transportation costs often limit the ability of Latino musicians in America to perform at a distance from their homes and to network with other musicians of their kind.

Another alluded to the lack of assistance to Latino arts and artists by describing the need for “*mejor educacion para los niños, ayudar a personas con talento (better education for the children, help people with talent).*”

**Short-term Goals.** In discussing and commenting on what they would most like to see accomplished in the short term, participants suggested various improvements to the environment for Latino culture through better communication, awareness, and networking, and through more activities that cater to the Latino community and help preserve their cultural values and expressions.

Desire was expressed by many participants for increased attention to Latino culture in educational settings. Some respondents specified inclusion of Latino issues in public schools and their curriculum as a short-term priority. One participant said, “*Bring the Latino art to Memphis City Schools,*” and another echoed, “*Latino arts in the school system.*” But education in a broader sense—of both learning and exposure, and both within the Latino community and the mainstream--was also seen as critical in an array of responses including:

“*Make the American and Latino population more aware of Latin culture including the arts (publicity...)*”

*“Encourage Latinos and Americans to participate in Latino cultural activities such as competition in handicrafts, drama, music and sales of handicrafts made by Latinos”*

*“Educating mainstream culture and Latino culture”*

*“Creating awareness in the general community of the existence of a Hispanic/Latino community”*

Yet another area of concern was the building of organizational structures that would support cultural activity and improvement of networks for communicating and publicizing such activity. Some responses identified the bolstering of both human and financial resources as a short-term priority. *“We need volunteers—money and dedicated coordinators,”* was the way one put it. Another cited, *“More community and organization relationships; funds.”* Planning and publicity were specific organizational priorities for respondents who called for *“networking and identifying the needs of the community first”* and *“getting the word out there is an avenue for sharing the cultural activity.”* For the respondent who expressed desire for *“an annual or semi-annual gathering of Latinos of East Tennessee as a group,”* the Knoxville meeting seems to have inspired its participants to pursue organizational and networking goals, as representatives of Grupo Hola and Club LatinoAmericano have held subsequent meetings to discuss mutual concerns.

Various issues of diversity, representation, and inclusion within Tennessee Latino communities arose during discussions of immediate agendas during the meetings, suggesting that class and nationality differences pose particular challenges to networking and organization. Some individuals from South American countries, for example, expressed concern that their particular backgrounds and distinctive fine arts traditions might be overlooked in a widely-defined emphasis on Latino culture.

Attendance at the meetings, on the other hand, reflected the fact that Latinos of more socially established and professional status are more likely to participate in organizational and planning activity. One respondent expressed concern for accessibility in future cultural efforts, wanting to *“work to develop places/ways where immigrant workers ‘toward the bottom’ have more of a voice, place and role in these conversations.”* Some suggested that this group could best be reached through the popular communication channels as well as by a greater effort to meet at times when these potential participants could meet. Instructive testimony on this point came from church work in Knoxville, where attendance at special services in Spanish proved disappointing until the scheduling of a late-night service. A huge turn-out demonstrated that there were many prospective Latino attendees whose employment hours prohibited their participation at other times.

Finally, short-term ideas included concern, expressed in different ways, that there simply be more activity calling attention to Latino arts and culture. One respondent wanted *“more widespread activities on Latino arts with participation of the Nashville community.”* Others called for *“promotion of public events and fiestas,” “exhibitions and shows,”* and *“arts care for Latino culture.”* Along these lines, one of the prospects

outlined by a participant at our meetings has since developed into a collaboration between the Nashville Independent Film Festival and the Hispanic Family Resource Center to produce a Latino Film Festival in Nashville on October 9.

In all of our meetings, there was a clear sense of the timeliness of these discussions, and a sense that within the short-term, efforts of some sort needed to start addressing these issues. One respondent summed it up in describing the top priority as being *“Ayudar a mi gente a no perder la cultura (help my people not lose their culture).”*

**Greater Goals.** The widest-ranging discussions at the meetings came when participants were asked to ‘dream’ and think about what they would ideally like to have happen. Paralleling short-term aspirations, many discussants and respondents voiced interest in acceleration of Latino arts activities and opportunities, with more cultural programs, festivals and public events. One wrote, *“I would like to see a cultural arts center.”* Another expressed the wish for *“Latino crafts –Instituto Cultural.”*

Aside from programs or facilities themselves, most participants elaborated on the ways these accomplishments could fulfill intangible goals. One respondent said she wanted to see programs and events *“Representing the Latinos and our culture as a valid, living culture. For Latinos to be proud of their heritage and not feel the need to crush or erase their ethnicity in order to succeed in this country.”* This sentiment was expressed over and over, as various participants yearned for greater *“Pride in the Hispanic community and UNDERSTANDING between all American peoples.”* Another wrote, *“Cultural work that leads to stronger Latino rights advocacy –Latino community empowerment in relation with Americans.”*

Issues of full accessibility and participation were clearly among long-range priorities. One respondent hoped for "more involvement of the Latino cultural community with the rest of the Nashville arts community." The emphasis in some of the responses stressed development of mutual understanding and respect for tradition and language. One participant's questionnaire expressed hope for "*Expandar las tradiciones de cada país y que los americanos se envuelvan en ellas (Expanding the traditions of each country and that the euro-Americans become involved in them).*" Another cited desire for an "*inter-ethnic/inter-minority dialogue within the local community.*"

Some respondents stressed links between cultural work with Latino youth and the promotion of good citizenship and healthy participation in larger society. As one put it, "*Latinos should become proud, productive and assimilated members of this society. Help children express their ideas, feelings, problems, etc. Create artistic groups for Latino kids through which they can focus their energies.*" Another concluded simply, "*Education, education, education.*"

Responses to both the questionnaire and the discussion topics reflected that Tennessee's Latino communities are decidedly concerned about culture and arts issues, and that their concerns in this respect have a great deal to do with how they feel about themselves and about their fellow Tennesseans. Their opinions and observations show a readiness for change: for more activity and visibility, for more awareness of and respect for their presence by mainstream society in the state, and for services that attend to their cultural needs and hopes.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Various recommendations were made at the conclusion of each of our meetings. Generally these focused on the interests of those in attendance. During site visits and other fact-finding conversations, additional concerns, suggestions, and strategies also came to light. Obviously, there is much to be done before long-range goals for Latino culture in Tennessee can be met. But there are many clear needs that Latino communities and cultural agencies in the state can begin to address now, and there are existing resources and approaches which need to be better utilized. The following recommendations, grouped in four areas, summarize my conclusions about what ought to be encouraged and accomplished in the immediate future. At present, there is no systematic means of implementing these recommendations. But it is my hope that the Tennessee Arts Commission, together with other funding sources and cultural agencies, Latino cultural activists and practicing artists, local arts councils and producers of art events, educators, social service providers, and other concerned parties, can work together through these means towards the ends brought to light in this project.

**Larger Inclusion Issues.** Work with Latino arts and culture faces the larger obstacles of accessibility and representation that affect all Latinos and Latino communities in Tennessee. Since my fact-finding visit to the state, I have been encouraged to learn of the creation of the Tennessee Latino Network, which is providing a forum for addressing concerns common to all areas of Latino participation and community life. I understand that the Network has identified deficiencies in language

accessibility measures, such as translation services and availability of printed materials in Spanish, and the lack of accurate demographic statistics about Latinos in Tennessee as being two over-reaching problems statewide. Arts and culture work can address these problems in exemplary ways through conscious adaptation of sensitive policies and procedures:

- **Awareness of and responsiveness to the language needs of Latinos.** Cultural entities should anticipate these needs and develop strategies to meet them as they are encountered, through the identification and availability of translators, through translation of relevant printed materials into Spanish, and through prioritizing the involvement of bilingual individuals in contact capacities.
- **Recognition of Latinos in arts and culture constituencies.** Although cultural programs do not gather population statistics, they do engage in less formal types of representation in which Latinos have too often remained invisible. On-going efforts to include Latino artists and resources and to seek out Latino participation in sensitive ways can place cultural activities at the forefront of multicultural recognition.

**Development Work with Latino Arts and Artists.** Beyond basic policies of inclusiveness, systematic work to identify, document, and encourage Latino art forms and artists would be enormously useful. Contact and assessment efforts are especially critical in the area of folk arts, where there is increased activity by individuals who bring folk cultural forms from different parts of Mexico to their lives in Tennessee. Yet these grassroots artists are the least likely to come to the attention of the arts mainstream on their own. In both fine and folk arts, Latino artists would benefit from help in

interpreting and presenting their art in an American context, so that the subtleties of their artform and its cultural background build more appreciative understandings. Other technical assistance and increased opportunities for Latino artists are also desirable.

- **Conduct surveys of Latino artists** in areas of the state with concentrated Latino populations. Such fieldwork would target, but not be limited to, folk artists. Exemplary work of this sort is already underway as part of multi-ethnic documentation being done in Jubilee Community Arts' Knoxville Folk Arts Initiative. Opportunities to encourage other such efforts should be supported both under sponsorship of both mainstream and Latino organizations.
- **Utilize appropriate expertise in documentary efforts.** The arts-and-culture establishment in Tennessee currently has few individuals who are well-versed in Latino culture. Seeking direction and involvement from professional consultants who are bilingual and familiar with appropriate issues and repertoires—and preferably themselves Latino—can greatly improve the quality and usefulness of the assessment work which will lay the foundation for other efforts. Work with Mexican immigrant traditions in particular will require thorough understandings of Mexican regional cultures and repertoires. Involvement of outside expertise will also bring standards and contacts to link efforts in Tennessee with the rest of the country.
- **Develop Latino community scholars** trained in the preservation and presentation of traditional arts following the model of summer programs at the Smithsonian Institution. Involving grassroots cultural advocates should be part of development work from the beginning, and where appropriate individuals emerge, they should gain

assistance in developing their skills and resources as an investment toward future programming.

- **Assistance to Latino artists** could take many forms, from professional development advice of the sort afforded by the *Handbook for Tennessee Folk Artists* to programs prioritizing opportunities for them. Latino performing artists currently qualify for fee subsidy under the TAC's Arts Advancement and Expansion Touring Arts Program. The Latino initiative has already led to the identification of additional artists for the program's flexible roster, and every effort should be made to take advantage of this program in the immediate future.

**Education.** Throughout all the commentary about needs and recommendations, there were numerous suggestions for educational improvements and activities. It is clear that public schools are already facing the social and cultural issues related to Tennessee's Latino presence, probably much sooner than other institutions in the state. Schools are therefore especially important as a primary point of inter-cultural contact as well as a context for improving knowledge and understanding, and educational efforts targeting both Latino students and non-Latino students and teachers can do much to improve the environment for Latino culture in the state. In larger school systems, English as Second Language (ESL) teachers are charged with addressing the special needs of Latino students, as well as those from other immigrant cultures. Although they understand best the wider multicultural issues entailed in their work, they have inadequate time and resources to affect larger system-wide approaches to them. Especially in rural counties, new Mexican populations have involved school systems for the first time in meeting

migrant education program requirements, making them the principal local government entity dealing with Latino families. Our participants also pointed out that education needs relating to Latino culture cannot be all be addressed in school, and that innovative out-of-school programs for Latino community members and for non-Latinos should also be developed. Specific recommendations include the following.

- **Collaboration between ESL and arts teachers** to develop more consistent approaches and curriculum materials to address Latino arts and culture issues.
- **Teacher in-service programs on Latino culture** should be developed and made available in school systems serving Latino students.
- **Participation by Latino artists in artist-in-the-schools programs.** Efforts should be made to identify and involve both fine and folk artists for inclusion on artist residency rosters. A special statewide program affording residencies and artist appearances in schools with significant Latino populations would be desirable.
- **After-school programs and adult education activities within the Latino community** should be developed. Latino arts and culture issues need to be represented alongside programming directed at acculturation skills.
- **Out-of-school educational opportunities about Latino culture for non-Latinos.** Greater opportunities for learning directed at Latino cultural appreciation, as for learning Spanish, should be made available to the general population. Arts programming should strive for thorough and accurate interpretation in presenting Latino subject matter.

**Assistance to Latino Events & Organizations.** An overwhelming sense was evident in the meetings that more needed to be done to support existing events, fledgling organizational efforts, and attempts at networking within Latino communities. Latino interests and potentials will not be fully realized without more effective communications and co-operation, organizational stability, planning and funding, to tap resources both within the Latino community and without. Some help in these respects can probably be had through better outreach to Latino interests on the part of existing programs and sources of support. Latino constituents need to become more aware of opportunities that already exist, such as prioritized support for Tennessee-based 501(c)(3) art organizations of color through the TAC's Arts Advancement and Expansion grant category. Language issues and social distancing will require that special efforts be made to improve participation in granting programs, and training and development opportunities for Latino constituents would help them comply with grant program requirements. Without losing sight of the larger goals of organizational growth--such as creation of facilities, stabilization of funding, and full participation in non-profit networks—recommendations at present need to address immediate realities.

- **Technical assistance to Latino groups in leadership and organizational development.** Better bridges need to be built between these newly emerging communities and the world of public agencies and non-profits. The meetings recognized a broad range of topics that need to be addressed by emerging Latino groups, ranging from expanding the leadership base to improving media relations and becoming recipients of grants programs. Entry-level training in skills and management could be best provided in many cases by Spanish-speakers experienced

in Latino community organizing. Latino groups can request support from the TAC's Arts Advancement and Expansion Technical Assistance Program for assistance of this kind, and relationships with other non-profit development and management efforts in the state also need to be cultivated.

- **Assistance to groups that are not yet registered non-profits.** Most Latino organizational interests in Tennessee are stuck at pre-entry level: they are not chartered 501(c)(3)'s so they can't apply for and receive grants, and because they can't apply for grants, they can't get help in addressing organizational needs. This is an exclusionary trap in the system that is especially difficult for people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Innovative solutions to this dilemma need to be found, through advisory and training opportunities that help such organizations navigate necessary paperwork and, more importantly, better understand the system which it regulates. Even the policy of excluding such groups from funding eligibility needs to be re-examined. Gaining entry-level experience in the grantsmanship is a valuable process, and grantmakers may consider following the lead of the Memphis Arts Council's Inner Visions program, which issues small grants of privately-raised funds to groups that have not yet attained a 501(c)(3).

**Involvement of Non-Latino Organizations.** While Latino cultural needs will not be adequately met without an organizational base within the Latino community, there is much that arts councils, mainstream cultural organizations, service providers and other institutions can do to improve the current situation. Efforts relating to Latino culture by non-Latinos should, above all, avoid patronization by involving Latino cultural advocates

and community members in substantive and meaningful ways, and by placing their empowerment and attainment of experience among the program objectives.

- **Arts and culture projects to build awareness and validation for Latino culture.**

More programs of all sorts featuring Latino culture, arts, and artists would be welcome and beneficial to the goals of this project. Organizations with on-going programs in the events, galleries, and other facilities stand to gain valuable experience themselves through efforts to relate to Latino interests and audiences and to present work and performances by Tennessee Latino artists. Such programming should uphold standards of professionalism and cultural etiquette, including adequate payment to artists, respectful and substantive interpretation of cultural content, and effective outreach to Latino communities. It is also in their own audience development interests for presenters offering Latino programming to seek expertise and advice in program development from within local Latino communities. Not all Latino arts, cultures, and audiences are alike, and informed planning is essential for successful programs.

- **Mentoring and partner relationships with Latino groups.** Established organizations stand both to learn and to share the benefits of their experience and resources in cultivating supportive relationships with Latino cultural entities and activities. Such arrangements offer one possible approach to initial organizational problems mentioned earlier. Helping Latino groups attain independent status and achieve related goals, such as locating programming space and accessing other resources, is one of the most important contributions that other entities can contribute to this process. The Memphis Interfaith Association's role in launching the Latino-



Memphis Conexión is a model in this respect which could be productively followed in other parts of the state. Joint project ventures between mainstream and Latino organizations afford another model, of which the collaborative sponsorship of a Latino Film Festival by the Nashville Independent Film Festival and the Hispanic Family Resource Center is already an excellent example.

### **TRENDS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The demographic projections for the South and for Tennessee in particular show that there will be a dramatic change in the number of Latinos living in Tennessee in the next century. They will be younger, in need of quality education, will be U.S. citizens, and will be relocating from other parts of the country or more likely than not if they are moving from another country it will be Mexico. This trend offers a unique challenge and an opportunity to the South and to Tennessee. This report has shown that the Latino population in the state while not new is increasing very rapidly and posits challenges for cultural work that with creativity and foresight will render Tennessee a leader in the work of preservation and development of the talents and artistic knowledge existing in the Latino communities. The opportunities abound, and the resources are there in those identified by the participants themselves: the community members, the artists, the media, and the children who will be the carriers of the traditions into the future, and who are the future of Tennessee.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term *Latino* in this report because, although many of them are of Mexican origin, the people I refer to do not identify as *Chicano*, which would be my preference. As an umbrella term, *Latino* also covers Spanish and Puerto Rican people as well as other populations of origin anywhere in Central and South America, and these demographics are represented among relevant populations in Tennessee. *Chicano* would be more specific to those who hold a particular ideology and who most closely identify with the non-immigrant Mexican population present in America at the end of the U.S.-Mexico War in 1848. Although I prefer to use *Chicano* or *Latino*, in this report I do use the term “Hispanic” when the reference is to the Census data that uses such a term.

<sup>2</sup> Projections for Latino population growth in this section of the report are likely quite conservative. I gathered most of these data in files found on the Population Projections section of the Census Bureau’s internet home page (<http://www.census.gov>). In the few months since my text was composed, figures posted in that source have already been upwardly adjusted. Other information is also drawn from Paul R. Campbell, Series A (the Preferred Series) as reported in 1996, “Population Projections for States, by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2025,” Report PPL-47, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Division.

<sup>3</sup> Commentary on Rodriguez’ work at Memorial Park Cemetary is included in John Beardsley, *Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995), pp. 125-31. See also Jerry Huston, “Cemetery’s artwork lends natural setting and historic vantage,” (*Memphis*) *Commercial Appeal* (April 23, 1991), E1, E4.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Moore, “Flores Brothers’ Talent Was ‘Hidden Under a Bushel,’” *Morristown Citizen Tribune* (January 7, 1996), C1-2.

## APPENDIX I

### Bibliography

The following bibliography, compiled by Robert Cogswell, covers published reports and resources of all kinds relating to Latinos in Tennessee. Any additions are welcome, especially articles that would give more representation of journalistic coverage from outside Nashville.

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West, Kay. "Avenue of Nations: Living the American Dream on Nolensville Road," *Nashville Scene* (December 4, 1997), 42-56.

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## APPENDIX II

### Project Participants

The following people assisted in the work of the project by sharing information and opinions. Those who attended one of the project meetings are listed with a letter in brackets after their name. [M] indicates attendance at the Memphis meeting, [N] at Nashville, and [K] at Knoxville. Others responded to subsequent contact and mailings by completing a survey form. The TAC is indebted to these individuals for their help and support for this effort.

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 615/742-2500(w)  
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[niffilm@bellsouth.net](mailto:niffilm@bellsouth.net)

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 615/741-8559(fax)  
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 423/691-5622  
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Cove/9107/](http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Cove/9107/)

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 615/248-6733(w)

Ramos, Mario  
 Unámonos  
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## APPENDIX III

### Organizations and Programs Related to Latino Culture in Tennessee

This list includes non-profit organizations and other agencies that have demonstrated interest in activities relating to Latino culture. Many other entities with wider missions or specific social service agendas have not been included.

Alianza Latina  
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615/340-2770

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Eloy Guerra, Director  
316 Philfre Ct.  
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Catholic Hispanic Ministry  
Jack Kramer, Director  
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Asesistencia Social  
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Club LatinoAmericano  
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423/239-7812  
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Global Education Center  
Ellen Gilbert, Director  
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Hispanic Family Resource Center  
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Nashville, TN 37210  
615/862-7948

Grupo Hola  
Coral Getino  
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Knoxville, TN 37922  
423/690-8660(ph/fax)  
[corbob@worldnet.att.net](mailto:corbob@worldnet.att.net)

Institute of Latin American Culture  
International Program  
YMCA of Memphis  
Salvador Toro-Moya  
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Memphis, TN 38119  
901/525-1020  
901/527-8100(fax)

Language and Culture Resource Center  
Charles Moore  
P.O. Box 70556  
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Rosie Freeman, Director  
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Scarritt-Bennett Center  
Carolyn Oehler, Ex. Director  
1008 19<sup>th</sup> Ave. So.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615/340-7500  
615/340-7463(fax)

St. Edward Hispanic Catholic  
Community  
Pedro Tellez  
188 Thompson Lane  
Nashville, TN 37211  
615/367-1752

TN Foreign Language Institute  
Martin O. Deschenes, Director  
404 James Robertson Parkway,  
Suite 1620  
615/741-7579  
615/741-7331(fax)  
[tflin@nashville.net](mailto:tflin@nashville.net)

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TN Migrant Head Start  
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Telamon Corporation  
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Unámonos  
Mario Ramos  
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Woodbine Community Organization  
Terry Horgan  
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Nashville, TN 37210  
615/833-9580 or 300-5417

## APPENDIX IV

**Active Latino Artists in Tennessee**

This working list of Tennessee-based Latino artists is far from complete. Artists omitted from this list, or others with information about them, are urged to contact Robert Cogswell or Lisa Hester at the Tennessee Arts Commission so that a more comprehensive directory can be compiled.

Al DeLory & Music Makers  
[Salsa group]  
Al DeLory  
3000 Hillsboro Rd., #11  
Nashville, TN 37215  
615/292-2140

Bendfeldt, Carlos  
[classical guitarist]  
1618 Strawberry Lane  
Johnson City, TN 37604  
423/926-9898 (h)

Binet, Noris  
[visual artist]  
P.O. Box 41761  
Nashville, TN 37204  
615/297-6654  
nbinet@aol.com

*Bisitantes del Norte*  
[Mexican guitar/vocal trio]  
Raphael, c/o El Matador Family Restaurant  
2904 Bristol Hwy.  
Johnson City, TN 37601  
423/282-8111 (w)

*Caliente*  
[Salsa group]  
Melina Almodovar  
1033 Colonial  
Memphis, TN 38117  
901/763-2777  
[melina80@hotmail.com](mailto:melina80@hotmail.com)

Castroverde, Tania  
[dance & choreography]  
Buckman Arts Center  
60 Perkins Extended  
Memphis, TN 38117  
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P.O. Box 41656  
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da Silva, Mario  
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*Los Bandolero Real*  
[Norteño group]  
Marco Antonio Aguilar  
217-C Riddle Road  
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*Los Cantadores*  
[Mexican vocals/guitar]  
Domingo Montes  
4822 Wooddale Avenue  
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901/794-2867

*Los Casadores del Bravo*  
[Norteño duet]  
Juan López  
383 Haywood Lane, Apt. A9  
Nashville, TN 37211  
615/832-1698

*Mariachi Guadalajara*  
Pedro Valenzuela  
4649 Cotton Lane #2  
Memphis, TN 38118  
901/366-4918

*Mariachi Imperio*  
Salvador Martinez  
Sweetwater, TN  
423/337-2449

*Mariachi Olimpico*  
Abel Flores  
141 Neese Drive, Apt. 386  
Nashville, TN 37211  
615/831-1566

*Minnie & Jose*  
[vocal/guitar duet,  
“Musical Tour of Latin America”]  
Jose A. Maymon  
810 Bellevue Road #160  
Nashville, TN 37221  
(615) 646-1305  
Minnie Villanueva  
(615) 742-7431

Miramontes, Rita Hamill  
[visual artist]  
119 Lakeside Drive  
Gray, TN 37615  
423/477-2304

Morrice, Santiago  
[visual artist]  
2820 Hazelwood Dr., Apt. B7  
Nashville, TN 37212  
615/834-8452

Perez-Leon, Claudio  
[visual artist]  
88 N. Main Street  
Memphis TN 38103  
901/529-1980  
[cperez11@midssouth.rr.com](mailto:cperez11@midssouth.rr.com)

Prado, Jairo  
[visual artist]  
923 Montrose Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37204  
615/383-8172

San Miguel, Nito  
[singer, guitarist]  
9012 Camero Lane  
Knoxville, TN 37923  
423/531-1575

*San Rafael Band*  
[Latino pop/jazz-fusion]  
Rafael Vasquez  
917 Harpeth Bend Dr.  
Nashville, TN 37221  
615/646-6404

*Serenata*  
[pan-Latin “romantic” ensemble]  
Pablo Garzon  
2116 Hobbs Rd., Apt. 14  
Nashville, TN 37215-3325  
615/297-1985  
[garzonpab@prodigy.net](mailto:garzonpab@prodigy.net)

Smith, Kathryn Garcia  
[visual artist]  
7161 Old Harding Place  
Nashville, TN 37221  
615/662-4665



*The World Music Trio*

[featuring Venezuelan composer/pianist]

Salvador Toro-Moya

Memphis, TN 38103

901/758-0593(h)

901/525-1020(w)

901/527-8100(fax)

[grisal1@hotmail.com](mailto:grisal1@hotmail.com)

*Trio Vendaval*

[Mexican vocal/guitar trio]

Raúl Ojeda

5099 Linbar Dr., Apt. D-67

Nashville, TN 37211

615/832-3913

## APPENDIX V

## Latino Media in Tennessee

**Newspapers & Magazines (Spanish)***Actualidad Hispana (biweekly)*

Luis Alva, Director  
3030 Nolensville Rd.  
Nashville, TN 37211  
615/331-1990

*El Crucero de Tennessee (weekly)*

Eliud Treviño, Publisher  
2805 Foster Ave., Suite 027  
Nashville, TN 37210  
615/834-7680  
615/834-7679(fax)  
tncrucero@aol.com

*El Horizonte (weekly)*

Celio C. Palacio, Editor  
3999 Lamar Ave., Suite 1  
Memphis, TN 38118  
901/566-9958  
901/566-0402(fax)  
[horizonte@bellsouth.net](mailto:horizonte@bellsouth.net)

*El Siglo de Memphis (weekly)*

Geraldo Reyes, Editor  
P.O. Box 18860  
Memphis, TN 38181  
901/362-0154 or 301-0607  
901/794-7520(fax)  
[reportero@netscape.net](mailto:reportero@netscape.net)

*La Prensa Latina (weekly)*

Rebecca Mathis, Editor  
376 Perkins Extended,  
Suite 2054  
Memphis, TN 38117  
901/751-2100  
901/751-1202(fax)  
smendell@aol.com

*La Voz de Nashville (biweekly)*

Luis Mascorro, Publisher  
2610-B Nolensville Rd.  
Nashville, TN 37211  
615/834-0337  
615/834-3957(fax)

*La Voz Hispana (weekly)*

Juan Romo, Publisher  
2242 Vinton Ave.  
Memphis, TN 38104  
901/274-0288

*TN Latino Magazine (monthly)*

Martha Salazar, Editor  
2608 Nolensville Rd.  
Nashville, TN 37211  
615/832-1095

**Newspapers (Bilingual)***Bravo Tennessee*

Fred Ramos, Publisher  
P.O. Box 23068  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615/429-6839  
615/329-4697(fax)

*Buenos Dias (bi-monthly)*

Paul van Cotthem, Editor  
P.O. Box 159120  
Nashville, TN 37215  
615/859-2431  
615/855-3376(fax)

**Newsletters***Hola!*

Hóra Látina  
 Coral Getino, Anna Piazzetta,  
 Ilsa Wood, Persides Herrera,  
 Editors  
 P.O. Box 32192  
 Knoxville, TN 37930-2192  
[corbobo@worldnet.att.net](mailto:corbobo@worldnet.att.net) or  
[apiazzet@bellsouth.net](mailto:apiazzet@bellsouth.net)

*La Cosecha*

Boletín de la Comunidad Hispana Católica  
 119 Dameron Ave.  
 Knoxville, TN 37917  
 423/637-4769  
 423/971-3575(fax)  
[lacoseha@yahoo.com](mailto:lacoseha@yahoo.com)

*The Woodbine News*

Woodbine Community Organization  
 Rod Williams, Editor  
 222 Oriel Ave.  
 Nashville, TN 37210  
 615/833-9580  
 615/833-9727(fax)

**Radio Stations (Spanish)**

WAPB AM 810  
 “La Sabrosita”  
 Martin Silva, Director  
 2201 Murfreesboro Rd.  
 Nashville, TN  
 615/399-0490

WGSF AM 1210  
 Fred Flinn, General Manager  
 6080 Mount Moriah Rd. Ext.  
 Memphis, TN 38115-2645  
 901/375-9324  
 901/795-4454(fax)

WHEW AM 1380  
 “La Ley”  
 Salvador Guzman, Director  
 1811 Carters Creek Pike  
 Franklin, TN  
 615/599-0600

WNQM AM 1300  
 “Radio Melodias”  
 Eliud Treviño, Program Director  
 1300 WWCR Ave.  
 Nashville, TN 37218  
 615/834-7680  
 615/834-7679(fax)

WNWS AM 1520  
 Mario Maldonado,  
 Program Director  
 P.O. Box 198  
 Brownsville, TN 38012-0198  
 901/772-3700 or 772-9753  
 901/772-2255(fax)

**Other Radio Programming**

WABD AM 1370  
 “La Voz de Borinque”  
 Israel Gonzales  
 P.O. Box 2021  
 Clarksville, TN 37042  
 931/645-4312

WETS FM 89.5  
 “Ritmo Latino”  
 Juan Chiu  
 P.O. Box 3361  
 Johnson City, TN 37682  
 423/282-3565  
[sckeeper@aol.com](mailto:sckeeper@aol.com)

WQOX 88.5 FM  
 “Sabor Latino”  
 Soraya Sanchez, and Rafael Miranda  
 3333 Covington Pike  
 Memphis, TN 38128  
 901/386-0410

WRVU 91.1 FM  
 “Panadero Ensoñado”  
 Ann Connor or Luis Barquero  
 P.O. Box 9100 Sta. B  
 Nashville, TN 37235  
 615/322-3691  
[ann.m.connor@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ann.m.connor@vanderbilt.edu)

**Television Programming**

Channel 19, Community Access Television  
"Nuevo Mundo"

Mario Ramos, host  
1808 West End Ave., Suite 1101  
Nashville, TN 37203  
615/329-4588  
615/329-4697(fax)  
[ramosmario@juno.com](mailto:ramosmario@juno.com)

**Internet Websites**

[www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Cove/9107/](http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/Cove/9107/)

[website maintained by Jose Guerrero with pages on Latino-Memphis Conexion and Fiesta Latino Memphis]

[www.uninsured/immigration.html](http://www.uninsured/immigration.html)

[website providing information about rights of Latinos in Tennessee]

[buzz.bellsouth.net/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/AppLogic+CachedPageAppLogic?cat=cg\\_5829&loc=BNA](http://buzz.bellsouth.net/cgi-bin/gx.cgi/AppLogic+CachedPageAppLogic?cat=cg_5829&loc=BNA)

[website of the TN Latino network]

## APPENDIX VI

## National Latino Resources

Latino Leadership Network  
Yolanda Garcia  
Santa Clara County Office of Education  
Children's Services Department  
1290 Ridder Park Drive  
San Jose, California 95131  
408/453-6980  
[Yolanda\\_Garcia@sccoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:Yolanda_Garcia@sccoe.k12.ca.us)

National Association of  
Latino Arts & Culture  
3618 W. Commerce, Suite 100  
San Antonio, TX 78207  
210/432-3982  
210/432-3934(fax)  
[artsnalac@aol.com](mailto:artsnalac@aol.com)

The Association of American Cultures  
John Paul Batiste, Ex. Dir.  
1925 Elm St., Suite 400  
Dallas, TX 75201  
214/855-5992  
214/855-2993(fax)  
[taac@artswire.org](mailto:taac@artswire.org)  
[www.artswire.org/taac/taac.htm](http://www.artswire.org/taac/taac.htm)