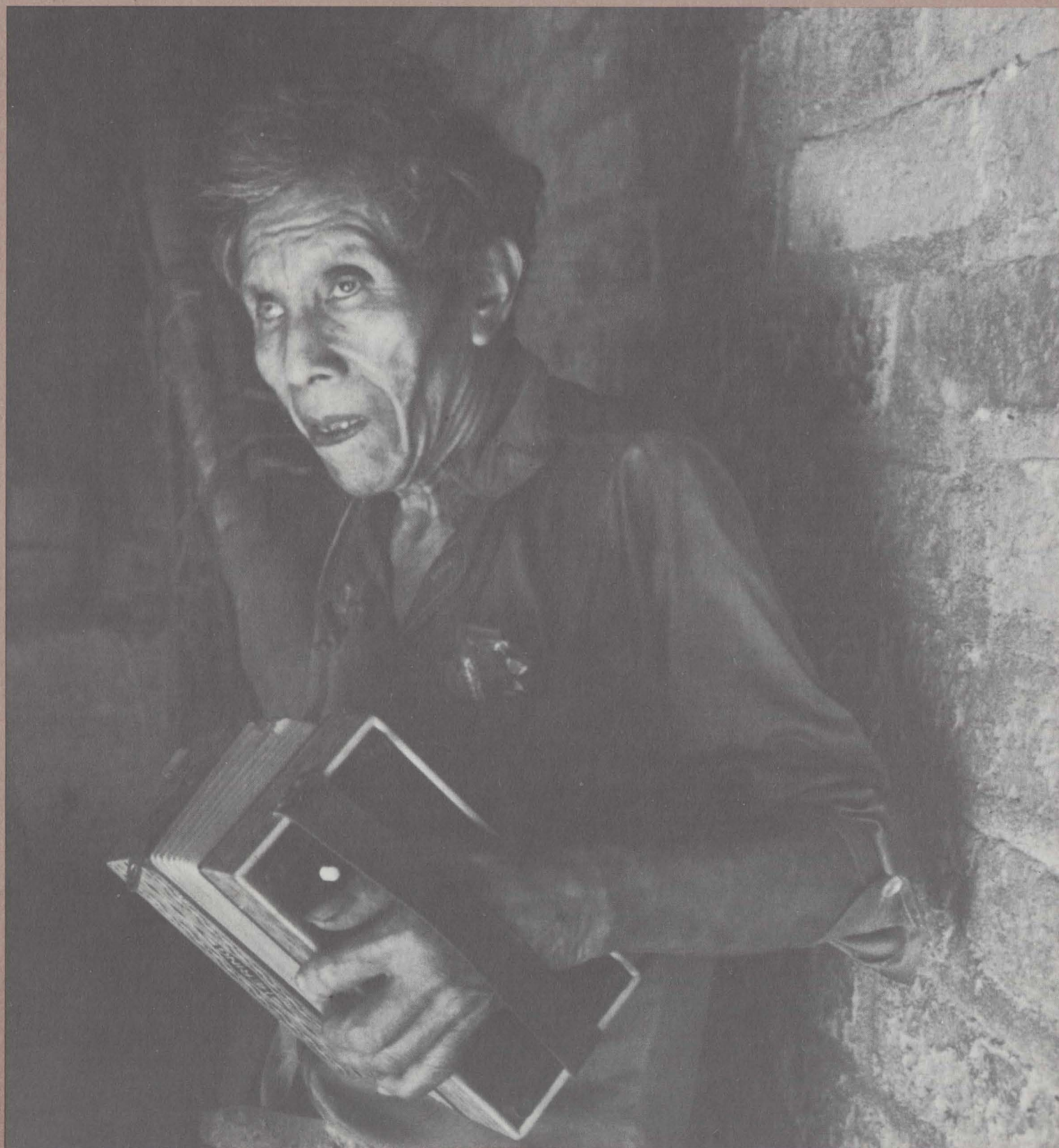


Recorded and Annotated by DAVID BLAIR STIFFLER



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4244

THE PIPIL INDIANS OF EL SALVADOR



FRANCISCO TEPAS AT NAHUIZALCO

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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THE PIPIL INDIANS OF EL SALVADOR

SIDE 1

- Band 1: *El Torito Pinto* This music was recorded at an outdoor festival in Izalco, The Cofradia de la Virgen de Concepcion, in December 1981 commemorating the Virgen, the origin of the song goes back to the time of Spanish colonial rule. Its interpretation is spread throughout the whole country. The best time for its celebration is usually May 3, "The day of the cross." However, it is still a popular theme throughout the year. During this time an effigy or construction of a bull is stuffed with fireworks and paraded through the streets exploding, attracting and frightening the participating merry-makers.
- Band 2: *El Carbonera*—recorded at Hotel Casa Novo, in San Salvador. Composer: Pancho Lara. It is a song dedicated to the Carbonera, or the person who makes charcoal for a living.
- Band 3: *El Zipitio* This song is based upon the legend of *El Zipitio de Mejicanos* (a suburb of San Salvador). The El Zipitio is a mythical person who charms the washer women who do their washing in the pool of water behind the church of Borbollon. When he succeeds he then makes the woman go insane.
- Band 4: *Los Historiantes* This is the traditional Spanish influenced dance that portrays the music and dance of the Moors and Christians during the period that Spain was under Moorish domination. (700-1492) It was imposed upon the Indians by the Spaniards to maintain their Spanish culture. This dance is performed to honor the patron saints.
- Band 5: Part two of the Above.
- Band 6: During the time of the recording, these radio spots would occur over the radios played in the buses going and coming to the small villages. It is included only for its historical value.
- Band 7: Accordion music by Francisco Tepas, one of the few remaining Nahaut speaking or singing Pipil Indians, probably the only one in Nahuizalco.

SIDE 2

- Band 1: Pipil Polka—a ceremonial or fiesta piece recorded at Nahuizalco by Francisco Tepas.
- Band 2: Accordion—Francisco Tepas
- Band 3: "Mi Duele"—(it pains me) Francisco Tepas
- Band 4: "Son Nahuat"—Francisco Tepas
- Band 5: "Kanka la Wituna"—Francisco Tepas
- Band 6: "Dos Campadres"—Pedro Musto and Jose Musto playing the guitar and marimba recorded at Izalco.
- Band 7: "El Barrenar"—played at weddings for Rain in May.
- Band 8: Jaw bone and Marimba music—Pedro Gonzales Musto, Jose Lucas Musto & Sylvester Xijache head of the village and cofradias.
- Band 9: Chant for the "Paseo de Nino" for the Cofradias

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THE PIPIL INDIANS OF EL SALVADOR

SPECIAL THANKS: To TACA International Airlines

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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The Pipils are descendants of the Aztecs of Mexico and today are the last pure-blooded Indians living in the country of El Salvador. Aside from the Pipils there are few remnant groups of the Lenca, Pokomam, Chorti and Ulva who live throughout the country. The Pokomam can be found near Atiquiza in the province of Ahuachapan, they are mainly a Guatemalan group. The Lenca descendants can be found in San Miguel and Morazon Provinces. Festivities incorporating aspects of their culture can be found near Moncagua. It is doubtful that anyone speaking the Lenca language still exists. Some trace of the Ulva culture reportedly has been pinpointed to Pasaquina in the province of La Union. Finally the Chorti who live in the area of Citala in the province of Chalatenango also can be found in the region that spans Guatamala and Honduras (in Jocotan and Copan respectively).

In this album some representation of the Pipil culture as well as the latinized traditional, Salvadorean folk melodies, that have their roots in the Indian and Spanish religious ceremonies will be presented.

In El Salvador or "Cuscatlan" meaning "Land of Precious Things" as the early Mayans called it, can be found over 300 Pre-Columbian sites, including temples, pyramids and ceremonial centers, indicating a densely populated former culture. In the 16th Century, El Salvador's culture changed abruptly with the coming of the Spanish. The Pipil Indians, (the Aztecs replaced the Mayas) who were the ruling population at the time fought fiercely against the Spanish domination, but were subdued. Almost half of their population were killed. The Spanish destroyed in their conquest many important aspects of the Aztec culture such as images of the two principal gods and other minor deities, as well as the picture books recording their history. The Indians' population and culture further diminished as a result of the Indians refusal to bear children who would only become slaves and subjugated to the mistreatment of the Spanish. The Spanish on the other hand began to have children with the Indians and created a new race of "Mestizo" (connotating mixed blood) and "ladinos" meaning anyone not Indian in community and custom.

The Pipil were a tribe who originated somewhere near the southern coastal region of Chiapas in Mexico. It is reported, according to "Bancroft in his "Works" that the Pipil migrated during the 9th century in a mass exodus (similar to that of the Jews of Israel) fleeing from the oppression of the fierce Olmecs. The Olmecs had invaded and conquered the "industrious, frugal and prosperous people"

and had made them subject, in their miserable state of slavery, to all sorts of abuses such as rigorous laws by which the slightest infraction was punishable by death, made to pay excessive and ruinous tribute and forced to yield up their children of both sexes to gratify the unnatural lusts of their masters.

When it finally became unbearable, the priests consulted the oracles and decided that they must prepare for a hasty departure, and leave in a group to find a new home. Those who questioned the move were quickly told that the Gods would protect them in their flight and were told to prepare for the long journey ahead of them. At the end of twenty days they finally reached the River Michatoyal where one of the priests finally died. Some remained here, but the balance went further south to the Volcano "Cuzatlan" in El Salvador.

Another story for their migration stated that the Mexican King Ahuizol, sent them in an army disguised as traders under the command of four captains and one general to Guatemala to settle the country in order to facilitate his intended military operations against the chiefs of Guatemala. The New settlers gained the name Pipils meaning child in the Mexican language because they spoke the Mexican language poorly much as a child would speak it. (Pipil also means "Noble").

Today the Pipil can be found in the departments of Sonsonate, San Salvador and La Paz. They live in such villages as Izalco, Nahuizalco, Panchimalco and the Costa del Balsam (named for Balsam - at one time a chief industry of the Indians, Balsam was an elixer made from Balsam tree).

The Pipil speaking the Nahuat tongue, who have survived as a cultural entity, have done so as a result of their strong social and religious bonds strengthened by tradition and custom. Language barriers that kept them within certain geographical areas aided in the development of distinct styles of dress, music and art. Ancient beliefs that still prevail among the Indians were able to survive under the guise of Christian symbolism concealed under the formal rituals of the Catholic church. (Over the centuries Catholic priests would visit on special occasions to remind them of their Christianity. But most priests neither understood the language or made any effort to do serious work as long as the Indians were reasonably clothed and attended masses. Many of the Catholic saints were easily accommodated within the Pantheon of the Indian Gods. Such dieties of corn, moon and the sun. Many Christian festivals have blended well with the Indian rituals.

Such festivals are centered around the Church. The community hosts a variety of events from market trading, carnival rides, fireworks, music, dancing and a non stop alcoholic consumption. After, of course the praying and religious ceremonies have taken place.

The ritual dances along with their costumes fall into two categories, the first are the ones of pre-Spanish origin requiring simple costumes and those originating after Conquest times requiring more complicated and ornate costumes which are the most popular. Those representing the Spanish Conquest include such dances known as La Conquista , Los Moros, Los Torito, La Historia & El Tunco de Montes. All of them require a costume display. Many use symbolic masks either painted wood or bark although commercially made false faces have been incorporated. In El Salvador the costumes do not seem to be as rich as those in Guatemala. Cotton prints are used instead of rich velvets and satins. The Pre-Spanish dances are generally derived from ancient and traditional forms of fertility rites involving the planting of maiz and the celebration of the first rain in May. Women are prohibited from participating in the ritual dances and are also forbidden to go near the costumes. Sexual abstinence must be maintained by the performers during the celebrations. Female characters are personafied by the men who wear feminine dress. The frequency and time of specific rituals are determined by agricultural factors.

In El Salvador the soil is rich and suitable for the production and culture of corn, the staple of the Indians diet. Three crops a year of corn are generally produced: Tunamil - corn planted in the months of September when the rainy season is about to end (Maiz de Sol, Sun Corn), Supanmil - when the rains are about to commence, April or May Winter corn and Apanmil - planted in the end of December, needing irrigation to grow (De regadillo o Humedad).

Most of the Indians live in small villages with thatched roofs or in adobe huts. Each family usually has a plot of ground to grow corn, and raise a few chickens, a dog, pig and sometimes a horse of mule.

Within the village a social structure exists with three easily identifiable and carefully preserved classes. The highest of these is the nobility or principales who are descendants from the Caciques (chiefs) or high officials of ancient cities, from this group come those who form the Cofradias (religious brotherhoods) and in charge of the fiestas each of which has its patron saints the image of which is kept in the house of the head of the Brotherhood (Alcaldea) and taken out each year in procession on that Saints Day. The Principales wear better clothes than the lower classes. The Medianos, or middle classes provide the local craftsmen and traders with other communities. And the Plebeyos, the lower class, belong the Mozos, the Indians who work in the fields and trod a long distance under heavy burdens.

In sharp contrast to Guatemala, El Salvador has only 5-6 villages where distinctive costumes still appear. The

native dress can be found in Panchimalco, Nahuizalco and Izalco, where the women sometimes dress in a wrap-around sarong type of skirt and a loose blouse. Often the skirt, particularly in Nahuizalco, a small village near Izalco, that produces the famous "Petates" or sleeping mats* is woven by the women of the village, but more often it is bought from the traveling salesman that comes from Guatemala. In fact the whole costume is similar to that worn in some Guatamalan villages. (The women in Nahuizalco regard the imported belt-fabric as taboo). Women have a greater tendency to retain or preserve their native costume in greater numbers due to less frequent contact with the world outside of their village. Women of the younger generation who go to the city to work have adapted western style dress into which world they have moved. (Some Indians have considered their costume to be one of the family, possessing a soul like their own, and must be spoken to and amused etc.)

Another reason that many Indians discarded their traditional dress and other outward signs of Indian identification, even to the extent of refraining from teaching or speaking the Indian language resulting in its complete disappearance was the Rebellion of 22-23 January 1932. At this time 15,000-30,000 Indians died as a result of a massacre occurring in the towns of Izalco, Sonsacate and Nahuizalco (anyone wearing Indians costumes was suspected of being part of the rebellion and were killed).

Since 1969 there has been a more or less successful attempt to revive pride in the Pipil culture, centered on the priest and the Indian community at Izalco. Hopefully the culture can now be experienced through the re-occurrence of the Indian festivals and the teaching of the Indian dialects and strengthening of the Pipil culture whatever now remains.

* Sleeping mats made with reeds planted when the moon is new and cut when the moon is full. Mats are used for walls, beds, tables and play an important role in ceremonial occasions when they are placed under sacred figures or used by Shamans for rites.

"The Music"

Side 1

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Side 2

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Band 9: Chant for the "Paseo de Nino" for the Cofradias - Sylvester Xijache

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TO GET TO EL SALVADOR FLY TACA - International Airlines

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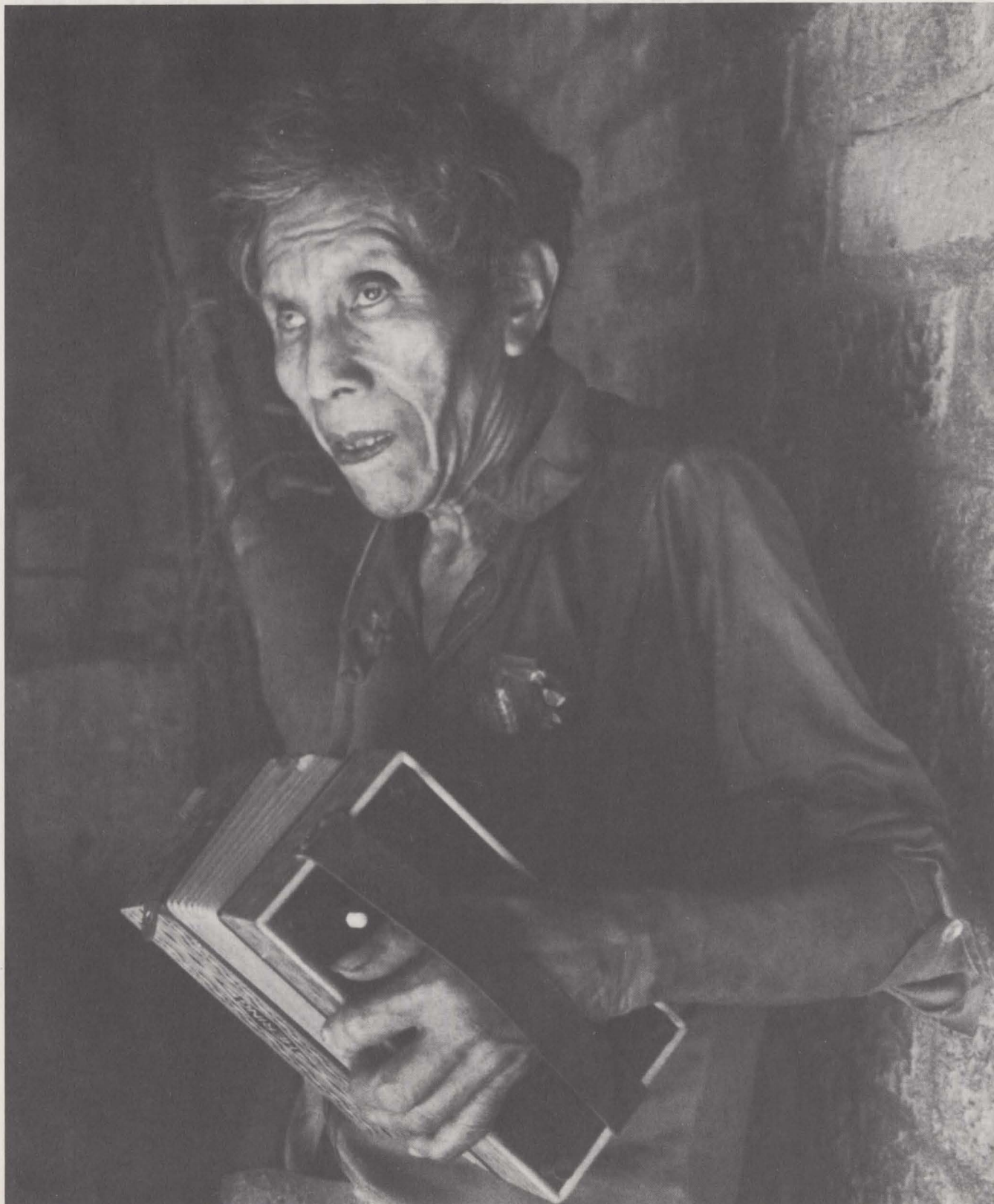
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Francisco Tepas at Nahuizalco.

LITHO IN U.S.A. 