



Women of the Same Blood

Introduction

Family history has been a key element throughout my work. *Women of The Same Blood* is a body of work where I investigate my own identity, belonging, and concept of home in comparison to other women in my family. Included are fifteen women descended from my great grandmother, across four generations. I have asked a series of questions pertaining to their experience with identity, culture, and heritage. I am interested in the varied feelings and experiences from women of the same blood. My goal is to connect the women in my family through the topic of identity, which is not often discussed, in order to preserve the spirit of my ancestors and hold on to what is being lost throughout the passage of time.

The analog process of photography has always been a love of mine. Throughout the planning phase of this body of work I decided I wanted to learn and take tintype portraits. Along with wanting to learn this process I thought it was interesting that it also would have been the medium commonly used during the time my great grandmother was born. The tintype was invented in 1856 but was only used for a short period of time.

I have always felt a strong connection to the land of my ancestors. I hold onto it and the culture, although it often feels distant. In 2016 my mom, grandmother, and I started

traveling to different small towns in north eastern New Mexico where my ancestors come from; the key towns being Montoya, La Manga, and Cuervo. It began as a personal journey looking to investigate the longing I felt for my family history and the land we come from. We have been back several times and continue to explore new locations together when we can. On each journey I discover new things and feelings. I document the remnants of what is left and connect it to traces and documents of my ancestors, using objects, census records, buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and more. These journeys with my mom and grandmother have been imperative to my work.

My focus in past works has primarily revolved around my grandmother, great grandparents, and history of place through a familial perspective. For this series I shifted my focus away from physical places and chose to engage with family members, women on my maternal side in order to investigate the feelings and uniqueness of being a New Mexican of Spanish Descent.

Women of The Same Blood was born out of the constant feeling I had as a kid, needing to explain my name, heritage, and culture to others. My two older sisters and I don't look alike at first glance. We all have different eyes, hair, and skin color. People often didn't believe that we were related or would ask if one of us was adopted. Neither of my sisters feel such a strong connection or longing for connection to the past and family history as I do. My sister

thinks it's partially due to my namesake, Zia. Zia is a Native American sun symbol and sun goddess, the Zia symbol is found on New Mexico's flag and is seen all over New Mexico. It was always awkward for me when classmates would ask me where I was from. No one was familiar with the name Zia and I was always asked "What are you"? I felt a strong connection to my New Mexican culture/heritage but it seemed like no one in Virginia knew what that was or meant—I didn't know either, but I knew what it felt like. I never knew how to respond to these questions but often responded by saying, "I'm from here (Virginia) but my mom is from New Mexico." The response was typically "Oh, you're Mexican! Where in Mexico?..." It was like New Mexico was an invisible state that no one knew existed. People always just heard Mexico. Mexican culture is extremely different, although there are similarities. My family can be traced to the land of New Mexico as far back as the early 1500's. We have been there since the land was New Spain, since Mexico declared independence from Spain, since the United States had claimed it as a territory, and now as a State. As long as the land has been there, my family has been there. We are a blend of cultures over time, unique to the land and the people of the land.

The constant feeling of having to explain my belonging was difficult, my work has helped me navigate and discover my belonging and identity. Creating *Women of the same Blood* was an extremely healing process for me and I am grateful for being able to connect with my family on a new level. This body of work was extremely stressful in the beginning,

on top of the uncertainty during the 2020 pandemic. I had originally planned to travel and do as many interviews and photographs in person. After completing the series under the restraints of the pandemic and working with zoom as another medium, I am intrigued by the layers of time, mediums, and information that have been compiled together due to the restraints of the pandemic.



Romanita Maes

Romanita was born in La Manga, New Mexico just outside of Las Vegas, New Mexico. She was one of eleven children, four boys and seven girls. She was 15 years old when she married Eduardo Dominguez who was 24 years old.

She especially loved her sisters and missed them when she left home at 15 years old.

Eduardo originally had set out to marry another woman. He and his father took a wagon to go ask for Mela's hand in marriage but on the way Eduardo changed his mind. They returned home to leave the wagon and got on horseback to go to the Maes house to ask for Romanita's hand in marriage. He had seen Romanita in a bonnet hanging clothes on a clothesline. Mela later married Eduardo's brother Fidel. Romanita used to tell a story about the wedding ceremony that took place somewhere else in San Miguel County, halfway between La Manga and Curevo. This celebration lasted several days.



Vera Dominguez

Vera was the big sister of the family. She was like a second mother as well as a role model for her younger sisters.

Vera graduated high school at age 16 and went to work in a local retail business. With her earnings she helped pay off the family debts acquired during the depression.

During World War II she went to California and worked in the shipyards. She paved the way for her younger sisters and encouraged them to follow their dreams and to be independent. After Vera married, she made a home and her brothers and sisters took turns living with her family. She continued to work and raised five children.



Mercie Dominguez

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

Hispanic

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I speak Spanish that I learned at home and it's my first language and I love it!

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

It is important and I have always loved it, I guess you can say it's part of me.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Both I would say

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

Hispanic. I don't like the others, they seem to be more of a label, I don't like to be called Latina because you can be from anywhere... I just don't like it

**WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU?
HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR
LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?**

It is a label, I think it's a little mixed up because not too many people know the difference.

**DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY
AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/
WHY?**

No, I don't think I have a struggle because I've always known who I am, and that's just who I am.

**DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC
BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED
THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?**

No, I've never been ashamed because I know who I am and I think you just learn to cope with those things as you go along.

**DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN
CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW
HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?**

I think it's important I also think you have to be careful what you pass on because there's a lot of misconception and some people are so bitter and I think sometimes they pass along the wrong things so you have to be careful with that. I think we need to be proud of who

we are and we should teach our children to be proud of who they are.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

Home is everything to me, where ever my children and my grandchildren are, and that's the most important thing in the world to me, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

Since I've been here forever, I think it's just the best there is. We have everything, we have a good climate and I guess since I've always lived here I think it's just a great place.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

Definitely being lost, it makes me feel sad because there's not enough of us to carry it on especially my age. There's nothing much I can do and there's not too many other people that are willing. It makes me sad but we are losing a lot of our culture and traditions and I guess I don't know what we could do about it but I hate to see it go.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

It's important because I think it should be carried on, why should we lose it all. We need to preserve some of those things.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Our holiday food. It's very important and we try to keep that up, Lou Ann and Tony still make tamales... Which I'm sorry to say I never did but they do. Holiday cooking is the most important thing we have to hang onto because it's going... not everyone does it anymore.

GREEN OR RED?

Well I used to love red chile but it's been a long time that I could eat any. I've built up an allergy to anything that's too spicy, I love it and I think it's wonderful and I'm glad that other people can eat it.



Lila Dominguez

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

Well I started out as Spanish American, and now I'm not sure.. Now I'm Hispanic, a term I do not like. I prefer the term Hispano. I'm still trying to come to terms with the fact that I'm American and I don't like that the United States have co-opted the term 'American'... Mexico, Central America, Canada.. They are all Americans, they all live in the Americas, North America, South America, We should all be Americans.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I learned Spanish at home, that's what we spoke and I always loved it. I learned English at school so I guess I'm truly bilingual. We Spoke Spanish at home but lived in an English speaking community.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

It is very important for me. I love the language! I love all languages and when I had the opportunity to go to college I studied languages and I got a degree in Spanish.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Well... yes, bi-cultural, but they have had to take me dragging and pulling. I had my own private culture at home but I had to learn the way of the world and I still resent and reject it. I married into an Anglo household and it was a total culture shock, the family I married into was totally different from my own. I was working at the time and I showed up in high heels, tight skirts, my suits and all that and my mother-in-law at the time thought that was pretty trashy... she would put me in her clothes and aprons, she was ashamed if anyone would come over. So instead of changing into being a 'gringa' I totally rejected it!

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I've wrestled with this my whole life. I say all of the above and I do the same thing if it says married, single, or divorced. It's a complicated world and we are complicated people.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

Well that's a hard one. People argue that the term originated in the 60s

with politics. I don't know when it originated but my father used it when I was growing up. It was interchangeable with 'la raza'. I don't remember if we referred to ourselves directly as Chicano but it was used to refer to the people, our people. When we spoke Spanish we called ourselves Mexicanos. We never said we were Hispano unless we were speaking in English. Only Papa Domingo was Hispano and now I'm trying to figure out why?

I was taught to go to school and so were my older siblings and they were super Chicanos. I remember that my brother George had started classes at the university in Las Cruces and my sister got a job at the 5 and 10 ! I remember my brother telling me with great pride that she was the first Mexicana hired at Sprouse-Reitz as a clerk! Every family had a different experience. Many families couldn't get jobs because they were Mexicanos but we never had a problem. My brother George was an engineer and he worked at Conchas Dam when I was growing up. In the summers he would come home. He was 13 years older than me and Vera was 10 years older. They were my heroes! They were able to go to school and work. George remembers Hispanos telling him when you educate a Mexican you ruin a good

sheep herder but they didn't let any of that stop them. And, me I was a fighter, I was feisty by nature and when I lived with George in Las Cruces, to go to junior high, he sat me down and told me I could not be a crusader. That was not my job. My job was to go to school, study and succeed. That was just the expectation and culture of the household, to go to school and get a job.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/WHY?

Well identity is very confusing. I don't know where people get their impressions. Sometimes people identify you or misidentify you and I just don't care anymore, but when you're growing up you care.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I was dismayed that who I am, was looked down on by the dominant culture. I still don't like it. But I loved being who I was and mom and dad's stories... I tried to pass that down to my daughter. And, sometimes I think I overdid it and now with you too.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

Well yes, but I think I overdid. Romana would have had a much easier ride if I just hadn't taught her any of it. She could pass for gringa. When my friends would meet my daughter they were always shocked and one time a friend told me, "Lucille your daughter is a gringa!" I just tried to give the best life I could to my daughter.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

The landscape ... it just speaks to you

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

The history, it's just home.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

Yes, just the passage of time. I used to go on trips and even just after 10 days there was always noticeable change, whether it was a store or restaurant that closed or a new one that opened, everything changes.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

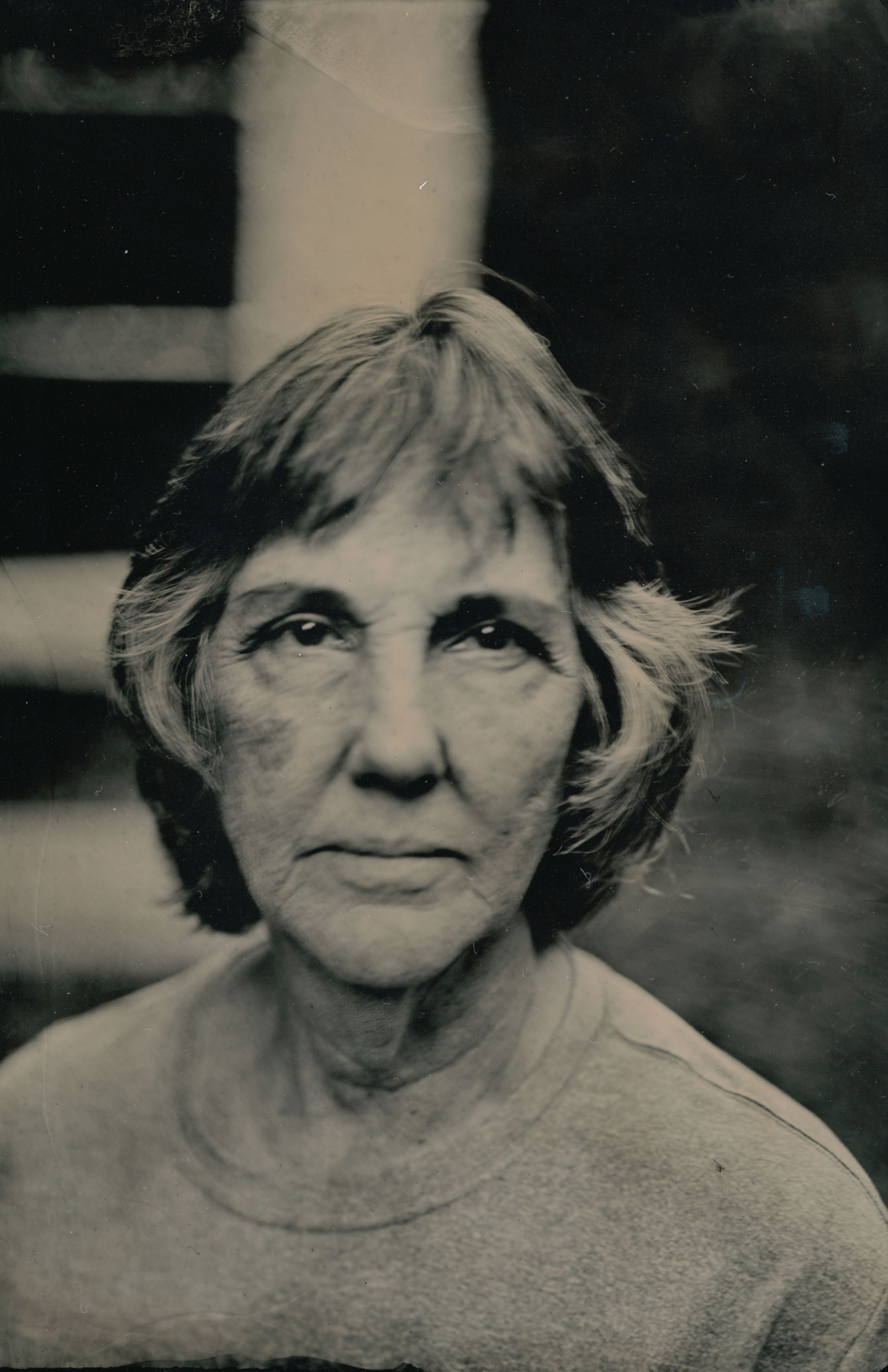
Very important! It just is.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Natillas, Enchiladas... even though we didn't have them growing up, We had Sopapillas but we called them Buñuelos, and Panocha we had for lent, Empanadas, Tortas

GREEN OR RED?

Both!



Romana Sanchez

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

That's a hard question because it changes all the time. I've always considered myself as a Spanish descendant so...Spanish American? But you can't use that anymore so I guess Hispanic. I'm a New Mexican, but that's a hard thing to describe.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I do not speak Spanish fluently. I understand a lot of Spanish and I grew up in a household that was truly bilingual. I understood home New Mexico Spanish. I can read it and enjoy it. It's a beautiful language that carries emotion and love in a way that you do not get in English. I think of certain things in Spanish that augment my world. I'm a passive bilingual. I have a deep level of understanding and love for the language. I can have short conversations in Spanish like giving directions if I have to, but not a full and in depth conversation. As a child I always felt like I was being made fun of when I spoke Spanish. Everything I said was cute and repeated so it felt as if I was being made fun of.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

It's very important to my identity. I wish I could speak more but it's part of me. Without all these pieces I wouldn't be me. Without growing up in a bi-lingual household I would be a completely different person.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

In many ways I am multi-ethnic. I consider myself bi-cultural, there are two different cultures that I live in and always have lived in. Here (in Virginia) I live in a very different culture than what I grew up in. But the culture I grew up in helps me navigate the culture here. And my own family culture is not something that is shared between cultures as a whole. One of my favorite memories growing up is when Chanita would come to visit Grandma, she spoke Spanish to me, I spoke English to her and we communicated just fine. We both understood both languages but weren't comfortable speaking both. It was such a warm, loving, affectionate environment. It's funny because if ethnicity has to do with your DNA... A lot of my DNA, I don't understand or know about the culture at all. Growing up and visiting my (paternal) grandparents in Denver

was so different, it wasn't as warm and affectionate like my household and family was at home in Albuquerque. They were always glad to have me and happy to see me but the culture there and the way of showing love was completely different. I was comfortable being there but it was so different and almost foreign compared to my home in Albuquerque. I think if you have more than one culture it becomes easier to understand and appreciate all and any cultural situation. It's individual, hard to describe and incredibly personal.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I don't like fitting into a box because I don't know what they really mean. I'm a New Mexican and to me that means more than any of those terms. But I don't try to explain what that means to anyone here (Virginia) because it's nearly impossible. It's more of a feeling than a definition. I don't identify with Mexican American or Chicana because growing up it was a political statement, a radicalization of something and I wasn't there yet. I check the Hispanic box on papers but when I can I check more than one I do.

**WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU?
HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR
LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?**

Chicano/a has different meanings, it means someone of Mexican descent and also is a political term tied to the Chicano Movement. I have not decided if I really identify with the term or not.

**DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY
AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/
WHY?**

Yeah, because it's so very personal, so it's hard to define...I am just who I am. One thing that changed when I moved here (Virginia) is that I didn't have to explain to people who I was, in many ways nobody seemed to care. In New Mexico one of my regrets was that I wasn't fully bi-lingual in the way I thought I should be. People often assumed I had a gringa mom because I had a Spanish last name but didn't look the way I guess people thought I should. I never belonged to either of the outside cultures, it's a sliding scale you go back and forth. What's interesting is when you become an adult no one seems to care, whereas growing up and going through school you are faced with it. I used to get very offended by people trying to figure out what I look like or who I was or where I came from. And why do

people ask? It shouldn't matter where I'm from or not from, sometimes it can be very intrusive.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

As a little girl I was very proud of being Spanish, I regretted the fact that I wasn't completely full Spanish. I didn't want to be the token gringa, and not be easily identifiable as Spanish. When I was adopted and my last name changed to Sanchez I told my mom oh good now I can be all Spanish. And now that I'm married I held onto my name, I use Sanchez for work and Palmer for my home life and for my kids. When I met my biological father for the first time I was grateful that my mom didn't stay with him because his culture and way of life was totally foreign to me, and I came home and thanked my mom for giving that life up.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

I have done that and continue to do that, with food, with language, decorations, singing, dancing, music, poems, telling stories about New Mexico and my grandparents. I taught my children

to pronounce words in Spanish. And I brought up my three girls the same but Zia was a New Mexico kid from the day she was born. You just teach your kids what you know I guess and those are the things I know. There's also a sensibility in the Spanish language that is surrounded in beauty, love, and caring and for me it is very important to pass down the love for humans and love for nature and just a cariño for the whole world and for everything, wanting to embrace the beauty of the world and language. Every language probably has that but there's something about the Spanish language that I love and that touches me and for me it is something that English does not have.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

I think of the air, the light, the sky, the smell when it rains... There's a very specific smell when it rains in Albuquerque. I think of my Papa and my Grandma, I think of the desert. It has to do with the landscape and the highness. It's like you're closer to the sky and the shadows are so crisp, the air is so clean, and the clouds. The history and the ruins, the churches. The wind, the landscape, and there's just a feeling that is so bright and clear. When you

walk across the land it makes a sound that nowhere else makes. It is known for that, people and artists go there just for the landscape.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

I know more about the history of the land and the history of the people, all of our ancestors are there.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

Yes, just because things change over time and there's a migration of people from Mexico and Mexico has a different culture. It also changes the language since the Spanish is different. The softness of New Mexico Spanish... You don't hear as much. Mostly it's just the passage of time and change. America is not the same. The New Mexico I left 30 years ago is not the same and why should I expect it to be. There are still parts of New Mexico and Albuquerque that are the same. I often think I would go back there to live.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

I think it's very important, not so much the day to day but I still do things the

way my grandma did. But especially for holidays. When I moved here (Virginia) Christmas was not Christmas for me until I started cooking New Mexican food and doing my traditions.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Biscochitos, Grandma's Sopapillas but they looked more like Navajo fry bread, and Grandma's Tortillas, the classic things grandma made were beans and potatoes and bread, sweet rice but we didn't have rice unless it was sweet or with egg.

GREEN OR RED?

Depends on what you're having it with, if you're having enchiladas green, if you're having tortas it's got to be red. And here (in Virginia) it's hard to find green chile and finding the right kind of red is even harder.



Roretta Lopez

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

New Mexico Hispanic

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I don't speak Spanish. I know a lot of Spanish but English is my first language

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

I think the Spanish language is beautiful and I'm so sorry I never became fluent. I grew up with Spanish all around me but I was never expected to speak it myself. I think it had something to do with being successful in school but I don't really know. So I sing in Spanish and cook in Spanish and speak place names correctly. And every now and then, especially when I am talking to my grandson a small cariño comes out, mijo lindo, that kind of thing.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Neither I just consider myself Spanish, that's what I am

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

Well I always considered myself to be Spanish American because that was the term being used growing up and as a young adult. I never liked the other terms; they were kind of militant. I like Hispanic. When someone asks me or in a form that is what I put down. Sometimes it seems like some entity out there comes up with these labels and tries to put them into one bowl, people have too much identification to jump into a single bowl, I don't like to be classified in any way.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

I never heard that term until I was in college. I think at the time it meant more to people who were from Mexico who came here to New Mexico rather than for us who were from Spain, we were isolated for so long we didn't have a lot of Mexican influence of migration into our families. I don't identify with the term at all or really care for it.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I don't, I haven't ever really had trouble with that. I think primarily because I grew up in a majority of Spanish people and Spanish speaking people... Even though I didn't really speak Spanish myself, I always understood. My grandma would talk in Spanish with us and we would answer her in English. Our whole community, we were all the same. I think when I started going to University of New Mexico it was shocking to me that there were so many Anglo people because I didn't know there were that many... So it was a new environment.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I'm very proud of my heritage. I have always known I belong here. I have always felt my roots reaching deep into the mud of the river like a big cottonwood tree. I'm proud that I know who I am and can trace my family back generations. I think it gives us compassion and a feeling of wholeness. I have always felt this way. At times throughout my life when I have been treated badly for the way I look, it has made me angry but never ashamed.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

I think it's really important, this is a really big world and at times it can be really hostile and so I think that your identity of who you are in your family, in your community, and in your culture needs to be strong. I think that people who are by themselves have a lot of trouble so I think that just talking to your kids and the way we cook and celebrate holidays those are the important things. Our kids really feel that too. I think love of family is the biggest one... that's how you keep your group together and how you keep your culture going.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

I think of here... But you know what I think of is the river, whenever we fly and come back you always see the river first and that's always a big joy to me, that we're home.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

I think that New Mexico is the best place in the county to live. Even though we're a poor state and we come in at the tail end of all the lists of everything.

I think we have the best multicultural area anywhere, because of that there is a high amount of tolerance for differences. I think there's a connection and you don't make distinctions. We are all here together. I think that's the biggest thing that makes New Mexico different. There is some attraction that brings people here, we're more relaxed, free flowing, and tolerant of each other.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

Well I don't see it as being lost, I don't see our culture dissipating at all. I think it becomes more inclusive and things change all the time but culture is a living thing, I don't see us losing it at all.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

Totally, completely, all the things we cook, the way we cook, and the way we teach each other to cook. Both of my boys are good cooks... They can make chile and tortillas, sweet rice. Everything that I cook they can cook. I learned how to cook a lot of things from our grandma. I have her rolling pin, my most prized possession. Cuisine is important and you know our celebrations are all about food so it's extremely important.

**IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES
THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?**

Red Chile, Tortillas, and Sweet Rice

GREEN OR RED?

I like red chile better. I think green chile is good with chicken but growing up nobody put chicken in chile, always pork. A long time ago people didn't freeze green chile, they didn't have giant freezers to roast a whole bag of chile and save it. Dried red chile lasted all winter long so I think traditionally people ate more of that so I like red chile better but I eat green too.



Lorene Lucero

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

I don't know actually, it keeps changing. I've always said Hispanic but now I also claim native. I claim Caucasian too

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I don't speak Spanish, I can understand it but I can't speak it.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

Not to me, I think it's a beautiful language but I've never had a problem not knowing Spanish.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Bi-cultural, I guess bi-ethnic too.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I don't, I've never liked those terms. I just think I'm an American.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU?
HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR
LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

I don't like any of those terms but to me
it means Mexican.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY
AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/
WHY?

I never have, I guess I've been lucky.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHNIC
BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED
THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I'm very proud of my ethnic background
and who I am. I don't think that's ever
changed. I love where I live and I've
never had a problem.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN
CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW
HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

I think it's important but I really
haven't pursued that at all, I want to,
and I have with food. I want to find out
how native I am and more about where
I came from so I can share it with the
girls. I want to say the language but
I don't speak it, it's something that
shouldn't be forgotten but it is, slowly
it is. Just the culture that I know about
is very important in passing down and
I hope I've done some of that. I talk to

the girls about what I did when I was growing up. The New Mexico culture is so interesting I want to learn more and then pass down that.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

I think of my children, I guess where I'm living, I think of the homes that the kids grew up in so that's what home is to me, my kids.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

I haven't traveled much myself but we are very unique here just our culture. I love fall here. It's so pretty and the smells of chile roasting all the feasts that the natives have, and they welcome you. I don't think I would want to live anywhere else, I really don't.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

I personally don't think it's being lost, I'm sure some aspects are but I think we do a pretty good job of keeping it alive. It would be really sad if it was lost.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

I think it's important, I've gotten away from some of it but I still love it. I

don't eat as much New Mexican food as I used to but it is very important to me, it's important to our state.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Carne Adovada, stuffed sopapillas or sopapillas in general, enchiladas

GREEN OR RED?

Both. I think I love both the same. It depends on what I'm going to eat. But I don't like green chile eating out though.



Rou Ann Lopez

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

I'm a New Mexican. I'm Hispanic and I'm from New Mexico.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I speak very little, I understand more than I speak and it was all at home.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

I think it's a beautiful language but it doesn't do anything to my identity.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Neither

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

Well I would say Hispanic because I'm not a Mexican, I'm not from Spain, I'm not a Latina I'm not from any of the Latin nations but my background is Hispanic I can trace my family back and there not from Mexico.

**WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU?
HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR
LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?**

It just means to me that you're somebody from here. You're from New Mexico, you have that background.

**DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY
AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/
WHY?**

Not at all, because I know who I am, I know where I belong.

**DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC
BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED
THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?**

I'm very proud of who I am and where I came from and that's never changed.

**DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN
CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW
HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?**

Yes, they need to know where they came from, where they belong, they need to be proud of who they are and where they came from. I just do that by teaching my kids where they came from and to be proud of who they are.

**WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU
THINK OF?**

Home is where my family is, it wouldn't matter if we were in a house or a hut

wherever my family is that's where my home is and that's where the heart is.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

We're a very unique blend of people, we come from several different backgrounds and we make it work because we all belong here. It's home, it's always been home, it's a beautiful and wonderful place to live.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

I don't think its being lost, i think the children are raising their kids the way they were with the same family values and the same strengths and i don't think thats going away

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

Food reflects the people, the environment, our whole culture and way of life sometimes.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

That's a tough one, beans and chile, Posole, Rellenos, and sopapillas you can't find anywhere else. Our food is unique to us because its a blend

GREEN OR RED?

Both!



Delina Polaco

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

Hispanic, We kind of come from everywhere so it's hard to pinpoint

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

Rumor has it when Papi was still alive I spoke Spanish with him. When he died I refused. I speak a little bit at work but that's about it.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

We use it everyday, I have to use it everyday at work so it's important and living here you have to know some because It's everywhere.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Yeah I'm bi-cultural, especially with holidays and food.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

That's how we grew up, that's just what we are around here.

**WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU?
HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR
LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?**

When I was little it was a bad term and you didn't want to be that but now it's not. It's just a little different, you're a little tougher, and embrace Mexican culture and we like to paint on our eyebrows.

**DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY
AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/
WHY?**

Not really, other than I can't speak Spanish... I get a hard time for that. I'm white enough to make it anywhere and brown enough to make it here so I've never had an issue, I can fit in wherever I need to.

**DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHNIC
BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED
THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?**

I think I've always been relatively proud, mostly because on both sides we can trace ourselves so far back. So there was no question and down here when you're growing up you have to be different kinds of brown and you get bullied and teased for it. And now you know it's mostly the women carrying the culture.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

We have Caleb and Ana and I'm going to make sure they both speak Spanish because we're not doing that again, we aren't going to lose the language. I'm going to teach them the food I know and the appreciation of family that we have. And food is a big way we do that. Family and food, they kind of go hand in hand.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

I think of grandma's house (Mercie's house) and we don't have it anymore. I think of Grandma's house, Sister's house, Tio's house, that's where I grew up.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

If you're part of a community you'll always be part of a community forever. People around here take care of their people. I've lived in other places and been to other places but I always end up back here, This is home.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

I do feel like it's being white washed, everything is becoming pop culture/

main culture. We're losing it and that's why it's important to show the kids how important it is to pass it on and it's important for other people to see it too.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

Food is everything! There's a process, it's important and these recipes are ones that our grandparents got. They have been passed down for generations and it would be a shame to lose it.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Tortillas you can put anything on a tortilla, Natillas... We only make them on special occasion but we always have them, and green chile

GREEN OR RED?

Both! I love both but red is my favorite, I can eat it with anything.



Felina Chacon

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, and now I also want to claim native.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I cant understand it or speak it

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

I really want to learn Spanish and be bi-lingual, and especially with my name people expect me to speak Spanish.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Bi-ethnic because we are white, Spanish, and native.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I'm American but also when people ask I tell them Hispanic

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

I don't identify with that.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I've struggled a lot, around my Mexican friends I'm white, and around my white friends I'm Mexican. So I'd just be on my own. I've truly felt lost in this world, I don't feel like I fit in at all.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I've always been proud of who I am. I've been told I'm not Chicana enough, I'm not white enough. At times I guess I've tried to blend in to be more white and now too with what's going on in the county... I'm married to a Caucasian man so people just think we're white folks. I don't feel the discrimination as much now as I did when I was growing up.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

I do think it's important and the way I plan on doing it is, I found out my great grandmother was a Curandera (a healer) and I really want to get into that side, the spiritual side and pass that on to my family and whoever in the family that wants to know. I want to get land, a

garden, have chickens, and tap back into how our ancestors live off the land.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

I think of Albuquerque, the Sandia mountains, the food here, the balloon fiesta, the State Fair and everything that makes New Mexico, New Mexico... That's home to me. It doesn't matter where I live in New Mexico, New Mexico is my home. I'm totally New Mexican.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

The Balloon Fiesta and also Christmas time here. We're the only place in the world that has candles burning in a lunch sack and it's the most beautiful thing. Luminarios are the most beautiful thing and you don't get that anywhere else.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

I think as a whole we keep the culture alive but also on a personal level unless your family still lives in the south valley, old town, downtown that's like the strongest culturally where as when you go up to the heights here it's mainly just BMW's and white people eating out

and there's nothing wrong with that its just a different experience to walk around old town and eat there than anywhere else in the city. It's not being lost but if you live here depending on what parts of town you live in you just won't see the culture.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

I think it's important, especially because It's way different than Mexican food, we have similarities like tacos, burritos, enchiladas... the chile is different, the cheese is different, the way we make our tortillas is different, but the way we make it is different and it's very Native American too. I think it's super important but because I live here i don't want to eat it everyday and I hate eating it out because we make better New Mexican food.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

I'll have to go with an Indian taco, blue corn Huevos Rancheros with Christmas, biscochitos, and Posole

GREEN OR RED?

I like both but I think I favor red, I only like green chile if it's only when mom makes it, I don't like to eat it out.



Alexis Chacon

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

I guess I view myself like a mutt, I guess Hispanic, Native American. New Mexico is such a melting pot. I've always viewed myself as Hispanic, I've never viewed myself in any other way.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

It's unfortunate because our great grandparents spoke Spanish and our grandparents but they didn't teach their kids. I can have minimal conversations, I'm a nurse so I can get by with Spanish speaking patients but it's not conversational. We should be bilingual. I feel like we have to bring it back, our generation.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

It's important. I think leaving New Mexico made me realize it, I just never realized it because it was just a part of my daily life.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

I consider both, I love to cook so it's how I show love to people and that's

something I feel like I got from our family.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I say Hispanic... Hispanic American, and Latina too.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

I don't identify as Chicana but I'm proud of the heritage. I relate to the term in a way I don't think other people do.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/WHY?

We were often told we were white within the family but I remember it being confusing because we definitely weren't just white, I always knew even though we weren't necessarily taught it.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

Proud and more proud the older I get

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

It's important to pass it on and I think we will. Teaching and showing the people around you, friends, and family that it's okay to be different and to continue the family traditions like luminarias even when other people think it's weird.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

Albuquerque is always home but I don't think I'll ever live there again and whenever Alex (my sister) is.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

For me it's the family dynamic. I think in New Mexico extended families are common and everyone is warm and inviting... No one ever spends a holiday alone and there's always enough food. And I don't think all families have that, which I didn't realize until my 20s.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

I think so, I think it's generational. Not even just in New Mexico, we live in

such a fast paced world and people don't cook like they used to. There are things that we just don't do anymore because of technology and the fast paced world. We just don't have the time anymore, so culture is lost in a sense.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

Very important, it brings people together. I love to cook and that's how I show love to people.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Huevos Rancheros w/ red chile, green chile chicken enchiladas, Posole, and Chicharrones with tortilla and butter.

GREEN OR RED?

It just depends what your eating but I eat green more.



Alexandria Chacon

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

Hispanic, we were always told Spanish, from Spain, but we had to have been some blend of Mexican and Native American so we really are mutts I guess. Recently we found out that we are more Native American than we thought so I guess we are just a mix.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I definitely don't. This is really sad because I wish we spoke Spanish. My fiance makes fun of me because he speaks better Spanish than me. I feel like I should be able to because I'm Hispanic and grew up in New Mexico. I can pronounce but that's about it. I get timid trying to speak it so I need to get to the point where I don't care if I mess up.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

I think as I'm getting older I appreciate it more than I did when I was younger. After leaving New Mexico I've gained a bigger appreciation for it.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Yeah I guess especially with the food I make and the traditions

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

Growing up I was always Hispanic or Spanish American.. We were taught Spanish American but our family has been there forever so we're definitely Mexican too, definitely native American. Now if I'm filling something out I put Hispanic and white usually. Hispanic American is what I say the most.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

I don't identify as Chicana but I understand it and relate it in a way others probably don't.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/ WHY?

I feel like when we were younger we were told to identify as white and it wasn't until we were older that we are Hispanic too. I wish I had embraced it younger, and I feel like I'm doing that now that we are removed.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

Definitely proud and more proud as I get older.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

I definitely want to carry on the culture with my family. I would love for my future kids to dive into Spanish and give them my last name as their middle names. I don't know if we will move back to New Mexico but we will definitely visit and especially with the food, decorations for holidays like lumanios and ristras.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

That's a weird question because when I think of home I think of wherever Alexis is. Now that I've left New Mexico I feel like I have multiple homes.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

The culture is just so unique even compared to the bordering states there's just nowhere else like it. It's a very friendly place to grow up and people are very welcoming.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

Now living away from home the distance just removes you from it...

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

Very important

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Green chile on anything basically, and the funny thing about New Mexico is it's just like the same 5 ingredients used differently. Stuffed Sopapillas, Tostadas, Posole with red chile on any holiday

GREEN OR RED?

Green but it depends really. I make green more.



Angeline Palmer

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

My dads from Virginia and my moms from Albuquerque, so I guess that makes me an Albuquerque Virginian.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I do not speak Spanish. I learned words and phrases at home and I took Spanish in school and then forgot it.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

I feel very connected to it through the books and songs that we grew up with that I feel are very important.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

Both but I don't tell people that I feel both because then there is too much explaining to do.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I say Mexican American if I want to talk about where I'm from because it's something that people can actually

grasp. I relate to Chicana because it's more representative of where my mom's family, they aren't 1st or 2nd generation American born they have always been here.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

It's represents the people who have always lived in the United States, even before it was the United States. The culture is very much its own. I can identify with some of the things, like what I grew up with.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/ WHY?

Yes, It's so diverse in Northern Virginia so it's hard to connect with people when everyone has such different backgrounds. The only people that I've met here that are from New Mexico are military families and living on base, you don't experience the culture the same way.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

No, I don't feel ashamed or anything. The hardest part is figuring out how to represent yourself and how you carry it

with you everyday like balancing two different cultures. It's not obvious that I'm not just white so figuring out when and where to bring it up in conversation is hard.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

It is important to me but it gets watered down. I can't pass down the same exact experience that I had. My kids have so much going on so it's hard to incorporate it all into daily life. We just focus on having positive traditions and incorporate the feelings of things my mom did. And with our diet, Gluten Free, Dairy free... It's not the same with soy cheese, or tofu cheese. We eat beans and chicos, the Posole is great.. But with no gluten, no dairy, we incorporate what we can... It's difficult. I think it's important to pass down the idea that everything has feelings so... Be nice to the chair, be nice to the tree, and prana..Sending and giving good feelings. And book culture, mainly children's books that were passed down, that we read over and over again. Then they became a story of their own and we have sayings that came from these books like the Tony DePaola book with the farolitos. There are things that

we say and my kids don't always know why or where these sayings come from but they get passed down from the books.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

When I think of home I think of eggs and tortillas for dinner.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

It's not so humid, it's bright. The way people talk. You feel up high. Everyone has dark eyes, they all say something about my eyes! The way of life is slower and people often stay close even if they move around. Everything and everyone looks more weathered.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

Yeah probably because everything gets watered down overtime. And sometimes when you hold on to things you feel like you have to hold onto there isn't any room to move forward and that can hurt large communities. Sometimes the same life struggles repeat and when it gets watered down it can become harder to move forward in a positive direction so at a certain point you have to pick what works for you and keep going. Preserve

what is important to you and remember the other things as well, but not necessarily pass the actions down. Just passing down the stories, but giving up anything detrimental to your future or your children's future.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

It's really important, food that tastes like home is special.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Beans, flour tortillas, Posole, and chicanos, chile, coffee, tortas

GREEN OR RED?

Green Chile, red too but mostly green



Reigh Palmer

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

I feel kind of conflicted because it's a mix of things and I don't fit into any one category.

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I know a little bit. I took three years of Spanish in school and try to practice with coworkers when I can.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

My relationship with the language is not as strong as I want it to be but since I have such light skin and features people are always shocked when I know anything about the language or culture.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

I do because I grew up feeling like I was bi-cultural but also I've been very closed off to that side of my culture because I don't feel like I fit in, sometimes I feel out of place when I try to immerse myself in the culture.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I haven't really figured out which of those terms I fit into or identify with.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

I don't really know but I guess Chicano/a is a person of Spanish ethnic background.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/ WHY?

Absolutely. It's interesting if I hang out with people who look similar to me, more white, I feel awkward because I kind of fit in with them but I also have a different background and spiritual upbringing that they don't relate with. But If I hang out with Hispanic friends it's odd because I only know bits and pieces. So i don't really fit in with either group.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I'm still trying to figure out how to define my background and who I am so I don't feel proud or ashamed. I'm just

trying to figure out where I fit into society.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

I think so, it's always good to know where you come from and the traditions that have been carried on over time. It's important to know your background it makes life more interesting so that you can be the best you can be. It's important to implement the importance of family and having that support network, it's becoming very rare to see tight knit families that stay together and having a larger extended family is more and more important. I didn't realize how important family is until I realized that not all families are like ours, not everyone has parents that are still together.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

I think of two places, the house I grew up in and New Mexico, I think of peace and the feeling of having a safe haven. I think of relaxing and good food.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

It's so easy going, it's not such a high paced environment like D.C.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

I feel like it is because it's really hard to explain New Mexican culture to other people, no one knows what that is or what it means unless they have lived there or spent lots of time there.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

Cuisine is very important, and if it's not spicy I don't want it!

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Enchiladas, Frito Pie, and Sopapillas

GREEN OR RED?

Green, always green



Zia Palmer

WHAT IS YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND?

I am Hispanic and European descent. This is a question that I have always struggled with. When I was a kid I was often asked "What are you?" or "Where are you from?" I usually responded "half White half Spanish". If I said, "I'm from here (VA)" I would get, "No, but where are your parents from" If I said I'm New Mexican I would get asked "oh where in Mexico"... Questions about my ethnicity never had a simple response, it always led to more questions no matter how I responded. My family has been in New Mexico forever, since the 1500's when they immigrated from Spain, but what does it mean to be New Mexican to an outsider?

DO YOU SPEAK SPANISH? IF SO TO WHAT LEVEL AND DID YOU LEARN IT AT HOME, IN SCHOOL, OR BOTH?

I do not speak Spanish but I can understand and read some. I learned certain things in Spanish at home, words, phrases, and songs. I took Spanish in high school, but never got comfortable speaking fluently. I can order food in Spanish and follow a conversation, I just can't have a full conversation in Spanish.

WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SPANISH LANGUAGE? IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOUR IDENTITY?

The Spanish language is extremely important to my identity. Even though I don't speak it fluently I have always felt very connected to it. I grew up hearing my grandma speaking to her sisters in a mix of spanish and english. The spanish language has always been present in my life.

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF BI-ETHNIC OR BI-CULTURAL?

I consider myself both. I have always lived in a liminal space between two worlds.

DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH THE TERM SPANISH AMERICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANA, HISPANIC, LATINA, IF SO WHY OR WHY NOT?

I identify with Chicana and Hispanic the most as they are terms that are easily digestible/understood but my identity is my own and is a blend and mixture of multipul cultures.

WHAT DOES THE TERM CHICANO/A MEAN TO YOU? HAS THAT MEANING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW?

Chicano/a has different meanings... It means someone of Mexican descent and also is a political term tied to the Chicano Movement. It's a term that

changes throughout time but it mostly used on the west coast.

DO YOU STRUGGLE WITH DEFINING YOUR IDENTITY AND/OR FINDING YOUR PLACE IN SOCIETY, IF SO HOW/WHY?

Yes! I have always had issues defining who I am and where I came from. Especially as a kid. I just wanted to be easily identifiable without question. Being from Virginia there is no common knowledge of what being New Mexican is and no understanding of the culture. I never felt like I fit in easily, I didn't feel like anyone was the same as me. I was always la gringa to my Hispanic/Latino friends and I never fit in with the gringo kids either. I just didn't feel like I had anything in common with the kids at school.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OR ASHAMED OF YOUR ETHNIC BACKGROUND? HAS THAT FEELING CHANGED THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFETIME, IF SO HOW/WHY?

I feel very proud of my Hispanic background and that has never changed. I used to be ashamed that I wasn't easily identified as Hispanic, and I often resented the fact that I didn't speak Spanish.

DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO PASS DOWN CULTURE/HERITAGE TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS? HOW HAVE YOU DONE THAT OR PLAN TO DO THAT?

I believe it is extremely important. I would like to learn the language and be able to pass it down along with the food and traditions that I grew up with. Especially our Christmas tradition of making green chile chicken Enchiladas, Posole, and Biscochitos and luminarios.

WHEN YOU THINK OF HOME WHAT OR WHERE DO YOU THINK OF?

When I think of home I think about the land in New Mexico, my ancestors, The sky, the air & smell, and the food! I think about my Grandma's house in Albuquerque and just feeling more relaxed. My home is where my family is (Virginia) but my heart is always in New Mexico.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT NEW MEXICO WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER COMMUNITIES AND WHY?

New Mexico is like its own pod of culture, you can't find anywhere else like it. It's a blend of ancient traditions and multiple cultures throughout time. The people in New Mexico have different voices, a distinct cadence and cariño in their voices that I haven't found anywhere else. There is so much history and culture that you can't find anywhere else in the world.

DO YOU FEEL THAT NEW MEXICAN CULTURE IS BEING LOST OVER TIME, IF SO HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL AND WHY?

Somewhat, I think it gets watered down with time, as does everything. I think it's important to hold onto what we can and carry on the meaningful traditions. It would be heartbreaking if the culture and the history was lost. I feel like it's a part of why my work is so embedded in the culture and history, in order to hold onto it and share it with others.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CUISINE IN TERMS OF YOUR HERITAGE?

Very important! Cooking and eating with loved ones is so important and ties us all together. New Mexican food is my comfort food and Holidays would not be the same if it wasn't for green chile chicken enchiladas, Posole, and Biscochitos.

IN YOUR OPINION WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE DISHES THAT DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE NEW MEXICAN?

Green Chile, Posole, and Biscochitos.

GREEN OR RED?

Green! It does depend on the dish you're eating but I usually prefer green.