

# Juan B. Rael Collection

AFC 1940/002

Prepared by Robin Fanslow



American Folklife Center, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

September 2000

Encoded by Nora Yeh, 2000 ; Revised by  
Nora Yeh

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/eadafc.af999001>

Latest revision: August 2009

# Collection Summary

Call No.: AFC 1940/002

Creator: Rael, Juan Bautista

Title: Juan B. Rael Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1939-1999

Bulk Date: 1940

Contents: 3 boxes containing manuscripts, sound recordings, graphic materials, published materials, and electronic media.

Repository: Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: This ethnographic field collection documents the musical heritage and Catholic religious and cultural traditions of the Hispano residents of the portion of the northern Rio Grande region spanning northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. It contains sound recordings of *alabados* (hymns), folk drama, wedding songs, and dance tunes performed by various artists singing a cappella and performing on fiddle, guitar, and harmonica, collected by Juan B. Rael in 1940. The collection includes correspondence with Alan Lomax and others at the Library of Congress (1939-1941), administrative materials, and recording logs. It also includes song transcriptions and translations and materials generated in the process of creating an American Memory online presentation in 1999, with essays and a glossary by Enrique R. Lamadrid. Languages: Collection material in English and Spanish.

## Collection Concordance by Format

Quantity	Physical Description/Version	Location/I.D. Numbers
Manuscript Materials		
21	folders	
Sound Recordings		
36	12-inch acetate-on-aluminum discs	AFS 3905-3940 (original field recordings)
5	10-inch DT reels	LWO 4872: reels 255-259 (preservation copies)
4	DAT Tapes	Made in the digital conversion process
Graphic Images		
1	black-and-white photoprint	AFC 1940/002:P1
1	copy negative	AFC 1940/002:P1-p1
Electronic Media		
6	3.5-inch computer diskettes	Documents generated during collection processing as well as documents/files used to build the online presentation plus backup copies
1	CD-ROM	Scanned images of manuscript items used in the online presentation

# Administrative Information

## Provenance

Juan B. Rael Collection was given to the Archive of American Folk Song (now the Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center) by Rael in 1940. During the digital conversion process in 1998 and 1999, additional materials, including reprint journal articles, transcriptions, translations, and contextual essays by Enrique R. Lamadrid, were added to the collection.

## Processing History

Robin Fanslow arranged and processed this collection. She curated the online presentation and prepared the collection guide for all original and additional materials in June 1999. Nora Yeh encoded this finding aid under the guidance of Mary Lacy.

## Location

Although American Folklife Center is the custodial division of this collection, the original 36 12-inch acetate-on-aluminum discs (AFS 3905-3940) and the 5 10-inch preservation reel-to-reel tape copes (LWO 4872: reels 255-259) are stored in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress. Reference copies of audio materials and all other collection materials are housed in the AFC.

## Access

Listening and viewing access to the collection is unrestricted. Listening copies of the recordings are available at the Folklife Reading Room, many are also online.

## Restrictions

Restrictions may apply concerning the use, duplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a reference librarian in the Folklife Reading Room for specific information about this collection.

## Electronic Format

An online version of this collection, including essays in English and in Spanish and a bibliography and glossary, titled "Hispano Music and Culture of the Northern Rio Grande: The Juan B. Rael Collection" is available as an American Memory online resource compiled by the American Folklife Center and the National Digital Library Program of the Library of Congress.

See "*Hispano Music and Culture of the Northern Rio Grande: The Juan B. Rael Collection*" at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/collafc.af000001> which includes information about ordering audio and photographic reproductions.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Juan B. Rael Collection (AFC 1940/002), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress.

# The Collector

Linguist and folklorist Juan Bautista Rael, highly regarded for his pioneering work in collecting and documenting the Hispano folk stories, plays, and religious traditions of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, was born on August 14, 1900, in Arroyo Hondo, New Mexico. His bachelor's degree, from St. Mary's College in Oakland in 1923, led to a master's degree from the University of California at Berkeley in 1927. After deciding on a university career of teaching and research, Rael relinquished his family inheritance in land, cattle, and sheep to his three brothers and his

sister. He had realized that the wealth in northern New Mexico that most interested him was the vast repertoire of folk narrative, song, and custom that had scarcely been documented.

While teaching at the University of Oregon, Rael returned to Arroyo Hondo in the summer of 1930 to begin compiling his famous collection of over five hundred New Mexican folk tales. By then his work had attracted the attention of pioneer Hispano folklorist and mentor Aurelio Espinosa, who invited Rael to Stanford in 1933. Rael completed his doctoral studies in 1937 with a dissertation on the phonology and morphology of New Mexico Spanish that amplified the dialectological work of Espinosa with the huge corpus of folk tales, later published as *Cuentos Españoles de Colorado y Nuevo Mexico: Spanish Folk Tales of Colorado and New Mexico*.

Well-versed in the historic-geographic theory of transmission and diffusion of motifs, tale types, and genres, Rael set out on the formidable, almost quixotic task of gathering all the possible versions and texts of the tales, hymns, and plays he was studying. The vast majority of tales are of European provenance, with only minimal local references. He meticulously traced the shepherds' plays to several root sources in Mexico, and his study *The Sources and Diffusion of the Mexican Shepherds' Plays* is a standard reference on the subject. His ground-breaking study of the *alabado* hymn, *The New Mexican Alabado*, is also a prime resource. Inevitably the text-centered historic-geographic approach led more to collection building than to analysis. It has been left to later generations of scholars to develop performance-centered studies, but the collections of Juan B. Rael continue to be an indispensable landmark in the field.

Note: This biography was excerpted from an essay by Enrique R. Lamadrid. For further information on the collector and the collection, see the framing essays written by Lamadrid to accompany the online presentation *Hispano Music and Culture of the Northern Rio Grande: The Juan B. Rael Collection*. See Folder #16 below.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Personal Names

Lamadrid, Enrique R.  
Lamadrid, Enrique R.--Correspondence.  
Lomax, Alan, 1915-2002--Correspondence.  
Rael, Juan Bautista, collector.  
Rael, Juan Bautista--Correspondence.  
Rael, Juan Bautista--Ethnomusicological collections.

### Organizations

American Folklife Center.  
Archive of Folk Song (U.S.), collector.  
Library of Congress. National Digital Library Program.

### Subjects

Alabados.  
Christmas plays, Spanish--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Coplas--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Dance music--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Decimas, Spanish American--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Fiddle tunes--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Field recordings--Colorado.  
Field recordings--New Mexico.  
Folk drama, Hispanic American (Spanish)--Rio Grande Valley Region.

Folk music--Colorado.  
Folk music--New Mexico.  
Folk music--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Folk songs, Spanish--Colorado.  
Folk songs, Spanish--New Mexico.  
Hispanic American Catholics--Rio Grande Valley Region--Social life and customs.  
Hispanic Americans--Colorado--Music.  
Hispanic Americans--New Mexico--Music.  
Hispanic Americans--Rio Grande Valley Region--Music.  
Hymns, Spanish--Colorado.  
Hymns, Spanish--New Mexico.  
Marches--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
New Year music.  
Posadas (Social custom)--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Recitations.  
Spanish Americans--Rio Grande Valley Region--Music.  
Spanish Americans--Rio Grande Valley Region--Religion.  
Waltz--Rio Grande Valley Region.  
Wedding music--Rio Grande Valley Region.

#### Related Title

*Hispano music and culture of the Northern Rio Grande.*

#### Forms of Material

Correspondence.  
Field recordings.  
Manuscripts.  
Photographs.  
Sound recordings.

## Scope and Content Note

Juan B. Rael Collection comprises multi-format ethnographic field documentation of religious and secular music of Spanish-speaking residents of rural Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado. It contains correspondence, administrative materials, recording logs, song transcriptions and translations, and materials generated in the process of creating the online presentation.

In 1940, Juan Bautista Rael of Stanford University, a native of Arroyo Hondo, New Mexico, used disc recording equipment supplied by the Archive of American Folk Song (now the Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center) to document *alabados* (hymns), folk drama, wedding songs, and dance tunes in Alamosa, Manassa, and Antonito, Colorado, and in Cerro and Arroyo Hondo, New Mexico. These efforts resulted in approximately 650 pages of print material including correspondence, recording logs, song text transcriptions, excerpts from publications, and 8 hours of audio recordings on 36 12-inch acetate-on-aluminum recording discs. A later effort added one graphic image: Rael interviewing Manuela "Mela" Martínez of Taos, New Mexico, circa 1930, and a corresponding negative. In the process of digitizing the collection for online presentation, materials including six computer diskettes containing digitized LP liner notes, book excerpts, journal articles, as well as digitized framing text, and one CD-ROM with digitized images were generated.

# Description of Series

*Container*

*Series*

SERIES I: MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS

Administrative Materials

Song Transcriptions and Texts

Rael's works resulting from the field project

Library of Congress publications

Online presentation of the collection *Hispano Music and Culture of the Northern Rio Grande: The Juan B. Rael Collection*

Related collections at other institutions

SERIES II: GRAPHIC IMAGES

SERIES III: SOUND RECORDINGS

SERIES IV: ELECTRONIC MEDIA

# Collection Inventory

*Container*

*Contents*

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SERIES I: MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS

Administrative Materials

- FOLDER 1 Collection guide
- FOLDER 2 Correspondence. Between Rael and library officials (particularly Alan Lomax and Harold Spivacke) about the collection, written from November 27, 1939, through December 1, 1941
- FOLDER 3 Recording log for AFS 3905-3940
- FOLDER 4 Log of recordings made in Antonito, Colorado, with equipment borrowed from Adams State Teachers College, Alamosa, Colorado

Song Transcriptions and Texts

- FOLDER 5 Song transcriptions/translations by Enrique R. Lamadrid for the online presentation. In numerical order by AFS number
- FOLDER 6 Alabado texts from *The New Mexican Alabado*, by Juan B. Rael, published by Stanford University Press, 1951. In alphabetical order by title

Rael's works resulting from the field project

- FOLDER 7 "New Mexican Wedding Songs," by Juan B. Rael, originally published in *Southern Folklore Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 2, June 1940.
- FOLDER 8 "New Mexican Spanish Feasts," by Juan B. Rael, originally published in the *California Folklore Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 1, January 1942.
- FOLDER 9 Introduction to *The New Mexican Alabado*, by Juan B. Rael, published by Stanford University Press, 1951. (Includes map of the region)

Library of Congress publications

- FOLDER 10 Excerpts from Lomax, Alan, ed. Liner notes to *Ethnic Music of French Louisiana, the Spanish Southwest, and the Bahamas from the Archive of Folk Song*. From the series "Folk Music of the United States." Library of Congress Recording Laboratory AFS L5 (Contains excerpts pertaining to songs in the Juan B. Rael Collection only.)
- FOLDER 11 "Juan Bautista Rael, 1900-1993: Pioneer Hispano Folklorist" and "Nuevo Mexicanos of the Upper Rio Grande: Culture, History, and Society," by Enrique R. Lamadrid, *Folklife Center News*, Winter 1999, Volume XXI, Number 1.

Online presentation of the collection *Hispano Music and Culture of the Northern Rio Grande: The Juan B. Rael Collection*

- FOLDER 12 Consultant: Enrique R. Lamadrid curriculum vitae; correspondence; audiography
- FOLDER 13 Copyright/permissions information. Letters of permission to reproduce materials online; consultant's opinion regarding material; memo from National Digital Library Program legal advisor regarding online dissemination.

## SERIES I: MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
FOLDER 14	Documents pertaining to work done by Systems Integration Group, Inc. Correspondence regarding scanning and SGML conversion of collection manuscripts; file directories; parser report.
FOLDER 15	Publicity/press releases. Official LC press release; <i>The Library of Congress Information Bulletin</i> , Vol. 57, No. 2 (February 1998).
FOLDER 16	Biographical information provided by Rael Family for online framing text <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correspondence with Enrique R. Lamadrid regarding biographical details of Juan B. Rael</li><li>• Stanford University resolution on the occasion of Rael's death</li><li>• "Literary Life of Juan B. Rael," unpublished paper written by Althea N. Oakeley, the great granddaughter of Rael's eldest brother for a college course</li></ul>
FOLDER 17	Framing text documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Homepage Text</li><li>• About the Collection Text</li><li>• Essays in English<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Juan Bautista Rael, 1900-1993: Pioneer Hispano Folklorist</li><li>Nuevo Mexicanos of the Upper Rio Grande: Culture, History, and Society</li><li>La Música Nuevo Mexicana: Religious and Secular Music from the Juan B. Rael Collection</li><li>Hispano Folk Theater in New Mexico</li></ul></li><li>• Essays in Spanish<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Juan Bautista Rael, 1900-1993: Folklorista Hispano</li><li>Los Nuevo Mexicanos del Río Grande del Norte: Cultura, Historia y Sociedad</li><li>La Música Nuevo Mexicana: Tradiciones Religiosas y Seculares de la Colección de Juan B. Rael</li><li>El Teatro Popular Hispano de Nuevo México</li></ul></li><li>• Glossary</li><li>• Bibliography</li><li>• Acknowledgments</li><li>• How to order audio and photographic reproductions</li><li>• Copyright and other restrictions</li></ul>
FOLDER 18	Manuscript material database report, hard copy
FOLDER 19	Audio database report, hard copy
	Related collections at other institutions
FOLDER 20	Collection guide for Rael manuscript materials at Stanford Bibliographic records for Rael material at New Mexico State Library
	SERIES II: GRAPHIC IMAGES
FOLDER 21	One b/w photographic print and one negative made from the print (AFC 1940/002:P1 and AFC 1940/002:P1-p1). Image depicts Rael interviewing Manuela "Mela" Martínez, Taos, New Mexico, circa 1930.

## SERIES III: SOUND RECORDINGS

## SERIES III: SOUND RECORDINGS

*Container*

*Contents*

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BOX 3

Four DAT tapes created in the digital conversion process

Note: Original acetate disc recordings, AFS 3905-3940, are housed in MBRS, as are the 10-inch preservation reels; reel-to-reel listening copies of the field recordings are available through the Folklife Reading Room.

### SERIES IV: ELECTRONIC MEDIA

BOX 3

Six computer diskettes: Contain documents generated during collection processing as well as documents/files used to build the online presentation (plus backup copies)

Note: Disk directories can be found in Folder # 1 with the Collection Guide.  
One CD-ROM: Contains scanned images of manuscript items used in the online presentation.

## Appendix A: Glossary of Spanish genre terms, including dances, from the Juan B. Rael Collection

Excerpted from the online "Glossary of Spanish Terms from the Juan B. Rael Collection," compiled by Enrique R. Lamadrid at University of New Mexico for: *Hispano Music and Culture of the Northern Rio Grande: The Juan B. Rael Collection*.

- "Adán y Eva" - "Adam and Eve," one of the cycle of *Nuevo Mexicano* religious folk plays portraying the first family in the Garden of Eden, the temptation of Eve, and their expulsion into the world.
- Alabados - from the Spanish *alabar*, literally hymns of praise, from a repertory practiced by the *Penitente* Brotherhood, used *generalabarrically* to refer to all hymns, but specifically to the hymns on the topic of the Passion of Jesus Christ and the suffering of his Mother.
- Alabanzas - also from the Spanish *alabar*, but referring to hymns of praise to the saints and the celebration of the Virgin Mary.
- "Apariciones de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe" - "The Apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe," one of the cycle of *Nuevo Mexicano* folk plays relating the experience of the Indian, Juan Diego, and his encounter with the Virgin.
- Autos Sacramentales - allegorical plays dating to Medieval times whose function it was to teach basic doctrines of the Church.
- Bailes - social dances, a major institution in *Nuevo Mexicano* village life. Whole families would attend and socialize. After World War II, dances are more age-segregated.
- Canciones - literally "songs," this term is used generically for almost any composition that is sung, and specifically for the lyric song tradition whose themes are love and death.
- Chotiz - Schottische, the internationally popular music and dance associated with, but not necessarily of Scotland.
- Coloquio - colloquy or conversation, as in "*Segundo Coloquio de los Pastores*."
- "Los Comanches" - the "Comanches," a regional Indo-Hispanic tradition of dances, music, and folk plays celebrated by *Hispanos* and Pueblo Indians who dress in the style of the Comanches, a plains tribe who raided the Rio Grande valley in the eighteenth century.
- Coplas - couplets, the most common unit of verse sung in the Spanish folk tradition, an octosyllabic four-line quatrain with assonance or vowel rhyming in the second and fourth line in the ABCB scheme. Spanish coplas can be improvised on the spot, but hundreds of them are centuries old and can be found all over Spain and Latin America.
- Corridos - contemporary narrative ballads, from the verb *correr* (to run), because they are sung straight through with no choruses or refrains. Short for *romance corrido*, literally "running ballad." Themes of natural and human disasters predominate.
- Cuadrilla - the quadrille, a kind of square dance with its own distinctive music that originated in the courts of Europe.
- Cuna - the cradle, a folk dance found only in *Nuevo Mexico* in which sets of two couples face each other and join hands, forming a "cradle." Danced to waltz tunes.
- Décimas - the most complex form of popular poetry with strophes of ten lines with assonant or vowel rhyming in a variety of schemes.
- Despedimiento - literally taking leave, the solemn hymns sung at funerals, specifically at the grave side. The *despedimiento* in the Rael Collection is called "*La Encomendación*," in which the departed soul is commended to the Lord.
- "El Encuentro" - the Fourth Station of the Cross in which Mary encounters Jesus, who has already been tried, condemned, scourged, and is on his way to Calvary with the Cross on his shoulder. "*El Encuentro*" is dramatized by the *Hermanos Penitentes* and their families in *Nuevo Mexicano* villages.
- "Entrega de Novios" - "The Delivery of the Newlyweds," a *Nuevo Mexicano* folk wedding celebration in which the bride and groom and their families are "delivered" to each other in song. Dates to the times when there was a shortage of priests to perform marriages.

- "Estaciones de la Cruz" – "Stations of the Cross," a fourteen-part prayer service and meditation on the Passion of Jesus, introduced by Saint Francis of Assisi. In *Nuevo Mexicano* villages, the *Estaciones* are also recited outside the church on the way to the local *Calvario* hill.
- Inditas - literally little Indian girls or a type of song, a broadly defined genre of *Nuevo Mexicano* folk music and song which includes everything from narrative ballads and hymns to saints to a ballroom dance. Thematically, *inditas* have to do with the relations between *Hispanos* and Indians, including warfare and love. Often sung to the syncopated rhythm of the Afro-Caribbean *habanera*, many *inditas* have choruses sung in vocables, the syllable singing typical of North American Indian music.
- "La Marcha" - the wedding march, a particular march which was used by wedding parties in procession to the bride's house after a wedding ceremony. Now, *la marcha* is a triumphal wedding march danced by couples who separate into lines and circle around to recombine in a kind of tunnel made by grasping and raising hands for the newlyweds to pass through.
- "Los Matachines" - the *Matachine* dance, a regional *Indo-Hispano* tradition of dance drama representing the spiritual conquest of the Americas. Danced in several parts to violin and guitar music: two lines of dancers twirl, kneel, exchange places, and form a cross as their monarch, Monarca, and a little girl, Malinche, preside. On the fringes *Torito*, a little bull, encounters the *Abuelos*, ancestral spirits who vanquish and castrate him.
- "Moros y Cristianos" - an equestrian folk play that portrays the struggle of Christians and Moors before the final reconquest of Spain in 1492.
- "El Niño Perdido" - "The Lost Child," one of the cycle of *Nuevo Mexicano* religious folk plays that treats the biblical episode of Jesus as a lost child who is later found debating with rabbis in the temple.
- "Los Pastores" - abbreviation of "*Segundo Coloquio de los Pastores*," the "Second Colloquy of the Shepherds," the most famous of the *Nuevo Mexicano* Nativity plays. A group of shepherds hears the angels announcing the birth of Jesus and tries to make it to Bethlehem despite the interference of Lucifer. Main characters include Bartolo, the lazy shepherd; Gila the beautiful shepherd girl; Ermitaño, the hermit; Lucifer, the devil; the Archangel Saint Michael; and the Holy Family.
- Plainsong - a type of religious music with roots in the Medieval church, like the *alabados* it uses modes and lacks time signatures.
- Polcas - Spanish for polkas, the music and dance craze which started in Poland and swept Europe and the world in the nineteenth century.
- "Las Posadas" - "The Inns," a processional musical folk play that represents the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and the problems they had in finding lodging. Performed on the nine nights leading up to Christmas. In the last verses of the song, the people finally recognize Joseph and Mary and invite them joyfully into their house, where all the participants enjoy refreshments.
- Redondo - circle dance in the repertory of nineteenth century *Nuevo Mexicano* folk dances.
- "Los Reyes Magos" - "The Wise Kings," the *Nuevo Mexicano* folk play that ends the Nativity cycle on Epiphany, January 6, or Epiphany eve the night before, when the Three Kings arrive in Bethlehem and bring the Holy Child their gifts.
- Rogativas - hymns that express entreaties for divine intercession and mercy, for the souls in purgatory, and to urge the faithful to confession.
- *Romancero Nuevomexicano* - the collection of old romance ballads which Aurelio Espinosa collected in New Mexico and published in 1915.
- Romances - old Spanish ballads dating back to medieval times and the fragmentation of epic poetry. Spanish Historical ballads disappeared in New Mexico, leaving the Novelesque ballads with their themes of love and death, and the Burlesque ballads which were used as political satire and children's songs.
- "Los Texanos" - "The Texans," is a secular folk play celebrating the defeat of the 1841 expedition from the Republic of Texas to explore and take command of their western borderlands or New Mexico.

- "Tinieblas" - Spanish for the Tenebrae service that represents the darkness and chaos following the Crucifixion of Christ. In the *morada*, a candelabra with thirteen candles is gradually extinguished, and prayers for the dead are recited, followed by three periods of deafening noise.
- Trovos - dueling songs of the troubadours that describe encounters of famous poets trying to outdo each other with their verbal virtuosity, a moribund form in New Mexico.
- Valses - the waltz with its sweeping triple-meter music and scandalous dance, which swept Europe and the world in the nineteenth century. Before the waltz, couples danced apart.
- Vaquero - cowboy, or more specifically, the nineteenth-century *Nuevo Mexicano* folk dance that only occurred in New Mexico, along with the *indita* dance, and the *cuna* or cradle dance.
- Varsoviana - "girl from Warsaw," the music and dance that celebrated the first Polish revolution, known in English as "Put your little foot" and mispronounced in Spanish as "Varceliana."
- Versos - verses, the term used to refer to couplets, or octosyllabic quatrains with alternating assonance or vowel rhyme. See also *coplas*.