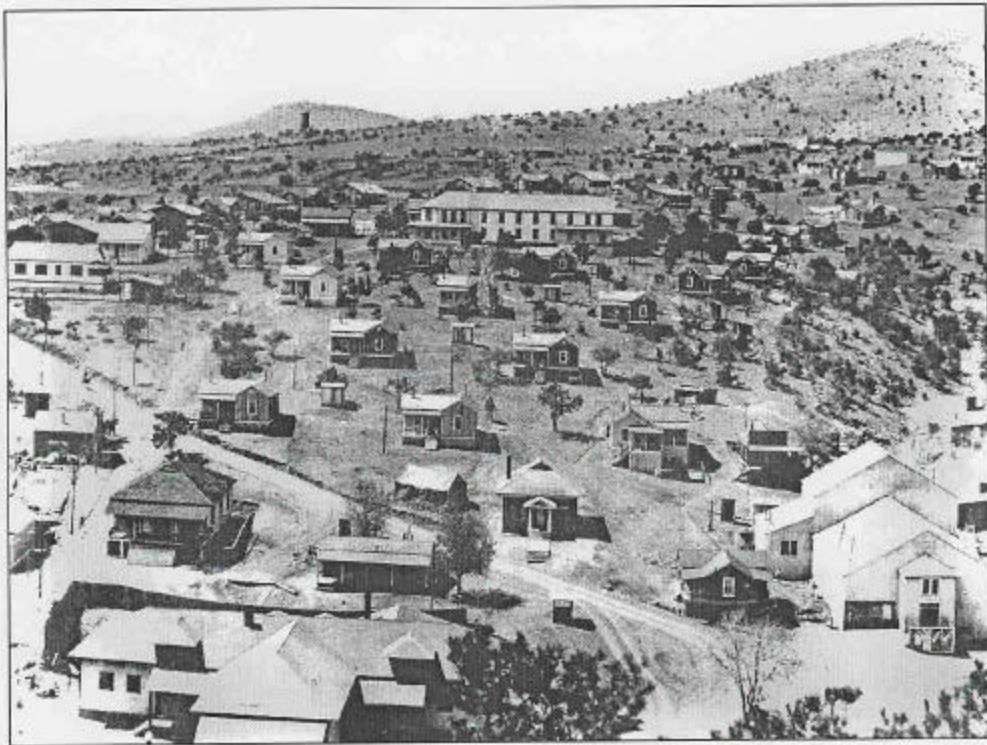


SANTA RITA, NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY REPORT



Department of Sociology
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Santa Rita, New Mexico Community Report

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Introduction

This paper is about community, space and place. It focuses upon how a small, rural, southwestern community lost its physical manifestation but continues to socially thrive and exist today. Space plays a very interesting role in this paper. This study focuses on a population of people who orient by the geographic place where they were born (Santa Rita, New Mexico), which is not particularly unique. However, what is unique is that they orient by a place that no longer physically exists. They orient by a place that has now truly become “space” due to the expansion of the Santa Rita Copper Mine.

The mining company, Chino Mines, currently owns the property where the town of Santa Rita once existed. Much of that property is now part of a large open mine pit. Eventually the residents were forced to leave Santa Rita so the mine could expand. Typically, the Society of People Born in Space (SPBS¹) meet annually to keep in contact with each other and to remember their community.

To the outsider and local alike, the sense of community in Santa Rita, New Mexico appears to have continued even after the physical buildings that comprised a town disappeared. In the 1950s the residents of Santa Rita, New Mexico faced an interesting dilemma. The mine of Santa Rita expanded to such a degree in the 1950s and early 1960s that the residents who lived in the town were forced to move (Chinorama Staff 1965). At the point when all of the houses were moved away from the town to nearby communities, Santa Rita appeared to have vanished. This paper explores the continuation of the Santa Rita community through examining residents' patterns of interaction and community attachment.

In the summer of 2000, a study was conducted on the rural community of Santa Rita, New Mexico. An investigation was conducted through analysis of secondary data, key-informant interviews, and a survey that was distributed to Santa Ritans. Because the town of Santa Rita does not physically exist today, we contextualize our study by first looking at past population trends and demographics of the surrounding area.

¹ The SPBS consists of former Santa Rita residents and is addressed in the History section of the paper.

Population Characteristics

The first section of this report presents sociodemographic and historical information on the community and surrounding area. The population trends for Santa Rita and Grant County are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Populations of Santa Rita and Grant County from 1900-2000

Year	Grant County Population	Santa Rita Population
1930	19,050	3,889
1940	20,050	2,948
1950	21,649	2,135
1960	18,700	1,772
1970	22,030	NA ²
1980	26,204	NA
1990	27,676	NA
2000	31,002	NA

NA: Information is not available

Source: U.S. Census of the Bureau 1930-2000

The following table presents some general population characteristics of Grant County for the year 2000. Although the county population is small (31,002) by some standards, the area contains a variety of individuals representing different backgrounds.

Table 2. Sociodemographic Profile in 2000 of Grant County

Population	31,002
% Male	48.7
% Female	51.3
% 65 and over	16.5
% under 18	26.2
% White	75.7
% Black or African American	0.5
% American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.4
% Asian	0.3
% Some Other Race	19.0
% Hispanic or Latino	48.8
# of Households	12,146
Median Household Income	\$29,134

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

Despite the fact that comparable data for Santa Rita is not available to compare with current Grant County sociodemographics, examining county statistics helps to create a picture of the population in the local county. As Table 2 displays, 75.7 percent of Grant County's population is White, followed by the Hispanic or Latino population at 48.8 percent. Slightly over one-quarter (26.2 percent) are under 18 and 16.5 percent are over age 65. The median

² Beginning in 1970 the U.S. Bureau of the Census no longer listed Santa Rita.

household income is \$29,134. The 2000 sociodemographic information shows that one-quarter (26.2%) are under age 18 and three-quarters (75.7%) identified as White while almost half (48.8%) identified as Hispanic or Latino.

History

The History of Santa Rita includes many peoples and places. It is impossible to discuss the history of the town without including the Apache Indians, Spanish invaders, Mexican immigrants, and Anglo settlers, all of whom played a key role in the town that was known as Santa Rita. The town, now gone, leaves its former inhabitants, especially those born in its perimeter, “Born in Space.” Surrounding towns such as Bayard, Hurley, Silver City, and even Pinos Altos are home to many former Santa Ritans today. These surrounding communities played a significant role in Santa Rita when the actual town of Santa Rita still existed, because residents would often interact with one another.

Original Santa Rita Inhabitants: Mimbrenos and Spanish Invaders

Originally, Santa Rita was home to American Indians, which provided them with copper. Generally known as Apaches, the Native Americans maintained a level of control over the mining area in Santa Rita (Munoz 1989). Later it was discovered that the Apaches consisted of different tribes. It was the Mimbrenos that lived near the mine (McCarish 1969). The mine was recognized as the “heart” of the Apache’s territory (Munoz 1992). The Spanish invaded the Native Americans' territory, and what was to become Santa Rita, in the 1700s. With the Spanish conquering of the area in the late 1700s and early 1800s came the take over of the copper mines that Native Americans had traditionally utilized (McCarish 1969).

The discovery of the mine is attributed to the Spanish Lieutenant Colonel Carrasco. The Mimbrenos did not allow Carrasco to proceed as he wished. Carrasco did not keep the mine very long; he sold it in 1804 to Don Francisco Manuel Elguea (Munoz 1992; McCarish 1969). Elguea was from Chihuahua and was able to form a decent relationship with the Mimbrenos, allowing him to mine. The Mimbreno chief at the time, Juan Jose, provided limitations to the mining, but still allowed it to be done. Later, in 1825, a formal peace treaty was established by two American trappers and the Mimbrenos, in an effort to have Americans run the mines without disturbance (McCarish 1969).

It is crucial to note that a peaceful relationship did not exist in Santa Rita at this time. In fact the Mimbreno Apaches faced betrayal that resulted in the deaths of hundreds. Before the peace treaty was established, the Mimbrenos were discontented with the Spanish and Mexican intruders. Because of the difficulties the Apache provoked for new settlers attempting to mine, the Mexican government offered a price for Mimbreno Apache scalps in 1837: \$100 for adult men, \$50 for adult women, and \$25 for any children (Munoz 1989; McCarish 1969). The Mexican government's willingness to pay such high prices for Indian scalps encouraged individuals to do the scalping as a means of earning extra income. A trapper known as James Johnson devised a plan to attract the Apaches (Munoz 1989; McCarish 1969). Johnson and mine owners planned a huge dinner gathering which brought over 400 hundred Apache Indians. It was when the Apache came to this "Feast of Santa Rita" that 400 of them were killed and scalped (Munoz 1989). With few Mimbrenos left, a new Apache leader stepped forward, Mangus Colorado, and the tradition of keeping American and Mexican settlers from mining was again enforced.

The Mimbrenos appear to have had the upper hand for some time after this attack owing to their retaliation. Periods of peace were followed by bursts of chaos. It seems that conflicts between the Mimbrenos and Spanish, Mexican, and American invaders were never completely settled. Eventually, Mangus Colorado was killed by American soldiers under the orders of Commander West of Fort McLane (McCarish 1969). Although Mangus Colorado was willing to fight for his territory and freedom he also hoped for peace. It may have been his attempt at peace that brought him to trust those who would murder him in the early 1860s (McCarish 1969).

Mining History

While the region surrounding Santa Rita has a vivid sociocultural history it also has a long and diverse mining history. It was in 1909 when Chino Copper Company obtained ownership of the mine in Santa Rita (Humble 1998) and started to dig the second largest open-pit mine in the United States (Munoz 1989). The mine provided work for many local people, who in turn supported the community. Although mine ownership changed hands over the years, mining continued in the region until recently. Today, mining has been significantly curtailed due to the drop in the economic value of copper. In 1924 Chino Copper Company merged with Ray Consolidated Copper Company, a relationship that lasted until 1926 when Nevada Consolidated became owner of the land (Humble 2002). As early as 1933 the mine was incorporated into the Kennecott Copper Corporation, which remained its single owner until 1980. Mitsubishi

International Corporation became owner of one-third in 1980 with Kennecott still a two-thirds owner. In 1986 the well-known Phelps Dodge bought the Kennecott portion and remains the current owner in partnership with Mitsubishi (Humble 2002). Today, Phelps Dodge, Inc. manages the mine in Santa Rita.

Chino Mines Company (CMC) is partners with Phelps Dodge and a Mitsubishi corporation (Heisei Minerals), with CMC as owner and Phelps Dodge as manager (Lewis 1997). Mining has long been essential to the local economy, providing work for about 1,200 local people in 1996 (Romo 1997). However, the recent drop in the price of copper has led to major layoffs in the local mining industry. Currently, because copper prices have continued to decline, the mine has laid off the majority of its work force (Head and Degener 1998).

Santa Rita was a true mining town. Residents worked at the mine and lived in the company town. In 1965 the local paper published an article that described which areas of Santa Rita were to be moved for mine expansion to continue. Because the land underneath Santa Rita was owned by the Kennecott Copper Corporation the company began to move the town to facilitate mine pit expansion in 1965 (Chinorama Staff 1965). Although the mine in Santa Rita has had several owners, over the years it has always been recognized by local people as the Chino Mine (Humble 2002). A distinctive element associated with mining in the Grant County region is the Kneeling Nun. A discussion of Santa Rita would not be complete without a discussion of the well-known Kneeling Nun.

The Kneeling Nun

The Kneeling Nun is revered as a sacred place and respected rock formation for local residents. It is geographically situated overlooking the large Santa Rita open mine pit and the daily mining operations. Although the economic base of the region has traditionally been mining, through time this activity has threatened the existence of the Kneeling Nun. The history of the Kneeling Nun dates back to the American Indians. Later Spanish and Mexican settlers created legends of the Kneeling Nun, explaining its origin. The Kneeling Nun was also respected as a safe keeper and protector of the mine laborers because of its geographic location overlooking the mining pit.

Due to the Kneeling Nun's close proximity overlooking the expansive Santa Rita mining pit, the rock formation has been at risk. The constant blasting involved in the open mining pit has led to the use of steel cables in recent years to hold up the Kneeling Nun. An interesting and important focal point of the community, the Kneeling Nun has been recognized by many people

that lived in the Santa Rita area and has come to be a symbolic representation of the community. The Mimbrenos and Apache Indians, the Spanish, the Mexican, and the Anglo community all have high regard for this special rock formation. The Kneeling Nun has been revered by some as holy, to some it represents the town, and others find it a beautiful component of the landscape. To many local residents, the Kneeling Nun serves as a symbol of the local region and protector of the miners who work in the Santa Rita mine.

There main legend, as explained by Lewis (1997), focuses on a nun who cared for a wounded Spanish soldier and tells a story of the couple's forbidden love. The nun was forced to leave her mission and was turned to stone while she kneeled and prayed atop the mountain for forgiveness, thus creating the rock formation in the shape of a kneeling nun. It was noted that some mine workers would only work within sight of the Kneeling Nun (Lewis 1997) and many would thank her for their protection at the end of a safe shift (Romo 1997).

Disputes over the Kneeling Nun between Chino Mines and the local union and residents have been ongoing since the late 1990s. In September 1997 as many as 100 people gathered at a town meeting to discuss the mining industry's threat to the rock formation (Ankrom 1997). Local protests, parades, and bumper stickers occurred in 1997 as union members and local residents rallied to "Save our Kneeling Nun" from destruction by the mining industry. This was the first of many attempts at organizing to protect the Kneeling Nun. In 1998 a California congressman worked to establish the Kneeling Nun as a national monument after Silver City residents asked that he take action towards preservation (Romo 1997). However, this effort was not successful.

In 1997, Chino Mines used motion sensors to check how the Kneeling Nun was being affected by mining and agreed to maintain a 400-acre buffer area around the Kneeling Nun (Romo 1997). The company wrote an open letter to Grant County citizens that appeared in *The Silver City Daily Press* in April 1998 indicating that that they were going protect the Kneeling Nun by minimizing seismic activity from blasting underneath the Kneeling Nun and securing it with cables.

Society for People Born in Space

The idea of a Society for People Born in Space (SPBS) was generated in the mid 1970s (Humble 2001). The term "Born in Space" arose from two NASA employees, (both from Santa Rita) who recognized that the town that they once loved and the ground that they once called home could only be described as "space." Once the Santa Rita mining pit expanded into the area

where the town once stood, it created a giant space or hole to facilitate further mine expansion. Harrison “Jack” Schmitt, an astronaut who walked on the moon in 1972, and Gilbert Moore, an Astro-Met Plant manager were both instrumental in helping to organize the society after learning that they were both born in the local Santa Rita Hospital. These two men designated the original criteria for belonging to the society: being born in the Santa Rita Hospital.

The original list of people “Born in Space” was based upon official records of births at the local Santa Rita Hospital. The formal criteria soon changed, however, as the organizers realized that many Santa Rita residents were born in Santa Rita but not all were born in the hospital (Humble 2002). Prior to the 1950s, it was common practice for Santa Rita babies to be born at home with a mid-wife, especially amongst the Hispanic³ population. Thus, the society began with more Anglo participants than Hispanic, however, more recently (the last 10 years), the society has come to include a greater number of Hispanic individuals from Santa Rita.

The SPBS is a way for former Santa Rita residents to keep in touch. According to Humble (2002) the move of the town occurred in several stages, beginning in the early 1950s, peaking in the 1960s, and tapering off in the 1970s. During the time of the move, the local newspaper printed a series of articles that outlined neighborhoods required to move and presented a timeline of when the people would move. During the 1960s, there were four designated areas required to move, one each year beginning in 1966, and ending in 1969 (Chinorama Staff 1965).

Born in Space History

Although the SPBS began in the 1970s, the first Born in Space Reunion wasn’t held until 1981. Annual reunions have occurred ever since except for the years 1993 and 1995 (Humble 2001). However, due to the serious downturn in the mining industry the last reunion occurred in the summer of 2000. The society also joined with the Hurley High School Reunion so both could meet at once. Hurley, a neighboring town of Santa Rita, is where local Santa Rita teenagers went to high school. Thus, many individuals who were born in space also attended Hurley High School.

As Andrew Guilliford recognized in the 1988 edition of “Society for People Born in Space,” the society serves a special role among former Santa Ritans. A feeling of community was evident when Santa Rita existed, and is illustrated by the existence of the society, as well as

³ The term “Hispanic” is used throughout this paper because it is the preferred term used by people of this ethnic background who live in the study site.

stories written about growing up in Santa Rita (Jones 1985). Today, SPBS continues to facilitate the community sentiment of Santa Rita among its former inhabitants (Guilliford 1988).

Methods

Data collection occurred during summer of 2000. Data collection methods consisted of key-informant interviews, surveys, a review of historic archival materials, secondary data collection, and non-participant observation⁴. Key-informant interviews were conducted with local people who were named by Santa Ritans as being knowledgeable about the community. The sampling frame for the survey consisted of an updated version of the 1989 mailing list for the SPBS. The original mailing list for the SPBS was 11 years old. Various old-timer individuals in the community reviewed the 11-year old list and helped to update addresses and indicate if any of the people on the list were no longer living. This was important since the study focused on an older population. Additionally, the list was updated by contacting Hispanic leaders in the local community who were aware of people who had lived in Santa Rita but whose names were not listed on the SPBS list. Our goal in creating a sampling frame was to maximize the number of Santa Ritans on the list, including those who were not born in the Santa Rita hospital.

A household survey consisting of 27 questions was created. Residents were mailed a version of the survey in both Spanish and English due to the large number of Hispanics who live in the local area. The survey consisted of two pages and took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey was sent to residents on the sampling frame list along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. The survey asked basic sociodemographic information as well as questions on community attachment and local community interaction.

Data and Discussion

Key-informant Interviews

Seven key-informant interviews were conducted in June 2000. Informants were chosen amongst people who were named by local residents as being knowledgeable about Santa Rita.

⁴ One of the researchers lived, worked and interacted with people from Santa Rita in the “mining district” for a period of three years.

Six key-informants were male (85.7%) and one informant was female (14.3%). The preponderance of male informants was explained by the fact that local residents named them more often as being knowledgeable about the community. Four of the informants were Hispanic (57.1%) and three informants were Anglo (42.9%). Interviews were conducted in either Spanish or English, depending on the preference of the informant. The mean age of informants was 60.

Table 3: Key Informant Sociodemographics

N=7				
Occupation	Sex	Ethnicity	Age	Length of Residence
Business Owner	Male	Anglo	61	N/A
Equipment Repair	Male	Anglo	58	50
Retired	Male	Hispanic	76	68
Retired	Male	Hispanic	64	20
Nuclear Physics	Male	Anglo	75	75
Postal Service	Male	Hispanic	68	68
Homemaker	Female	Hispanic	80	70

The interviews consisted of 25 questions regarding the Santa Rita community, concerning what the informant felt regarding the community and some demographic questions. Some central questions from the interview were: What do you remember about the community of Santa Rita?; How do you define community?; Did you consider yourself a part of the Santa Rita community when you lived in Santa Rita?; and do you still consider yourself a part of the Santa Rita community? The topics of these questions are most relevant to this paper even though the interviews produced a wealth of other information. Individual responses for each question were coded by topic.

Key-Informant Results

As previously noted, the key-informant interviews produced an immense amount of information. The key-informants spent many of their years growing up in Santa Rita, as is indicated by the number of years they spent living in Santa Rita (see Table 3). The mean length of residence is 58.5 years, and key-informants discussed their experiences as youth in Santa Rita, as young adults and as adults.

Santa Rita Memories

When asked what they remembered about Santa Rita, as many as six of the seven key-informants (85.7%) discussed positive community relationships. Such discussions focused on the closeness of the community and the friendliness it entailed. One informant mentioned that the “community was just like a family.” While other informants did not relate Santa Rita to a family, the sense of their hospitality towards one another was apparent. Informants used words

like “friendly,” “tight knit,” and “respect” for one another to describe social relationships in the community.

In response to the same question discussed above, some informants focused on segregation. Three key-informants (42.9%) said that the town was segregated. Hispanic informants mentioned segregation more often than Anglo informants. Two of the four Hispanic informants (50%) mentioned segregation while only one of the three Anglo informants (33.3%) discussed segregation of the town. The topic was discussed in terms of Mexican and Anglo division. The Anglos lived on the “west side” of town in neighborhoods like “Ball Park.” Despite the differences between the two segments of the population, each considered his or her ethnic group part of the town and had the same positive remarks regarding the closeness of the community.

The topic of the mine and/or company was discussed among four of the seven informants (57.1%). The mine appeared to be viewed as both a positive and negative aspect of the town. One informant mentioned that “everybody worked at the mine, they made the community.” It was also mentioned that Santa Rita was a “typical mining town owned and operated by a company... The company had a say so in everything.” While the company provided much needed work for the Santa Rita residents, it also appears that the company controlled almost all aspects of the town, further facilitating the ethnic inequality in the community. One key-informant indicated that the company had distinct job differences as well as two separate payrolls for the Anglo employees and the Hispanic employees. An informant reported “the bathrooms were segregated.” Another informant mentioned that living conditions were affected by the inequality at work as well. Because “it was segregated . . . [the] white community had better homes... These homes were unreachable” for the Hispanic community. This segregation therefore pervaded all aspects of local life from lodging to sanitation, wages and type of mining occupation.

It is important to note that the topic of the mine was addressed by three of the four Hispanic informants (75%) while only one of the three Anglo informants (33%) mentioned the company. Hispanic informants discussed the mine in greater detail and related how they were personally affected. The Anglo informant discussed the fact that “Kennecott built the school and owned it.” While this did not elicit a lengthy discussion of the mine it does show that the informant recognized the power and important role that the company played in the small town.

Community

When asked to define community, the word "together" was used in five of the seven (71.4%) descriptions. Answers varied, but the explanation of doing things together was described in a few different ways. Informants noted "we get together," "residents... do things together," and "people being together," as their personal definitions of community. Interestingly, informants also tended to give other examples of interaction from life in Santa Rita that included "dances" and the "pool hall."

Almost all informants considered themselves a part of the community. Only one (14.3%) key-informant did not consider himself a part of Santa Rita because he had limited interaction with people from the community. When asked why they considered themselves part of the community informants gave two main responses. Three informants (42.9%) noted the idea of roots through the referral to place. Additionally, two informants (28.6%) mentioned parent(s) as a reason why they felt a part of the community. Their parents were from Santa Rita. This kinship link created a feeling of connection to the community. The same percentages were reflected when asked whether the informants still consider themselves a part of Santa Rita. Six informants (85.7%) still consider themselves a part of the community today while one (14.3%) does not.

Santa Rita Household Survey

In total, 711 surveys were mailed out; 281 were completed for a response rate of 39.5 percent. Table 4 summarizes the sociodemographic data about the survey respondents.

The mean age of the survey sample was 65.3 years old. A larger number of females completed our survey than males at 52.2 percent and 47.8 percent respectively. Respondents had a mean length of residence in Santa Rita of 16.9 years. Almost one-quarter (23.1%) of the sample are high school graduates. A little over one-third (36.8%) had at least a college education; 21.3 percent reported education or training beyond a basic college degree. The mean income of the survey sample was \$37,999.88. Over one-half (57.4%) reported White as their ethnicity and 40.8 percent reported Hispanic as their ethnicity.

Table 4: Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristic	Value
Sex	
% Female	52.2
% Male	47.8
Ethnicity	
% Anglo	57.4
% Hispanic	40.8
Education	
% did not complete high school	12.3
% high school graduate	23.1
% some college or vocational school	27.8
% college graduate	15.5
% graduate or professional training beyond college degree	21.3
Length of Residence	16.91
Mean household income	\$37,999.88
Mean Age	65.29

A Close Community

Respondents were asked to report how close the community of Santa Rita was when they lived there. On a five point scale ranging from very close to very distant, the majority reported that the community was close. The following table summarizes the results of this question.

Table 5. Community Closeness N=210⁵		
	Frequency	Percent
Very close	132	62.9
Somewhat close	60	28.6
Neutral	15	7.1
Somewhat distant	2	1.0
Very distant	1	0.5
Total	210	100.0

Over one-half (62.9%) reported that Santa Rita was "very close" when they were living there. Almost one-third (28.6%) reported that the town was "somewhat close" when living there. This left only 7.1 percent to report that the community was "neutral," neither close or distant. One percent reported "somewhat distant" and 0.5 percent reported "very distant." This shows that the majority of respondents felt a significant level of community cohesion in Santa Rita.

⁵ The number of responses (N) differs for each of the tables presented due to missing data.

Community Attachment

Two questions were asked regarding whether respondents considered themselves a part of Santa Rita in the past as well as in the present. These questions attempted to measure the community feeling over times. The following table summarizes the two questions.

Table 6 shows that over three-quarters (80.3%) considered themselves a part of Santa Rita when they were growing up. Over one-half (64.5%) reported that they still consider themselves a part of Santa Rita today.

Table 6. Community Feeling Among Respondents		
Past community attachment	Frequency	Percent
A part of Santa Rita when growing up	200	80.3
Not a part of Santa Rita when growing up	49	19.7
Total	249	100.0
Current Community Attachment	Frequency	Percent
A part of Santa Rita today	171	64.5
Not a part of Santa Rita today	94	35.5
Total	265	100.0

In order to know why some respondents still feel a part of the community and why others do not, they were asked to explain why they did or did not still consider themselves a part of Santa Rita. The following table displays the different types of responses for this question.

Table 7: Community Attachment Reasons N= 222		
Responses	Frequency	Percent
Birthplace	33	14.9
Strength of Community	32	14.4
Lived elsewhere longer	31	14.0
Family history	24	10.8
Town does not exist today	23	10.4
Keep in contact other residents	21	9.5
Other	19	8.6
Memories	18	8.1
Never lived in Santa Rita	16	7.2
Too young to remember Santa Rita	5	2.3
Total	222	100.0

As Table 7 shows, reasons such as family history, birthplace, close contact with others from Santa Rita, and community cohesion were all cited as reasons for still feeling a connection to Santa Rita. The most often cited reason (14.9 %) why respondents still felt a part of the community was because Santa Rita was their place of birth. Answers varied from the simple and direct, "I was born and raised in Santa Rita," to others that offered more detail, "I was born there

[Santa Rita] and what I remember lives in my heart. Friends and family still live in surrounding areas."

The responses categorized as "birthplace" all stated that the respondent was born in Santa Rita. This focus provides the sense of community that the respondents still hold based on birthplace. One respondent explained, "It was a part of where I lived, who I know, what my father did for a living. I was born there. The town no longer exists. The community is frozen in time." Another respondent explained the strong connection still felt, despite the many years that had passed since his home was in Santa Rita:

Being that I was born in Santa Rita and the fact that I keep coming back 4 times a year and the fond memories I have of my childhood in Santa Rita and Hanover where I lived until 1953 I consider myself a part of that community. I feel homesick at times even after having lived in California for over 46 years. I thank God for having been born in Santa Rita and being able to drive there 4 times a year. I go in the spring, summer, fall and winter.

Respondents discussed the strength, the bond, and the closeness that the community shared in reference to community strength. Strength of community was cited by 14.4 percent of the sample, as another common reason for feeling a part of the community.

Santa Rita is HOME. Because it was destroyed as a community and yet still there does make the memories even more special and its history very unique. To my knowledge all other people who have totally lost their communities it has been from a negative cause. Santa Rita's destroyer is from the source that supported the families, educated the children, built our churches, supplied our recreation, took care of our health and birthed our new citizens and buried our dead. As years passed the economies, culture, and politics greatly changed our lives, but we have stayed special and close. My death plans are written and paid for and my family is in agreement and it gives me comfort to know my ashes will be scattered at Santa Rita. Yes, I am still an active member of the Santa Rita community.

As this example illustrates, references to community tended to be more lengthy and descriptive overall than those that referred to birthplace. The strong sense of attachment and reverence for the respondent's hometown is conveyed by a wish to have his or her ashes scattered over Santa Rita.

Some stated "feel strong bond" or "because we're a close community" in response to why respondents felt a part of the community. As one respondent noted, "Our whole existence was contained in a small area and to all of us it was 'home.'" This statement gives a sense of how important Santa Rita still is to its former inhabitants. Deep admiration for the community was expressed through respondents' statements of love for their old town: "The love and family atmosphere of belong[ing] to the Santa Rita community never leaves you until you die. It was a very special place." This quote expresses a strong feeling of community attachment, as this

community feeling is expected to persist beyond mortal existence. Some respondents stated that they felt the community feeling would never leave them: "We will always be a part of the Santa Rita community. It is part of us and we are part of them." Another respondent with a similar statement explained that now "we are a lot closer ... Santa Rita is like the glue to our bond with the rest" of the community.

Community Interaction

In order to gain an understanding of people's connection to community we also examined patterns of community interaction. The following table summarizes the level of interaction while living in Santa Rita that respondents reported.

Over three-quarters (77.8%) reported that they interacted "everyday" with community members while living in Santa Rita and 14.2% reported that they interacted "more than once a week." Only 8 percent of the sample reported less frequent levels of community interactions ranging from "once a week" to "never."

Table 8. Interaction Levels When Living in Santa Rita N=212

	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	165	77.8
More than once a week	30	14.2
Once a week	2	0.9
A few times a month	3	1.4
A few times a year	1	0.5
Never	11	5.2
Total	212	100.0

The following table presents the level of interaction among respondents while living in Santa Rita with different ethnicities.

Table 9. Interaction Among Different Ethnicities N=226

	Frequency	Percent
All of the time	90	39.8
Often	58	25.7
Sometimes	36	15.9
Very little	33	14.6
Never	9	4.0
Total	226	100.0

Table 9 shows that more than one-third of the respondents (39.8%) reported interacting with different ethnicities all of the time. One-quarter (25.7%) reported that they interacted with different ethnicities often. Fewer respondents reported interacting sometimes (15.9%) and very little (14.6%). Only four percent reported never interacting with someone of a different ethnic background. Therefore it was quite common for residents in Santa Rita to interact with people from different ethnic backgrounds.

The following table represents the level of interaction that respondents reported among others from Santa Rita today.

Table 10. Current Interaction Levels Among Santa Ritans N=245

	Frequency	Percent
Everyday	40	16.3
More than once a week	34	13.9
Once a week	12	4.9
A few times a month	32	13.1
Once a month	7	2.9
A few times a year	34	13.9
Every year	12	4.9
Every couple of years	36	14.7
Never	38	15.5
Total	245	100.0

The levels of interaction today among former Santa Ritans is not as high as it was when the town existed. The most common responses were "everyday" (16.3%) and "never" (15.5%). These two responses are completely opposite and illustrate the variety of interaction amongst Santa Ritans. This illustrates that the respondents were equally divided among high levels of interaction and low levels of interaction.

Respondents were also asked about their level of community involvement in the town where they currently reside. Interestingly, respondents reported moderate levels of interaction in their local communities today. The following table displays the level of interaction respondents reported in their local communities today.

Table 11. Level of Involvement in Current Community N=265

	Frequency	Percent
Very active	46	17.4
Active	90	34.0
Somewhat active	63	23.8
Not very active	41	15.5
Not at all active	25	9.4
Total	265	100.0

Just as former Santa Ritans have displayed significant levels of interaction with each other, their current levels of involvement within their present communities is significant as well. Most respondents reported that they were "active" (34%) and "somewhat active" (23.8%) in their local communities. About one-quarter (25.3%) reported that they are a "not very active" or "not at all active" in their current community.

Santa Rita Neighborhoods

Although Santa Rita existed as one community, the notion of neighborhood was also key to the strength of local community interaction. Respondents were asked to list the neighborhood they lived in when living in Santa Rita. Table 12 shows the neighborhoods that were listed by respondents.

Table 12. Neighborhoods N=151

	Frequency	Percent
Booth Hill	19	12.6
Ballpark	14	9.3
Booth Hill/ Ballpark	7	4.6
El Canyon	18	11.9
Downtown	14	9.3
El Espinazo Del Diablo	11	7.3
Santa Rita Hill	15	9.9
Iron Hill	6	4.0
Barrio De La Iglesia	8	5.3
Casas Nuevos	6	4.0
Hurley	5	3.3
Other	28	18.5
Total	151	100.0

The most common neighborhood reported was Booth Hill by 12.6 percent. El Canyon was also frequently reported by 11.9 percent and Santa Rita Hill by 9.9 percent. Fewer than ten percent reported that they lived in Ballpark (9.3%) and Downtown (9.3%). Santa Rita neighborhoods were not integrated by any means. According to key-informants and historian Terry Humble (2002) Anglos lived on the west side of town and Hispanics on the east. Booth Hill, Ballpark, Downtown were inhabited by the company bosses and Anglo community. Santa Rita Hill and Iron Hill are recognized as the same neighborhood and served as the dividing line; Anglos lived on the west and Hispanics on the east. The neighborhoods known as the barrios, El Canyon, El Espinazo del Diablo, Barrio de la Iglesia, and Casas Nuevos, were inhabited by the Hispanic community. Those who did not live in Santa Rita directly after their birth were asked to list the town lived in after they were born. The following table summarizes this question.

Table 13. Residence After Birth (Other than Santa Rita) N=116

	Frequency	Percent
Hurley	47	40.5
Bayard	16	13.8
Other	53	45.7
Total	116	100.0

Most respondents that did not live in Santa Rita after birth listed Hurley (40.5%) as their residence after birth. Many listed various towns that did not constitute a single category but a

number of differing areas. Bayard was also cited by 13.8 percent as respondents' residence after birth.

Because we were interested in the current lives of past Santa Rita residents we asked a question concerning current place of residence. While many still live in New Mexico, even more live in other parts of the United States. The following table describes where respondents are now living.

Table14. Current Residence N=277		
	Frequency	Percent
Silver City	40	14.4
Bayard	40	14.4
Hurley	13	4.7
Other, NM	76	27.4
Other, US	108	39.0
Total	277	100.0

As the Table 14 shows, many respondents (39%) live outside New Mexico. Of the respondents that still reside in New Mexico, many moved away from the Santa Rita area. Almost one-third (27.4%) reported living in a variety of areas in New Mexico, outside the local area. An equal number reported living in Silver City (14.4%) and Bayard (14.4%). The respondents who do live outside New Mexico live in a variety of areas within the United States. These states are summarized below.

Table 15. Respondents Living Outside New Mexico in Percentages N=108		
	Frequency	Percent
Alaska	1	0.9
Arizona	23	22.2
Arkansas	2	1.9
California	36	33.3
Colorado	3	2.8
Connecticut	1	0.9
Florida	2	1.9
Kansas	3	2.8
Michigan	1	0.9
Missouri	2	1.9
Montana	1	0.9
Oregon	1	0.9
Pennsylvania	1	0.9
Tennessee	1	0.9
Texas	23	22.2
Virginia	2	1.9
Washington	2	1.9
Wyoming	1	0.9
Total	108	100.0

The most common state that respondents reported living in was California. More than one-third (33.3%) reported that a California town was their current place of residence. Respondents equally reported Arizona and Texas at 22.2 percent.

The Mine in Santa Rita

Clearly the mine played a large role in the employment of Santa Ritans. The following table presents the number of respondents that reported their family had worked for the mine and the number of relatives that worked for the mine.

Table 16. Family Mine Employment

	Frequency	Percent
Family members worked for mine	224	88.2
Family members did not work for mine	30	11.8
Total	254	100.0
Number of family members	Frequency	Percent
0	9	3.6
1	166	67.2
2	33	13.4
3	13	5.3
4	12	4.9
5	9	3.6
6	1	0.4
7	4	1.6
Total	247	100.0

As many as 88.2 percent reported that their family had worked for the mine. This left a little over 10 percent (11.8%) who reported that their family did not work for the mine. Over one-half (67.2%) reported that one family member worked for the mine. Over 10 percent (13.4%) indicated that 2 family members worked for the mining company. The following table shows the different types of family members who worked for the mine.

Table 17. Type of Family Members that Worked for Mine N=255

	Frequency	Percent
Father	221	86.7
Brother	30	11.8
Uncle	26	10.2
Grandfather	22	9.0
Husband	13	5.1
Cousin	9	3.9
Other ⁶	22	9.0

*Percent totals do not equal 100 percent. Respondents were provided the opportunity to list more than one relative.

⁶ This category includes both male and female family members that worked for the mine. Females (mother, sister, aunt, etc.) constituted 3.9% of this category.

Most respondents (86.7%) reported that their father had worked for the mine. Having had a brother work for the mine was noted by 11.8 percent and uncle was noted by 10.2 percent. We gave respondents the opportunity to list other occupations. Table 18 lists other types of employment reported by residents of Santa Rita when they resided in the community.

Table 18. Other Occupations in Percentages N=67

	Frequency	Percent
Construction	3	4.5
Kennecot Copper Company	8	11.9
Business Owner	8	11.9
Professional	10	14.9
Ranching	7	10.4
Mining	9	13.4
Other	22	32.8
Total	67	100.0

Being a professional in Santa Rita was reported by 14.9 percent of the respondents. Examples of types of professionals listed include teachers, doctors and lawyers. Mining was also reported by 13.4 percent. Kennecot Copper Company was noted as an employer by 11.9 percent of the respondents. Kennecot Copper was a mining company just outside of Santa Rita. It is difficult to analyze the responses that simply listed "mining" and "Kennecott Copper" without producing further details because it is unknown whether respondents did mining work for the company or may have been employed by the company store, for example. Kennecott was also a partial owner of the Santa Rita mine for a number of years. The discussion of employment often led to the discussion of the Kneeling Nun, due to its location over the Santa Rita mine.

The Kneeling Nun

Besides the Kneeling Nun's connection to the mine, the community members also expressed that the Kneeling Nun has many different levels of importance to them. Respondents were asked whether the Kneeling Nun was considered a part of the community. The following table presents the results of this question.

Table 19. Is the Kneeling Nun a Part of Santa Rita? N=257

	Frequency	Percent
Kneeling Nun is a part of Santa Rita	217	84.4
Kneeling Nun is not a part of Santa Rita	7	2.7
Don't know if Kneeling Nun is part of Santa Rita	33	12.8
Total	257	100.0

As many as 84.4 percent reported that the Kneeling Nun is a part of the community. Over 10 percent (12.8%) reported that they did not know if the Kneeling Nun is part of Santa Rita. Very few (2.7%) reported that the Kneeling Nun is not a part of the community.

Respondents were also asked whether they felt the Kneeling Nun was important to the community of Santa Rita. Table 20 summarizes what respondents reported.

Table 20. Importance of Kneeling Nun to the Community N=254		
	Frequency	Percent
Kneeling Nun is important to community	213	83.9
Kneeling Nun is not important to community	4	1.6
Don't know if Kneeling Nun is important to community	37	14.6
Total	254	100.0

The majority of respondents (83.9%) reported that the Kneeling Nun is important to the community of Santa Rita. As many as 14.6 percent did not know if the Kneeling Nun is important to the community. Reasons that respondents listed for why the Kneeling Nun is or is not important to the community are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21. Community Importance of the Kneeling Nun N=180		
	Frequency	Percent
It is a landmark	41	22.8
Symbol of the town	28	15.6
Folklore	21	11.7
Other	21	11.7
Religious meaning	21	11.1
Historical importance	15	8.3
Environmental and/or emotional attachment	12	6.7
The town no longer exists	9	5.0
Memories	9	5.0
Recreation	4	2.2
Total	180	100.0

Most frequently cited for why the Kneeling Nun holds community importance was that it is a landmark of the town, by 22.8 percent. Being a symbol of the town was the also commonly discussed, by 15.6 percent. Five percent discussed the fact that the town no longer exists. Some of these responses were made by respondents that did feel the Kneeling Nun is important to the community as well as by others who did not feel that Kneeling Nun was important to the community.

Some respondents (5%) recounted and explained how memories made the Kneeling Nun important to the community. The Kneeling Nun was a feature of the community shared by the community:

So many memories. We always check to see if the (our) Kneeling Nun is still there. This is difficult to explain. Something you just grew up with in Santa Rita. I once hiked to the base of the Kneeling Nun. I think we established a protectiveness. At one time, we found out that the blasting in the pit caused the Kneeling Nun to slide out of its original

place. There was a lot of concern. If I remember correctly, the mining co. did something to stabilize it. Anyway, we always check when we are there.

Even though the Kneeling Nun is thought to watch over the town, this respondent explained how the community watched over the Kneeling Nun. The community worked together to ensure that it would be protected.

Folklore was cited by as many as 11.7 percent as a reason why the Kneeling Nun holds community importance. One respondent concisely explained that "Every child growing up in the surrounding communities knew the romantic story of this tragic love affair and dreamed the dreams of such deep and abiding love." The love the community has for the Kneeling Nun seems evident in such statements.

Respondents were asked whether they felt the Kneeling Nun rock formation held personal importance for them. Table 22 presents how respondents answered this question.

Table 22. Keeling Nun's Importance in Percentages N=254		
	Frequency	Percent
Personal importance	214	84.4
No personal importance	24	9.3
Don't know	16	6.3
Total	254	100.0

An overwhelming majority (84.4%) reported that Kneeling Nun has personal importance. Less than 10 percent (9.3%) reported that the Kneeling Nun does not have personal importance and only 6.3 percent reported that they did not know. Table 23 presents the reasons respondents listed for why the Kneeling Nun has personal importance and why the Kneeling Nun does not have personal importance.

Table 23: Personal Importance of the Kneeling Nun N=215		
Responses	Frequency	Percent
It is a landmark	49	22.8
It brings back memories	31	14.4
The folklore	24	11.2
It is a symbol of the town	24	11.2
Recreational uses	16	7.4
It has historical importance	16	7.4
Environmental and/or emotional attachment	16	7.4
It has religious meaning	13	6.0
No personal connection	12	5.6
Other	12	5.6
The town no longer exists	2	0.9
Total	215	100.0

The Kneeling Nun was reported to be a landmark by 22.8 percent, which was the most common reason listed for why the Kneeling Nun is important to the community. The Kneeling

Nun was also reported to be a symbol that represents the town by 15.6 percent of the respondents. A small portion (0.9%) reported that the town no longer exists.

From the explanations given, the Kneeling Nun is difficult to separate from the community. Respondents were asked a close-ended question "Is the Kneeling Nun important to you personally?" Almost all respondents agreed that the Kneeling Nun holds personal importance. As previously noted, the Kneeling Nun is revered by those who live in its surrounding areas and is reflected by the majority of responses to this question. Respondents revealed exactly why the rock formation holds so much meaning to them in the follow-up question that asked: "Why or why not?"

Memories were commonly cited as reasons for the personal significance, reported by 14.4 percent of the sample. One respondent noted that the Kneeling Nun "reminds me of home, as we lived there many years." This is simply put, but the message is clear. Even though the town is gone, it remains the place Santa Ritans refer to as "home." As one respondent explained: "The Kneeling Nun was part of my life as a child. When I played outside or rode in the car I saw the Kneeling Nun. The best way I can describe it is it was like a focal point, a landmark."

The Kneeling Nun serves as a reminder of Santa Rita and of local recreation opportunities. One respondent recalled, "It is very important. I have fond memories of hiking and finding some swimming holes there. Also, when I was very young, I truly believed the legend was true to fact. It is spiritual and I love it." The Kneeling Nun is well known for its folklore and religious significance.

Kneeling Nun As A Symbol

Nearly a quarter of the respondents wrote that the Kneeling Nun was a landmark that deserved recognition. Responses showed that the Kneeling Nun was easily recognized and revered by many local people in the area. One respondent explained that "It's a beautiful landmark that I spent my youth climbing and gazing at." The previous quote shows an attachment to the Kneeling Nun based around interaction and recreation. Another respondent noted, "It's a landmark and the only thing besides the pit left of Santa Rita."

Many respondents explained that the Kneeling Nun was more than just a landmark, it was symbolic of the community. Since the town is now gone, the Kneeling Nun has developed an even greater significance as socio-geographic feature for Santa Ritans. Descriptions of symbolism were noted by 11.2 percent of respondents. One respondent clearly summarized what many others explained with, "It represents a wonderful community that exists only in our

collective memory!" Still another said, "It represents the town- it is the icon of Santa Rita and even Grant County." Respondents noted that the town may be gone, but the Kneeling Nun is a never-ending reminder of what once existed below it. According to another respondent the Kneeling Nun is important "because it is part of the community of Santa Rita." This statement reflects that idea that for many locals, the community of Santa Rita continues to exist in the symbol of the Kneeling Nun.

Similarly, a different respondent noted, "It represents the family and community of Santa Rita." Here, the use of the present tense indicates a feeling that the community currently exists. The Kneeling Nun has importance to one respondent "because it represents a land mark of the town where I was born, and most of all, it's a beautiful mountain. It's our mother." Still another respondent noted, "It's a symbol of pride to our family." These quotes indicate the connection between symbolism and the family. As the mother of the town, the Kneeling Nun serves as another connection between its community members.

Some responses were not specific as to the role the Kneeling Nun played in the community, but explained that the Kneeling Nun had a special place in the heart of the individual. A smaller number of respondents, 7.4 percent, noted emotional and/or environmental attachment to the Kneeling Nun. According to one respondent the Kneeling Nun "gives the old heart strings a tug each time I see it." This kind of attachment was displayed in other categories, but a few respondents were very specific in how the Kneeling Nun made them feel: "Gives a sense of stability - emotionally since it's thought that it will always be there." This kind of personal importance is revealing because the respondents display individual attachment to what they consider a special place. One respondent explained: "She's special. She's always been there and is a part of me and she should always be there. They can dig somewhere else."

Even though the town is already gone the controversy continues as to whether the mining should continue. The Kneeling Nun is clearly respected, revered, and served as a focal point to remember the town. Attachment to the Kneeling Nun is personally significant to the Santa Rita community. Although the houses, stores, and hospital are gone the special rock formation remains, now overlooking the open-pit mine, the space previously occupied by the town.

Conclusion

Results from this study demonstrate that the community of people who were “Born in Space” is alive and well. Community existence is suggested by the fact that so many of the ex-Santa Ritans continue to interact with one another despite non-existence of a physical community, consisting of buildings, schools, churches and athletic fields.

Results from key-informant interviews and surveys suggest that community exists. Past community members with high levels of involvement had a tendency to continue their involvement with others from Santa Rita despite the physical non-existence of the community. Even though those who used to share the boundaries of Santa Rita have new homes in different locations, they still consider Santa Rita a community to which they belong. Thus, the Santa Rita residents have demonstrated that community cannot be defined merely by limited geographical boundaries. Community exists for the residents of Santa Rita today because they still interact with one another.

Anytime one speaks with an ex-Santa Rita resident, the feeling of community shared by these individuals who were "Born in Space" is evident. It is also demonstrated through the persistent patterns of social interaction that occur annually through the SPBS reunions. Non-participant observation conducted in the mining district over a period of 3 years also suggested that many residents attend the funerals of other Santa Rita residents even if they were not particularly close friends with these individuals.

This common local practice is also an expression of honoring community. This study offers support and hope for the resilience of local, rural communities. It is comforting to know that despite changing economic times and shifting demographic patterns, Santa Ritans still take the time and effort to interact socially with one another and therefore to maintain a sense of community. People who were "Born In Space" have taken great strides to ensure the survival and vitality of Santa Rita. Viva Santa Rita, the community lives!

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