

Brother Towns

Pueblos Hermanos

PRESS KIT

BACKGROUND

Description of Film

Brother Towns is a story of two towns linked by immigration, family, and work: Jacaltenango, a highland Maya town in Guatemala; and Jupiter, a coastal resort town where many Jacaltecos have settled in Florida. The film's director, Dr. Charles Thompson, will attend the screening and will be available to discuss the film and answer questions. __

Brother Towns chronicles a story of how and why people migrate across borders, how people make and remake their communities when they travel thousands of miles from home, and how people maintain families despite their travel. Because we are all immigrants, this is a universal human story, and a quintessential American one. All of us understand family. __

Brother Towns is also a story of local and international controversy. News of undocumented immigrants is familiar in nearly every community across the U.S., and citizens must choose how they respond to this issue. __ Our story includes voices of those opposed to undocumented immigrants as well as advocates helping migrants who seek work and hope, whether documented or not.

This web site provides resources for helping to understand and address this issue responsibly. As *Brother Towns* raises some important human rights issues, ultimately we hope the story inspires you to action. This site is filled with links to other organizations and sites for your further research. Many of these organizations need volunteers or other forms of support to keep up their work. The Study Guide featured on this site is another tool we offer you here for starting conversations in your communities to raise awareness and go deeper into these issues.

Welcome to *Brother Towns*, a place where there are no easy answers, but where emotions of every sort abound. Families are like that.

Director's Statement

The first indigenous Maya person I ever met was on a farm in Pittsboro, North Carolina in 1982. "Victor" fled Guatemala as a refugee following the brutal death of his brother and ended up in North Carolina for a year before seeking asylum in Canada. Through Victor and the contacts he provided, I did my graduate anthropological research in the

town of Jacaltenango between 1996-97. The focus of my research and writing was refugees. My dissertation later became a book: *Maya Identities and the Violence of Place: Borders Bleed* (Ashgate, 2001).__

While living and conducting field research in Jacaltenango, I saw children all over town wearing t-shirts and caps emblazoned with the word, "Jupiter." Only after stopping to ask one boy about why he was wearing the name of a planet did I realize Jupiter is a town in Florida, the destination of thousands of men and women from Jacaltenango who have gone there as refugees both of violence and of economics.__

Since returning to the US in 1997, my wife and I have continued to return to Jacaltenango and Jupiter whenever possible. In 2005, I began to dream of the possibility of a film that might convey some of the beauty and sorrow of what I have learned over these years from our friends in Guatemala. I began to film. I worked alone at first, simply capturing interviews and scenes, hoping it would come together for some future project. __

I began to realize that I was in possession of stories that simply had to be shared with broader audiences. In 2007, I started writing grant proposals for this project and through generous support have been able to hire Michael Davey, Margaret Morales, and student interns to work with me, as well as to pay musicians and other artists to contribute their talents. This collaboration, both domestic and transnational, has made the project immensely better than I would've accomplished alone. __

Brother Towns is the story of family, violence in Guatemala, and cultural beauty. But what really compels me about this story is the diversity and depth of immigrant experiences represented by people in the US. There is so much more to immigration from Latin America than most US citizens realize. There are people of many nationalities in the US seeking work, and the primary reasons for their being here have nothing to do with "stealing jobs" as the stereotype goes. Instead, most are suffering because they have left the very family members they have gone to the U.S. to provide for. __

I hope a humanitarian point of view comes through strongly in the film. However, our primary goal is to create dialogue around the issue of immigration – dialogue beginning with human connections and centered on particular people and their choices. My work with the Maya began with a conversation on a US farm. It is our hope that this film sparks further conversations, cross-cultural, trans-political, and human. The term "brother towns/pueblos hermanos" has that meaning, too.

Film Crew Biographies

Dr. Charles Thompson Jr. - Director

Charles Thompson, director of the undergraduate program at CDS, holds the faculty position of Lecturer in the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke and is an adjunct professor in the Department of Religion. He holds a Ph.D. in religion and culture from UNC-Chapel Hill, with concentrations in cultural studies and Latin American

studies. His particular interests in documentary work fall into the categories of oral history, ethnography, filmmaking, and community activism. A former farmer, he remains immersed in agricultural issues and the laborers within our food system. He has written about farmworkers, and he is an advisory board member of Student Action with Farmworkers. He is the author or editor of four books. His latest book is *The Old German Baptist Brethren: Faith, Farming, and Change in the Virginia Blue Ridge*. He is editor, with Melinda Wiggins, of *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworker Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*. Thompson is also the producer/director two documentary films: *The Guestworker* and *We Shall Not Be Moved*. He is currently finishing a documentary film on Guatemalan day laborers in the U.S., *Brother Towns/Pueblos Hermanos*, and is also at work on a book about moonshine and small farmers in Appalachia in the 1930s.

Charlie Thompson is Curriculum and Education Director at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University and is a lecturer in Cultural Anthropology. He has worked and studied in Guatemala since 1994. He lived with his family in Jacaltenango from 1996-1997. His other film works include *The Guestworker* with Cynthia Hill and *We Shall Not Be Moved* with Chris Potter. His books include *Maya Identities and Violence of Place: Borders Bleed, Indigenous Diasporas and Dislocations*, and *The Human Cost of Food*.

Michael Davey - Director

Michael Davey, a painter and editor living in Durham, NC, co-director and editor of *Brother Towns*, is co-editor of *Tobacco Money Feeds My Family* and *The Guestworker*. He has worked in the production business for twenty years (actually more than that) and during that time has edited a wide variety of programs including documentaries for PBS, the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel, Discovery Health Channel and Animal Planet.

Margaret Morales -Associate Director

Margaret Morales graduated from Duke University in 2008 with a degree in environmental science and policy. She worked as a member of the *Brother Towns* film crew between 2008 and 2009, helping with some shooting and editing, and as content manager for the film's website. She has continued to work in documentary film, with a focus on environmental issues, and always remembers the sage advice Charlie and Michael showered upon her!

Production Notes

Brother Towns/Pueblos Hermanos was shot over the course of three years 2006-2009. The narrative is rooted in two towns: Jacaltenango, Guatemala and Jupiter, Florida, particularly where cross-cultural experiences of the Jacalteco Maya connect the two places. In 1996, Director Charles Thompson lived in Jacaltenango with his family for a year, and he has continued to visit both Jacaltenango and Jupiter on a regular basis since. The team traveled to two locations twice in 2008-9 to supplement the footage captured by Thompson over the preceding years. *Brother Towns* was shot on mini-DV tape on Sony PD170 cameras and edited on Avid in Durham, NC. The paintings that appear prominently in the film were produced by an indigenous artist named Cupertino Delgado

Camposeco of Jacaltenango. Original music for the film was written and performed by Guatemalan artists, including Santos Montejo. Funding was provided by foundations, various programs and departments at Duke University, including the Center for Documentary Studies. Brother Towns is under consideration for broadcasting by Latino Public Broadcasting for 2010.

Programming Descriptors

Format: Documentary_

Genres: Drama, Human Rights, Culture, Social Issue, History_ **NICHES:** Native/Aboriginal Peoples, Hispanic, Latino, Third World

Qualifiers

Exact Runtime: 00 hr : 58 min : 30 sec

Date of Completion: December 2009

Country of Production: USA

Country of Filming: USA, Guatemala

Production Budget _150000 (in U.S. Dollar)

Fund Source: _ - Fledgling Fund_ - Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University_ - Trent Foundation_ - Mary Duke Biddle Foundation_ - Collaboration Development Grant from the Counsel for the Arts Office of the Provost Duke University_ - North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church_ - Duke Endowment - Rural Church Division

Media Contact Information

All inquiries regarding Pueblos Hermanos/Brother Towns: brothertowns@gmail.com

Public screenings of the film Brother Towns are possible. Those interested in having the film screen in your community should please contact film director, Charles Thompson at this email: brothertowns@gmail.com. _Film Director, Professor Charles Thompson, is available for invited talks at high schools, colleges, universities, religious communities, and other venues. For speaking engagements related to Brother Towns or his other work, please contact him at: brothertowns@gmail.com

Santos Montejo's Hombres de Maiz, containing 11 songs of his original music, is available for \$15.00 plus \$4.00 postage through our film's email address: brothertowns@gmail.com. _Proceeds help support continuing efforts to promote Maya art and music.

Past Press Coverage

In English

TC Palm

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2010/jan/20/brother-towns-documentary-a-hit-with-jupiter-viewe/>

The Palm Beach Post

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/news/documentary-to-feature-jupiter-s-el-sol-center-163032.html>

In Spanish

La Palma Interactiva

<http://www.lapalmainteractivo.com/noticias/content/noticias/comunidad/articulos/2010/01/08/brothertowns.html>

Bios of Artists

The powerful art and music seen and heard in *Brother Towns* are the creations of indigenous musicians and artists from Jacaltenango. These artists have created works to tell their community's history and culture, as well as stories of their migration and change through time. Simply put, their work makes the film, and *Brother Towns / Pueblos Hermanos* wouldn't have been possible without their cooperation. The artists were paid for their contributions and have agreed to include their work as part of their ongoing outreach to the broader world.

Don Santos Tiosh, Juan, Adan

_As part of the *Brother Towns* project, Santos Montejo recorded a CD entitled, "Hombres del Maiz." The 11-song collection was professionally recorded and engineered by Efrain Chura. Efrain is originally from Bolivia and is also a musician. His backup vocals, drums, flute, guitar, and bass are also featured on the CD.

Visual Artist: Don José Cupertino Delgado Camposeco__ Cupertino Delgado Camposeco is a painter and sculptor who lives with his wife and family in Jacaltenango, Guatemala. His works appear in churches, municipal buildings, and he sells his work throughout Guatemala. His 30-painting work entitled "*No Más Guerra*," depicting the violence of the 1980s as well as violence in previous eras of indigenous history in Guatemala, appears as part of the *Brother Towns* film. Don Cupertino has graciously agreed to collaborate with this project and hopes that his works might help educated a broad audience and bring about peace in his country and beyond.

Contact Information

Twitter - <http://twitter.com/BrotherTowns>

Facebook – [facebook.com/brothertowns](https://www.facebook.com/brothertowns)

Gmail – brothertown.puebloshermanos@gmail.com