

Discovering the Rio Grande Valley

Reports from the:

Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools Program (CHAPS)

Report # 1

The Norquest Family: A *Porción* of Edinburg

Report # 2

The Cantú Family: A *Porción* of Edinburg

Report # 3

Atwood Acres: A *Porción* of Edinburg

Additional copies may be purchased at: <http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/cantu/>
this needs fixing

For more information on the **CHAPS** Program, visit us at www.utpa.edu/chaps

The Cantú Family: A Porción of Edinburg

A Report Prepared for

The Cantu Family

And for the UTPA and CHAPS Program Class Titled

Discovering the Rio Grande Valley: The Natural and Cultural History of South Texas

Edited by:

Jenarae Alaniz, Roland Silva, Robin Galloso, and Daniel Nicholson

Written and Researched by:

Roland Silva, Ramiro Garza, Randall Ramirez, Alexis Casiano, Kristine Adames, Uriah Curtiss, Luis Reyes Jr., Ashley Leal, Jenarae Alaniz, Ryann Fink, Raul Lopez, Joel Rodriguez, Alyssa Aparicio, Ryan Lanoy, Arturo Cortez, Nadia Borrego, Armando Montelongo, Christopher Scott, Jesus Ramos, Omar Flores Marin, Jorge Trujillo, Francisco Gonzalez, Antonio Briones, Jose Garcia, Colin Newton, Randy Rosas, and Daniel Nicholson

Principal Investigators from the CHAPS Program:

Margaret Dorsey, Juan González, Sonia Hernandez, Bobbie L. Lovett, Kenneth R. Summy, and Russell K. Skowronek

2014

Copyright page

The full title page is usually page iii of a book, and displays the book's full title (including the subtitle), the names of the author(s), editor(s), and contributor(s). You may also include, the publisher's name and/or logo followed by the year of publication at the bottom of the page.

Example Text: Update to display information specific to your book.

[Style = Copyright]

Copyright © <Year of Publication> by <Your Name>

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review or scholarly journal.

First Printing: <Year of first printing>

ISBN <Enter your ISBN>

<Your Publishing Company Name>

<Your Street Address or Post Office Box>

<Your City>, <Your State> <Your Zip Code>

www.<Your Internet Address>.com

The copyright page appears on the reverse side of the title page, usually page iv. The text on the copyright page is generally set two or three points smaller than the main body text so all of the information will fit on a single page. The copyright page contains all relevant publisher and author information, including the Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication (CIP) data.

Cite as:

Alaniz, Jenarae, Roland Silva, Robin Galloso, and Daniel Nicolson, Editors
2012 The Cantú Family: A Porción of Edinburg. A Report Prepared for the Cantu Family
and for the University of Texas-Pan American, Community Historical Archaeology Project
with Schools Program. The University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas.

Dedicated to the Memory of

Rojelio Cantú Sr.
(1922-2014)



90th Birthday 2012

And

**Maria Lopez Cantú
(1924-2013)**



With All of Our Thanks.

This document is dedicated to the entire Cantú family who helped make this report a possibility but especially to the two family members who passed on before completion of the final publication. Rojelio Cantú Sr. and Maria Lopez Cantú had both participated in the formal ethnographic interviews conducted by the CHAPS Program students. The patriarch of the family, Rojelio Sr. was 91 years old when he passed on in early 2014. Maria Lopez Cantú was present at the interview conducted with Rojelio Sr. She was Rojelio Sr.'s sister-in-law, Maria was married to Rojelio's Sr.'s older brother, Felipe Cantú. Maria passed away in the middle of 2013, after the class had completed its preliminary research in the fall semester. Their passing was heartbreaking for the entire family. The CHAPS team feels very lucky to have met them and heard their stories about life here in South Texas. This report could not have been completed without their ready contributions. The CHAPS Program thanks the entire Cantú family for their magnanimity and patience.

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	xiii
DEDICATION.....	vi
FOREWORD.....	xvi
PREFACE	xv
CHAPTER 1: The Cantús of Edinburg.....	4
CHAPTER 2: The historical background of the Cantú family	6
CHAPTER 3: The geology of the Cantú farms.....	28
CHAPTER 4: The biology of the Cantú farms.....	36
CHAPTER 5: The lifeways of the Cantú family	43
CHAPTER 6: Conclusion.....	63
LIST OF REFERENCES	64
APPENDIX A: Interviews	67
APPENDIX B: Obituary Dedications	176
APPENDIX C: Land transactions of Jackson property	177

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Cantú Family Tree.....	2
Figure 2: The Cantús of Edinburg. c. 1995.....	4
Figure 3: Carmen Hernandez-Cantú, Rogelio Jr., Marcos Ramirez, Jesus Cantú-Serna. c. 1955.....	6
Figure 4: Pictured with their grandchildren, Hermelinda and Rogelio Sr. pose for a photo. Date 2009.....	9
Figure 5: Figure 5: Rogelio Sr.'s Immigration card. Arrival Date 1923.....	11
Figure 6: Jesus Cantú-Serna, Felipe Cantú, and Rogelio Cantú Sr. out on the field. c. 1940.....	12
Figure 7: Rogelio Sr. out in the field on his property. c. 1978.....	12
Figure 8: Rogelio Jr.'s early start as a truck driver. c. 1955.....	13
Figure 9: Pictured with workers, Rogelio III, Rogelio "Roy" Jr., and Ruben Sr. get ready to transport goods to market in Houston. c. 1983.....	13
Figure 10: Hermelinda and Rogelio Sr. at their Jackson property. c. 1955.....	14
Figure 11: Hermelinda Cantú standing in front of Jackson Rd. c. 1970.....	14
Figure 12: Norma, Ruben Sr., and Rogelio Jr. standing next to a combine machine. Date August 1967.....	15
Figure 13: Pictured here are Rogelio III and farm laborers loading watermelons for trucking. c.1983.....	15
Figure 14: North Junior High School, located on Lovett St., with heavy flooding. (Image courtesy of UTPA Library).....	16
Figure 15: Pictured here-the Cantú siblings with their children and parents. Date 1995.....	17
Figure 16: Norma Cantú Valdez with a hired family. The woman pictured in the background is pregnant with child. c. 1974.....	19
Figure 17: Siblings Norma, Ruben Sr., and Rogelio Sr. pose for their graduation photos.....	19

Figure 18: Proof of Hermelinda Cantús dedication to education-she still has her grade school report cards.....	20
Figure 19: Here we have pictures of some of the many machines used on the Cantú farm.....	22
Figure 20: Figure 20: Hermelinda Cantú takes the wheel. Date Unknown.....	23
Figure 21: Ruben Sr. and friends after a day of working in the field. c. 1977.....	24
Figure 22: Rogelio Cantú Jr. and Ruben Cantú Sr. Date 2012.....	25
Figure 23: Rogelio Jr. on his tractor. c. 1967.....	25
Figure 24: Locations of six boreholes dug on Jackson Rd. Property and Mile 17 ½ Rd.....	29
Figure 25: Soil compositions of CHAPS 3, 4, and 5 which were taken at Jackson Rd. Property.....	30
Figure 26: Soil compositions of CHAPS 6, 7, and 8 which were taken at Mile 17½ Rd. Property.....	31
Figure 27: Soil deposit from Mile 17 ½ Rd. property. October 2012.....	31
Figure 28: Jenarae Alaniz and Ryann Fink drilling CHAPS 8. October 2012.....	32
Figure 29: Ramiro Garza, Francisco Gonzalez, Jorge Trujillo, Armando Montelongo, Roland Silva, Dr. Juan Gonzalez, Colin Newton, Luis Reyes Jr., Alyssa Aparicio, Arturo Cortez, Kirstine Adames, and Jenarae Alaniz drilling CHAPS 6, 7, and 8 on Mile 17 ½ Rd. October 2012.....	32
Figure 30: Location of five oil rigs on or near the Cantú property. c. 1950. Photo courtesy of Carrol Norquest Jr.....	34
Figure 31: Cantú property and its surroundings, 1995.....	36
Figure 32: Cantú property and its surroundings, highlighted area indicates neighborhoods developing. Date 2003.....	37
Figure 33: Cantú property and its surroundings, with an expansion of apartment housing. Date 2005.....	37
Figure 34: Cantú property and its surroundings, vegetative regrowth in highlighted areas. Date 2007.....	38
Figure 35: Cantú property and its surroundings, with completely developed apartments filling the area. Date 2010.....	38

Figure 36: Butterflies identified on Cantú property, Nov. 29, 2012.....	40
Figure 37: Birds identified on Cantú property, Nov. 29, 2012.....	41
Figure 38: Plants identified on Cantú property, Nov. 29, 2012.....	41
Figure 39: Cantú field which had recently been plowed, northwest side of Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012.....	42
Figure 40: Randy Rosas (camera), Norma Cantú Valdez being interviewed by Alexis Casiano. Date 2012.....	44
Figure 41: Rogelio III (Rogelio Jr's son), Ruben Sr., Ruben Jr., Damien Valdez (Norma's son), Rogelio Jr. Date Unknown.....	44
Figure 42: Mrs. Hermelinda's fruit stand, view of south side. Date 2012.....	45
Figure 43: Mrs. Hermelinda Cantú with her wares. Date 2012.....	46
Figure 44: Some examples of the variety produced on the farm. From pickles (cucumber), to citrus (oranges), and corn, which is still grown there today.....	46
Figure 45: Inside Hermelinda's fruit stand. Date 2012.....	47
Figure 46: The family and their livestock. Ruben Sr., Rojelio Sr., and Rogelio Jr. pictured. Date 1967.....	48
Figure 47: Rojelio Sr. and Hermelinda's wedding. Wedding party unidentified. Date February 12, 1953.....	49
Figure 48: The family at an anniversary with cousins in Mexico. Mrs. Hermelinda sits as the mariachis serenade. Date 2007.....	50
Figure 49: Aloe Vera plant.....	51
Figure 50: Hermelinda and Rojelio Sr. cut a rug on the dance floor. Date 1977.....	53
Figure 51: Rogelio Jr. having a good time after a delivery trip to Campo. c. 1977.....	54
Figure 52: Some of the many siblings of Mrs. Hermelinda Cantú. Alphonso Rodriguez, Leonila Rodriguez, Santos Rodriguez, Victoria Rodriguez, Primo Rodriguez, Cipriana Hernandez (Wife to Rodolpho), Mrs. Hermelinda, and Severyana Balderas. c. late 1970s.....	55
Figure 53: Ruben Sr. in front of a service farm truck. Date 1978.....	56
Figure 54: Noemi and Ruben Sr. celebrating their daughter Bianca's 1 st birthday. Date 1987.....	57

Figure 55: Aurora and Marcos Ramirez with cousins Rogelio Sr. and Armando Cantú. Date July 1955.....	58
Figure 56: Rogelio Cantú Sr. and Hermelinda Cantú at their 37 th wedding anniversary. Date 1990.....	58
Figure 57: Limestone (far left) and Chert flakes found on Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012.....	59
Figure 58: Chert flakes found on Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012.....	59
Figure 59: Petrified wood found in front lot of Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012.....	60
Figure 60: Land snail shells found on Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012.....	60
Figure 61: Dr. Pepper bottle and Topo Chico bottle fragments found on Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012	60
Figure 62: Glass fragments found on Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012.....	61
Figure 63: Glass fragments found on Jackson Rd. property. Date 2012.....	61
Figure 64: Glass insulator on power line. Date 1967. Thanks goes to the South Texas Museum for blown up image of insulator. Date 2014	61

Acknowledgements

Were it not for the cooperation of the Cantú family of Edinburg, Texas this story would never have been told. There are several members of the Cantú family that we wish to give special thanks to: Mrs. Hermelinda Cantú, Rogelio Sr., Rogelio Jr., Norma, Ruben Sr., Ruben Jr., and their cousin Marcos Ramirez. Thank you all for taking the time to tell your stories and answer our questions. The Cantú family members provided us with insight into the lives of vendors, farmers and laborers of Edinburg, and in addition to this, the CHAPS team had the benefit of collaborating once again with Mr. Carrol “Kelly” Norquest, Jr., the patriarch of the first family investigated by the CHAPS team in 2011.

As a result of this we were provided with various details related to labor, local natural oil and gas resources, and musical traditions. Ted Falls, a labor associate who contracts with the Cantús, was an additional source of information regarding oil and gas resources. He owns the property on Mile 17 ½ Rd. in Edinburg, where students also conducted a brief geologic survey. We would also like to extend thanks to Ruby de la Garza of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for funding out of the Hispanic Serving Institution Grant that assisted in the acquisition of equipment for this study. The historic land ownership data acquisition was researched through the Hidalgo County Clerk’s Office, with aid from the Land Record Department’s Rene Salinas. Dr. Lisa Kay Adam, Registrar and Curator of Artifacts for the Museum of South Texas History, provided lectures on the human geography of the Rio Grande Valley for the CHAPS students who were unfamiliar in local history and land dynamics. Janette Garcia, Head of Special Collections and Archives and her colleagues in Special Collections – Mayra Gonzalez, Lisa Huerta and Adela Cadena were of great service conducting portions of the history investigation. Roseann Bacha-Garza, the CHAPS Program graduate assistant, helped provide equipment, images, and maps to students of the course and oversaw our syllabus construction. Nancy Schindele and Eloise Montemayor from the Border Studies Archive filmed the interviews and edited interview transcripts. We of course could not do this without our professors, and so we would like to thank from the history and anthropology departments, Bobbie Lovett, Dr. Sonia Hernandez, Dr. Russell Skowronek, and Dr. Margaret Dorsey. From the biology and geology departments, we would like to thank Dr. Kenneth Summy and Dr. Juan Gonzalez. We are supremely grateful for their insights during the project and their editorial assistance during the preparation of this document. Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Kimberly Selber, Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communication, for graciously supporting this and other projects conducted by the CHAPS Program team.

The Acknowledgments page is usually the first of the front matter pages following the Contents pages. While the Dedication is usually only a few words or lines of text, the Acknowledgments page provides authors a chance to acknowledge or thank anyone they wish, especially people who were involved in the writing or production process.

If your Acknowledgement text requires multiple pages, the final page should be on an even numbered page (left side of an open book). A section break is included below to automatically insert the required blank page if required.

Tip: Traditionally, pages following the table of contents are numbered with Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). Although page numbers are not displayed on the pages before the Table of Contents, they are included in the page count. Begin using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) in the Introduction and main story text.

FOREWORD

Take a drive anywhere in the Rio Grande Valley and it's not uncommon to see fields of sorghum or citrus orchards. These farms have soil that is not only rich in nutrients but also rich in history. One of these stories is that of the Cantú family of Edinburg. Residents of the region for more than ninety years their story, like those of other farming families, is part of the agricultural history of the Rio Grande Valley. Documented here by the UTPA Community Historical Archaeological Project with Schools (CHAPS) Program, their's is the story of the American farming experience.

The report discusses how, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the fertile land in the Rio Grande Valley led to a southward and northward migration into the area. The Cantús, hailing from Mexico and caught in the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution became part of this migration and farming boom in the 1920s. Despite the adversities brought on by drought, snow and hurricanes farming is still a way of life for the Cantú Family.

With a growing population, agricultural production in the Rio Grande Valley will only continue to increase. Feeding the world is possible through contributions made by the Cantú family and other farming families across Texas and the United States. We should all acknowledge the contributions of the CHAPS Program, whose efforts document these stories and so, help us better recognize the contributions farmers make in our lives.

Ruby S. De La Garza
Regional Director- Texas
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Hispanic-Serving Institutions National Program Office
Edinburg, Texas

August 2014

PREFACE

Enter a grocery store or visit a fruit and vegetable stand and one can see the bounty of America's farms and orchards. Consumers have come to expect perfectly, ripe, unblemished, similar in size, and inexpensive produce. Few venture into the fields and orchards to "pick their own," and so, experience in a small way what it means to be a "food producer" and to understand the uncertainties of farm life. Farming is hard work and is fraught with potential problems ranging from droughts, floods, hail storms, frosts, to plant diseases and destruction by insects or birds.

During the twentieth century the Rio Grande Valley was known for its agricultural output. Life centered on agriculture with most residents participating in some aspect of this production from planting, to harvesting, packing, and shipping. Over the past twenty years since the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement the region has been transformed. Where once grew citrus, sorghum, or cotton we now find housing developments and other light industries.

Now a generation has come of age without experiencing life on the farm. Mechanization and the employment of migrant workers create the mystery surrounding whom produces our food is growing. The Cantú Family of Edinburg shared their story of life on the farm from 2012-2014 with student participants in the CHAPS Program-sponsored class at the University of Texas-Pan American titled, "Discovering the Rio Grande Valley." Here we learn about a family who fled the Mexican Revolution to become part of the agricultural legacy of the Magic Valley. We learn how they have faced hurricanes, freezes, droughts, and swarms of birds all to feed the people of America. The CHAPS Program team is honored to provide primary information on local geology, archaeology, fauna, flora, and history while telling the story of Cantú Family and their life. Thanks are extended to the Norquest Family, Dr. Lisa Adam and the Museum of South Texas History, Dr. Ruby de la Garza and the USDA, and an Anonymous Donor for their on-going support of the CHAPS Program. We hope you will enjoy this "Porción of Edinburg," and in it find a story which resonates across the disciplines.

Margaret Dorsey, Ph.D.
Juan L. González, Ph.D.
Sonia Hernandez, Ph.D.
Bobbie L. Lovett, MA
Kenneth R. Summy, Ph.D.

Russell K. Skowronek, Ph.D.,
Director of the CHAPS Program
WWW.UTPA.EDU/CHAPS

2





Figure 2 Standing L-R: Ruben Sr., Hermelinda, Norma, (seated) Rojelio Sr., Rogelio Jr. The Cantús of Edinburg, c. 1995.

This report is the culmination of approximately 24 months of research, fieldwork, and revisions conducted beginning in the Fall of 2012 from a class of undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Texas-Pan American titled “Rediscovering the Rio Grande Valley” under the direction of a multidisciplinary faculty of anthropologists, archaeologists, biologists, geographers, geologists, and historians. This is the story of one of the many Mexican American farming families that settled in the Rio Grande region after escaping Mexico’s Revolution (1910-1920). This migration of people fleeing north into the United States was matched by yet another migration of Midwesterners moving south for new agricultural opportunity. The Cantú family settled in Edinburg, Texas, in the early 1920s and have since developed a thriving produce and trucking business providing crops to markets in the Rio Grande Valley, Houston, and even up further north to the Midwestern states area. This refers to north Central America and the region around the Great Lakes, divided into two divisions totaling 12 states. During the severe droughts that occurred in the Midwest in 2012, the Cantú family helped supply produce needs to the region by sending trucks loaded with locally-grown produce to Midwestern markets (Ruben Cantú, Sr., personal communication 2012).

The students in this study integrated methodology associated with the fields of history, geology, biology, and anthropology to provide a comprehensive picture of topics such as migration, labor, human-land interaction, and rural to urban landscape shifts. Although this is the product of many hands, it would have been impossible to tie the entire project together without the information provided to us in the form of formal ethnographic interviews by the Cantú family.

As mentioned above, this report was formed by an interdisciplinary approach that was composed of a combination of library and archival research, physical surveying and exploration, as well as formal and informal follow up ethnographic interviews that were designed to cover a broad range of topics. Through the progression of this course, students were introduced to both legislative and judiciary databases. With this information, for example, we learn of the specific use of the land from the legal standpoint. We learned about the differences between deeds of trust and liens, between mineral rights and land titles. How has ownership of the area developed? Where and how long has it taken? Through geologic and biologic surveys the students were taken on field excursions at the sites, learning various properties of the environment of the Rio Grande Valley. Soil properties, stratigraphic information, flora and faunal data were gathered for the Cantú report. The interviews and the field data collected by the team were then synthesized into this report. After the information was compiled, at the end of the fall 2012 semester students from the CHAPS research team gave a presentation on their preliminary findings to members of the Cantú family and a few private citizens.

There are five chapters that address different topics relating to the Cantú family's story. Chapter 2 is a review of the historical developments that led to the unique culture we experience today, discussing such historic events as the Hurricane Beulah's impact on the region and the Mexican Revolutionary period. It chronicles the Cantú's family history on both sides of the border beginning with the Mexican Revolution and coming in to the early 21st century. Chapters 3 and 4 inform to the geology and biology of the land the Cantú family has lived on. Both chapters include descriptions of the biological survey along with charts of the animals and plants cataloged. Within Chapter 4, there are figures containing our geologic borehole data gathered on both of the Cantú's properties. Chapter 5 consists of the cultural considerations of religion, folk medicine, and the division of labor in the Cantú family and the results of an archaeological survey conducted on two properties managed by the Cantús.

CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CANTÚ FAMILY

Roland Silva, Jesus Ramos, Ramiro Garza, Colin Newton, Alexis Casiano, Ryann Fink, and Randall Ramirez

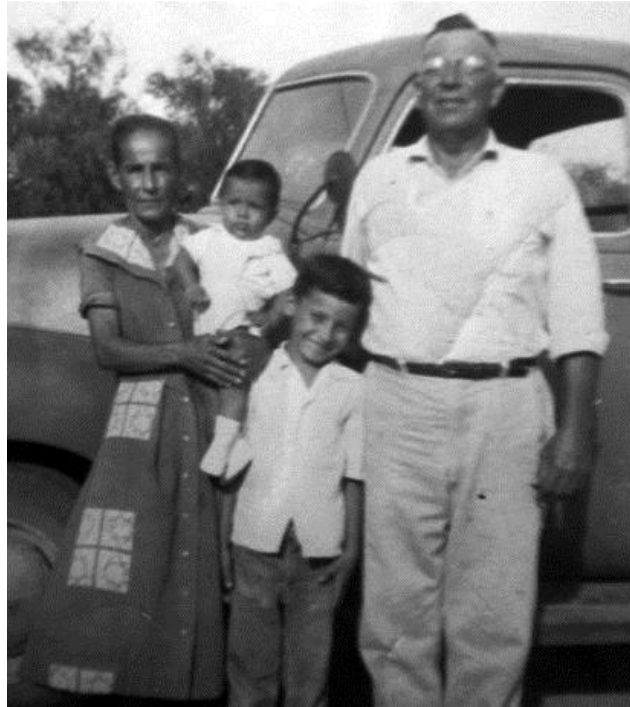


Figure 3 L-R: Carmen Hernandez-Cantú, Rogelio Jr., Marcos Ramirez, Jesus Cantú-Serna. c. 1955.

In this chapter, we consider the social and political events that brought the Cantú family into the United States, providing one facet of the migration and immigrant experience in this region. The following pages briefly outline significant events that impacted the Cantú way of life. Their story begins with the biggest factor that brought them to Edinburg—the Mexican Revolution. Pictured above in Figure 2 is their grandfather, Jesus Cantú Serna, the man who started their family branch and the one responsible for bringing them to Edinburg.

Mexican Revolution (1910-1920)

The Mexican Revolution began on November 20, 1910 with the primary goal of overthrowing the Porfirio Díaz regime. The revolution was a product of class conflict which led to aggression between capitalists and proletariats in retaliation to American economic interests. According to historian Alan Knight, it was a revolution which challenged, but could not defeat the established bourgeois order (Knight 1985:1, 3). The Mexican Revolution represented a time of social and political crisis, and mass political mobilization, marking the end of the old plutocratic form of government. The revolution was not solely a labor movement and not one worker's party obtained political recognition because a formal council was never established (Knight 1984:1). Historian Friederich Katz explains the origins in three main causative phenomena. The first was the expropriation of village land

in South and Central México with an agrarian policy put forward by Díaz that antagonized substantial segments of the population. The second involved the transformation of the northern frontier into a “borderland” during the last quarter of the nineteenth century with an influx of American capital. The northern frontier underwent important transformations when Porfirio Díaz and the United States imposed their political and economic authority in the region, especially in Sonora, Chihuahua and Coahuila. For example, the presence of railways in this region transformed the old “frontiers” into an informal border.

In the political sphere, Díaz vectored his power through *caudillos*, or local bosses, to control individual states, thus destroying the autonomy of the peasantry (Katz 1981:27, 28, 29). The presence of American investments produced an influx of economic transformation, but not for all involved. Katz further explains that the ascendance and rapid integration of Northern México and the appropriation of public lands by the “domestic oligarchy” and foreign entrepreneurs limited the access of wealth and resources to the lower and middle classes.

The third causative phenomenon was Díaz’s invitation to European nations to invest in México. This act challenged American economic domination, thus provoking American resentment of this diversification of foreign trade (Katz 1981:30).

At first, the revolutionary movement appeared triumphant in spite of a harsh authoritarian reprisal, creating a counter revolution. The military and social forces would not agree to reestablish peace or stability. Ideological differences among revolutionaries, factions, and military campaigns all over the country resulted in a bloody civil war. The principle centers of insurrection were located in Chihuahua and Morelos. It was here that Francisco Madero, a Mexican statesman and the primary opponent of the tyrannical Porfirio Díaz, personally supervised the military actions of Pascual Orozco, the commander of the revolutionary forces and his subordinate Francisco Villa. In Morelos, the peasantry followed the revolutionary Emiliano Zapata. After the occupation of Ciudad Juárez in 1911 and negotiations with the Díaz regimé, Díaz exiled himself from Mexico in defeat, embarking on a trip to Europe (Krauze 2002:16, 17). Madero became president in 1911, and shortly thereafter, his government was overthrown in a *coup d’état* lead by General Victoriano Huerta. The active phase of the revolution started after the assassination of Madero and his vice president, Pino Suárez. An ample military response was marshalled in opposition to the *de facto* Huerta regime.

Venustiano Carranza, governor of Coahuila during 1913-1914 was in charge of the Constitutionalist Army, whose aim was to restore the constitutional basis of law and order violated by Huerta. Huerta resigned the presidency in 1914 after repeated defeats of his army, but the triumphant constitutional faction was incapable of achieving true victory through a new government until after the Convention of Aguascalientes. Eulalio Gutiérrez was designated to be the new provisional president of México, with Villa as the commander of the Constitutionalist Army. Carranza opposed the resolutions and formed a new government in the capital of the state of Veracruz. In 1915, Villa’s dissension with Carranza produced a critical divergence during the revolution--Villa and Zapata were united and General Álvaro Obregón allied his forces with Carranza. In the following years, the revolution changed *caudillos* (local bosses) into *jefes revolucionarios* (revolutionary leaders). After the pivotal Battle of Celaya in 1915 near Celaya, Guanajuato, the powerful *Division del Norte* lead by Villa was banished. Carranza became president in 1917 and governed until assassination by the military in 1920. After 1920, the military from Sonora ran the country however, General Obregón was himself murdered before his second re-election campaign.

In the following years, military commanders became more bureaucratic and politically-minded with the formation of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*. The Institutional Revolutionary Party was established in 1929 after the assassination of Obregón, to build stability in the post revolution period. The PRI was created to bring every political faction and interest group together. However most of the actual power came from a Central Executive Committee, which budgeted all government projects. The Party was very authoritarian and hierarchical, leaving little room for opposition. It avoided empowering any one faction too much, preferring the establishment of political castes, developing into a new form of state by 1940 (Krauze 2002:19, 20).

The instability along the border prompted a response by Presidents William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson. Over 17,000 U.S. soldiers were sent to guard the international boundary. Most of the literature dealing with the revolution along the border focuses on the events surrounding Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico in 1916 and the Mexican Punitive Expedition, in which General John J. Pershing and 10,000 U.S. troops marshalled southwards on an expedition into Mexico to apprehend Villa and his cohorts. This mission was doomed to failure as Pershing was ill-equipped and poorly supplied for the excursion, and while he was eventually successful in routing the *Villistas*, Pershing nonetheless was unable to capture Villa. He eventually left Mexico, ordered back on assignment for World War I. The efforts to guard the border were often unsuccessful, and as a result the prevalence of banditry and smuggling commonly produced heavy tension between soldiers and civilians. By 1920, the civil war in Mexico finally came to an end. The Constitutionalists, under the command of Carranza, gained control over most of the country and were able to impose a degree of law and order along the Mexican side of the Río Grande River. North of the river two U.S. regiments were stationed on the border. They were the 10th Cavalry that arrived in Arizona on December 1913 and the 12th cavalry regiment that was posted at McAllen, Texas in 1916 (Work 2009:183, 184). When the Constitutionalists regained control over the states of Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas, armed conflict occurred in the Mexican border states of Matamoros, Reynosa, and Nuevo Laredo between 1912 and 1916. One of the most urgent problems was acquiring a steady supply of guns and ammunition. The U.S. Federal government reported that the revolutionaries were smuggling guns out of the United States in defiance of the arms embargo imposed by President Wilson.

The people that lived on the north bank of the Río Grande River through the revolution and its aftermath became witnesses to many incidents. There was a range of unscrupulous activities in operation, such as the aforementioned banditry, that left residents with plenty to fear. As another example, there was the Plan of San Diego discovered in McAllen, Texas on January 6, 1915. This plot called for a Mexican American insurrection on the border with the intent of regaining all territories lost by México at the end of the Mexican-American War (Matthews 2005:28). Although the plan was thwarted, the situation in the lower Río Grande Valley remained critical. It was in this tumultuous era that the Cantú family's story begins.

The Beginning of Our Story

On October 26, 2012, students from the CHAPS class at the University of Texas-Pan American conducted an ethnographic interview with Mrs. Hermelinda Cantú, mother of Rubén Cantú and wife of Rojelio Cantú Sr. revolving around the Mexican Revolution. Hermelinda Cantú recalled that her father, Andrés Rodríguez, was a victim of the revolution. According to Mrs. Cantú, her father who was only twelve years of age in 1914, lived in Monterrey, Mexico. One day, while waiting for his father at a crossroads, a group of revolutionaries took him captive, to this day it remains unclear as to which particular faction

committed the abduction. Continuing her story, she recollected that her father returned home after several years of wandering and performing menial work (Ramos/Cantú 2012/pg. A-3). Mrs. Cantú also recounted memories of an aunt kidnapped in full view of her family as a teenager. She miraculously returned home many years later (Ramos/Cantú 2012/pg. A-3). Despite such traumatic events, various branches of the Cantú family have survived and played a vital part in the formation of families and communities in the Rio Grande Valley (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Pictured with their grandchildren, Hermelinda and Rogelio Sr. pose for an Easter photo. From L-R: (front row) Dominic Garza, Rogelio Sr., Hermelinda, Bella Hope Cantú. (2nd row) Nadia Lynda Valdez, Damian Valdez, Miguel Valdez, Roxanna Cantú, Rachel Cantú, Bianca Noemi Cantú, Nailea Quintanilla, Rebecca Cantú, Rogelio Cantú III, Ruben Cantú Jr. 2009.

South Texas is Calling

During the late 19th and early 20th century farmers who were interested in generating large amounts of produce were beckoned to South Texas. Unfortunately, the region lacked farm-to-market roadways, and so an efficient and cost effective transportation system for moving produce out of South Texas was unavailable. Farmers of this era found it difficult to convince the Southern Pacific Railroad to lay track despite the petition of influential ranchers such as Robert Kleberg, Richard King II, John Kennedy, Jim Wells, John Armstrong, Robert Driscoll Sr. and Jr., and Francisco Yturria (Montejano 1987:106). Many land speculators able and willing to start new lives as farmers clung to the hope of cultivating cash crops. These ranchers, determined to make the vision of an agricultural paradise in South Texas a reality, used their capital and resources to finance a railroad. Beginning in 1904, the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railway connected Brownsville to the Corpus Christi terminal of the Missouri-Pacific railroad system (Montejano 1987:107). As predicted, the “Magic Valley” began to attract farmers, land developers, irrigation engineers and northern produce workers.

At the turn of the 20th century the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas experienced a great influx of Anglo Americans to the region. These Anglo Americans were drawn to this area due to the new railroad, a water pump house, and the ease of purchasing low priced land to farm. This new migration brought the beginnings of ethnic tension between current Mexican American landowners and incoming Anglos for control of resources in the region.

As the Anglo population continued to swell so did the price of land and taxes. *Tejano* ranchers soon became overwhelmed with high taxes and were forced to sell large

portions of their property. Anglos were largely successful in utilizing the legal system in order to gain lands as most had intimate knowledge of the bureaucracy of land stewardship, whereas many *Tejanos* had no understanding of the U.S. legal system whatsoever. In the end, there was a major shift in landholding from *Tejano* to Anglo hands (Alonzo 1998).

Author David Montejano remarks in his book, *Anglos and Mexicans: In the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* the farm boom unfolded between 1900 and 1910 because of the tremendous amount promotional literature being circulated by newspapers throughout the agriculture states of the Mississippi Valley. Montejano makes note of the special offers made for prospective home-seekers, enticing them to come visit. By the trainload every first and third Tuesday of the month folks were brought to investigate the “Magic Valley” and other arable areas of South Texas (Montejano 1987:109). As a result of these efforts to attract people to the region, the economy of counties such as Hidalgo was adjusted from 677 farms averaging 969.5 acres apiece in 1910, to 4,327 farms averaging 126.9 acres in 1930 (Montejano 1987:109). In addition, at the turn of the 20th century the total population in Deep South Texas ballooned from 79, 934 to 159,842 by 1920 (Montejano 1987:109).

John Shary led the pull that attracted Midwestern Anglos to the Rio Grande Valley. It started in 1912, when Shary first became interested in the lower Rio Grande Valley (Hart 2012). Like others before him, Shary was impressed with the commercial potential of citrus-growing experiments by men such as A. P. Wright, J. K. Robertson and H. H. Banker. For that reason, Shary bought and subdivided more than 50,000 acres of land in the Rio Grande Valley and implemented an irrigation system. With the creation of the Southwestern Land Company, Shary became a remarkable promoter. He offered prospective investors package deals in which they could purchase land, trees, and even labor (Thompson 1997:166).

According to multiple interviews with the Cantú family, they considered themselves a part of the migration boom to South Texas. However, the Cantús were not lured to the area like the Midwestern families. They differed from their Anglo counterparts in that they were not seeking fertile land to farm, no, the Cantús migrated to South Texas fleeing the Mexican Revolution. From the sacrifices of three generations of Cantús living in the United States, this great family maintains pride, dignity, and humility, a paragon of farmer families from our Rio Grande Valley.

Farm Life (1920-1980)

The Cantú family trace their origins to Mexico. According to family lore, the progenitor of the Edinburg Cantús, Jesus Cantú Serna, was one of the first of the Cantú family members to move from Mexico to the United States. Family members claimed that he left his home in the small community of Los Ramones, located north of Monterey, due to the Mexican Revolution. The story goes that Jesus Cantú Serna was threatened and nearly hanged, however it is unclear why he was targeted. The events took place so long ago that no one could exactly remember the details surrounding Cantú’s departure from Mexico. We believe it may have had something to do with Mr. Cantú Serna’s last job. He was a sheriff in Mexico before he was a farmer in the U.S. (Norma Cantú Valdez, personal communication 2014). What is clear was that he crossed the border and eventually settled in the Rio Grande Valley in 1922, and by the 1930s the Cantú family patriarch had established roots in Edinburg (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2013). Rojelio Sr.’s own documentation reads their arrival by “rowboat” (Figure 5).

ORIGINAL **CERTIFICATE OF LAWFUL ENTRY** FORM No. N-135
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

No. 247827

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT A RECORD OF ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES OF THE ALIEN WHOSE NAME AND DESCRIPTION APPEAR ON THE REVERSE HEREOF HAS BEEN MADE AS PROVIDED IN THE NATIONALITY ACT OF 1940.

Rojelio Cantu Hernandez

W. S. [Signature]
 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

ORIGINAL *File No. 1407-177*

PRESENT NAME	HERNANDEZ	CANTU	ROGELIO
	(SURNAME)	(MIDDLE)	(FIRST)
NAME AT TIME OF ENTRY	Hernandez	Cantu	Rogelio
	(SURNAME)	(MIDDLE)	(FIRST)
February 23, 1923			
(DATE OF ARRIVAL)			
rowboat			
(MANNER OF ARRIVAL)			
Ramones, Nuevo Leon, Mexico			
(PLACE OF BIRTH)			
December 1, 1922			
(DATE OF BIRTH)			
5 feet 5 inches	medium-dark	brown	brown
(PRESENT HEIGHT)	(COMPLEXION)	(EYES)	(HAIR)
September 19, 1944			
DATE OF ISSUE			
			FILE No. AR-2577111
<i>Rojelio Cantu Hernandez</i>			
(SIGNATURE OF ALIEN)			
<i>Francisco L. [Signature]</i>			
(SIGNED IN PRESENCE OF)			Immigrant Inspector
			(TITLE OF GOVT. OFFICER)

Figure 5: Rojelio Sr.'s Immigration identification, dated 1944, D.O.B. on 1922, and (U.S.) arrival date 1923.

The first family farm was a plot of land located three and a half miles west of Highway 107 and three quarters of a mile north on Hoehn Road Jesus Cantú Serna purchased 20 acres of land and established the homestead. This is where his grandson Marcos Ramirez grew up and still resides at to this day (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-1). Figure 6 is a picture of that area, with Jesus Cantú Serna and his sons Felipe and Rojelio Sr. Behind them we see exactly what Edinburg used to be-empty fields everywhere. Figure 7 is proof positive of their accomplishments; the establishment of a strong family farming business in Edinburg.



Figure 6 L-R: Jesus Cantú-Serna, Felipe Cantú, and Rojelio Cantú Sr. in a field of tomatoes. c. 1940.



Figure 7: Rojelio Sr. in a field of grain sorghum. c. 1978.

Farming and trucking have always been a part of the family business for the Cantú's. Jesus Cantú Serna was in charge of operations at the farm tending citrus, cotton, corn, and grain (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pgs. F-6, 10, 16). The market for fresh foods outside of the Rio Grande Valley led to the beginnings of the family's trucking business, Rogelio Cantu Jr. Farms. Rojelio Cantú Sr. was remembered for being heavily involved with trucking crops to the market, and his sons and grandsons manage the trucking business today, transporting their products to El Campo and Houston (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Rogelio Jr.'s early start as a truck driver. c. 1955.

Marcos Ramirez, cousin to Rogelio Jr., Ruben Sr., and Norma, explained that the market for crops was stronger in Houston and they could earn more money for the crops there than in the Rio Grande Valley. Ramirez attempted to clarify:

Well....take a watermelon. Back then...they would sell by the pound. Here we might have been able to get five, seven, eight cents a pound. Over there we probably got 30 cents a pound or something like that...when you're talking about 30 or 40 thousand pounds...you know that makes a significant difference. (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-7).



Figure 9 (L-R): Pictured with workers, Rogelio III, Rogelio "Roy" Jr., and Ruben Sr. get ready to transport watermelons to market in Houston. c. 1983.

It was not until Jesus Cantú-Serna retired that his son, Rojelio Cantú Sr., took over the family farming business. For many years the family did not own the land they lived on. They took care of the property and lived in a small two-room house next to the “Big House” where the property owners resided. They acquired the property in the 1950s, but it was not until 1971 that Rojelio Cantú Sr. and his wife Hermelinda Cantú saved up enough money to purchase the land adjacent to theirs (Figure 9 and 10). The land and house would serve as an important backdrop for the foundation of a new family, but once again, these are powerful examples of what life in Edinburg looked like before rapid urbanization (Figure 11).



Figure 10: Hermelinda and Rojelio Sr. at their Jackson property. c. 1955.



Figure 11: Hermelinda Cantú in front of the Jackson Road property. c. 1970.

While anyone looking for work had an opportunity, farming to the Cantús was a family affair, and everyone helped out, even the children helped pick crops. Figure 12 gives us an exact date helping us understand how early in life work on the farm began. Norma Cantú Valdez remembers working after school and on the weekends picking whatever was in season.

Norma, daughter of Rojelio Sr. and Hermelinda, recounts:

You know, it's amazing, back then, we used to go pick cotton...[even when] my dad would be out of town. My mom would take us all...from the oldest to the youngest. We would have our own sack and we'd be picking...she

wouldn't let us go sit under the trailer or [horse] play...(Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-19).



Figure 12 L-R: Norma, Ruben Sr., and Rogelio Jr. standing next to a combine machine. Date August 1967.

There has always been an effort to hire willing workers for the fields and legal status was not a major factor that affected employment at first. The family also worked on other farms where workers registered in the Bracero Program were hired. Figure 13 shows those workers hand in hand with family, working to move watermelons from the flatbed of a truck to the back of their red semi-trailer for transport to market.



Figure 13: Pictured here is Rogelio III and farm laborers loading watermelons for trucking. c. 1983.

Along with the hiring process, one of the major changes to the agricultural economy was in deciding which crops were grown and how they were sold. When the Cantú family first began farming, there were no restrictions regarding the type and quantity of crops that could be grown and sold. Whatever was planted was taken to the farmer's market and buyers were able to choose how much they desired to purchase. Family members now reminisce about how much easier it was to sell crops in the pre-1980 period, before the introduction of brokers and a more complicated market. The overall farming process has become more complex, and according to the family, purchasers now tell landowners how much of a particular crop is needed, and from there an exact number of acres of land are devoted to growing it. The opposite of what they were once used to. Their choices are now more limited, and so the family must provide the requested supply of crop to stand a chance with specific demands in the marketplace.

Farming is affected by many factors, including the climate, natural disasters, financial resources, and access to labor. From information provided by the Cantú family in ethnographic interviews, the CHAPS team learned that they have contended with many droughts, hurricanes, and freezes on the farm. Hurricane Beulah stands out as one of the worst natural disasters in Rio Grande Valley history. Sources report Beulah hitting the Rio Grande Valley on September 19-20th, 1967. The strong winds and widespread flooding destroyed the Cantú family's crops and livestock. Norma recalled that dozens of new-born piglets were lost during this event. The water and mud were so high that the piglets drowned (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pgs. C-8-9).



Figure 14: North Junior High School, located on Lovett St., with heavy flooding. (Image courtesy of UTPA Library).

Hurricane Beulah left its scars on the Cantú family, but multiple freezes during the 1980s and in the first decade of the 21st century also took heavy tolls. Ruben Cantú Sr. recalled how the freeze of 2004 destroyed all of their hard work. He lost all of his crops and with it their brand-new home. At his wit's end, Ruben Sr. was torn between struggling to keep his composure for his family and wondering what he was going to do to put food on the table (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2012). For many people throughout the Rio Grande Valley, the Christmas freeze of 2004 was a white winter miracle, but to farmers like Ruben Sr. it resulted in bitter losses incurred to his family. It was a difficult subject to discuss, but Norma still went on to explain just how important farming and trucking is to the Cantú family. She recalled:

My brothers have always...followed [in] my dad's footsteps either trucking or farming ...our way of life is...whatever is...produced... that would be part of what we would eat...so when the freeze comes everything is gone, there's nothing. You know, and it really affects... everything... everything you put into it...is lost...there's no work 'cause there's nothing to haul, there's nothing to cut...it really affects him very emotionally 'cause that's his life you know. (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-10).

To this day, the Cantús have struggled to keep up the family business, but they have persevered despite numerous difficulties and continue to grow quality produce.



Figure 15 L-R: Pictured here-the Cantú siblings with their children and parents. (Front row) Ruben Cantú Jr., Bianca Noemi Cantú, Rogelio Cantú Sr., Miguel Valdez, Rebecca Cantú, Rachel Cantú, Roxanna Cantú. (Back row) Ruben Cantú Sr., Noemi Cantú, Nadia Lynda Valdez, Norma Valdez, Hermelinda Cantú, Carmen Cantú, Rogelio Cantú Jr. (Not Pictured) Damian Valdez, Rogelio Cantú III. 1995.

Labor and Farm Life in the Rio Grande Valley (1920-1980)

In the early 1920s and well into the 1970s there were few labor laws in effect, especially in Texas. One such, known as the National Labor Relations Act, guarantees basic rights to private sector employees to organize into trade unions. This was not intended to benefit independent contractors or agricultural workers. There were no dedicated union groups of laborers at the ready with shovels and pitchforks. The labor acquiring strategies of farmers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley involved large families or subcontracting laborers. Beginning in the 1940s, the United States implemented the Bracero Program. The purpose of this program was to address labor shortages inflicted by World War II. This agreement between the two governments allowed Mexican workers to seek employment with U.S. farmers. Unfortunately, many of these folks were forcibly deported afterwards (Zatz 1993:851). Through its 22 year duration from 1942-1967, over five million Mexican laborers were contracted in 24 states (Calavita 1992:1). It was not until 1961 that 117,368 Mexican Bracero Program laborers came into Texas, a majority of them ending up in the Rio Grande Valley (Scruggs 1963:251-264). Ruben Cantú Sr. recalled, "...when it came to irrigating and stuff I [would] hire people (Leal/Cantú 2012/pg. D-8)." Cantú Sr. could not provide details as to whether or not they were documented or undocumented laborers. This is quite understandable: considering that he was six years old at the time. In Marcos Ramirez's interview, the first cousin to Ruben Sr. recalled that when the Bracero Program was in effect, they hired Braceros from trucks that came by and they also hired undocumented workers. According to Ramirez, "...when penalties started getting more severe with the illegals, you know, we backed off..." (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-10).

Carrol Norquest, Jr., another local farmer whose family was studied in 2011, was interviewed on particular topics such as labor and farm life to complement the experiences of the Cantú family as well as other local farming families in the Rio Grande Valley. In his interview, conducted on October 28, 2012 Norquest shed light on the evolution of labor laws and how farmers coped with the changing times (Salinas-Hernandez et al. 2012).

Relationships amongst farms were important throughout the early part of the twentieth century. A rural community allowed for close ties between families in the area. Norquest tells of the ability to simply, "...walk to their house...you could get on a horse and go over or...if you had gasoline for the Model-T Ford, well, you could go." (Alaniz/Norquest 2012/pg. G-10). He told us a brief story of a neighbor who was also a nurse, rendering aid while his grandmother was dying. For community solidarity, local farmers would work each other's fields from time to time, sharing labor. As agricultural technology developed further though, farmers were able to more efficiently plant and harvest large tracts of acreage. Unfortunately, small-scale farmers were unable to reap as many benefits from this and eventually the neighborly atmosphere faded into the future of a struggling market.

Ruben Sr. gave insightful accounts of workers on his father's farm, and even after the Bracero Program ended, their neighborly spirit remained. Rojelio Sr. would re-purpose or renovate storage facilities on their land to provide rudimentary homes for the workers to live in while they toiled for the Cantú family. Between the 1970s and 1980s many men worked the fields for the Cantú's. A few workers even brought their entire families with them, depicted in Figure 16 with Norma Cantú Valdez (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2013).



Figure 16: Norma Cantú Valdez with a hired family. The woman pictured in the background is pregnant. c. 1974.

Ruben Sr. remembers his mom sending the worker's children into public school. She has always understood the importance of a good education to lead on to a successful future. All of her children have earned high-school diplomas, pictured in Figure 17.

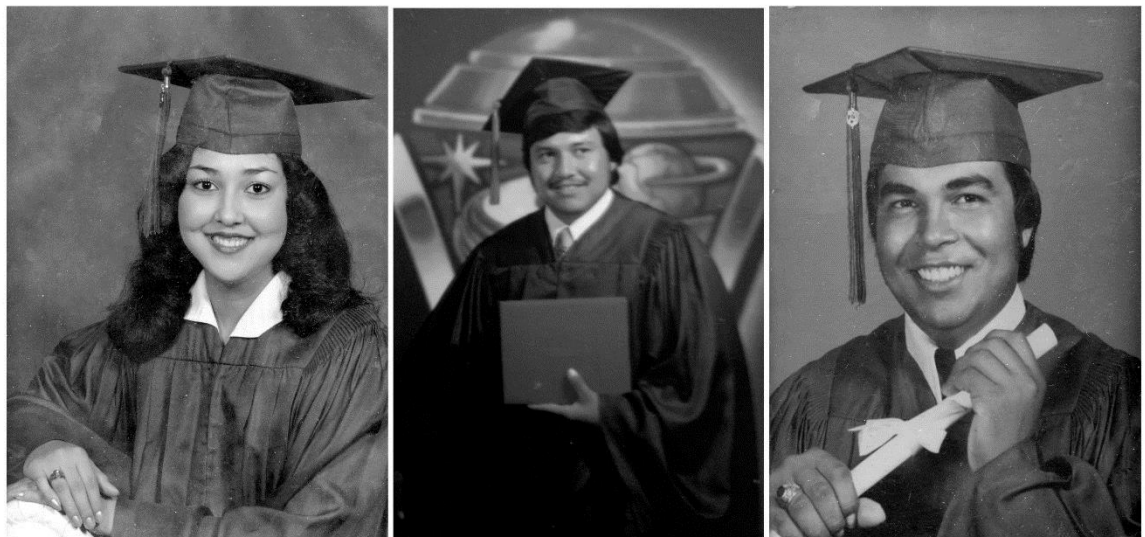


Figure 17 L-R: Siblings Norma (1977), Ruben Sr. (1981), and Rogelio Sr. (1974) pose for their Edinburg high-school graduation photos.

Mrs. Hermelinda even still has one of her report cards from the 1st grade, shown in Figure 18.

months. They are invited to come then and at any other time convenient for them.

Original STATE OF TEXAS FREE TEXTBOOK CARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 1943-1944 SESSION

Name of Pupil *Rodriguez Hermelinda* Grade *Inter* School _____
 Name of Parent _____ No. House _____ Street _____
 Town _____ County _____

List of Books—Title	Book No.	List of Books—Title	Book No.
Agriculture _____		History _____	
Arithmetic <i>5</i> _____	<i>128-11</i>	Language _____	
_____		_____	
Basic Reader _____		Physical Science _____	
_____		_____	
Civics _____		Spanish <i>10</i> _____	
Drawing _____		_____	
_____		Spelling <i>6</i> _____	
Geography _____		_____	
_____		_____	
Handwriting _____		_____	
_____		_____	

I certify that the pupil's record on the books listed on this card is clear.

Teacher *R. H. McArthur* Principal _____

Original and duplicate copies should be kept on file by the teacher. When all books have been returned, the pupil should be given this original card, fully receipted. Without it he will not be granted free textbooks for the next session.

Figure 18: Evidence of Hermelinda Cantús dedication to education includes her grade school report cards. 1943.

Ruben Sr. shared a few of the many success stories of the children Mrs. Hermelinda helped put through school. In one example he gave, they employed a husband and wife who were both deaf and mute to work on their property. They worked with their two sons, the eldest of which was also hearing impaired. With Hermelinda's help, both sons graduated from high school. The older son is now a sign language teacher (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2013). Norma Cantú Valdez told us of some children that eventually became professors themselves, and they continue to call and visit Mrs. Hermelinda at her home (Norma Cantú Valdez personnel communication 2014).

In 1986, the United States passed the Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA) (Baker 1997:5). It was a one-time only process that allowed immigrants who were living illegally in the United States the opportunity to change their legal status. Also included with that bill was another legislation, the Special Agricultural Worker (SAW) Program. This allowed immigrant farm workers who could prove that they were working for 90 consecutive days in the United States to be granted legal status (Baker 1997:9). Through this program many of the workers on the Cantú farm were able to remain legally in the United States. Rogelio Jr. and Ruben Sr. were both very observant of paperwork and bureaucracy themselves and helped their workers follow through with the necessary forms. While some of the workers decided to return to Mexico, many elected to continue working and living in the United States. Ruben Sr. said that they helped "fix" twenty guys, many of whom stayed on working with the Cantús, while still others went on to work for construction firms (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2013). It was a long process for the workers but the Cantús helped them out despite the difficulty, hiring the right lawyers to formalize everything (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2013).

The Rio Grande Valley Comes of Age

"Kelly" Norquest highlighted several relationships in his description of some citrus businesses and co-ops that were founded in the Rio Grande Valley. From the 1930s into the 1960s, the citrus associations packaged and shipped a majority of the produce. Norquest emphasized the fact that members of the co-op not only shared in the profits, they also shared in the losses. The entire operation was run by a board of directors. The success of the citrus co-op led to the development of a cotton gin and a grain elevator. In the modern Rio

Grande Valley we have an electric co-op now known as Magic Valley Electric Company. This company developed out of the Rural Electrification Act passed in the 1930s. This act facilitated electricity to farmers at their homesteads. The only way to participate was to contribute to the co-op.

The introduction of electricity greatly affected farm life and those with the resources had access to major modern amenities. In the 1920s the tools of the farm trade included scythes, hand-driven equipment and horse-drawn plows commonplace on through to the 30s. In the 1940s, demand for labor on the farms increased. This was attributed to World War II. The government needed to feed recruits, but as the war effort continued on, the need for scrap iron also increased, so even though gasoline and many other necessities-like rubber, were rationed, horse drawn contraptions were salvaged and replaced with newer gasoline-powered equipment (Alaniz/Norquest 2012/pg. 15).

With new technology in hand and many soldiers contributing to the war effort, the need for labor on farms during wartimes was always a critical issue. Through the 1950s, dependency on undocumented Mexicans for labor became the norm. By the late 1960s, farmers had access to new and improved cotton-pickers that could harvest one and later two rows at once, increasing efficiency and reducing reliance on manual labor. Unfortunately, the equipment was expensive and not everyone could afford it. Furthermore, the federal government finally expanded coverage of the Fair Standards Labor Act to include farm laborers, introducing farmer trade unions but also raising labor costs. Many farmers went out of business because they were unable or unwilling to pay the cost of legal labor. According to Norquest, a popular tactic employed by local farmers was to transfer their farming operations to Mexico in search of more affordable labor wages (Alaniz/Norquest 2012/pg. C-16).

Labor as we think about it has changed since the 1920s, when Ruben Sr.'s grandfather first moved to Texas. Gone are the days of tilling fields and planting and harvesting crops by hand. Figure 19 is a collage of pictures of machinery the Cantú family have used in their employ.



Figure 19: Some of the many machines used on the Cantú farm. Dates as follows L-R: (Top row) Rojelio Sr. standing atop a combine c. 1965, combine machine at work c. 1973. (Middle row) 1983 pictured with Rojelio Cantú and sons Ruben Sr., Rogelio Jr. Rogelio III and workers, Tractor pictured c. 1995. (Bottom row) Dated 1970 pictured with Hermelinda and Rojelio Sr., photo of tractor equipment 2010.

The Cantú family has preserved a long tradition of farming that binds them together. They have kept their business afloat through all these years and have provided wages for many other families, improving living conditions for all involved. When asked about his grandfather, Ruben Sr. said that Jesus Cantú Serna became an American citizen in 1969 and afterwards his parents took their family to Mexico to see where their heritage came from. He thought it was wonderful to see their family history come through a full circle back into Mexico. Their grandparents were born in Mexico but were laid to their final rest in the United States, at Hill Crest Cemetery in Edinburg (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2013). The unity within the family is still strong, and every time life gets tough, they continue to stick by each other.

Division of Labor on the Cantú Property

Similar to many farming families in the area, the Cantú livelihood and household is maintained by the collaborative efforts of everyone. There was no exception to this on the Cantú farm. Chores and duties were no different from what is found in societies today. When hands were short around the farm or in the field, Norma Cantú Valdez told us that her mother, Hermelinda, never shied away from helping her husband with work (Figure 20):

“My dad and my mom used to [both] drive the truck...she’s got her driver’s

license...my dad and her, he would take one of the trucks to the field and she would follow him in the other one...then my dad would take the trucks to go and load it and she would stay [behind] in the field with the workers...” (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-19).



Figure 20: Hermelinda Cantú takes the wheel. Date 1983.

Families during the mid-1900s would have large households as a response to the increased demand of labor. Farming was the way of living for many families in the Edinburg area, and the more children the family had the more labor available. As Marcos Ramirez explains in the following:

“A lot of kids would go...with their mothers or fathers... back during that era, everybody was looking to have large families. The fathers wanted large families to put their kids out to work...You know, I don’t know the [exact] ratio...everybody was always looking for work in the fields, you know, to stay alive.” (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-10).

As Mr. Ramirez explained, the laborers on the Cantú farm came not only from locally hired men. Figure 21 is a great image of Ruben Sr. and some friends after a workday. Norma commented:

“...school kids...wanted extra money to spend...their parents would actually come and ask and then they would bring their kids.” (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-19).



Figure 21: Ruben Sr. (pictured 2nd from the right standing) and friends after returning from harvesting watermelons in Falfurrias. c. 1977.

The children's responsibilities evolved from simple tasks, such as thinning out fields with tilling hoes, and as they grew older, the chores assigned to them gradually increased in difficulty. As a way to cope with the harsh conditions of farm labor, the family often sought ways to make hard work seem like fun, competitive activities that would make time fly by faster. Norma Cantú Valdez pointed out during her interview that hard work doesn't always mean having a boring time:

“It was a challenge to see who would pick the most pounds at the end of the day...if you didn't, it would be so long and boring...[though when they competed] nobody wanted to leave, it was already getting dark and we were still, it's like they were *amachadas* to stay and see who was going to win...it was fun” (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-19).

At the present time Ruben Cantú Sr. and his brother Rogelio Jr., below in Figure 22, oversee management of the farm.



Figure 22 L-R: Rogelio Cantú Jr. and Ruben Cantú Sr. Date 2012.

For some of the large-scale tasks such as irrigation, the Cantú brothers subcontract their laborers. Ruben Cantú Sr. recalls working on the farm as a child with his father:

“...growing up it was fun but it was also hard work...my dad had a little tractor and...he worked during the week with the Edinburg Citrus and during the weekends he would uh, do the land...they hardly had any time off...he would bring me and he would put me on his lap on the tractor. Okay start driving...you know, that’s how I started learning...”(Leal/Cantú Sr 2012/pg. D-11).



Figure 23: Rogelio Jr. on his tractor. c. 1967.

The labor consisted of indoors domestic work and outdoors labor at the fields. The females of the Cantú family generally handled domestic responsibilities such as cleaning,

cooking, and feeding the animals when the men were not present. The males maintained the house exterior and usually worked in the fields.

The Cantú's upbringing as a whole brought the siblings closer together and instilled the values of hard work. Occasionally, the children were rewarded. Ruben Cantú Sr. remembers playing in the nearby canal after a hard day of work and sometimes being treated with trips to the local Whataburger:

“Well, uh, this is where we grew up...we used to get the hoe and get out there... just the family...[later] we would jump in the canal...it was fun. And uh [when] my dad goes, “Do you guys uh, want some Whataburger?” man, we jumped this high...” (Leal/Cantú Sr.2012/pg. D-11).

If the family did not possess the necessary equipment for the farm, they would out-source the labor. Ruben Cantú Jr. explained that if a certain tool was needed such as a combine, Rojelio Sr. would hire someone to bring and use the necessary equipment (Aparicio/Cantú Jr. 2012/pg. E-5).

Hurricane Beulah (1960-1980)

Although the Rio Grande Valley is known for its tropical climate, it like any other region cannot escape the wrath of Mother Nature. The Cantú family shared various memories of weather events that impacted their lives. Hurricanes were at the top of their list. Brief reference was made to Hurricanes Dolly and Allen, although it was Hurricane Beulah that came up repeatedly in the interviews.

Hurricane Beulah hit the Rio Grande Valley on September 19, 1967. Wind gusts of over a hundred miles an hour were recorded in the Edinburg area. As a Category 5, Beulah was the strongest hurricane of 1967 and along with the tremendous wind speeds, flooding was rampant in the area as Hurricane Beulah made landfall. This combination of strong winds and flooding wiped out the citrus industry in the region.

Ruben Cantú Sr., six years old at the time, remembers how that year's corn crop was ruined by Hurricane Beulah. It destroyed their fruit trees and the floodwaters carried produce away. The canals overflowed and roads were under water. Cantú Sr. stated that the water reached up to his waist, but the family had shelter nonetheless, and along with thirty other people in the big house on Jackson Rd., took solace from the storm. The family survived in the end, but the house was damaged by a fallen tree (Leal/Cantú 2012/pgs. D-2, 4, 5, 11, 18).

Their losses were blatant and Ruben Sr. noted the suffering livestock during Beulah. Piglets mired in the tremendous amount of mud and silts drowned. The flooding and the floating bodies of little dead piglets were also one of Norma's most profoundly distinct memories. Like her brother, she remembers watching all the fruit from the trees wash away during the storm. She recalled the big house that belonged to the property owners, next to the two room house they lived in. She remembered everyone seeking shelter in the big house. Despite this, the family survived and did what was necessary to keep the farm running. The family's determination and perseverance is a direct reflection of their upbringing. Ruben Cantú remembers his father filling the bottom of a small trailer with the dead piglets. The cattle on site were the only animals to fare well during the storm. It took a month to begin recovering from Hurricane Beulah (Leal/Cantú 2012/pgs. D-2, 4, 5, 11, 18). Another significant storm event Ruben Sr. recalled was Hurricane Dolly in 2008 but Mr. Cantú Sr. would argue it was nothing compared to the devastation caused by Beulah more than 40 years before.

Norma Cantú Valdez recalled looking out the window of the big house and seeing water everywhere (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pgs. C-8-9). Rogelio Jr. attributed the flooding on the property and in the area to poorly maintained drainage systems. He spoke of powerful winds, but did not feel the rain was sufficient enough for the amount of flooding in the area. He recollected only around eight to ten inches of rain and so believes the flood damage was mainly due to drainage from the city of McAllen (Silva/Cantú Jr. 2012/pgs. B-8-9). Like Rogelio Jr., Marcos Ramirez agreed that the wind damage was the most destructive facet of the storm. However, Ramirez was stationed in Phoenix, Arizona during the storm and received most of his information about Beulah from television broadcasts and the Red Cross (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-5). One of the most commonly recollected events by everyone interviewed for this project was Hurricane Beulah. The flooding, whether it was the result of the rain from the hurricane, poor drainage, or a sister city dumping its overflow from the area, the Cantús property felt the disastrous effects.

Though devastating, Rogelio Cantú Jr. cultured his entrepreneurial spirit after the storm. He recalled the area around the Mile 17 ½ Rd. being flooded after the storm and Rogelio Jr., thirteen years old at the time, saw an opportunity. Using one of his dad's tractors, he would charge twenty dollars to pull cars out of flooded areas. He was not the only one doing it either, though in the end it was still much cheaper than calling a wrecker service (Silva/Cantú Jr 2012/pg. B-8).

Conclusion

The Cantú family has called the Edinburg area home for almost a century. They have lived through numerous trials as a family, and their resolve is stronger than ever. From their indirect involvement in the Mexican Revolution, to living through one of our area's worst natural disasters, Hurricane Beulah, the Cantú family has persevered, creating a long-standing legacy. Their lives compose the quintessential landscape of life in the Rio Grande Valley.

CHAPTER 3: THE GEOLOGY OF THE CANTÚ FARMS

Roland Silva, Joel Rodriguez, Raul D. Lopez, Uriah Curtiss, Ryan Lanoy, and Christopher Scott

Geomorphology and General Geology

In Hidalgo County, the topography varies from 15 to 70 meters above sea level with the highest elevation found on the western boundary abutting Starr County, gradually decreasing eastwards, bordered by Cameron County (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976). The prevailing wind directions of Hidalgo County are described from eolian, or wind-driven imprints oriented in north westerly lineations (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:98). The chief geologic feature of the Lower Rio Grande Valley is the Rio Grande River and its sizable delta. The Rio Grande Valley is divided into four counties: Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Cameron totaling 2.7 million acres (Bice et. al. 1976:1). Our study focuses on the areas located in north central Hidalgo County region in the town of Edinburg, Texas.

According the U.S.G.S. Soil Conservation Service's survey of the county, the surficial geology of Hidalgo County contains windblown sand sheet deposits from north to south across the landscape. Four geologic formations compromise the land surface of Hidalgo County. They are the Pleistocene-era Lissie formation, the Beaumont formation, Holocene alluvium floodplain deposits, and fluvial terrace deposits. The Cantú property in Edinburg, Texas is located on the Lissie formation in Hidalgo County (Jacobs and Aronow 1981: 98). Sediment descriptions of the Lissie formation correspond with our geologic borehole samples taken from the Cantú residence and property. Composed of various clays, sands, silts, and evaporates, the soils are diagnostic of the LRGV's semi-arid environment, which facilitates a higher amount of evaporation than precipitation as a consequence of our hot and humid environment. As a result hard rocks such as calcite and the flood plains of the river provide silts, clays, and sands to fill out the sedimentary rock record of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.



Figure 24: Locations of six boreholes dug on Jackson Rd. Property and Mile 17 ½ Rd.

Purpose and Methodology

Following research to determine the geologic make-up of the region, the CHAPS group elected to take geologic core samples to gain a more readily observable understanding of the composition of the soils. Figure 24 (above) displays the six locations on properties located on Mile 17 ½ Rd. and along Jackson Rd. At each borehole location, we used standard hand-driven augers with one meter extension rods. Measurements were documented at ten centimeter increments and examined to determine soil information and other features of note, such as calcium carbonate inclusions and the presence of iron oxide. This allows for a more in depth interpretation of the soil's history. Figures 25 and 26 display the results of our investigation.

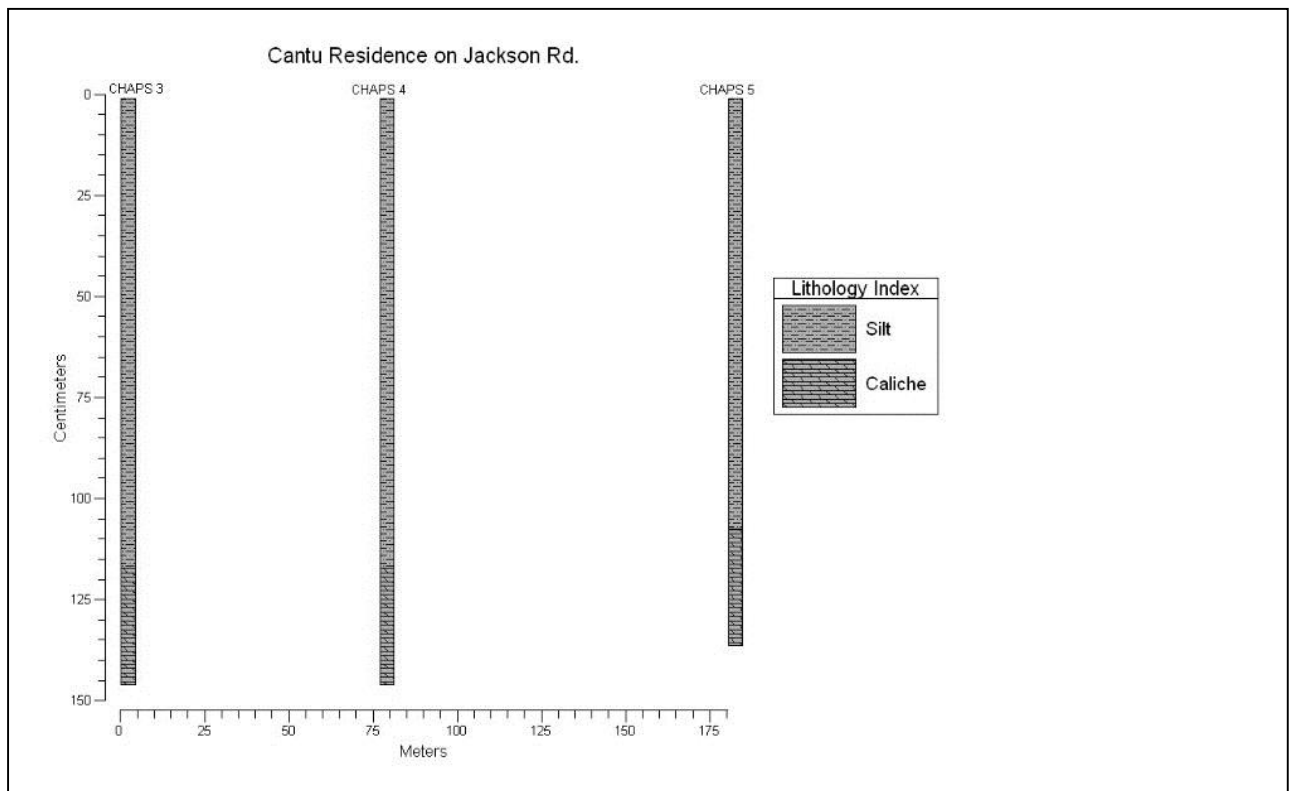


Figure 25: Soil compositions of CHAPS 3, 4, and 5 which were taken at Jackson Rd. Property.

On Ruben Cantú's first property, north of Schunior Rd. on Jackson Rd., three boreholes were drilled and designated as CHAPS 3, CHAPS 4, and CHAPS 5. During the first 115 centimeters of CHAPS 3 the auger contents comprised primarily of silt sediments. After 120 centimeters, we began to collect caliche. Figure 27 shows the auger with a soil sample. There are small calcium deposits in the soil indicating proximity to a caliche layer.

The group observed the change as it became increasingly difficult to drill further. This layer of caliche was agreed upon as a suitable borehole terminus, as digging through it risked damaging the equipment. CHAPS 4 collected similar results through 115 centimeters of data. Shortly after, the auger again bit caliche around the same depth. CHAPS 5 was taken towards the west end of the property adjacent to the canal. At a depth of 110 centimeters the auger continued to sample silts. The drilling team was unable to dig much further as they once again discovered caliche around 115 centimeters. Beds of caliche can cause problems for agriculture. A layer of calcite, or *caliche*, while only one more unit of Moh's hardness (a standardized scale for categorizing the hardness of minerals) above a human fingernail, may nonetheless prevent water from draining properly, accumulating with percolating salts in the soils to restrict the growth and nutrition of plant roots. As we are in an environment with more evaporation than precipitation, salts can and do contribute to these layers in the soil.

Today Ruben Cantú Sr. leases land from Ted Falls, located off of 1820 West 17 ½ Rd., where the half of the boreholes samples were taken (CHAPS 6, CHAPS 7, and CHAPS 8). The data from CHAPS 6 were recorded as consistent sand sediments through the first 105 centimeters. CHAPS 7 contained only sand through the first 115 centimeters of coring, sampling caliche at around 120 centimeters. CHAPS 8, the last borehole, indicated sandy

strata through the first 80 centimeters. The auger reached the caliche layer at around 85 centimeters, the shallowest found thus far.

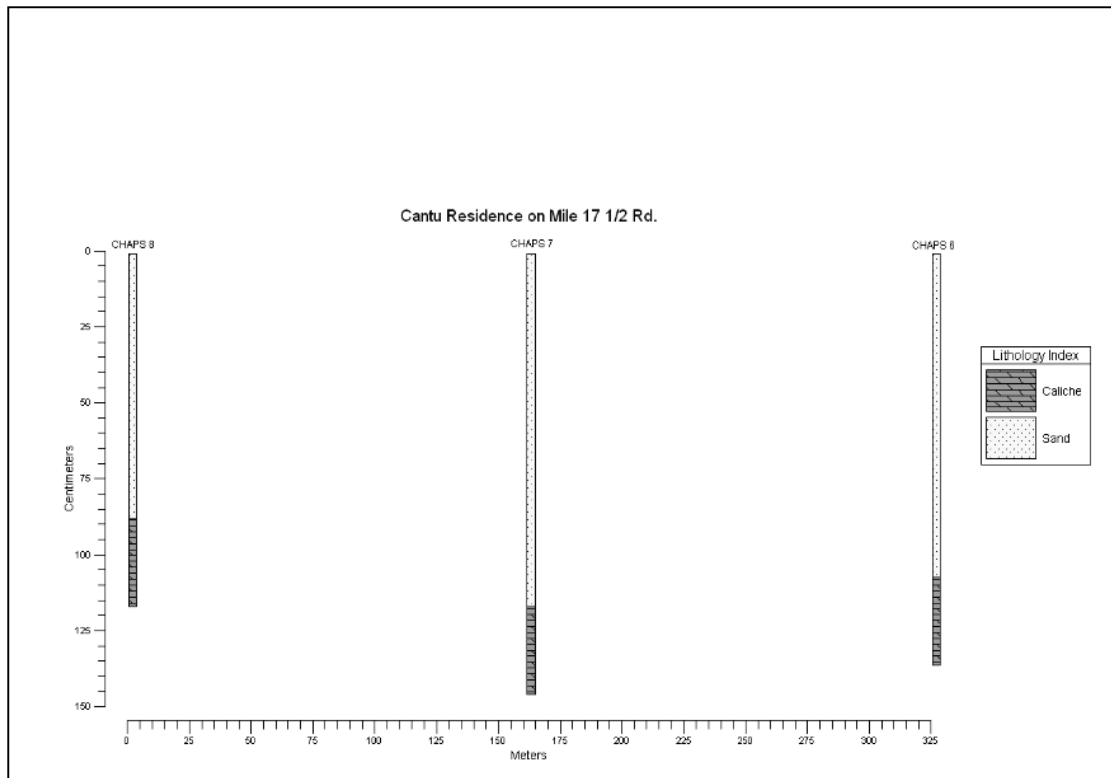


Figure 26: Soil compositions of CHAPS 6, 7, and 8 which were taken at Mile 17 ½ Rd. Property.



Figure 27: Soil deposit from Mile 17 ½ Rd. property. October 2012.

Figure 28 shows two students in action digging a borehole with the hand auger for CHAPS 8. All students participated in collection of core samples. Figure 29 is one half the CHAPS team that worked on CHAPS boreholes 6, 7, 8 on Mile 17 ½ Rd.



Figure 28 L-R: Jenarae Alaniz and Ryann Fink drilling CHAPS 8. October 2012.



Figure 29 L-R: Ramiro Garza, Francisco Gonzalez, Jorge Trujillo, Armando Montelongo, Roland Silva, Dr. Juan Gonzalez, Colin Newton, Luis Reyes Jr., Alyssa Aparicio, Arturo Cortez, Kirstine Adames, and Jenarae Alaniz drilling CHAPS 6, 7, and 8 on Mile 17 ½ Rd. October 2012.

Extreme Climatic Events

It is clear that the weather is a central part of life to the Cantús as a farming family. These disasters include hurricanes (discussed in Chapter One), extreme cold, and extreme heat. Ruben Cantú Sr. recalled quite a few of these major disasters during his lifetime.

Freezes, Snows, and Droughts

Pertaining to catastrophic climatic events, the freezes of 1983 and 1989 and the Christmas day snowfall of 2004 greatly impacted the Cantús' and fellow farmers' livelihoods. The freezes of 1983 and 1989 were disastrous to the RGV's orchard industry,

forcing most farmers to abandon the citrus business, essentially destroying the citrus economy. Some sold their properties to others intent on furthering urbanization of the region. For those who persevered, the recovery process was slow and arduous, taking orchards about five years to fully recover. The white Christmas of 2004 was remembered by most RGV residents as a refreshing change to our usual weather. The last recorded snow was in the 80's, but 2004 haunts Ruben Sr. to this day. This "white miracle" killed all of their crops and left Ruben Sr. no choice but to give up their then-newly purchased home and property to make ends meet (Ruben Cantú, personal communication 2012). Of recent, the drought over the past year in this region has also greatly impacted farm life. Unfortunately, in the spring of 2013, in addition to growing urbanization and heavy drought, red wing blackbirds swarmed their crop of corn, destroying the Cantú's lush fields, constituting yet another major pest to life on the farm (Ruben Cantú, personal communication, 2013).

Oil and Gas

A major event that took place in the area of the Cantú property involved the establishment of oil rigs. The majority of these wells were drilled in the northwestern section of Edinburg between the 1950s and 1970s. According to Mr. Carrol Norquest, a neighbor of Mr. Cantú, there was five oil rigs within a five mile radius of Mr. Cantú's property (Carrol Norquest, Jr., personal communication, 2012). One oil rig in the early 1940s was located on the corner of Schunior Rd. and Sugar Rd. where the University of Texas Pan-American built its Wellness and Recreational Sports Complex. A second oil rig was located on the Cantú property on Jackson Rd. during the 1970s. The third oil rig was located on the corner of Chapin Rd. and Sugar Rd. directly across from the Norquest's property. The other two oil rigs are located further north of Edinburg near Mile 17 ½ Rd. In 1951, one well was in production on Mr. Cantú's second property.

The Cantú property is located in the northwest section of Edinburg, Texas. If one was to look at a geologic atlas of Texas, it can be observed that the Cantú property is betwixt numerous oil and gas fields located in Hidalgo County. The South Monte Cristo Gas Field, South McCook Oil & Gas Field, and the Jeffress Gas Field are all located to the northwest of the Cantú property. The North Monte Christo Gas Field, South Santellana Gas Field, and West Sal Del Rey Gas Field are located to the north, with the San Carlos Gas Field, La Blanca Oil Field, and San Salvador Gas Field all situated to the east. To the south there is the Edinburg Gas Field, and the Shepherd Gas Field on the border of Mexico (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976).

With major oil and gas fields located to the north, south, east, and west of the Cantú's property it should come as no surprise that oil and gas wells are found on and around both of their properties and on those of neighbors. As time went on, many of the oil companies began to plug up the wells as their oil "dried up" and became inundated with salt water. According to Mr. Norquest, the farmers of the area, including the Cantús, received around three thousand dollars from the oil companies before the wells filled with water (Alaniz/Norquest 2012/pg. G- 9). While it was difficult to locate where the oil well was on the Jackson Rd. property, the remnants of the oil rig on his second holding could be easily seen from the street.

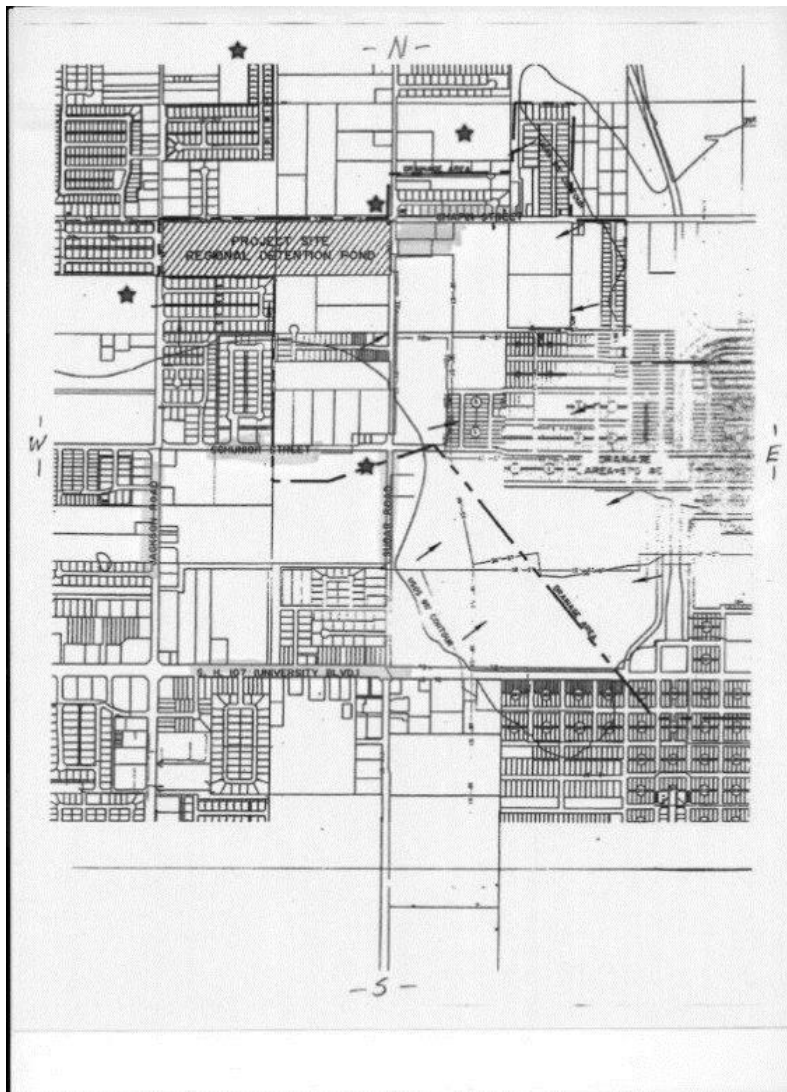


Figure 30: Location of five oil rigs on or near the Cantú property. c. 1950. Photo courtesy of Carrol Norquest Jr.

Mile 17 ½ Rd. Property

Mr. Ted Falls owns the property of 1820 West Mile 17 ½ Rd., the second property that Mr. Cantú currently farms, though this is on a temporary lease contract. Mr. Falls was a farmer himself at one time. Though now retired, he has been a friend and business associate of the Cantús for years. The property taxes that the city of Edinburg levies on Mr. Falls are only \$190 dollars as opposed to thousands of dollars in fees per year if the land were not farmed. This is why many farmers tend to lease their property if they themselves forgo agriculture in order to save money on property taxes. According to Mr. Falls, any profit that Mr. Cantú makes off the lease contract belongs to Mr. Cantú, simultaneously assisting with expenditures and allowing Mr. Falls to save money as well. Mr. Falls admitted that he was uncertain as to when the first oil and gas wells were drilled on his property, but he believes it was in the early 1990s. The wells were owned by LTS Oil and Gas. The initial borehole was 7,820 feet deep with the plans originally scoped to sample three formations. However, as they reached the first formation they stopped and chose not to sample the second formation (another 1,500 feet deeper) due to a lack of suitable machinery. LTS Oil and Gas extracted oil from his well for two years. It amounted to three barrels of oil per day at

\$42.00 dollars per barrel of oil back in the 1990's (Ted Falls, personal communication 2011).

A barrel of oil today is approximately \$103.00 dollars showing just how society's dependence and demand on oil has grown significantly in a little over a decade. The well on Mr. Falls land was left uncapped, never properly shut down by the company. In 2004, a second company by the name of Breitling Oil and Gas Company bought the well from LTS Oil and Gas, but never extracted anything from that location or attempted further drilling into the second unit. However, the company continues to pay Mr. Falls \$1,200 dollars per year in royalty dues because the well remains uncapped (Ted Falls, personal communication 2012).

CHAPTER 4: THE BIOLOGY OF THE CANTÚ FARMS

Roland Silva, Francisco Gonzalez, Nadia Borrego, Jorge Trujillo

Wildlife has always been present on the Cantú property. Until 1995 the Cantú property was surrounded by crop fields. Over the years the open fields were replaced with apartment complexes and by 2010 the property was at the center of an expanding suburban sprawl. Once commonplace, the howls of coyotes at night became more and more infrequent as urbanization moved north of Highway 107 and encroached onto their property. The Cantú property today mainly consists of two large crop fields that encompass roughly 70% of the approximate 20 acre area. Their land has always been devoted to agriculture, an essential facet of the Cantú family livelihood. When our initial CHAPS survey was conducted, we noted quite a few small patches of brush land that looked more than sufficient to support various forms of local wildlife, and so decided to attempt a follow-up inspection. Our findings are organized into table figures shown later in the chapter. Within Google Earth, a histogram function allows us to observe regrowth rates in vegetation. This contrasts well with Edinburg's municipal expansion into the area. The following figures cover a fifteen year period.

Figure 31 is an image taken in 1995, and barring a substantial drop in image resolution compared to modern photogrammetry, shows just how isolated the Cantú's were from the city proper at this time. The family was originally located at the house on the southeast corner of the property. The small white ring indicates the original Cantú residence, and the larger ovoid encircles the current house, fruit stand, and mechanic garage.



Figure 31: Original Cantú property (smaller circle), the current residence (larger oval), and its surroundings, 1995.

Figure 32 shows just how much the land changed in the eight years between 1995 and 2003. Located to the west of the Cantú property, right across the street in the center of the map on what was once a crop field is now home to dozens of apartments spread across six neighborhood streets. To the south of the neighborhood district at the corner of Jackson and Schunior Rd. is what looks like the beginning of more road construction for urban infill.



Figure 32: Cantú property and its surroundings, highlighted area indicates developing neighborhoods. 2003.

Figure 33 was taken from Google Earth in 2005. The area directly north in the center of the image is the city's emergency water retention pond. The image, taken in 2005, illustrates a transition from tilled fields of barren dirt, to grasslands, and finally into a fully characterized brush lands habitat.



Figure 33: Surrounding neighborhoods of Cantú property, displaying the recent expansion of apartment housing. 2005.

Figure 34 was taken two years later in 2007 and depicts the tenacity of Rio Grande Valley vegetation and grasses. The three images illustrate a transition from tilled fields of barren dirt, to grasslands, and finally in a fully characterized brush lands habitat. In five years times the RGV biosphere completely reconstituted a low-lying forest to the south of the Cantú property.



Figure 34: Surroundings of Cantú property, vegetative regrowth in highlighted areas. 2007.

Figure 35 was taken in 2010 and shows the area has been almost completely filled with apartments. Two neighborhood streets, Moonlight and Candlelight to the north of the property, are completely filled with small capacity domiciles. Likewise the streets across Jackson to the east of the Cantú residence are similarly developed. The corner of Jackson and Schunior to the south is left bare, but the land behind it to the north and east has identically been lined to capacity with urban progress. The western section has developed green, fully-reestablished woodlands on some ranch property. A few civil changes to the surrounding terrain have expanded the street of Jackson to four traffic lanes and a median, pushing a little more out into the surrounding sidewalks.



Figure 35: Surroundings of Cantú property. Completely developed apartments complexes fill the area. 2010.

A brief biological survey was undertaken on the morning of November 29th 2012 to document the wildlife parameters of the property. The meeting point of the survey was at the northeastern corner, the most artificially developed area of the property, a clearing for parking their semi-trailers. The living residence, a fruit stand, and a tractor trailer maintenance shop together made up only a small section of the property. From there we

began our surveillance moving southwards across the crop field towards the south east corner. No crops were being grown in the area at the time of this survey. The unplanted crop fields had already begun transitioning into grasslands terrain. Different annual plants are common in disturbed areas and spring up when crop fields are not in use. A northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) was seen flying low over the fields, perhaps in search of a field mouse. On the south eastern corner of the property is a brush thicket that was once the site of the original Cantú living residence. Aerial photographs showed the house still present in that corner in 1995. The house has since been abandoned from an unfortunate fire and the environment has recovered the area. The largest range of trees was found in this area of the premises, some of which had been there as long as or longer than the original residence. Mr. Ruben Cantú Sr. remembered a mesquite tree that he and his siblings used to play under growing up. Some examples found in this corner area were well matured native wildlife trees like sugar hackberry (*Celtis laevigata*), or “paloblanco” as it is commonly referred to in this border region, spiny hackberry (*Celtis pallida*), or “granjeno” covered in its bird favorite-orange berries, “huisache” (*Acacia farnesiana*), white mulberry tree (*Morus alba*), and only one mature anacua (*Ehretia anacua*) and Texas ebony tree (*Chloroleucone bano*).

All of these trees are among the best wildlife cornerstones in the South Texas landscape. They provide for cover, nutrition, and nesting sites to wildlife. Sugar hackberry, granjeno, and mesquite trees (*Prosopis glandulosa*) line the southern perimeter of the property. American snout butterflies (*Libythea nacara*) known famously for the impressively large numbers in which they present themselves in the late spring and fall, fill the air around these hackberry trees- the host plants for their larval stage. In fact, a large part of the plants recorded during the biological survey of the property serve as host plants or nectaring plants for many species of butterflies and insects. This was discovered by our survey count of more than 20 species of butterflies observed during the biological audit. October and November are the months where the peak of butterfly diversity is observed in the Rio Grande Valley, an area famous for over 300 species of butterflies on record and for being the northern extent of ranges of many tropical butterflies. The Rio Grande Valley brings in millions a year from eco-tourism. The RGV is the number one bird-watching region in the world, and the second in butterfly (Mathis et al. 2004).

Most of the wildlife was seen in a 3,330 square meter patch of vegetation in the middle of the property. Our review of aerial photographs showed this area of land practically bare, and now about 17 years later this central patch has turned into a dense scrub thicket. Mesquite trees and “paloblanco” trees make up the canopy where northern mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*), house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and doves (*Zenaidura macroura* and *Zenaidura macroura*) were observed. While the understory of “crucita” (*Eupatorium odoratum*), lantana (*Lantana camara*), and scorpion tail (*Heliotropium angiospermum*) plants harbor a mass of different species of nectaring butterflies. These plants along with a variety of grasses, mallows, asters, vines and some prickly pear cacti (*Opuntia engelmannii*) have engulfed some old trucks and trailers laid to rest there after many years of servicing the Cantú family. This central patch clearly demonstrates the resilience of the South Texas ecosystem.

The subtropical climate in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, unique to southern Florida, deep south Texas and adjacent to northeastern Tamaulipas, Mexico, lends to long growing seasons in plant life, making it possible for highly diverse habitat to form in a short span of years (Tunnell 2002:28-37). The following is the list of the plant and wildlife species recorded in our biological survey.

Results of Biological Surveys

The results of the surveys conducted at the Cantú Property on Jackson Rd., November 29, 2012.

Common Name	Scientific Name
American Snout	<i>Libytheanacarinenta</i>
Brown Longtail	<i>Urbanusprocne</i>
Ceraunus Blue	<i>Hemiargusceraunus</i>
Checkered White	<i>Pontiaprotodice</i>
Dainty Sulphur	<i>Nathalisiole</i>
Great Southern White	<i>Asciamonuste</i>
Gulf Fritillary	<i>Agraulisvanilla</i>
Little Yellow Sulphur	<i>Pyrisitialis</i>
Lyside Sulphur	<i>Kricogonialyside</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Mallow Scrub-Hairstreak	<i>Strymonistapa</i>
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>
Phaon Crescent	<i>Phyciodesphaon</i>
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
Rounded Metalmark	<i>Calephelisperditalis</i>
Tropical Checkered-Skipper	<i>Pyrgusoileus</i>
Western Pygmy-Blue	<i>Brephidium exile</i>
White Peacock	<i>Anartiajatrophae</i>

Figure 36: Butterflies identified on Cantú property, Nov. 29, 2012.

For butterfly watching in the RGV, the peak of diversity falls within the months of October and November. At least 20 different species were identified in abundance.

Common Name	Scientific Name
House sparrows	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaidamacroura</i>
Northern Harrier, Marsh Hawk	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
White-Winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>
American Coot	<i>Fulicia americana</i>
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>

Figure 37: Birds identified on Cantú property, Nov. 29, 2012.

There were not many birds visible on site, and while the CHAPS team did hear a few common calls, such as the Northern Mockingbird's high-pitched rapid-fire chirping, we were unable to get a good look at them for proper identification at the time of the biological survey. Another sited bird, the Mourning Dove, is also common in many parts of the Rio Grande Valley. Many of the birds found were located by the drainage canal on the west side of the property.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Anacua	<i>Ehretia anacua</i>
Bermuda Grass	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>
Buffel Grass	<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>
Chile Pequin	<i>Capsicum annuum</i>
Climbing Milweed	<i>Funastrum cynanchoides</i>
Common Sunflower	<i>Helianthus annuus</i>
Corona de Cristo	<i>Passiflora foetida</i> var. <i>gossypifolia</i>
Cow Pen Daisy	<i>Verbesina encelioides</i>
Crucita, Blue mist flower	<i>Chromolaena odorata</i>
Depression Weed	<i>Baccharis neglecta</i>
Erect Spiderling	<i>Boerhavia erecta</i>
False Ragweed	<i>Parthenium hysterophorus</i>
Giant Reed	<i>Arundo donax</i>
Honey Mesquite	<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>
Huisache	<i>Acacia farnesiana</i>
Johnson Grass	<i>Sorghum halepense</i>
Least Snout Bean	<i>Rhynchosia minima</i>
Live Oak	<i>Quercus virginiana</i>
Lotelbush	<i>Ziziphus obtusifolia</i>
Malva Loca	<i>Malvastrum americanum</i>
Mexican Hat	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Old Man's Beard	<i>Clematis drummondii</i>
Palmer's Pigweed	<i>Amaranthus palmeri</i>
Pigeon Berry	<i>Rivina humilis</i>
Possum Grape	<i>Cissus incise</i>
Retama	<i>Parkinsonia aculeate</i>
Rocket Mustard	<i>Sisymbrium irio</i>
Scorpion's Tail	<i>Heliotropium angiospermum</i>
Silver Leaf Nightshade	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i>
Spiny Hackberry, Granjeno	<i>Celtis pallida</i>
Spiny Sow Thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>
Straggler Daisy	<i>Calyptracarpus vialis</i>
Sugar Hackberry, Palo Blanco	<i>Celtis laevigata</i>
Texas Ebony	<i>Chloroleucone bano</i>
Texas Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia engelmannii</i>
Tepeguaje	<i>Leucaena pulverulenta</i>
Thicket Threadvine	<i>Cynanchum barbigerrum</i>
Three Furrowed Indian Mallow, Amantillo	<i>Abutilon trisulcatum</i>
Tie Vine	<i>Ipomoea cordatotriloba</i>
West Indian Lantana	<i>Lantana camara</i>
White Mulberry	<i>Morus alba</i>

Figure 38: Plants identified on Cantú property, Nov. 29, 2012.

The above figure lists the different plants seen on the Cantú's property. The plants serve as a home for the various other animals and insects. Not only were butterflies and birds identified, but crickets, grasshoppers, Damselflies, dragonflies, moths, and native bees

were also spotted on the property. However, the team was not able to properly identify them. These insects are part of the ever-changing environment of South Texas.



Figure 39: Cantú field which had recently been plowed, northwest side of Jackson Rd. property. 2012.

Conclusion

While the rapid pace of urbanization has had various deleterious effects on plant and animal communities, nature has demonstrated it can still recover quickly even after substantial clear cutting. The previously mentioned pastureland transformed back into brush land in less than ten years. Although nature can restore itself fairly quickly after human intervention, there is no sign of urban expansion slowing down in Edinburg. Recently, the Texas House of Representatives and Senate approved the merging of the University of Texas-Pan American and the University of Texas at Brownsville. Along with the formation of a medical school, this guarantees even more development of the Edinburg area in support of these various facilities. It is our hope that this survey will provide for an increased awareness of local flora and fauna and their vulnerability in the face of continued rapid urbanization.

CHAPTER 5: THE LIFEWAYS OF THE CANTÚ FAMILY

Roland Silva, Ashley Leal, Alyssa Aparicio, Luis Reyes, Jr., Jenarae Alaniz, Randy Rosa, Kirstine Adames, Omar Flores Marin, Armando Montelongo, and Daniel Nicholson

Keeping Old Memories Alive

Like heirlooms, folklore and family histories are passed down from generation to generation, cementing a community's identity in their beliefs and culture. For examples we noted how the family traversed Mexico to the Rio Grande Valley (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-2) or how Pancho Villa's men abducted a family member from their hometown of San Carlos, Texas (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2012). The family stories that circulate throughout the Cantú family serve to keep them connected personally and culturally with each other. This family has farmed in the Edinburg region for many years. They often told stories during the long days in the heat to help pass the time during the work day. As Marcos Ramirez, cousin of Ruben Cantú Sr., states, "... they often told stories while working in the fields and would visit nearby neighbors after supper to chat (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-12).

Whether in the homes of friends and family or in the field working, folklore stories are highlighted and told in all forms. The most common folktale often told is that of *La Llorona*. Norma Cantú Valdez, sister of Ruben Cantú Sr., recalls hearing many stories growing up about "the weeping woman" who drowned her children in a river as an act of vengeance against her spurned love (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-16). After realizing the grim reality of her irreversible act, she took her life in the same fashion and is said to haunt rivers and canals in Mexico and Texas, crying out in search of her babies, unable to enter the afterlife without them. Mexican culture has told of very taking several different forms. Some have told stories of a wailing spectre with the skull instead of a face, others have reported her with the face of a horse, and there are accounts of her with a demonic, fanged-face. This tale was often told to many Mexican American children by their elders as a way to scare children into acting well-mannered, and this was no different for the Cantú family. Ruben Cantú Sr. told the team of a story that was passed down from his mother. Hermelinda's brother used to regularly swim at a canal in their hometown of San Carlos, Texas and one day while swimming he saw a "monster-like" figure rise out of the water. It frightened him off and he never ever went back there. (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2012). Norma Cantú Valdez recalled one memory in particular herself. It happened when some of her father's workers went walking across the street along a reservoir one night. The workers arrived visibly shaken. Pale faced, they recounted the figure of *La Llorona* rising out of the water and disappearing into a field next to the reservoir. This is just one of her many sightings in the Rio Grande Valley and a story often retold at the Cantú family table (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-16).



Figure 40 L-R: Randy Rosas (camera), Norma Cantú Valdez being interviewed by Alexis Casiano. 2012.

As the new generation of Cantús replaces the old, the family continues to cherish their history and traditions. Stories are more than just something to tell a child at night. They are oral records of history and legacies that should be preserved through time.

Fond Memories and Traditions of Food

Food is the glue that brings people from all walks of life together. Savory smells and the traditions of culture. It is the mixing of identities and flavors. Food, like in every culture, is important because of its ability to bring families together as one.

Gathering together at barbecues was a treat for the Cantú family. At these family gatherings, red meats were preferred as the base of the meal, usually complimented by making traditional side dishes such as rice and soup (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-2).



Figure 41 L-R: Rogelio III (Rogelio Jr.'s son), Ruben Sr., Ruben Jr., Damien Valdez (Norma's son), and Rogelio Jr. at the Jackson property. c. 1995.

The family has always incorporated foods they've grown on their property into their diets. Every part of the plant was utilized. For example, discarded corn husks or *hojas*, are still used to cook *tamales*, a dough-wrapped delicacy akin to a pocket entre' form of shepherd's pie. Norma Cantú Valdez describes the experience of gathering and preparing supplies for making the dish as a long, painstaking effort. The women would go into a back

room of the house and remove the kernels off the corncob and then grind it into paste for the *masa*. Norma elaborated:

“Okay, we had to do, go and, so we would grind the corn and all that and get it, then she would cook it. Take it to grind it, to make the *masa*. And then, I would have to, all of us would have to go and get the *hojas*...”
(Valdez/Casiano 2012/pg. C-16).

Norma laughed about this because it is easiest in this day to simply drive to an H-E-B grocer or a Wal-Mart and buy anything readymade. She fondly remembers how they would make a game out of this work too. Competitions like who could prepare the most *tamales* or who could make the best tasting ones (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-16). When the time came for the corn kernels to be ground up, they would be processed using a *metate* (a stone platform) with a handheld, smaller stone used for crushing materials called a *mano*. These are not unlike a mortar and pestle. Ruben Sr. still has the *metate* used by his family and the machine used to remove the kernels from the cob (Ruben Cantú, personal communication 2012).

Like in most Mexican and Mexican American households, *tortillas* are a staple and prized item at the table. Norma remembers how her mother made *tortillas* at home and despite the variety of foods they would prepare, everyone always went straight for the bean tacos, a simple traditional favorite (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-16).

Rogelio Jr. has memories of coming home from school and going straight to the fields to work every day. Ruben Sr., Rogelio, Jr., and Norma would bottle tomatoes with their mother (Ruben Cantú, personal communication 2012). Ruben Sr. explained that there were many steps to properly bottling tomatoes starting with cleaning, boiling, and finally peeling them. Their father bought a machine at an auction that placed caps on bottles because he knew it would be used extensively. Ruben Sr. vividly remembers when he and his siblings were would use it. His job was to apply the seal to the bottle (Ruben Cantú, personal communication 2012).

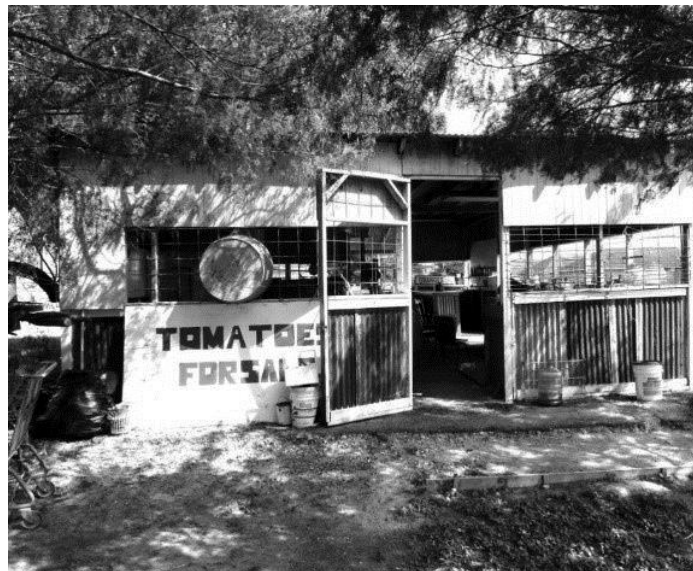


Figure 42: Hermelinda's fruit stand, view of south side. 2012.



Figure 43: Hermelinda Cantú with her wares. 2012.

The matriarch of the family, Hermelinda Cantú has run a fruit stand in front of their house for more than twenty years (Figures 42 and 43) (Silva /Cantú Jr. 2012/pg. B-3). The Cantú property has cultivated various fruits, vegetables, and grains such as: watermelon, cantaloupe, tomatoes, parsley, sorghum, and jalapeños (Ruben Cantú Sr. personal communication 2012). Figure 44 is a collage of some of the various crops grown on the farm.



Figure 44 L-R: Some examples of the variety produced on the farm. From pickles (cucumbers pictured with Hermelinda, Rojelio Sr., and Rogelio III, c.1986), to citrus (oranges, pictured with Rojelio Sr., s. 1973), and corn, (here pictured is Rodolfo Hernandez, husband to Cipriana, Hermelinda's sister, and Rojelio Sr., c. 1971) which is still grown there today.

What began as nothing more than a small table in front of the house has now developed into a permanent structure for goods the Cantú family may sell. As time went along however, traffic at the fruit stand grew infrequent. During peak seasons though there is an increase in demand for fruit such as watermelons (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-20).

Unfortunately, the Cantús do not grow citrus anymore. When they were members of the Farmers Co-op of Edinburg, they encountered some crooked business dealings that they chose to avoid. They acquire citrus from Paramount Citrus, Nicho Produce, and Warren Produce to sell at their stand (Ruben Cantú Sr. personal communication 2012).

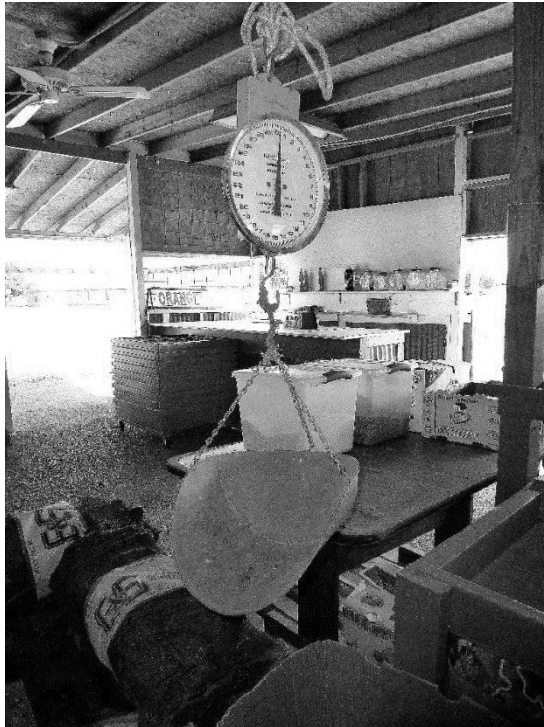


Figure 45: Inside Mrs. Hermelinda's fruit stand. 2012.

The Cantu family also raised a few farm animals. Aside from pigs and cows, Maria and Hermelinda recalled when they had chickens and roosters living around their house. Maria had no problem butchering and preparing them for dinner, duties mostly found at a butcher shop or a slaughter house, prepared for consumer purchase. However, family does not raise animals at their Jackson Rd. residence anymore. They suffered heavy losses of animal stock during Beulah, and eventually the expansion of neighborhoods into the area prompted the city to ask them to stop raising more due to noise pollution and wandering-chickens crossing the road became an issue for the nearby tenants. Their problems eventually found the attentions of the sheriff, who then issued a cease and desist order to the family's animal husbandry (Hermelinda Cantú, personal communication 2012).



Figure 46 L-R: The family and their livestock. Ruben Sr., Rojelio Sr., and Rogelio Jr. pictured. c. 1967.

Cactus was collected from around the property and cooked up with meals. This was common during *cuaresma* (Lent). Norma described the cactus as a traditional food that her family consumed. She also mentioned how *menudo* (specialty soup) and *capirotada* (bread pudding) were foods made for special occasions (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-15).

Although food straight from the field was utilized around the Cantú homestead, there were special occasions to break up the normal routine. Norma described how during her parents' generation, it was customary to have three day weddings. As a prime example, her parent's own nuptials lasted three days in 1953 (Figure 47) (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-6).



Figure 47: Rojelio Sr. and Hermelinda's wedding. Wedding party unidentified. February 12, 1953.

There was a ceremony at the church and then food was served after. It was common to serve meat, *arroz* (rice), and *mole* (chicken with spicy chocolate sauce) for the meal (Hermelinda Cantú, personal communication 2012). The meat was most often a whole cow or pig cooked outside to provide enough food to supply for three days' time. (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-6).

Whataburger, the Texas fast food burger chain, was something of a treat for Ruben Sr. He remembered how his father would take him to Whataburger when he was younger. There was only one Whataburger in Edinburg at the time so it was always special for them to go, "it wasn't a treat, it was a feast," (Leal/Cantú Sr 2012/pg. D-11). Those memorable trips remain close to Ruben today. Ruben Jr., in fact, is a frequent customer of his local Whataburger and he goes almost every morning like clockwork to have his cup of coffee, chatting with locals about news and life.

The Cantú family's lives revolve around food, from their livelihood to their get-togethers on the weekends for cookouts. Food brings the entire family together and promotes the best opportunity for both the young and the old generations to share ideas and memories.



Figure 48: The family at an anniversary celebration with cousins in Mexico. Hermelinda sits as the mariachis serenade. 2007.

Herbal Remedies

Western medicine was not always used while growing up. Sometimes a fast home remedy was all that was needed to cure a simple ailment. The art of the *curanderisima* was usually done by a woman and could cure ailments such as *Mal de Ojo* (the Evil Eye), *susto* (fright), and *empacho* (swelling in stomach or intestines). Herbal remedies from native plants were utilized in an assortment of ways. The use of folk medicine was very common growing up in the Cantú family (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-17). A variety of methods were used to heal someone. One method used to get rid of *susto* was to allow the healer to place a blanket over the victim, then prayer, ending with albacar (basil), used to “wipe away” the fright.

Mal de Ojo, another common ailment that could be treated with *curanderisima*, was a situation in which someone would use black fell magics to inflict you with an “evil eye” that caused illness. The sickness occurred without warning and was believed to be transmitted when someone stared at you and did not touch you. One way to cure it was through prayer and physical contact with a chicken egg to rid you of the negative energy. After praying over the sick person, the egg was then cracked into a glass of water. Whatever was making you sick would materialize itself in the yolk and show you what made you sick. The yolk might form a big eye to display that the ailed person was suffering from the *Mal de Ojo*, or may break apart from the illness (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-17).

Marcos Ramirez remembers his grandmother acting as a *curandera*, or folk healer, for the family. She learned many herbal remedies growing up in Mexico (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-11). The matriarch of the family was not a commercial practitioner as she healed within the family only (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-11). Marcos mentioned how it was common to see someone practicing *curanderisima*, likening it to a trip to a modern-day pharmacy (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-12).

Special herbs were also used to improve health, for example, Norma Cantú Valdez said teas were used a lot at home. The most commonly used herbs on the farm were

manzanilla (chamomile) or *estafiate* (Mexican wormwood) (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-17). Both of those teas could soothe a stomach ache (*empacho*). The more well known of the two, *manzanilla*, can be boiled to make tea or used topically to soothe joint or muscle pain. Overall, the *manzanilla* plant calms and soothes. *Estafiate* was also a go to herb when one needed something for digestive issues, the leaves and flowers could be boiled to make a tea which could treat stomach aches (colic), fever, and even rheumatism because of its anti-inflammatory properties. Ruben Cantú Sr. remembers drinking *estafiate* on occasion and recalls it tasting terrible (Ruben Cantú, Sr., personal communication).

Hermelinda grew many herbs in her backyard like *manzanilla*, *estafiate*, *salvia* (sage), *ruda* (rue), and *hierbabuena* (mint) all of which could be brewed into a tea. *Salvia* had multiple purposes but was commonly known as an antibiotic for colds and fevers, as well as an indigestion reliever. *Ruda* was known to the Cantú's to be a muscle relaxant for arthritis and anxiety relief. On that note, *hierbabuena* was also used as a pain reliever, could soothe joint pain and stomach problems. There were many ways to apply *hierbabuena* to the body. It could be boiled into a tea or the sap could have been used topically on affected areas. In recent years there have not been plants in Hermelinda's backyard but her kids fondly remember the kinds of herbs they could find in her garden (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-17). She would go back and take a few leaves, boil them up instantly, and there you had your remedy. Norma said that her mother always boiled her teas from fresh herbs and felt a little guilty for buying readymade tea bags nowadays. Her mother always has *Manzanilla* on hand because her grandchildren constantly ask for tea (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-17).

A more commonly known herbal remedy is the use of Aloe Vera. *Savila*, as it is called in Spanish, was used for many types of injuries to the skin such as cuts, scrapes, and burns. Ruben Cantú Sr. recalled always using it because it provided a soothing relief to the affected area (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication). It was easy to grab a stalk off the plant, cut a piece and apply it directly to the skin.



Figure 49: Aloe Vera plant at the Jackson property. 2010.

Some herbal remedies and folk medicine cannot be yet explained by modern day science, but it seems that believing is half of the cure. Believing an egg has curative powers or drinking a funny tasting brew is a small part of the Mexican culture's history. It is something that the younger Cantú generation grew through and they will continue to carry down these traditions to future generations.

Religion

In Mexican-American culture, religion plays an important role in everyday life. Growing up, the Cantú family were raised as Roman Catholics and would attend mass at the Sacred Heart Church in Edinburg, Texas (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-12). Religion, just

like any other human activity, is subject to change over time. Norma was kind enough to provide a few examples on how the Catholic Church and its devout have changed over time.

One example she gave was that people today are not as stringent with following all of the edicts of Catholicism anymore (Hermelinda Cantú, personal communication). In the interview with Norma Cantú Valdez, she states that when her mother Hermelinda was growing up, Hermelinda's father was strict about the concept of fasting. He would fast every day until noon (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-12). This concept of fasting may still be seen today, but very few Catholics actively participate in it outside of Lent.

Another change that has been seen throughout the years is the number of children who continue to attend their Catholic Catechism Diocese or CCD classes (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-12). Children must attend these classes, as they grow older in order to receive the three sacraments of initiation within the Roman Catholic Church. The first sacrament that a child receives is a baptism, followed by Holy Communion and finally confirmation. Typically a child will receive the sacrament of Baptism when he or she is still a baby. Once the child begins going to school he or she will also begin attending CCD classes where around the 3rd grade he or she will receive the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Another important event is a rite of passage for young ladies within the Hispanic culture, known as a *quinceañera*, or fifteenth birthday. A *quinceañera* is very important in Hispanic culture and within the Roman Catholic Church, but this time of celebration is becoming less and less a church function. Traditions are changing, and so today's *quinceañeras* are often more commercial, with most of the focus going into the party aspects. This was not always the case, years ago the main focus of a *quinceañera* was being blessed by the church and going through all the rituals involved. In order to receive a *quinceañera*, a young lady must have received her Sacrament of baptismal and Holy Communion. She would then need to attend meetings in order to prepare herself for this milestone. Before, a whole mass was dedicated to the young lady's coming of age ceremony. Today the young lady is quickly blessed in a few minutes during a regularly scheduled mass. A new tradition that has been incorporated into a *quinceañera* is during the mass, the young lady will place one of her bouquets upon the altar of the Virgin Mary as her way of saying thank you for the blessing. In her interview, Norma Cantú Valdez stated that she wanted a *quinceañera* but due to circumstances at the time she wasn't fortunate enough to have one. However, her daughter and nieces have had theirs since (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-12).

Not every family classifies themselves within the same religious denomination. Although the Cantú family was raised Catholic and Norma identifies herself as such, her younger brother Ruben Cantú Sr. and his direct descendants worship within the United Methodist Church and attend the El Buen Pastor Church in Edinburg, TX. Ruben Sr. and his family regularly attend church services on Sunday and are closely involved within their church. Attending church services was something that Ruben Sr.'s wife, Noemi, enforced when raising their two children Bianca and Ruben Jr. The Cantú family are active members who participate in various groups within their church. Ruben Sr.'s wife Noemi serves as the choir director for the El Buen Pastor church. Their daughter Bianca serves as a choreographer for the liturgical dance, their son Ruben Jr. serves as the praise and worship team drummer, and their granddaughter Bella Hope Cantú, participates in both the children's choir and liturgical dance. (Ruben Cantú Jr., personal communication 2012).

Religion continues to be an important tradition in society today. Religion can tie families and communities together. Although with the passing of time, some religious traditions have changed, many families such as the Cantú family continue to actively follow and participate in various activities within their church.

The Role of Music in the Cantú Family

The relationship between music and the Cantú family demonstrates change within the family and the history of the area. Many of the elder family members spoke about their music from Mexico (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-2) (Aparicio/Cantú Jr. 2012/pg. E-17).

Known as *corridos*, this music covered a variety of topics portrayed in ordinary life. This was direct tie to the culture of the area (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-10). By turning events into songs, the audience more readily identifies with the music's message.

Holistically it allows for a snapshot of local history, reflecting the life of the inhabitants through vivid musical presentation. There were many other genres they described besides the traditional *corrido*. Besides *tejano* music and other Spanish music from Mexico were some modern American tunes heard at school or play (Aparicio/Cantú Jr. 2012/pg. E-17). Norma acknowledged the value of traditional *corridos*, but she also mentioned an affinity for Elvis.

On a similar note, Carroll Norquest Jr.'s own family has their own healthy relationship with music. Albeit the songs they sang were from their own heritage, with music not only in English, but German, Spanish and Swedish as well (Alaniz/Norquest 2012/pg. G-19).

Marcos Ramirez mentioned there was always music playing at their *pachangas* along with dancing on the patio (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/pg. F-3). At home, Rogelio Sr. enjoyed dancing with his wife Hermelinda, or anywhere else the opportunity presented itself (Figure 50).



Figure 50: Hermelinda and Rogelio Sr. cut a rug on the dance floor. c. 1977.

Miguel Valdez, son to Norma Cantú Valdez, was a favorite of Mr. Rogelio Sr. He is a musician who continues to perform through various functions and is actually touring the United States currently with an orchestral group. He was lucky enough to play for Mr. Rogelio Sr. at his deathbed in the hospital. Miguel and two friends played a favorite of Mr. Rogelio's, called the "Pajarero" and for a few minutes, Mr. Rogelio Cantú's face lit up with a smile. He eventually became too excited and the doctors came in to ask them to stop performing (Norma Cantú Valdez, personal communication, 2014). Carroll Norquest Jr. explained the cooperative spirit of farmers from this area, as most major social functions relied on celebrations within households (Alaniz/Norquest 2012/pg. G-10).

Essentially encouraging interactions amongst all families and communities, music continues to be both an outlet for relaxation and a cohesive force bringing people together.

Leisure Time in the Cantú Family

Life on the farm meant little spare time for leisure (Leal/Cantú Sr 2012/pg. D-12). However, this did not mean that the Cantú family wouldn't take a break every once in a while. Although the family did not travel much or take many trips to the beach they did enjoy leisure activities both at home and in town (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-2). Ruben Cantú Sr. and the other children in his family spent most of their playtime outdoors. According to Norma Cantú Valdez, they would play hide and seek with cousins (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-5-6).

Ruben Sr. and Norma both remember playing on a large tree behind their family home. According to Ruben Sr., they loved to climb up and use the tree swing (Ruben Cantú, personal communication 2012) (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-2). Today, this tree still stands in the background of what is left of their old, two-room house along with a smattering of jars, bottles, and pot lids scattered over the remains of a concrete foundation.



Figure 51: Rogelio Jr. having a good time after a delivery trip to Campo. c. 1977.

Playing outdoors usually involved a little imagination to find creative uses for dirt and other items from the farm. For example, Ruben Sr. recalled an event in which he and his siblings made their own bowling alley. They used a rubber kickball to knock down pins fashioned from used Clorox bottles filled with dirt (Ruben Cantú, personal communication 2012). According to Norma, she and her brothers enjoyed making "little mud pies" and "cutting the mesquites off the tree and pretending to cook" (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-2). Norma also explains that as a child, her father would make his own home made slingshot and hunt little birds with it (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pgs. C-4).

The Cantú children enjoyed walking to West Manor, a grocery store located in Edinburg on State Highway 107 and Sugar Rd. to sell back empty soda bottles they gathered for more sodas or groceries (Ruben Cantú, personal communication 2012). For fun, Ruben Sr. would lie down on Jackson Rd. and count the cars as they drove by, or sometimes he would go fishing in the canal next to the farm for freshwater catfish (Leal/Cantú Sr.2012/pg. 16-18).

Occasionally, the Cantú family would attend fairs and livestock shows. Their father would drive the family to the livestock show in Mercedes. At the show, Norma remembers seeing Fess Parker, who portrayed Davey Crockett in a 1950s Walt Disney television series. Norma also remembers traveling to Mexico for *La Feria*, an annual fair held in Reynosa (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-14).

According to Norma, while growing up, her family tried to spend every Sunday visiting their maternal grandparents. Before going home, everyone would gather around the television and watch "Bonanza", a popular "wild wild western" television program (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-5). Norma explained, "That was our treat before we got home

because we had school the next day.” (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-14). The family did not have a television themselves at home, but where ever they had an opportunity the children enjoyed watching “The Flintstones” a popular cartoon show (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-14). Now once every year, on Thanksgiving Day, the family gets together and watches “The Wizard of Oz” on television – a tradition the family still enjoys (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-14). At Christmas time, the Cantú family unfortunately never had a Christmas tree. However, Christmas was Norma’s favorite holiday, so she did enjoy a chance to sing Christmas carols (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-3).

Many of Hermelinda’s brothers died at young ages. Her side of the family has a hereditary affliction known as hemophilia aka the “royal disease”, a condition that prevents blood from clotting in males possessing the trait. Those who survive continue spending time together. Norma jokingly refers to her mother and aunts as the “Golden Girls.” When all of them get together, they enjoy shopping excursions, going out for dinner, and hosting potlucks (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-8).



Figure 52 L-R: Some of the many siblings of Mrs. Hermelinda Cantú. Alphonso Rodriguez, Leonila Rodriguez, Santos Rodriguez, Victoria Rodriguez, Primo Rodriguez, Cipriana Hernandez (Wife to Rodolpho), Mrs. Hermelinda, and Severyana Balderas. c. late 1970s.

Rogelio Sr. enjoyed relaxing outside with friends and family while listening to live music. Whenever he had the chance, their father loved to have two or three people come over and play music, “...even if it was just an accordion and a bass player or a guitar player.” (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-14). This was not the only place where the Cantú family gathered for music and dancing though. Marcos Ramirez lived nearby on a farm with their grandfather, Jesus Cantú Serna. On Fridays or Saturday nights, a member of the family or sometimes a neighbor out there would host an outdoors party (Nicholson/Ramirez 2012/ pg. F-2).

In the 1970s, like today, homecoming was an important event for many teenagers, and Ruben Sr. was no exception. Using his father’s flatbed truck, he went off to pick up his date for homecoming. His father used this particular truck, with big crate bins in the back for moving produce, for his job at Edinburg Citrus. After homecoming, Ruben, Sr. and his date grabbed a bite to eat in McAllen at a Shoney’s restaurant on 10th Street (Leal/Cantú Sr 2012/pg. D-8).

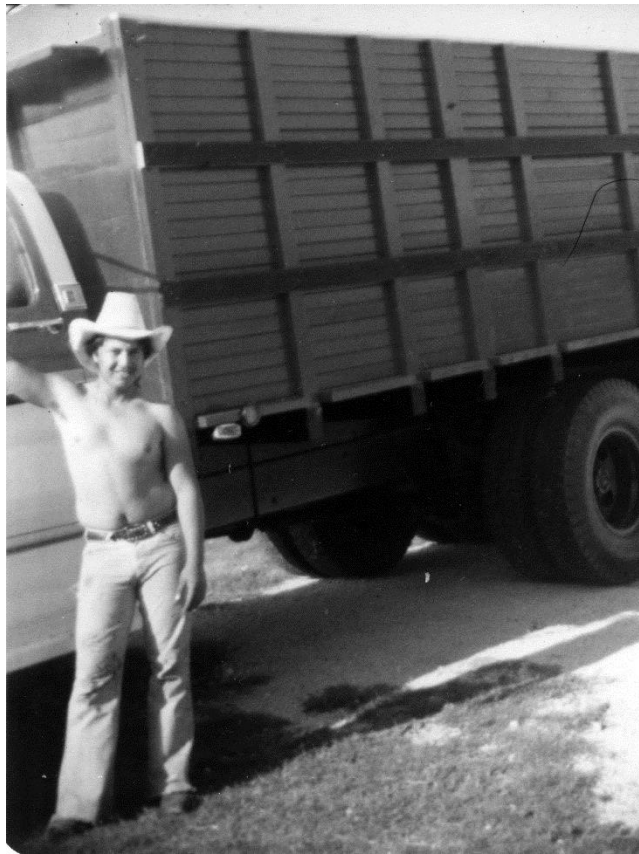


Figure 53: Ruben Sr. in front of a service farm truck. 1978.

In the late 1970s, using another one of his father's trucks, Ruben Sr. would go to the movies at a drive-in theater located on University Drive, where a Wal-Mart now sits. The movie theater had two screens. Ruben Sr. joked about his father's trucks saying, "Back then those girls weren't shy. Heck, she just wanted to be with me I guess, she didn't care in what!" (Leal/Cantú Sr 2012/pg. D- 9). Figure 53 shows Ruben Sr. posing for a photograph, standing proudly by his truck. The movie theater and a Sonic Drive-in (now a Star's Drive-in), are two places where Ruben Sr. went out on dates with his sweetheart. Her name was Noemi, and in 1982, she became Mrs. Noemi Cantú, eventually raising a third generation of Cantús with her loving husband, Ruben Sr. (Figure 54) (Ruben Cantu, personal communication 2012).



Figure 54: Noemi and Ruben Sr. celebrating their daughter Bianca's 1st birthday. 1987.

Like Ruben Sr., Rogelio Cantú Jr. also found some time to enjoy life as a teenager. In high school during the afternoons, Rogelio Jr. would listen to music play on a jukebox in the school cafeteria and watched movies at the Citrus Theater in downtown Edinburg. When the field on the Cantú property was empty, Rogelio Jr. and other relatives would use it to their advantage and play some baseball or football (Silva/Cantú Jr 2012/pg B-12). While Rogelio Jr. was much too busy working on the family farm to actually participate in high school football, he did go to the games: "Even though we had worked hard, we had still had our fun." Before going to a game, Rogelio Jr. and his friends would try to find someone to buy them a six-pack of beer. Dances were held after the game in the school gymnasium. Rogelio Jr. remarked how drinking a couple of beers gave him "...the guts to go ask a girl to go dance with you after the football game." (Silva/Cantú Jr 2012/pg. B-12). While life on the farm is definitely a full-time job, there always seems to be a lot more living to discover if one takes a closer look.

Material Culture

The original Cantú farm site was located approximately three and a half miles north of University Drive on Hoehn Drive. Marcos Ramirez grew up and now lives at the location and describes it as a very small with two rooms. Six months after Marcos was born, his father passed away and so Marcos and his mother, Aurora, came to live here with Jesus Cantu' Serna, Ruben Sr.'s grandfather, who helped raise Marcos as his own

(Nicholson/Ramirez/2012 pg. F-4). Below (Figure 55) is an image of them together with cousins, Rogelio Sr. and Armando Cantú.



Figure 55: Aurora and Marcos Ramirez with cousins Rogelio Jr. and Armando Cantú. c. July 1955.

In regard to the cultural inventory of the Cantú property, there is a noticeable lack of any sort of family heirlooms. According to information collected during the interview process, Norma reported that she has photographs from their family's past, some of her father's hats, and at one time, she had her mother's wedding dress, but the dress has since disappeared (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-4). There are pictures of it though, shown in Figure 56 at their 37th anniversary.



Figure 56: Rogelio Cantú Sr. and Hermelinda Cantú at their 37th wedding anniversary. 1990.

Hermelinda passed down important documents such as birth certificates to her children once they had married (Casiano/Valdez 2012/pg. C-4).

The CHAPS team conducted two archaeological surveys of the Jackson Rd. and Mile 17 ½ Rd. properties consisting primarily of surficial collection of material remains. The collections were mostly comprised of domestic refuse such as broken glass, an old water hose nozzle, and a deflated kick ball. At the 17 ½ Mile Rd. site, the remains from construction projects and machinery were observed and collected. At both sites a few items of stone were gathered that may have been prehistoric in nature, unfortunately there is a lack of context for the remains. These possible prehistoric artifacts can be seen in Figures 57 and 58. They consist of a few chert flakes that may be debitage and some larger chert (quartz) that suggested they may have been used as hammerstones. Unfortunately, there were no distinctly conclusive features to associate with the materials, so their presence may be the product of artifact scattering by prehistoric, historic, or geologic processes.



Figure 57: Limestone (far left) and Chert flakes found on Jackson Rd. property. 2012.



Figure 58: Chert flakes found on Jackson Rd. property. 2012.

A few other items found on the Cantú property indicated prehistoric life, such as a sample of petrified wood (Figure 59) found in the front lot of the Jackson property. Although it was found on the Cantú's property, its proximity to the road suggested it may have been brought over on a truck when the streets were being paved so its origin cannot be exactly determined. Another prehistoric diagnostic found on the property were tiny land snail shells, shown in Figure 60. They can be found all over the LRGV and many were noted in abundance on the property on the banks of the irrigation canal.



Figure 59: Petrified wood found in front lot of Jackson Rd. property. 2012.



Figure 60: Land snail shells found on Jackson Rd. property. 2012.

In Figure 61, the team catalogued some glass fragments that may look quite familiar to many people. Some are pieces of a Dr. Pepper soda bottle from the 1970s and another fragment was part of a Topo Chico bottle. Topo Chico is a mineral water imported from Mexico.



Figure 61: Dr. Pepper bottle and Topo Chico bottle fragments found on Jackson Rd. property. 2012.

There were three fragments of similar texture and color concluded belonged to belong to the item. We believe it was part of some glass tableware, such as a candy dish or vase. The other fragment in Figure 62 (far right), is thought to be the same type of item from another set. There was not enough evidence to determine what brand of item it was, however, it is evident that they were all made in the 20th century. Other fragments like those in Figure 63 are of other glass shards found on the Jackson Rd. property. The darker shard (far left) is thought to have been from a wine or champagne bottle due to its thickness. The

dark blue fragment is from a cold cream Nozema container, which may be familiar to most people. The glass container was used by the company through the 1980s. Today the company uses plastic jars. The light blue fragment (center right) is from an electric wire insulator used on city power lines. Glass is a good insulator of electricity and was first used when power lines were introduced. Figure 64 shows what the insulator would have looked like on the power line. The marble (far right) was most likely used by one of the Cantú children when they were growing up.



Figure 62: Glass fragments found on Jackson Rd. property. 2012.



Figure 63: Glass fragments found on Jackson Rd. property. 2012.

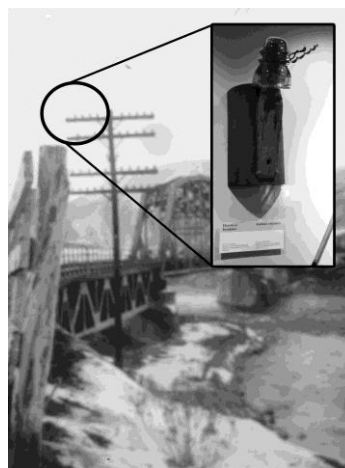


Figure 64: Glass insulator on power line. Date 1967. Thanks goes to the South Texas Museum for blown up image of insulator. 2014.

These items found on the Cantú's property were just a small indication of the family's progress through time. Their inclusion in our study gave us a better understanding of what it was like to grow up on the property and how life has changed since the family first arrived in the 1920s.

Trash and What Happened to it

In the past, the family would burn a majority of their waste in 55-gallon barrels, but now trash collection is provided by the city of Edinburg (Leal/Cantú 2012/pg. D-14). The family would merely have to place their garbage somewhere between 100 and 150 yards to the roadside away from their home. Like clockwork, the city would send a truck out on either Tuesday or Thursday to haul away refuse from the Cantú property (Aparicio/Cantú Jr. 2012/pg. E-1). Rather than recycling themselves, the family allowed the city to remove all of their garbage. However, from what can be discerned from the interviews, the family did not seem to have too many recyclables (Aparicio/Cantú Jr. 2012/pg. E- 1). Ruben III himself keeps very little, but hangs onto a few articles of clothing with sentimental value and some old photos (Aparicio/Cantú Jr. 2012/pg. E-2).

Conclusion

The Cantú family's story is rich and nuanced. Ruben Sr. told the CHAPS team that he feels his mom is what has kept their family together through all of life's challenges (Ruben Cantú Sr., personal communication 2013). Through the good and the bad, this family has remained strong and intact, a legacy passed down to the younger generations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The Cantú family's story is like that of many who immigrated to the United States to escape danger in Mexico and to make a new life for themselves. Their contribution to this area fits like a perfect puzzle piece into the story of Edinburg, the Rio Grande Valley, and the United States.

Through cooperation in their daily lives, the Cantú family has been able to contend with some of the harsher realities of farm life—droughts, floods, frosts, and swarms of birds and other pests. From the information provided by the family, we can see that an assortment of traditions helped keep the family together even through the roughest of times. This is not only the story of the Cantú family, this is a rubric to understanding the hundreds of families living throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley that fled Mexico during the Mexican Revolution. Ultimately, this is a story of the migrant's dream of success for themselves and for their future generations. The Cantú family is another *porción* of the greater Edinburg story.

The Cantú family arrived in Edinburg, Texas, in the 1920s. Over the past 90 years they have become respected farmers and entrepreneurs in this region. From humble vegetable stands to short and long haul produce trucking, the Cantús epitomize the American farmer-hardworking and patient. It has long been one of America's iconic lifestyles—to live off the salt of the earth, providing food for your family through hard work and perseverance. With blood, sweat, and tears, they face insect and bird infestations, droughts, floods, freezes and the ever-increasing costs of labor and fuel to provide food to the tables of America's families. This project also served as a reality check because, in general, we spend very little time thinking about how our food is produced and how it gets to us. Here is the presented story of a farming family who makes that happen, not one of the “big guys” instrumental in the overall development of Edinburg and larger Lower Rio Grande Valley. This is not to detract from the contributions of large land owners, but to show that the RGV was not built solely by the deeds of wealthy families, but by small-scale farmers who came to this region nearly a century ago. Farmers like the Cantús.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Alonzo, A.
1998 *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900*.
Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Baker, Susan Gonzalez
1997 The "Amnesty" Aftermath: Current Policy Issues Stemming from the Legalization Programs of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. *International Migration Review*, 31(1):5-27.
- Calavita, K.
2010 *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration, and the I.N.S.* New Orleans: Quid Pro, LLC.
- Cantu, H. and Ramos, J.
2012 Interview with Hermelinda Cantu. Edinburg, Texas. Housed in the Border Studies Archive at The University of Texas-Pan American.
- Cantu, R., and Leal, A.
2102 Interview with Ruben Cantu. Edinburg, Texas. Housed in the Border Studies Archive at The University of Texas-Pan American.
- Cantu, Jr. R., and Aparicio, A.
2012 Interview with Ruben Cantu, Jr. Edinburg, Texas. Housed in the Border Studies Archive at The University of Texas-Pan American.
- Cantu, Jr., R., and Silva, R.
2012 Interview with Rogelio Cantu, Jr. Edinburg, Texas. Housed in the Border Studies Archive at The University of Texas-Pan American.
- Garcia, Janette
2011 *Edinburg*. Charleston, S.C. Arcadia Publications.
- Katz, F.
1981 *The Secret War in Mexico*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press
- Kaufman, K.
2000 *Field Guide to Birds of North America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company
- Kaufman, K.
2003 *Field Guide to Butterflies of North America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company
- Knight, A.
1984 The Working Class and the Mexican Revolution. *Journal of Latin American Studies* 16(1):51-79

- Knight, A.
1985 The Mexican Revolution: Bourgeois? Nationalist? Or Just a Great Rebellion? *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 4(2):1,3.
- Krauze, E.
2002 *Biografia del Poder*. Mexico: Tusques Editores.
- Mathis, Mitchell, and Matissof
2004 A Characterization of Ecotourism in the Texas Lower Rio Grande Valley. *Valuing Nature in Texas*.
- Matthews, M.W.
2005 *The U.S. Army on the Mexican Border*. Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press.
- Montejano, D.
1987 *Anglos and Mexicans: In the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Norquest Jr., C., and Rodriguez, J.
2012 Interview with Carrol Norquest, Jr. Edinburg, Texas. Housed in the Border Studies Archive at The University of Texas-Pan American.
- Plana, M.
2007 The Mexican Revolution and the U.S. Border: Research Perspective. *Journal of the Southwest* 49(4): 603-604.
- Ramirez, M. and Nicholson, D.
2012 Interview with Marcos Ramirez. Edinburg, Texas. Housed in the Border Studies Archive at The University of Texas-Pan American.
- Richardson, A. and King, K.
2011 *Plants of Deep South Texas: A Field Guide to the Woody and Flowering Species*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.
- Scruggs, Otey M,
1963 "Texas and the Bracero Program 1942-1947", *Pacific Historical Review* 32, No. 3, pp. 251-264.
- Thompson, J.
1997 *A Wild and Vivid Land: An Illustrated History of the South Texas Border*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association.
- Tunnel, J.
2001 *The Laguna Madre of Texas and Tamaulipas*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Valdez, N., and Casiano,

2012 A. Interview with Norma Cantú Valdez. Edinburg, Texas. Housed in the Border Studies Archive at The University of Texas-Pan American.

Work, D.K.

2009 Enforcing Neutrality: The Tenth U.S. Calvary on the Mexican Border, 1913-1919. *The Western Historical Quarterly* 40(2):183-184.

Zatz, Marjorie S.

1993 "Using and Abusing Mexican Farm-workers: The *Bracero* Program and the INS." *Law & Society Review* 27(4): 851-863.

APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTIONS

Interviewee: Hermalinda Cantú

Interviewer Team: Christopher Scott, Jesus Ramos, and Ramiro Garza

Date:

Location: Cantú family residence

Introducción: (J Ramos, Narrador) leves sonrisas; se escuchan la voz de D. Hermalinda y del narrador momentos antes de iniciar, y D **Hermalinda** le dice, nomas y me recuerde, porque mi mente ya ¡**Jesús**.- No se preocupe D Hermalinda.

Jesús: Muy Buenas Tardes, otra vez estamos de, con el gusto de los estudiantes de la, de los estudios de la frontera Border Archives de la Universidad, nuevamente en la casa de la Sra. D. Hermalinda Cantú, Ah que esta es su casa, y que ha tenido a bien recibarnos, por segunda, por segunda vez, en este mes .en menos de un mes. Me acompaña el Sr. Ramiro Garza compañero de la Escuela, me acompaña mi compañero Omar Flores, mi nombre es Jesús Ramos y por supuesto, la ayuda indispensable de la Srita. Nancy del Departamento de archivo. Eh, Tuvimos una muy venturosa Ah. Locución de la familia hace menos de un mes, pero ahora, aunque, esta no estaba programada, eh, queríamos hacer algunas preguntas ex profeso típicas de la familia, e irnos un poquito mas hacia la historia de la familia Cantú que para nosotros y para la Universidad representa una importancia relevante en la consecución de poder integrar la historia de esta familia. Una de las cosas D. Hermalinda.

Hermalinda: Mmh!

Jesús: Que queremos platicar. (En ese momento entra a la sala el Sr. Rubén Cantú) **Jesús.-** Buenas tardes Don Rubén.

Rubén: Buenas tardes a sus órdenes

Jesús: muchas gracias, nos gustaría saber, (dirigiéndome a D. Hermalinda) porque es interesante, es cuando usted se casa oímos la versión de que su matrimonio, la boda había durado tres días o algo así

Hermalinda: Si tres días.

Jesús: nos puede platicar algo sobre esto, porque duro tanto tiempo, la costumbre ¿

Hermalinda: la costumbre,

Jesús: la costumbre

Hermalinda: la costumbre

Jesús: Si

Hermalinda: Eso fue, la costumbre

Jesús: Y en esos tres días que hicieron, que fiesta hubo?

Hermalinda: Bueno hubo, ensayo primero verdad,

Jesús: En la Iglesia.?’

Hermalinda: En la Iglesia y luego la comida

Jesús: y los otros dos días

Hermelinda: a cuales otros dos das si ya van tres
Jesús: Ah ya van tres días, Hubo baile
Hermelinda: Hubo baile
Jesús: Música.
Hermelinda: Música
Jesús: que tipo de música tocaron ¿
Hermelinda: Mexicana
Jesús: Mexicana., bailaron algún Vals?
Hermelinda: y bailamos
Jesús: de Matrimonio
Hermelinda: de Matrimonio
Jesús: Que comida sirvió en ese día señora
Hermelinda: pues nomas carne, arroz, mole y Cake, galletas, dulce
Jesús: Y usted recuerda de mucho agrado ese día
Hermelinda: si ese día
Jesús: El día de su Boda en 1953
Hermelinda: Si
Jesús: De los cuales ya cumplieron
Hermelinda: vamos a cumplir sesenta años
Jesús: sesenta anos de Matrimonio
Jesús: Algún incidente que usted se acuerde de ese día de esa Boda, fue toda felicidad
Hermelinda: Si fue todo felicidad, no hubo nada de nada
Jesús: En realidad no tiene por qué haberlo verdad
Hermelinda: No.
Jesús: y de ese matrimonio nacieron tres hijos
Hermelinda: si tres hijos
Jesús: Rogelio, Rubén y
Hermelinda: Norma
Jesús: Norma, La hija de en medio
Hermelinda: Si Norma que esta en medio de los dos, de Roy y de Rubén
Jesús: Muy Bien
Jesús: fíjese que si. Compañeros quieren adicionar algo sobre la boda de la Señora ah D. Hermelinda. Me imagino que Don Rogelio estaba muy feliz ¿
Hermelinda: Si
Omar: Un pastel o algo.
Hermelinda: Si como no. Si
Omar: pastel de Boda Sera.
Hermelinda: Si grande
Jesús: Me decía usted que se casaron en la Ciudad de Alamo
Hermelinda: en Alamo
Jesús: en Alamo Texas. Muy bien
Jesús: Fíjese que. Uno, uno de los compromisos que queríamos recibir de Usted es que nos platicara un momento, poco comprensible, en que no ahondamos en ese tema la ultima vez. Sobre los orígenes de la Familia Cantú, que se van mas allá de los que nosotros conocemos sobre la familia aquí en Estados Unidos, aquí en territorio Americano, en Texas y había varias cosas que queríamos tratar de dilucidar,? si algún miembro de la familia se había venido de México por alguna situación, o por la Revolución?, como fueron los primeros días,? que personajes de los Cantú, hombres o mujeres habían nacido en México. Hace un momento Usted comentaba de su padre

Hermelinda: de Papa. Que era de Monterrey
Jesús: platíquenos de el
Hermelinda: Bueno el, su vida de él. Él fue robado!, por los soldados, a él se lo levantaron, lo robaron, y tuvo que estar de vuelta pa atrás
Jesús: Que edad tenia cuanto lo secuestraron, lo raptaron.
Hermelinda: No recuerdo
Jesús: Fue en Monterrey?
Hermelinda: En Monterrey, fue cuando estaba la Revolución de 1914
Jesús: la revolución mil novecientos catorce
Jesús: es cuando estaba el gobierno del General Huerta.
Hermelinda: Si
Jesús: Saben ustedes que tipo de soldados eran lo que lo raptaron,
Hermelinda: pues nomas soldados
Jesús: eran Revolucionarios, pero no sabe si eran federales o eran rebeldes
Hermelinda: Ay no se, ellos andaban sueltos verda andaban según mi Madre, el; la verdad platica , platicaba que; ellas tenían que hacer comida pa los soldados
Jesús: Si Señora
Hermelinda: porque llegaban los soldados y ellas les daban de comer
Jesús: en 1914 en Monterrey
Hermelinda: en Monterrey
Jesús: y en un descuido de la familia, se llevaron a su papa
Hermelinda: Si
Jesús: Que edad tenia cuando fue robado
Hermelinda: .mi papa, mi papa es robado en, no recuerdo yo, pero fue mediano papa, como de, unos diez, doce anos
Jesús: diez o doce anos de edad Hermelinda.- de edad
Jesús: a que edad vuelve a re-integrarse con la familia
Hermelinda: Bueno, mi, no se a que edad,, pero el, a que años regreso?
Jesús: Si.
Hermelinda: el cuando regreso. El, se vino pa acá.
Jesús: cruzo la frontera
Hermelinda: la Frontera
Jesús: No sabe usted en que año
Hermelinda: (Con voz débil), no me acuerdo
Jesús: Diría usted que se vino huyendo de lo que estaba pasando en México
Hermelinda: bueno duro muchos anos aquí, este. Él fue a reconocer otra vez su gente
Jesús: volvió a México?
Hermelinda: el me llevo para que yo conociera a su familia. , entonces fue cuando yo y ahí supe que él había sido robado
Jesús: Interesantísimo
Hermelinda: Si
Jesús: Usted nació aquí en este lado
Hermelinda: Yo nací aquí
Jesús: Su padre Señora.- me da el nombre completo
Hermelinda: Andrés Rodríguez
Jesús: Don Andrés Rodríguez
Hermelinda: Ríos
Jesús: D. Andrés Rodríguez Ríos
Jesús: si se usaran los dos apellidos, pues Rubén, seria Cantú Rodríguez

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Rodríguez el apellido paterno de soltera de su mama

Hermelinda: Mmmh (susurra una aprobación)

Jesús: Eh cuantos hijos tuvo su padre

Hermelinda: Yo creo que fuimos dieciséis ;

Jesús: Muchos hijos. Dieciséis hijos, muy bien. Como eran las familias antiguas, sobrevivieron todos ¿

Hermelinda: No! Nomas la mitad, ahora vivimos menos de la mitad

Jesús: Mire usted, y el nombre de su mama

Hermelinda: es, María de Lourdes Chávez

Jesús: María de Lourdes Chávez

Jesús: ya era de este lado

Hermelinda: Si!

Hermelinda: mama también era de México

Jesús: pero ella había nacido en México?

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: en Que parte señora?

Hermelinda: en Monterrey, también

Jesús: en Monterrey, cuando se vino para acá no se conocían

Hermelinda: bueno mi madre nació en Nuevo Repueblo,

Jesús: Nuevo Repueblo

Hermelinda: Si Nuevo Repueblo, de aquí se conoció mama y papa

Jesús: y ya se casaron de este lado.

Hermelinda: De este lado!

Jesús: Muy bien, usted me comentó hace rato antes de empezar la grabación un aspecto muy interesante de esos años de aquella Epidemia mundial

Hermelinda: Si de es gripa

Jesús: De la Influenza Española, me puede platicar un poquito de esto

Hermelinda: Bueno. Lo que mi padre decía. Si, ahí murieron mis abuelos, esto era tanta la cantidad de muertos que dicen que ponían una cortina, grande en cada puerta.

Jesús: Que interesante Señora.-

Jesús: Como la Peste

Hermelinda: Si por eso, luego ya levantaban y hacían sepulturas separadas ya,

Jesús: a la Fosa Común. En este caso sus abuelos mueren de la Influenza Española

Hermelinda: Española

Jesús: En la ciudad de Monterrey

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Eso sucedió en desde el 15,16,17 desde el mil novecientos diecisiete

Hermelinda: Si si

Jesús: más o menos

Hermelinda: En la Guerra que fue mundial

Jesús: el catorce, y el quince

Jesús: Quien mas murió señora de la Influenza Española de su familia

Hermelinda: yo creo que nomas un abuelito si, Erasmo

Jesús: Cuando usted va a México Señora y lleva usted a su papa a reintegrarse afectivamente con su familia, le dio gusto de ir a a verles?

Hermelinda: Si y me dio mucha tristeza

Jesús: Claro

Hermelinda: porque ellos, ellos mismos no se reconocían. Yo recuerdo que cuando el me llevo era a su hermana por señas, el ya no miraba mi papa, yo lo llevaba, y me decía por los caminos, tenia una mente pero muy

Jesús: Aguda!

Hermelinda: Si. ¡Que caminos se seguía y que caminos eran. Entonces por eso me dirigí. Lo lleve ahí, entonces encontramos a una de mis tías.

Jesús: Buscando, preguntando?

Hermelinda: Si. decía mi tía me recuerdo. Decía. Tu no eres mi hermano. Yo no tengo hermanos y entonces mi papa comenzó a decirle, que su padre y su madre, todo muy triste., porque es duro que ellos se hayan reconocido ya grandes, grandes

Jesús: y Hubo muchos anos de separación?

Hermelinda: de separación si eh. Muchos anos, erl problema fue de que, fuimos nosotros allá por hacerle a el una operación en los ojos

Jesús: en Monterrey

Hermelinda: En Monterrey

Jesús: en que año Señora

Hermelinda: En que año seria?

Jesús: Que edad tenia usted?

Hermelinda: yo tenía dieciséis anos

Jesús: Antes de casarse

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Definitivamente. Señora recuerda usted, algún pasaje que le haya contado de su padre o familiares de su mama de personas que vivieron en México, de la la familia Rodríguez en este caso que se hayan venido a Estados Unidos por la Revolución o por causas eh?

Hermelinda: No fíjese que no bueno. Mi papa y mi mama se hicieron novios y se casaron

Jesús: Ya aquí de hecho su padre no tuvo que ver nada con la Revolución, fue una victima

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Social?

Hermelinda: de la Revolución, porque es como le digo, mi papa fue robado,

Jesús: y en los años en que fue robado, que hacia él, alguna vez le conto?

Hermelinda: No.

Jesús: Con quien vivió ¿

Hermelinda: El dice que iban unos arrieros, y en un Guayín lo subieron, y en eso se lo llevaron

Jesús: Si

Hermelinda: y se perdió y se perdió

Jesús: Nunca conto realmente lo que pasó en esos años de cautiverio; digamos, fuera del hogar, de ver a sus padres

Hermelinda: Fíjese que no recuerdo

Jesús: y señora volviendo un poquito, bueno antes de eso mis compañeros quieren hacerle alguna pregunta a la señora

Ramiro: The only I

Jesús: En Español;

Ramiro: La única pregunta es que no sabes en que año nació tu papa mas o menos

Hermelinda: Fue en Mayo de 1902

Ramiro: 1902

Jesús: Mil novecientos dos

Ramiro: By 1902 and the time he was about (preguntado en Ingles)

Jesús: doce anos tenía

Hermelinda: Si doce anos

Hermelinda: Si en Monterrey

Omar: y su mama en que ano nació su mama

Hermelinda: mama nació un día cinco de Febrero de 1908

Jesús: de mil novecientos ocho su mama

Hermelinda: mmh (signo de aprobación)

Jesús: Dona Hermelinda. Por el lado de Cantú, vamos un poquito al lado de los Cantú. De su esposo, del papa de su Marido, de don Rogelio

Hermelinda: Aja!,

Jesús: la historia de ellos detrás de esos anos

Hermelinda: de los años de atrás

Hermelinda: Bueno cuando yo me case pos ellos Vivian aquí.

Jesús: usted conoció a su Marido aquí?

Hermelinda: Si yo lo conocí aquí

Jesús: Alguna vez. Le platico Don Rogelio su esposo sobre su padre y su Madre.

Hermelinda: No! Porque que ellos también se vinieron pa acá.

Jesús: Por razones que no conocemos

Hermelinda: Por razones nomas para vivir acá

Jesús: Cambiaron

Hermelinda: Cambiaron Si! Eso es lo que yo

Jesús: Don Rubén si me permite hacerle una pregunta

Rubén: Claro

Jesús: conoce Usted algún ejemplo de la familia que haya tenido que ver alguna cosa la Revolución, o de alguna relación con la revolución mexicana. O que hayan sido soldados o qué que se hayan cruzado o por miedo, porque recordemos que, en esas épocas, en 1910 al quince, hubo un éxodo de Mexicanos que se viniuieron por miedo , por cuidar a sus familias , por lo mucho o por lo poco que tenían. Hubo mucha gente que vino a éste lado. Recuerda Usted algún incidente de esa.....

Rubén: Yo no recuerdo nada. Mi papa tal vez si o si lo supo.

Jesús: Algunas cosas de las gentes.-

Rubén: Si

Jesús: Su papa ya nació aquí Don Rubén

Rubén: El nació allá en México

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Nació en?

Rubén: En los Ramones

Hermelinda: En los Ramones

Rubén: En los Ramones Nuevo León

Jesús: Su esposo?

Hermelinda: Si mi esposo

Jesús: Se vino muy joven al Sur de Texas

Hermelinda: Si

Rubén: Decía mi mama y mi papa que a los cuarenta días

Hermelinda: Si a los cuarenta días a el lo pasaron para acá, Si

Jesús: y ya no quiso ir para allá

Hermelinda: (sonriendo dice) No!! Risas generales. Ya no se lo llevaron

Jesús: Sabe algo de sus abuelos Don Rubén. del papa de Don Rogelio

Rubén: Namas que era un hombre muy fuerte (sonrisas)

Hermelinda: Si!

Jesús: Pues como ustedes!

Jesús: de trabajo

Jesús: Pero donde nació su abuelo? Tiene usted idea?

Rubén: Donde nació mi abuelo ¿

Hermelinda: Ay!

Jesús: Y su abuelita. Ella también era de México

Rubén: No la alcance a conocer

Rubén: Ella murió antes que el

Hermelinda: Pero también ellos eran de México

Jesús: de Nuevo León

Hermelinda: Si de Nuevo león, del Porvenir

Rubén: ¿Del Porvenir?

Hermelinda: Si!

Hermelinda: pero era Rancho del Porvenir

Jesús: del Porvenir Nuevo León

Hermelinda: Si!

Jesús: Cerca de Monterrey

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Alguna pregunta compañeros? Ah

Jesús: Cuando usted, antes de casarse conoció a su esposo aquí. Como veía usted la Frontera, para los Mexicanos?

Hermelinda: Yo la veía bien, y cuando ya la vide fue cuando yo me case y como trabajaban ellos verdad!

Jesús: Si!

Hermelinda: y pasaba gente, agarraban gente, los agarraban. Como se llama hijo ¿los que trabajaban en la Hielera?

Rubén: Braceros.

Jesús: Había un programa desde los cincuentas sobre Braceros

Hermelinda: Braceros!

Jesús: Y tenían permiso para trabajar

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Aunque muchos de ellos se quedaron

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: De este alado y ya se diluyeron

Hermelinda: Si Pues si!

Jesús: Ustedes se hicieron de tierras aquí en este lado y llegaron a contratar mano de obra de México?

Rubén: Si!! Bueno yo y mi hermano. Sembrábamos mucho brocal y en eso año de Ronald Reagan eh había una “amnesty” (dicho en Inglesa) y había un montón, de cantidad ,de gente unos nos agradecieron y otros no.

Jesús: Como todo en la vida hay gente agradecida y gente que no agradece

Rubén: Si. Unos ya hicieron vidas aquí, compraron casas.,

Jesus: O sea que hicieron su Vida

Rubén: Tuvieron hijos

Jesús: De aquí

Rubén: Unos de ellos, ya son Maestros,

Jesús: Ok!

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Como ven ustedes. D. Hermelinda, la vida social de la gente de ustedes, que quedo en México y la gente que ahora Vive aquí.

Hermelinda: De Como los miro? Yo no veo diferencia para mí

Jesús: Esa es una gran respuesta

Hermelinda: De la gente de él ,todavía que están que todavía existen. Viven muy bien

Jesús: Si! Y viven mejor que si se hubiesen quedado allá, no lo sabemos

Hermelinda: No No lo sabemos

Jesús: No lo sabemos señora.

Jesús: y dígame una cosa. Usted conserva aquí cerca, hermanos o hermanas.

Hermelinda: Si aquí Si. Cerca de aquí tengo una hermana y las otras dos las tengo en Santa Rosa Semos cinco hermanas y dos hermanos

Jesús: Y dos hermanos los que quedan de dieciséis

Hermelinda: Si los que fuimos

Jesús: Murió alguno de ellos durante la Influenza Española

Hermelinda: No ¡ mis hermanos murieron de la Hemofilia

Jesús: Perdón

Hermelinda: De la Hemofilia es cuando la sangre no se cuaja

Jesús: Si, Señora

Hermelinda: Viene de los Españoles

Hermelinda: esos tienen historia de Español

Jesús: Díganme.- por donde venia la Hemofilia en su familia

Hermelinda: Mi mama, por mi madre

Jesús: se acuerda señora, de haber tenido ellos el diagnostico de Hemofilia. Con alguna Letra?

La A

Hermelinda: La O

Hermelinda: Si era la O

Jesús: entonces.- los que murieron eran varones

Hermelinda: Si déjeme decirle. ellos podían acabarse con un piquete

Jesús: Claro.

Hermelinda: Se les salía la sangre

Jesús: Todos eran hombres

Hermelinda: Todos!

Hermelinda: Tuve también hermanas

Jesús: Pero ellas no murieron de Hemofilia. No?

Hermelinda: No

Hermelinda: nomas los hombres

Jesús: Estaba ligada al sexo prácticamente la Enfermedad

Hermelinda: Si la Enfermedad, venia por parte de mi Madre

Jesús: Popar parte de su mama,

Hermelinda: y ni nomas la familia de nosotros, todos los primos hay, muchachos con Hemofilia. Hermanos de mama

Jesús: Por el lado Materno

Hermelinda: Mmh ¡ (aprobación)

Jesús: Supo de algunos casos de familia de su mama que se hayan quedado en México que les paso lo mismo y en que año fallecen?

Hermelinda: No de los Hombres

Jesús: Murieron ellos por la Enfermedad. Por esta Enfermedad?

Hermelinda: Mi hermano murió el mayor porque se le acabo la sangre. Un sangrado de la Nariz

Jesús: de la Nariz

Hermelinda: Si. Igual mi otro hermano no se dieron cuenta que era enfermo. Lo operaron del Apéndice y se murió.

Jesús: Si señora

Hermelinda: No unos casos muy feos

Jesús: Muy feos muy fuertes de familia

Hermelinda: Que no había remedio

Rubén: Una cosa media curiosa, los primos míos parte de mi mama verdad!, todos tienen esta Enfermedad, y gracias a Dios yo y mi hermano no

Jesús: Si hay un factor en la sangre llamado factor hemofílico, que se diagnostica y que en este caso la Hemofilia es aligada a los hombres nada mas prácticamente. Las m mujeres son transmisoras de la enfermedad pero no son sujetas a padecerla. Este es un antecedente muy importante que no sabíamos

Hermelinds: No, no sabíamos

Jesus: ustedes alguna pregunta Ramiro. Omar

Jesús: Es muy. fíjese usted que la Universidad , aprecia mucho lo que usted nos platica, lo que mis compañeros recogemos, y tanta gentes que han repetido

Nota: En este momento se escucha el Teléfono celular de la entrevistada Hermelinda—

Jesús: Tiene una implicación de conocer el futuro histórico de la familia Cantú

Hermelinda: [contesta el teléfono] Bueno Ey!

Jesús: Una pausa!

Hermelinda: [continúa en el teléfono] Ah Ok!!. Ahí llegó un hombre, nueve o diez sacos de Maíz, a nueve Dólares el Saco dirigiéndose a su hijo Rubén!

Jesús: Ya dijo la señora. Rubén no me le baje a ocho! (dirigiéndome a Ruben que sale de la estancia para atender a un cliente en le frutería (Sonrisas)

Jesús: Gracias. Como le decía, la Universidad esta encantada de tener todos estos datos Ah en aras de que tratamos de identificar una familia desde sus masa antiguas raíces. y es innegable que la familia de usted haya tenido definitivamente una base familiar que fue en México

Hermelinda: Bueno esa Enfermedad, vino por el lado de mama porque mi mama era española.

Jesús: Donde nació su mama

Hermelinda: en Monterrey

Jesús: En Monterrey

Hermelinda: Pero venían en sus raíces

Jesús: Si como la mayoría de la gente del Norte. Eso es un dato bastante normal digamos y hay gentes que trazan su familia desde que vinieron de España

Hermelinda: Si así era ella

Jesus: Otros orígenes señora , de familia que hayan oído ustedes. Su abuelo o su abuela, algo que haya oído usted en cuanto a los orígenes familiares

Hermelinda: Yo oía verdad que bueno, voy a hablar de mi abuela, ellos se criaron en México, ellos los que les paso en la revolución, , tenia mi abuelita muchas hijas, y esas hijas las escondían porque una de ellas fue robada, se la quitaron, a mi abuela del brazo,

Jesús: Muy pequeñita

Hermelinda: Si!. Bueno ya grande ¡una de las que ponían comida pa los soldados.

Jesús: Era una jovencita!

Hermelinda: Si!

Hermelinda: E iba mi abuelita por un camino a buscar a mi abuelita porque estaba en un crucero teniendo cuidado de los soldados, entonces, wntwre sellos a una de mis teas, se la quito del brazo. Y fue robada mi tía.

Jesús: Nunca regreso??

Hermelinda: Con la voz triste y apagada dijo ¡ (ella nunca regreso)

Jesús: El desconcierto de la tribulación, de su abuelita debe haber sido

Hermelinda: De mi abuelita muy mayor

Jesús: Muy grave!

Hermelinda: Muy grave...si

Jesús: Y esto fue durante la revolucion

Hermelinda: Si durante la revolución. ¡! Esa revolución ¡! Fue muy mala

Jesús: Porque señora?

Hermelinda: Pues la misma gente como hace las cosas

Jesús: Hay gentes que hacían Las cosas bien y otras que actuaban mal

Hermelinda: Y asina es, es un mundo ;

Jesús: Si. Dentro de la revolución, se valían de la revolución para hacer un daño. Y? de esta Señora nunca se supo nada ¿

Hermelinda: No. No!

Jesús: Algo bastante trágico, alguna pregunta compañeros?

Ramiro: Its an extraordinary? (En Ingles)

Jesús: Es muy elocuente la historia, nos faltan algunos minutos para completar cerca de una hora.

Omar: Algo y en 1914 no había mucha hambruna, entonces batallaban, mucha gente pasaba hambre. No sabe de amigos que ¿

Hermelinda: Hambre si hambre, no conseguían comida, no tenían comida, y este lloraban los niños de hambre, según

Jesús: En México

Hermelinda: En México

Jesus: Por la Revolucion

Hermelinda: Porque no tenían comida. Si

Omar: A veces tenían que Comer algo que no fuera Comida para que su estomago no?

Hermelinda: No le doliera así!

Jesús: Cuenta la genta que a aquellos que mejor íes iba eran aquellos que tenían un rancho

Hermelinda: Si

Jesús: Que tenían vaquitas! Gallinas

Hermelinda: Gallinas u y todo eso

Jesús: Y de ahí comían y se alimentaban

Hermelinda: Si oh si!

Jesús: Que los de la Ciudad?

Hermelinda: Los de la ciudad no porque no hace mucho venia una tía en Monterrey, que ayudaba, pasaban ahí los niños y les daba comida, todavía no hace mucho y ella a todos les daba algo

Jesús: Les daba algo.

Jesús: Humanitaria!

Hermelinda: No los dejaba, voluntaria ella porqué a muchas criaturas que pedían, ella les daba comida, un lonche unja tortilla,

Jesús: Algo esto paso en México

Hermelinda: En México

Jesús: le voy a hacer una pregunta difícil al mismo tiempo. Usted cree que la revolución, fue buena o fue mala?

Hermelinda: Yo Creo que fue mala! Muy mala

Jesús: Muy mala

Hermelinda: De a tiro! porque se fue mucha gente como dire' sin tener ninguna culpa

Jesús: Es una gran definición señora! De usted y la contesta usted muy rápidamente.

Hermelinda: Porque oía a mis padres

Jesús: Claro. Porque y la razón de decirlo. Si mis compañeros tienen algo mas que agregar en aras de ser prudentes con esta familia, el día de hoy pues vamos a dar terminada la visita histórica de esta sesión

Hermelinda: Sonrisdas pregúnteme algo, aunque ustedes están muy jóvenes.

Omar: No crea

Jesús: Yo pienso que tenemos algo de la familia que no sabíamos, son datos muy importantes. Lo de la hemofilia, lo de su abuelito, esas son cosas que deben de permanecer en el libro de familia

Hermelinda: En el libro de familia si

Jesús: Algo mas que quiera agregar, para terminar

Hermelinda: Bueno mis Tías todas tienen hijos hemofílicos, por el lado de mi abuelita Española

Jesús: Es hereditaria!

Hermelinda: Si!

Jesús: Fuera de eso damos por cerrada la transmisión, le agradecemos mucho, otra vez , la felicitamos por su lucidez, muy brillante su mente

Hermelinda: La edad que tengo!

Jesús: Una gran conversadora.

Hermelinda: Gracias a ustedes y que lleguen a la edad mía, y tengan una mente.

Jesús: Como la suya.

Hermelinda: Bueno no digo yo que la tengo pero gracias a jehová Dios que yo todavía hago cuentas,

Jesús: Señora, muchas gracias y espero vernos y que no sea la ultima vez que estemos en esta casa

Hermelinda: Bueno. Esta muy bien y muchas gracias. Y muchachos aquí estamos vivos

Interviewee: Rogelio Cantú, Jr

Interviewers: Roland Silva, Arturo, Colin Newton

Border Studies Archives Representative: Eloise Montemayor

Date:

Location: Cantú family residence

Roland: ...idea.

Colin: Roland, and if need be, if you're strained on time, you can skip my portion and focus

on yours, cause was along the same lines as mine.

Roland: Okay.

Colin: Or, but if we have time...

Roland: Okie dokie. Uhhhhh. Well, then I guess we'll go ahead and start. Uhh do I just hit the record?

Eloise: It's already on it says so.

Roland: Oh, okay so it's been going for awhile. Alrighty. Um. Well can we go ahead and start with your family sir? Um how many, how many of you are there? Uh in your immediate family, like your..

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Three. Just Three.

Roland: There's just three of you?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah.

Roland: That'd be yourself, your brother and...

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: My sister.

Roland: ...and you're sister. Okie dokie. Um. And this wasn't the original property that, that, that you lived on right? Correct? You started out on your-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: We started out on that other corner over there.

Roland: Mhm. And that was your grandfather's? I mean I'm sorry that would be your uh was that your father?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: My mom and dad's.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah.

Roland: Okay. Um, how long have you lived here sir?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: All my life.

Roland: All your life? Uh if you don't mind me asking, uh how old are you sir?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Next month fifty-eight.

Roland: Oh. Okay um let's see uh, how did you start here sir? Uh did you did, did, did all of you start farming? Or did it uh..well how how how did you get started?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well my, as far as I remember back, my grandfather was the one farming. And he used to live in the little old house back there on that other corner. And when my grandfather retired, my father took over. My father's always been in the trucking business okay?

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And farming-he needs to help my grandfather. But when grandfather retired my dad just took over the whole thing.

Roland: Mhm. So this is just all...your family business?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Right.

Roland: MhmUm. So how long have you been driv...uh driving a truck?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well. Here in the farm things are done a little different than in the city.

Roland: Mhm

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I was about eleven years old when I started driving the tractor, maybe ten

Roland: Wow.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: We used to farm all this property here...and some on sugar road. Uh I don't know if you talked, -I understand you talked to Maria Cantú. That property there, we used to farm that too. And uh and my grandfather's home place, which is in Hoenn Drive, Hoen Road, uh...

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: ...about three roads down the road. That was where my grandfather

lived, we got to farm all those properties.

Roland: Um. With, well to I guess, to just sort of stay with asking the questions about your farming. Mr. Cantú told us a pretty terrible story uh in 2004 where the frost when it hit, and it almost wiped you guys out.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well, yeah.

Roland: Um. Has that ever happened before? I mean, have you have that kind of near, close, just...

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: My father--

Roland: ...situation?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: --used to talk about one like that back in '52.

Roland: '52.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: The year '52. Wipe up all the orange trees and all that.

Roland: Ok.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And then we had another one in '83 that I remember. And in '94 we have another one sort of.

Roland: Mhm. Um. When you got when you, uh when your family farms, what uh, how do you pick what you're going to grow? Usually, do you have the market, does the market tell you-

Roel Cantú: With the hands.

Roland: -well I mean uh, sorry sir, haha. I uh, my sentence isn't, uh isn't worded properly. Um, how do you decide, what what to grow? What kind of crops?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: What we could sell.

Roland: Uh huh.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Back then, uh it was a whole lot easier than now.

Roland: Mhm

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: (garbled) Back then if you had it you can sell it. Now you have to go through a middle man, broker, and all that and it's not the same. Somebody else is making the money.

Roland: Uhuh. That's always an issue. Did, well, when you delivered uh when you delivered your produce where would you usually go? Would it be always to Houston?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: To Houston.

Roland: The farmer's market over there?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah.

Roland: How long uh, well, do you still deliver over there?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Sometimes.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: But it, the market over there is not the same as it used to be. Again, because of the damn brokers. They already--

Roland: Right.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: -went in there nd-

Roland: It's more about the, the business than about the uh well about families, the people making the--

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Uh-

Roland: -produce.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: -I know more about that because uh...I'm the one stuck in that inn, and my brother's the one that sends the stuff to me over there.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: So, it's kind of weird sometimes you can get a better price here than over there

Roland: Hmm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: But it comes back again to the brokers-which I don't have no place for.

Roland: Um, well I guess that would.. that's that's a bad way to go into the next questioning, but uh it works. I uh, I had wanted to task you if you'd had any sort of political problems. Just, you know with people giving you uh, just difficulties with your business with.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: We had some with that little fruit stand there.

Roland: Really?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah.

Roland: How long has that been there actually? I uh I uh...

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I think we started here like back in '69, '70.

Roland: Really?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah.

Roland: Ok.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And these new city guys-mayors, an all them people-they tried to shut us down.

Roland: Wow.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And uh, but I had already gone to the courthouse and I fathered, grandfathered it in, and everything, so they can't do nothing about it.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Uh I had a mayor, or a city some people from the city council...

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: ...that uh, he made a fool of himself one time at a meeting. We had a meeting, and he was going to close us down...and I'm not a very political man, and I don't, I don't know very much about all that but I uh, I just asked him one question. He said he was going to close all the fruit stands in the city limits. So I asked him a question. I said, "Sir, how far does your city limit go?"

Roland: Haha.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: He said, "Ohh."-man real proud, " Oh it goes all the way up to 490 and 281 by the airport." I said,"Oh, ok...so 281 is in the city limit?" "Oh, yes sir." I said, "Are you going to close all the people down on 281 that has fruit stands?" That's, that was, right there.

Roland: That's interesting. I uh, ...there's no way that would work.

Eloise: What was his reasoning for closing the food stands?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: They didn't want nobody selling in town, here and we are considered being in town already, the city.

Roland: Do you remember when you really started having that that problem come up, you know where you're in the city limits, you're considered part of, because I mean, you really weren't, there was nothing here before-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No no no no. This, this stuff just happened about...I'd say when they built this highway here, about 3 or 4 years ago. 3 years.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: That's when they wanted to do everything. And uh the main thing was, when those apartments came, those were the first one's that came around, right there. Ok, I know the history on that land cause, as the years grew, I mean as the years went by we grew up a little bit. I used to farm that land. Uh well...Corquest? Those people there- (*referring to Norquest family*)

Roland: Mhm.

Roel Cantú: -they used to farm it.

Roland: Yes. Yeah.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: They used to farm a whole bunch around here.

Roland: A lot of it went to the, a lot of it went to the University

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Ok.

Roland: A lot of it went to the city. Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Then it came the time when they quit, by that time, my brother and I were already farming more. We had the opportunity to farm there, and I, right there in the corner. Schunior.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: On this side. And then, the stables on that side used to be Lee Walker's. They cleared them out, and I used to farm that land.

Roland: And then, uh these people came and--

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well, they started building all over the place.

Roland: Mhm. Ok.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And I had some more land over here on 17 mile and a half-that's, that was not my property, that was, I was just leasing it out.

Roland: Mhm. Your um, uh Ru um, your brother told us a, a story about the chickens, that you all used to have.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Oh we, well when we used to live over there, man we had a hog farm, a few cows, whole bunch of chickens. We came to this side here, well nobody was around. The only house that was around was the one at that corner right there, and that's Chapin and Jackson. And the other one was, over there on uh, Jackson and Schunior, on this side. On this side, there were some stables, horse stables.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: So we had all, place to grow whatever we wanted, to to grow and you know that, just uh, fun around here.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Cause at that time it was fun for us.

Roland: Um, usually who would uh, who'd you have uh, farming? Would it be just your immediate family? Would you, or do you hire uh temporary uh workers or?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No. We, we had to hire people to do it.

Roland: Mhm. Uh um. Did you have anything to do with the uh with the Bracero program?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I didn't. My father did.

Roland: So he uh, he would contract uh then, some wor-mexican workers to come for-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah but he was uh, he was uh working for somebody else.

Roland: The-you're father.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah.

Roland: Ok. Um. Hm. Ok so then you were involved, uh well you're family was, was uh somewhat involved with the program. Do you remember anything about any of those workers? Or any just-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well I was, I was a young kid, I remember some of the names and they used to pick a lot of the oranges and grapefruits and my father used to deliver them to the sheds here. But that was not ours. That was, he was just working for somebody else. The farming, he was doing it, doing it on the side.

Roland: Oh. Ok.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: That was like, a hobby.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Uh.

Roland: Um, let's see...did you ever have any problems with immigration? Uhh-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: [laughs]

Roland: -well yeah, I mean, that was my next question from the Bracero program.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: [still laughing] Yeah I had some.

Roland: Would you mind telling us abit about that sir?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well yeah, I mind I'm *laughs*...I just hope I don't get in trouble by talking,

Roland: No no no no sir.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: -but what I gotta say I gotta say.

Roland: Ok.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: There's always been a problem here in this, this place, here in the valley. The people from town don't want to work in the fields. You know it. So who does the dirty job for everybody? The people from Mexico. They come and work in the fields. Yeah. When I was growing up there was no such thing as foods stamps, the lone star. You needed money, you go out there, and you earn it yourself. And the way I grew up, if I made five six dollars that week, I gave 'em to my parents. Then, my parents would give me fifty cents or maybe a dollar. That was my money to go spend Saturdays. Go to the movies. And one dollar would go a loooong ways. I remember going to the Citrus Theater, the building's still there in Edinburg. It'll cost you, it'd cost me thirty-five cents to go in there. And then you buy a hot dog, and a coke, that's another, thirty-five, maybe forty cents, and you come out of there, and you still had change in your pocket. Of course, there was no gas because, we walk. Ok. So that's, that's the way it was. When I was growing up there was no football practice, no band practice, no sir. As soon as you get home, you change your clothes, and you go to work in the field. And a lot of people there, a lot of my friends would ask me, "Hey you got anything to do on the farm? We need to work." And sometimes we did, and they'd come and hoe, they'd come and pick beans or pick up watermellons, squash, whatever we had. And my dad would only pay 'em day-by-day. A day of, my dad always had a few dollars and he'd pay 'em every day. That's what the kids liked. They get paid everyday. There was no law about hiring twelve, thirteen-year olds in the field. So when they made that law, that's when everything went to shit there. The kids don't know how to make the money. They know how to use the damn lone star card. You know what I'm telling you now? That's why when all that shit started, and I grew up, when I graduated from my highschool in 1974, I was supposed to go to college, there (gestures to UTPA's area), but, the day I went to go register they gave me my schedule and all that stuff and, I was (garbled)gonna repeat some of my eleventh and twelfth grade stuff that I had already had. I said, "I don't need this shit, I already passed it. I want something that I'll...that I'm gonna study to get me a job in the next two or three years." So I told them they could keep my paperwork there. I went working in the fields, and we were doing okay. My dad would supply for us. We had a new car, pickups, big trucks. So I just continued working--with my dad. So, I figured, if we hire more people to gather oranges and grapefruits, we make more loads, we make more money. So, everybody was doing it so I start hiring wetbacks. And yes, they took away twelve, twelve of em away from me one time. They kinda gave me a little shit y'know, but it was the first time. But then, they were easy about it, and they know what the situation was, so now, up to now, if them people are working in the field they don't bother you. But uh, they're doing something else, yes, there's gonna be trouble. But uh, when I think I-the year that I got caught was 1977, '78 somewhere around there. And uh, they were not working when uh, when they took them away. I took them to go get groceries. *laughs*

Roland: Wow. And they just scooped you up. Just, well them right?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah it was a, like a private investigator and she saw me, she called the border patrol. *garbled* *laughter* And I was a young dude back then, I was about twenty-three twenty-four...and I had to go to the border patrol office in McAllen and they did a little

mock raises his voice “Yeah!” he (*they*) got a little nasty for a little while but that's about it.

Roland: Mhm. Sort of a slap on the wrist.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah. And I can tell you-

Roland: Uh yeah you- *clears throat*

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: -and I can tell you, and up 'till now, you want some people to do some hard work around here-that's the only peoples gonna work. When I was growing up like I said, there was nothing-no Lone Star, none of that stuff.

Roland: Well some people don't have a, yeah they don't have that choice.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah, and uh, now, it's it's terrible out there.

Roland: Now uh, everything's paved.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: So-

Roland: There're apartments everywhere.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: But I, I-if this government, I tell you one thing right now, if this government was ever to take that stuff away...be alot a changes. Alot a changes.

Roland: Alot of us would be out of jobs. *laughs* Probably, might be better students *laughs*

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I uh, one time I brought it up. I guess we had our first class reunion *laughs* and I brought it up and most of my classmates were working on the human, human resources offices and all that. I brought it up and goes *mock joke voice* “Hey man what's wrong with you? We're gonna be like out of a job if you do!” *laughs* So, so I know what's going on out there.

Roland: Mhm

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: But as long as they let us work, don't mess with me anymore, like they used to. That's right. You go to Houston, you go to the, uh market over there-

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: -that's what you're gonna see. All Mexican people. With no papers. One time uh, we were out there and uh, I finish uh, I finish selling my watermelons and I had my son-uh I don't know if you interviewed my son, little short fella.

Roland: Yeah. I don't-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Roy the third. Well anyway-

Roland: Yes actually.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And uh, I guess when he had just talked to you all he had just pulled in from a load. And uh, and I told him, “How would you like to go to the flea market?” And those flea markets over there-are flea markets- not these piece of cakes around here. So we went out there *chuckles* and uh, we just got there around ten, eleven o' clock in the morning, man you-and all of a sudden you just saw people running aaaall over the place. Border Patrol got there. They loaded five buses that day.

Roland: Oh ok.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: This is not too long ago. This is about maybe three, four years, three years ago. Yeah. *noise of RC sipping coffee*

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And, uh, we just got there around 10 or 11 oclock in the morning. Then, all of a sudden you just see people running all over the place. The Border Patrol had got there. They loaded 5 buses that day. This is not too long ago. This is about maybe 3, 4 years ago. 3 years ago. Yeah.

Roland: That would be something interesting to look for. That's, thats terrible, I mean it's very recent.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah so, Ive seen a lot of stuff like that. I also saw the trailer where the

people were in Victoria. And I went right by it in the afternoon. But I didn't know what was in there. And then at night when I was going back to Houston, I saw the commotion going on there. And I saw when they were pulling out the bodies out.

Roland: Oh ok, that's, um, I'm actually, I don't think I know anything about that Sir. Uh, what happened exactly in Victoria?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: You don't know what happened there.

Roland: I, I don't have

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: There was a trailer just like mine. They had 60 people in there, 19 died. They just left them there with the doors closed. See, Houston to me is like going to Mcallen. I used to go to Houston every day. Go and come, go and come. I got a deal over there at one time where I just delivered. Delivered my, uh, watermelons. I would get to Houston around 4, 5 in the morning. By 6, 7 o'clock they were off. Come back and Ruben had another trailer loaded in the afternoon and go back. Not very many people can do that every day. You're talking about 700 miles a day. But when you see little money, you can do it.

Roland: Did any, any of your family, uh, serve in the military Sir?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I got cousins that did.

Roland: What'd you think of that? I mean, had you ever thought about it?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well, let me tell you. They served in the Vietnam War. And they were drafted, so there was no other choice. You had to go. Ok, back in uh '73, '74 I went to get registered and everything. And at around that time, that's when they changed the drinking age to 18. If you're old enough to die for your country, you're old enough to drink. So they changed it to 18. When we graduated, we were supposed to go for the physical, but we never did. That's when the Vietnam deal was over. Now if you want to volunteer, you could go. Which I didn't, didn't want to. But I got some friends that came up all messed up from over there, no legs, missing arms. Some of 'em didn't make it back. But that was because they wanted to, they volunteered.

Roland: OK, So, none of the, they weren't drafted, yeah. Um....., think that's, do you guys have any questions you had wanted

Tony: You had said earlier, 2 trailers a day to Houston, Um, did you ever have any problems with DPS like with your actual driving hours back then.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Back then no, now you do. Now they're a pain in the ass.

Tony: Right. Um, As far as, uh, as far as your driving, you said you on occasionally be gone for a couple of weeks or a month at a time.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Okay, when I'm gone for two, three weeks a month or so, I go work in the harvest. Because we do the harvest here, the corn in the milo, whatever, and they move back towards Houston around that area. That's, uh, harvest.

Tony: Right, um, when you would return after those trips, did you notice anything dramatically changed in this area? Whether it's been more built up as far as rural changing over to city or anything in particular that would stick out?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: At one time, like when they built all this stuff here, um, yes.

Roland: Do you remember when Jackson was first paved?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Uh no it was already paved.

Roland: Oh it was already paved.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: As far as I remember but it was a real narrow road. I mean.

Roland: They recently widened yea enlarged it

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: From the other side of 17th, uh Chapin, you can see where it narrows but it was still more narrower than that. Um when Hurricane Beulah came, part of the part of 17th mile ½ was flooded. Your school was flooded but I was around thirteen years old. I made money with my tractor my dad's tractor. The water and the cars the water was about

that high all around that place there. I would go with my tractor and charge them twenty dollars a pop to pull the cars out. I made five or six of them trips a day. Pretty good for a thirteen year old. But I didn't tie the cars, there's a rope you tie, I don't want no responsibilities. And I wasn't the only one doing it, I mean there was a lot of kids doing it. Cheaper than a wrecker.

Roland: Do you remember anything else about Beulah, that year?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yes I remember, that was my first year I was gonna go to junior high and we had only been to school one week. And I liked being in junior high because in elementary you're stuck to one room all day long. In junior high, you change classes every period and I liked that. But we had gone about a week and then Hurricane Beulah came. And we were off for about maybe a month. So all that area, I'm talking about junior high where the city offices are right now, the old college auditorium. All that. Okay that's that's what I'm talking about, all that was full of water. Your school was full of water. But it wasn't your school wasn't as big as it is now. It was only over there by 107 and some buildings on this side. The highway use to come up to not even up to sugar road. Uh as soon as you pass Lamar school pavement ends right there and all of that ends right there, rock road.

Tony: Um, as far as your siblings, what was the age difference between all of you, like would you be at the same school at any given time? Would you all walk to junior high or anything like that?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No we never got to walk to school, we never got to walk to school the bus always picked us up.

Tony: Okay

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: The bus always picked us up. Up until I was in high school I got my car

Tony: Uhuh

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And not many very guys had a car.

Tony: Because you were pulling people out with your tractor.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No no no no no not many...students, I'm talking about students.

Tony: Right

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Not many people had cars back then they'd ride the bus. Like I said, I was one of the lucky ones that that uh my dad provided and uh got a car, pick-ups, and whatever but we really use to work hard.

Tony: Uh, as far as the work here at home, you and your brother would primarily do the farming along with some of the friends at school that wanted to join in?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yea

Tony: Uh, what about your sister, would she help primarily at the house or would she help with you?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yea she'd help at the house and help here at the farm.

Tony: Yes, sir.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Me, my brother was still kind of young when my father took over. My sister and I use to irrigate.

Tony: Okay yea

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: This field here.

Tony: Uh, well you had mentioned that when Beulah hit there was incredible flooding, which is understandable, but uh as far as the drainage, did that help at all or was there was just too much rain?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No nonono the drainage system they had it was

Tony: Nonexistent?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No nonono, they never took care of it.

Tony: Oh okay.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Those big canals, those drainage.

Tony: Yes, sir.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: They were wooded up, I mean it was little water running from the fields when you drain a field.

Tony: Uhhh, is that primarily from the debris from Beulah or was it already an existing problem?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No, it was already there I mean; it's just that they never took care of it. When that flood, but I'm gonna tell you one thing that I remember, it did not rain enough for all this place to get flooded. It wasn't enough rain that we got maybe eight, ten inches of rain that's not enough. Our neighbors down the road, McAllen they drained their town into ours over here. That's what happened.

Roland: Edinburg's pretty flat so.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: So they drained the town from over there and all the water came down here. Cause I remember when I was staying over there it quit raining ya know; you could see land all over the place and then all of a sudden we started seeing water all over our field. Oh, shit; water, water. We needed about that much for water to go inside our house but that's when the drainage canals busted they had no place to go.

Roland: Was that retention pond there or just a hole in the ground?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I don't know why they did it they never used it. We got another place in San Carlos, I was out there yesterday. They did another one like that but bigger they they messed up about 200 or 300 of good farm land.

Roland: Just dug a big hole.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: But I don't know. This last hurricane we had what was it about three or four years ago; Dolly?

Tony: Uh Dolly, yes sir.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Okay, San Carlos had a problem over there but it came back again they never kept the ditches uh clean. And now that's why they're building that pond over there but if they could only keep the ditches clean they wouldn't have to spend all that millions of dollars of what they're doing.

Tony: As far as the uh day to day activities um culture wise, um would you have a lot of family come visit for Sundays or any kind of like barbbque situations or parties and stuff like that?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yea we, they use to come but you would spend no fifty or eighty dollar on meat. There use to be a slaughter house there on Schunior and I think it's 18th on this corner, Baker's is here right now. I don't know if you seen the oil field deal, you know what I'm talking about 18th and Schunior?

Roland: Uh, Yes.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Going East. Okay this side they had a feed lot a whole bunch of cows they would feed them a lot and they also had the slaughter house there. Okay, my dad use to go I remember he use to take one of those big buckets. They would uh he would buy the tripas, you know the tripas you can buy now, okay they would fill up that bucket for about fifty cents. Uh, the heads of the cow maybe fifty cents or a dollar they they wouldn't sell.

Tony: Right

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And uh the liver and stuff like that real cheap. Bring it back and had a big party. Of course they'd buy good meat, steaks or whatever but at that time and the tripas have always been a tradition here and all over here in the valley. So, its just.

Roland: Oh I was just thinking about something that occurred to me sort of at once, we didn't even ask you, how did you get along with other farmers here in Edinburg?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Good.

Roland: Um, what kind of problems did did y'all ever have any just like problems that you all had to share or to look forward to take care of?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No.

Roland: They're all pretty self-sufficient?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yea, nobody, we had a lot of people here that use to come to us and they said if they farm their product if we could uh go sell it for them in Houston but we never, I mean what we did on our own was plenty for us. Back, I don't know if Ruben told you, back in ninety-two the shed there we use to farm a lot of pickle. Then we had a lot of farmers bring in pickles in here, we would load eight or nine trailer loads semis leave out of here every day but then uh the main man we were dealing with had a heart attack and the company changed the deal from here changed it to West Texas. So we were out of that and it was good money we were making pretty good money out of that. So that's why I had this as an office but then in 2007 I got divorced and like the ladies take everything right? I don't know.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Oh well, just to let you know.

Tony: Did uh, well speaking of that you built up obviously the tractor trailers um, over time would you just add to the fleet or is it, was it like a third party that was provided trucks for you or?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No, our fleets always been growing little by little. I mean, there is no third party.

Tony: Right.

Roland: Just retire them as you go?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: My Father had new trucks always had good equipment to work with and all these trucks that are parked there in the back are junked now. Uh they don't, we ain't got no use for them. That's when gas got expensive so we had to go to diesel trucks, now diesel is more expensive than gasoline.

Roland: How's that really affected you uh like the gas prices, you just are you driving less or you just gotta go with it?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I don't know about you guys but I always have to have over a thousand dollars cash in my pocket to fill up my truck. You put two hundred and fifty gallons at four dollars. That's a lot, what's four quarters, four quarters is one dollar right? That's a thousand dollars.

Roland: Four quarters is an empty wallet.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And over there they don't accept checks. No checks, it has to be cash or card, and I hate to deal with the card. Sometimes the machine doesn't take it and you gotta go and you're there; take cash. When I'm working locally here I get my diesel there at Stripes by the cemetery; which is Richardson right there Richardson starts this way and Schunior starts this way.

Roland: Okay, yea.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Okay in the mornings when I go there I need to buy Diesel. Okay I go over there I have to long line and there's a whole bunch of ladies there buying tacos with their Lone Star, that's bullshit. There I am trying to pay cash and there's people buying tacos with their Lone Star and I have to wait behind them. I don't have no place for people like that. I don't give a damn if it's white, black, Mexicans. There's always something to do out there and you can make a living, unless you're crippled. Just look at these whole people; my mom, my dad. One day my mom was real worried, I say "what you worried about?". "Well I'm gonna lose my appointment in the food stamp." I said "hey mom I didn't know you were getting food stamps." "Yea." "How much are you getting?" "Twenty dollars." Chhh, how's

that? Now you get a young lady out there, especially if she's been divorced, got's three or four kids from different fathers; and I've seen it, seven, eight hundred dollars for free home, housing.

Tony: I think they get cell phones now too.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Even better so they can call their boyfriends.

Tony: Do you think that's a product of like the actual culture or just because it was introduced, they saw a way out of it or?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: It's just the politics, look, when when we were small there were a whole bunch of businesses in town, small business but there was Valley Mart, uh, Rivas food stores; uh Scarlots, Ramirez. A whole bunch of little stores; like Juniors but a little smaller back then. Well there was no food stamps and everybody had business. Everybody had business. HEB was always there. HEB has always been there. When Wal-Mart came they put everybody out of business. I don't know if you guys know where Wal-Mart is right now there was a theatre, a drive in theatre; you go in with your car, a theatre. They knocked that thing down and put Wal-Mart there. Okay, all these little people with businesses they went out of business. And I know they ain't gonna take the Lone Star away. They ain't, because that's what keep Wal-Mart going and HEB going, the Lone Star. People without a Lone Star would not go to those stores. And the people that won't go to those stores their merchandise is going to stay there and it's gonna make them close down. So it's just a circle. And I don't have no schooling but I know that. I know all that stuff, that's why they can't put a stop to it cause everybody will go broke. So they need the Lone Star to keep those big stores going.

Colin: Well Mr. Cantú you obviously express the big generational difference in generations you know with the Lone Star issue and the harder working generation before. Um, how old were you when you started working for your parents out on the property?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Very young. Used to pick cotton. Very young. Picked cotton. Picked whatever was in the field.

Tony: Was it a seasonal thing?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Oh yes.

Tony: As far as, k keeping the, keeping the field year-round, pretty much?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Oh yeah, well you, pick cotton, and cotton was over, pick fruit-oranges, grapefruits. Then I'd farm here. My dad had a real good business selling green beans. We used to pick everyday after school. Back then there was a...an uh McAllen Civic Center, they used to make a dance, every Monday. Uhh, Paulino Bernal. Now he came, became religious. Uh, they used to charge 99 cents to go to the, to the dance. You pay a dollar and they give you a bubblegum back. And all those kids that used to come and work for my dad, friends of mine, sometimes uh, we didn't have nothing to do but we were gonna have something next week. My father would loan 'em the dollar so they could go to the dance.

laughs

Colin: So what else did you do for fun when you weren't working or helping out the family or going to school when you were younger?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Sometimes we'd spend it in the field, but uh, for fun-we go to the movies. That Citrus Theatre...and come back and go to work, go to school. My mom always made sure that we always made our homework. After we work, in the afternoon, you go back inside the house and you make your homework. So there was no football practice for me, there was no...baseball or anything. Just work. And a lot of people-

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr:-not only me. The only ones that were, playing football and stuff like that were...lawyer's sons, doctor's sons-high society people, back then. But anyway, I had nephews, cause I have a, I'd got a, I have three girls. And all of 'em were sergeanettes and I

used to go to the football games to go see 'em. And I used, us, I used to see that favoritism is never gonna go away, never. I knew there, there was good boys there that would play football. But they have to play the lawyer's son, the doctor's sons. Now when they were getting in trouble they would put the good people, but it was already too late. That's never gonna end. Never gonna end. It's always gonna be there. Mister, mister.

Colin: Were there any local hangouts that you all went to when you were a teenager? That are no longer around?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well, after the football game we, we used to go to the gym. Dance.

Colin: So lots of dances-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Even if we lost, or who won, or whatever, we'd go out there and have a little fun.

Colin: What kind of music did you grow up with?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Tejano. Tejano and the old, the regular spanish, mexican music, and of course the english music. And in school, uh, they would play both. Both. both Musics. We had a jukebox in the afternoon, high school, in the cafeteria. You put your quarter in there and you hear whatever you *laughs* wanted to, to hear. School was okay. School was okay.

Colin: So what, what are some of your fondest memories on the property as a child? 'Cause as we looked around the field, we found lots of old glass from soda pop bottles? Marbles, pieces of little tether footballs, so w what did you do on the property when you were a kid for fun?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well when the field was empty, we used to play, we used to play, uh our relatives you know? Uh baseball, football...that's about it you know, that. It was a, when we were going a uh, uh when we were going to high school...well, around the age of fifteen, sixteen, I mean I'm pretty sure it's still going on-get somebody to buy you a six-pack of beer. Beer was about 89 cents a six pack. Back then. Drink a couple of beers then go to the football game then, you had the guts to go ask a girl to go dance with you after the football game *laughs*. It was, it was alright. No problems with that. Even though we had worked hard, we had still had our fun.

Colin: An... and I have another question for you regarding, you know, your dealings with the land. Did you ever have any run-ins with any local, political agriculture figures like Othel Brand? Or anybody like that or were they pretty much out of your sector?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: No, they were, he was in McAllen, in Rio Grande City...he never bothered us.

Colin: Okay.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: He never bothered us.

Colin: Were there any figures in the Edinburg area that you ever had run-ins with? Or was it pretty friendly?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: It was friendly. Yeah, it was friendly. There was no, no. Not that I remember uh. Of course, back then and still right now, you respect each other. I mean, if I see a farmer farming next to me, I'm not going to try to get his, his field away. He's renting there, I mean I go look somewhere else and I got rent somewhere else. 'Cause I'm pretty sure if I was gonna try to get his land I was gonna get in trouble. Anybody could.

Tony: Did, did any of the migrant strikes, speaking of Othel Brand, uh did any of that spill over to this area? Or was it just, uh pretty much like a smaller, smaller family-run businesses that didn't really get any of that?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well, we never had that, that problem.

Tony: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Uh, we had that *garbled* hour, where people come and check us.

Tony: Right.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: And uh...it's hard, working with people in the field. Cesar Chavez came with a new law back in the '70s-you have to have restrooms in the field. It was fine.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: But was is not right is for uh, for them to give us a fine. I mean, we're supposed to provide toilet paper, clean water, and soap. But the people take the toilet paper-the workers-and then they come and check you, there's no toilet papers. Ruben, Ruben got a \$700 fine for not having toilet paper there. And I had put the damn thing in that morning. So that's, I don't think that's fair.

Roland: Mhm. Have you ever had those kind of problems before? Or since then?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Noooo. Because we, we try to stay away now with uh, we hardly hire any people to do any harvest.

Roland: Mhm.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well, well we quit about two years ago, probably, maybe three. Now we're getting-just something that can be harvested with a machine. Uh, like I said again, I can't, I lost my contacts in Houston, 'cause of the brokers. Big companies. When I sell my load, I want my money right now. Brokers come in, and they give 'em forty-five days to pay. I can't wait forty-five days to get my money.

Roland: Right.

Colin: So, the previous way of doing things was, you'd unload your load, and it would be sold in lo, local supermarkets?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah. There's a whole bunch of stores there in Houston uh, the main ones that I used to sell to-Fiesta, Fiesta stores.

Colin: Did you all ever sell to local stores like M. Rivas, or any of them? Ruben's?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Yeah, a little bit. But not, uh what they buy was two cases of tomatoes, fifteen, twenty watermelons. What you gonna do with thirty, forty acres on the field, and you're gonna get rid of 'em at two boxes a day? Uh, I got, I got in with some people there in Fiesta, Texas. I used to deliver 5,000 watermelons a day. Two trailer loads. And uh, I would distribute those 5,000 in six stores.

Colin: And what year do you remember as being the worst crop that you all ever had? The one you stand out as, years you all really struggled with?

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Around '92, uh disease came around here. White fly. It wipes our, it wiped our uh, pickle deal. Nobody knew the cure for that- for the white fly. That was one of 'em. Then about three years ago, something like that, two years ago, we had big drouth. Mhm. There's another one. Um, back in the '80s, I don't know if Ruben told you that, we had about thirty acres of watermelons, ready to be cut, and my dad was still in it with us, and we went to go see the field, he said, "Nahhhh. Why don't we just wait 'till Wednesday. On Wednesday, all of 'em, most of 'em are gonna be ripe." Then the following day was Tuesday, we were out here somewhere, just a little 'ol cloud. My dad saw it, and he said, "Well boys, let's go to the watermelon field, 'cause this is gonna, might be the last time we're gonna see it. About a mile *laughs* before we got to the watermelon field, we met a cloud of hail. And that hail streak just went through our field. Wiped it out. It's the things like that.

Roland: Mhm.

Colin: And do you have any closing thoughts about all the change that's occurred in the area over the years? Do you think it's-obviously, you're not very happy with all the suburban sprawls that-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: I'm not.

Colin: have developed.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Because if you go in there, if you go in here, all the damn places are for sale. And the banks got in trouble for financing all this stuff here. They're sitting on it right

now. And then, you try to go get a loan from them, and, and they're pretty hard about, giving you a loan, because of this shit that they did here. One of the ones that really messed up was First National Bank.

Roland: Mhm. Uh, well that's, pretty much I think, covers most of what we wanted to ask you sir. Uh, we really appreciate you taking the time to talk-

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Alright.

Roland: -with us about everything. Um. Thanks, thank you very much sir.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Okay.

Roland: Did you guys have anything else you might wanna add? *noise of people shuffling* I think that's pretty much it.

Rogelio Cantú, Jr: Well, if you need anything else-
[End of recording]

Interviewee: Norma Valdez

Interviewers: Alexis Casiano, Ramiro Garza, and Randy Rosas

Date: October 5, 2012

Location: Cantú family residence

Border Studies Archive Representative: Eloise Montemayor

Alexis Casiano: My name is Alexis Casiano and today is October 5th 2012 um interviewing Ms. Norma Valdez for the Cantú family oral history. Alright? Um so I guess what is your full name?

Norma Valdez: Norma Irene Valdez.

Alexis Casiano: Alright, and um why did your parents pick that name for you?

Norma Valdez: I have no idea.

Alexis Casiano: [Laughing]

Norma Valdez: I guess they... my dad liked it.

Alexis Casiano: Your dad liked it, alright.

Norma Valdez: Mhm

Alexis Casiano: And um could you state your parent's names and your sibling's names.

Norma Valdez: Ok my father is Rogelio Cantú Senior. [Background conversation]

Alexis Casiano: Mhm

Norma Valdez: My mother Hermalinda Rodriguez Cantú, and my brother, I have one Rogelio Cantú Junior and Ruben Cantú.

Alexis Casiano: Alright and so when were you born?

Norma Valdez: When? January the fir- 11th, uh, 1958.

Alexis Casiano: 1958, and were you born here in The Valley?

Norma Valdez: Mhm. Born in Edinburg.

Alexis Casiano: [chuckle] and, uh, how did your family come to live here at this property?

Norma Valdez: Here, here?

Alexis Casiano: Mhm.

Norma Valdez: Because we used to live over there. I don't know if you knew...

Alexis Casiano: Oh I didn't know.

Norma Valdez: Yeah. Where that little wooded area was, we were there for...there that's where we grew up.

Alexis Casiano: Oh, okay.

Norma Valdez: And then my parents used to um take care of the property around here and all that so they got the opportunity to buy this part.

Alexis Casiano: Mhm.

Norma Valdez: And uh, we got the, the land, we got a house and we just moved over.

Alexis Casiano: When did you guys move over?

Norma Valdez: About 1971.

Alexis Casiano: Mhm.

Norma Valdez: Yeah.

Alexis Casiano: And how long had they been living at the other part of the property

Norma Valdez: Oh I'm not sure. A long time...

Alexis Casiano: A long time?

Norma Valdez: So I remember it was just like a two bedroom, um not even a two bedroom. It was a two room house, that's where we all grew up ... Yeah it's amazing, it's like you make space ... and everything works.

Alexis Casiano: And your family had moved from Mexico, and that was where they first?

Norma Valdez: No, my mom is from here. Apparently my dad was born Mexico.

Alexis Casiano: Oh.

Norma Valdez: And well the stories that I hear is that he was a new born when they crossed him over... so my mom is an, an American citizen and my dad became...

Alexis Casiano: Okay. And so what was it like growing up? You mentioned that, you know, it was a two room family, two room house.

Norma Valdez: It was, it was fun. I mean if you didn't know any better. Its... it didn't bother you, you know, not having your own room or anything like that. It's like we were always united as a family, you know, um ... It was, it was fun, it was okay. I mean we had to help out of course and do a lot of stuff. And um...

Alexis Casiano: Well what kind of things did you have to do?

Norma Valdez: Well, we didn't have like the running water or anything like that. We had a well and we took turns getting water out of there in a little bucket like this, you know, and um...

[Overlap in background **Ramiro Garza:** chuckles]

Norma Valdez: We used to have this, um... huge, those galvanized trash cans. And in the mornings we would fill it up, so with the heat of the sun the water would get warm enough to where we could take a bath, or you know that's what we would use it for. And my mom had her ringer washer, but she would build a fire and put one of those galvanized tubs fill it up with water and that's the hot water she would use to wash.

Alexis Casiano: Wow.

Norma Valdez: So it's like you know.

Alexis Casiano: Mhm. Umm, did you, you know, how did you take out trash, wash dishes, things like that too?

[Telephone rings]

Norma Valdez: Yes, oh gosh. The trash, well back then we didn't have the service of you know pick it up. We would have to separate the cans, you know all that stuff that wouldn't burn and burn up what we could. And um wash dishes. That was my job.

Alexis Casiano: Were um any of the [door slams] chores divided? Like you had to wash dishes, what did your brothers do, what kind of chores did they have?

Norma Valdez: They would have to clean outside. Or do other stuff.

Alexis Casiano: Oh okay and um I guess could you describe like a family dinner. You know who did the cooking and who set up things like that.

Norma Valdez: My mom would do the cooking and I would help her set the table. And then we would all sit to, to eat. And then afterwards of course the cleaning up was mine, kitchen was my job.

Alexis Casiano: And what would you do for fun?

Norma Valdez: What did- We didn't have a TV ok?

Alexis Casiano: [Laughs]

Norma Valdez: No TV. Um... We would play outside with actually dirt, making little mud pies. And um uh cutting the mesquites off the tree and pretending you know to cook. Or my brothers, we had a swing in the back. You know, nothing like what the kids have now.

Alexis Casiano: And would your family ever take trips to the beach or things like that? No?

Norma Valdez: No, none at all. No traveling.

Alexis Casiano: No traveling.

Norma Valdez: Nuh uh.

Alexis Casiano: [laughing] What was your religion growing up?

Norma Valdez: Catholic.

Alexis Casiano: Catholic?

Norma Valdez: Mhm.

Alexis Casiano: And did you attend a church nearby or?

Norma Valdez: It was Sacred Heart here in Edinburg.

Alexis Casiano: Ok um did anybody in your family play musical instruments? Was music a big part in the background growing up?

Norma Valdez: Yes. We did. Uh all three of us actually. My brother and I were with the orchestra and my little brother was in the band.

Alexis Casiano: What instruments did you play?

Norma Valdez: Uh we, I played the violin, and my other brother played the violin, but my little brother for a little while played the cello, then he went into the band to play drums.

Alexis Casiano: And um so I guess you were playing around the house a lot, things like that?

Norma Valdez: Yes.

Alexis Casiano: Any favorite songs you remember playing?

Norma Valdez: Umm, gosh no not really my favorite was from when it was like Christmas time you know we would play the Christmas carols and stuff.

Alexis Casiano: Those were your favorites?

Norma Valdez: Yeah.

Alexis Casiano: So I guess that kind of segue ways into how were the holidays? Were there any special traditions and things that you would do during [interrupted]

Norma Valdez: We never had a Christmas tree. I never had a Christmas tree until I got married like what 30 some years ago. Um... Birthdays, yes we would celebrate birthdays. My mom would make this big feast and you know and we would just have people come over and that was the main thing.

Alexis Casiano: And what were these parties like? Just family and friends?

Norma Valdez: Just family and friends mhm.

Alexis Casiano: Ok.

Norma Valdez: yeah.

Eloise Montemayor: What type of foods were at the feasts?

Norma Valdez: Well she liked to, she always made like um... barbeque you know the, the like the one you buy on Sundays

Alexis Casiano: Mhm.

Norma Valdez: *Barbacoa*. That was part of the, the, the meal that we would have or sometimes of course we would have uh barbeque outside like the chicken mostly chicken.

Alexis Casiano: Mostly chicken?

Norma Valdez: Yeah.

Alexis Casiano: Umm.. Did she bake your cakes or?

Norma Valdez: No.

Alexis Casiano: No?

Norma Valdez: Can I tell you where we used to get them? At the Phoenix Bakery, when it used to be a little, just a corner there in Edinburg and now uh you know they've already, almost closed down but we always used to get my cakes there from Phoenix Bakery.

Alexis Casiano: Okay um are there any special heirloom heirlooms that you have from growing up anything that you've kept photos, bibles, and other things that were passed down to you maybe?

Norma Valdez: I have photos. Um, cause my house burned down about 7 years ago, and I lost a lot of stuff um... Mostly my mom would keep everything and once we were married she would just give us little things, you know. So what she gave me was like all my, my, like my birth certificate and all that you know all the little, the way you know she kept everything like perfect. So yeah uh... the last thing her wedding dress but that's gone, so you know just things like that we try to keep like my dad's hats

Alexis Casiano: Mhm

Norma Valdez: You know keep, they get old but they're still there.

Alexis Casiano: Um well probably, have there been any stories that have been retold and retold, been passed down, things that you've heard about you know your older family members things that have happened?

Norma Valdez: The only story that I ever heard was.. that I hear was when they would, my dad was born in Mexico, when they brought him over. And I don't know how true it is that they crossed him... you know through the river to get him on this side so once he was over here you know they just stayed and everything.

Alexis Casiano: Mhm.

Norma Valdez: But that's like the main story that I always heard about them.

Alexis Casiano: That was the main story?

Norma Valdez: Mhmm. My dad used to say a lot of stuff. He used to tell us things and because he worked all the time so the little time we were with him you know he would sing to us and he would play around with us.

Alexis Casiano: What kind of songs would he sing?

Norma Valdez: Songs that he learned in school.

Alexis Casiano: [Laughing]

Norma Valdez: And he would actually... you know sing them to us. Cause he went to school for a few years, I don't know, and then he decided that he rather stay in the *monte* and play with his brothers and sisters and not go to school at all, so that's what happened.

Alexis Casiano: Okay.

Norma Valdez: Yeah... But he, he learned. I mean he's very smart. He would tell us, and um we had any problems with any of our homework or.. He would help us with the math and all that.

Alexis Casiano: Okay.

Norma Valdez: Mhm.

Alexis Casiano: That's good um... what kind of games did he play? Was it the same stuff as you growing up making mud pies and things like that or?

Norma Valdez: Well in their case they would go and try to kill the little birds with the, what are they called slingshots?

Ramiro Garza: Mhm

Norma Valdez: They would make their own, you know, stuff like that just to be playing around.

Alexis Casiano: Okay um... were you or any of you family members ever mentioned in the newspaper for anything?

Norma Valdez: Besides car wrecks? [Laughs] Um let me see...

Ramiro Garza: Tell us about the car wreck.

Alexis Casiano: If you don't...

Ramiro Garza: If...

Norma Valdez: No, that's fine no. It happened when I was on my way to school, and my mom was taking me and we had an accident right here in the corner right where it used to be first national bank and across the street was uh first state bank there was two banks. So we were on 281, no Closner, going to Edinburg high and right there at the light uh the car coming didn't stop, and just hit my side which made the car go up towards the bank. And that that came out in the front page of the Edinburg daily Review. It's like okay. I wasn't supposed to be late to school but I was late to school. That was, that came out in the ...yeah.

Alexis Casiano: And when was that?

Norma Valdez: That was in 1976 I want to say or '75 yeah.

Ramiro Garza: So did your friends talk about it at school or was it a topic like that, that at your school?

Norma Valdez: I mean, they were, it was a little bit you know... After I didn't show up to school for a couple of days, you know, but nothing serious it was just bumps and glass in my eye and stuff like that that... Mhm...Yeah and I think. I wanna say that there are, my father I think. There's something in the newspaper where he was, when he was picking fruit you know how they would go and take pictures of the truck drivers you know I want to say there's something like that about him.

Alexis Casiano: Do you know maybe when that was?

Norma Valdez: Umm ... That was probably gosh in umm da da da dum... maybe ... the late sixties or close-the seventies yeah.

Alexis Casiano: Okay. Um were there any world events things that happened that you know maybe had an impact while you were growing up maybe big things that you remember happening... I don't know if you were old enough when Kennedy was shot.

(Overlap **Norma Valdez:** yes)

(Overlap **Alexis Casiano:** If that had...)

Norma Valdez: I saw it. I mean I didn't see it happen. But I was watching TV but not at our house cause we didn't have one. We were at my aunt's house and I remember watching it you know all the commotion, everything going on.

Alexis Casiano: Mhm.

Norma Valdez: Yeah.

Alexis Casiano: So you would visit your aunt often to watch TV or was that just?

Norma Valdez: No um as we were growing up we tried to every Sunday go visit my grandparents,

(Overlap **Alexis Casiano:** Mhm)

Norma Valdez: My mom's uh family, and everybody would get together and before we left Bonanza used to come out before it was the news. So we would actually everybody go watch Bonanza and then go home. You know that was our Sunday outing

Alexis Casiano: Mhm.

Norma Valdez: Mhm.

Alexis Casiano: So what else would you do while you were visiting with family?

Norma Valdez: Um... Well my cousins would be there we would play around you know just hide and seek and stuff like that. And my grandfather her mom- her dad used to say a lot of stories now him he was the dentist of the family. He used to pluck, take out your teeth and it's like without you even knowing. You know, it's like you had a loose tooth and he says "come here" and he was blind okay "come here *mijita*" and before you "where is it? where is it?" and it's like "right there grandpa" and it's like "oh this one" and you wouldn't even know it was already out and it's like "okay grandpa" (overlap **Alexis Casiano** laughing) that I remember is everybody would go to him.

Alexis Casiano: Everybody went to him to get a tooth pulled?

Norma Valdez: Mhm, yeah.

Alexis Casiano: Anything else you remember about him?

Norma Valdez: Oh he was awesome. You know him being blind because he was blind for so long. He knew between wheat's and grass and plants. He would weed the garden, he would water it, he would pick cotton, he'd be out in the fields. You know. And this man was completely blind like...

Ramiro Garza: What was his name?

Norma Valdez: Andres Rodriguez.

Ramiro Garza: Andres.

Norma Valdez: Mhm, I mean completely blind.

Alexis Casiano: What caused him to go blind?

Norma Valdez: Uh his optic nerve they dried up both you know. And my mom remembers taking him to the hospital in Mexico, cause they were gonna do it. He walked in seeing and he came out blind. And my mom, I mean she had to do so much for them before she met my dad. She was the breadwinner she was take, the driver she did everything to take care of them completely yeah.

Alexis Casiano: When did your parents meet and get married?

Norma Valdez: They got married in 1953. They had a, like a three day wedding.

Alexis Casiano: What?

Norma Valdez: Yes!

Alexis Casiano: Could you describe that?

Norma Valdez: I mean they, they back then the weddings would go on. They would start on like Thursday, and then you know. And I don't know how they would do it, they had the whole, the bride, the bride and groom, with the *damas* and you know really, really nice. Uh... and um... first it would that it would be together like my grandfather and my dad and them. And then they would get married. And she would actually have to stay at home before she would be able to come home you know those... uh back then it was like so, they were real strict (overlap **Alexis Casiano:** mhm) You know, but I know it lasted three days, three long days for them.

[trailer in the background]

Norma Valdez: Isn't that amazing?

Ramiro Garza: Yeah

Norma Valdez: That it's... And February the 12th, they are going to be married sixty years.

Alexis Casiano: Sixty years? Wow.

Norma Valdez: Mhm.

Alexis Casiano: That's really nice.

Norma Valdez: I know because marriages don't last. Some last what a month, two months?

Alexis Casiano: Yeah, celebrity weddings.

Norma Valdez: No, they've been together and inseparable. Like when one is in the hospital well my dad's here, we have to take him or vice versa but they're always together they're always together and it's you know.

Alexis Casiano: Have you guys celebrated their anniversaries?

Norma Valdez: Mhm.

Alexis Casiano: How?

Norma Valdez: We're planning something for this uh the sixtieth. Cause my mom's birthday is the ninth of this month, she'll be 85 and my dad will be 90 December the first.

Alexis Casiano: And so I imagine the 50th was a big one, did you guys celebrate that?

Norma Valdez: Yeah, we started when we saw that my dad started getting sick and you know, we started celebrating uh on their 37th anniversary. That was, they went and redid their vows. They got married at a church in Alamo and they did that (overlap **Alexis**

Casiano: mhm) and her old bridesmaids came

Alexis Casiano: All of them?

Norma Valdez: She had her bridesmaids and now with their husbands. Isn't that amazing?

(Overlap **Ramiro Garza:** That is amazing.)

(Overlap **Alexis Casiano:** That's crazy.)

Norma Valdez: Mhm and they went to the same church they got married and they got married there, they renewed their vows so it was all over again.

Eloise Montemayor: Norma, could you explain for us who [overlap in background **Mrs.**

Cantú: Excuse me] weddings for us it sounds so like wow back then could you explain what goes on day one, day two, day three, a little bit more about the details of a three day wedding the kinds of foods, the traditions

(Overlap **Norma Valdez:** I mean back then,)

(Overlap **Eloise Montemayor:** anything you can remember?)

Norma Valdez: The food they would kill a pig or a kill a cow or whatever. That's what they actually would cook because there was a lot of people going and coming three days ... Uh and in reality I'm not really sure what of three days was the actual wedding, when they got married, but I know it was, you know, uh like getting to know the family. And then um the actual wedding so I'm not sure, but when my mom said a three days I was like "oh my gosh mom how could you afford three day weddings?" You know, yeah they had the bridesmaids had their dresses all the same they had the beautiful wedding dress and they had the ring bearer. My father in his suit and all that you know really nice and I don't know if my mom showed you a picture of that?

Eloise Montemayor: Gosh I don't know

Ramiro Garza: No, but actually if there is a way for us to get pictures of that later (overlap

Norma Valdez: Mhm) We would like to come back to see if we could either scan them or actually take them from here to the archive (overlap **Norma Valdez:** yeah) to have them scanned (overlap **Norma Valdez:** mhm) and add them to this if you could do that for us

Norma Valdez: Yeah, because it's amazing. You know just beautiful black and white pictures, of course, you know but it's amazing how they've been married for so long

Eloise Montemayor: Wow.

Alexis Casiano: And where, these three days it was all at one place or?

Norma Valdez: Yes it was at her house in San Carlos. She lived in San Carlos. Mhm.

Alexis Casiano: So for three days people are coming and going from her house, her home.

Norma Valdez: Mhm... Yeah, back then when she started driving it was like the old trucks and stuff that you had to crank them up to start them. Back then she did all that. Mhm. because she had to take my, my grandparents where they needed to go. And you know she had, she was the oldest of the girls uh so she had all of her brothers and sisters to watch.

Ramiro Garza: So how many were in her family?

Norma Valdez: There were, I don't, I'm not sure if there were like maybe 15, but half of them passed away because in her, the blood, there's the hemophilia blood on her side where they didn't know back then. And she lost most of her brothers to that you know for one had a nose bleed. The other one was appendicitis just surgery they didn't know there's no clotting for it. And um, then she lost some sisters twin sisters as a matter of fact and um but there's I think there's, now there's seven cause she, one of her brothers passed away several years ago. Uh... but it was a big family.

Ramiro Garza: And she was the oldest?

Norma Valdez: Yes, and you should see them when they get together, all of the sisters. It's like, we call them the Golden Girls because they take off. They come pick up mom they go shopping, they go out to eat and it's like you know its I love it. It's like they're together all the time.

Alexis Casiano: And they do that often, once a week?

Norma Valdez: Once a week maybe. Sometimes once a week when they're not working, cause I still have one of my aunts that works or once a month they get together and they have a meal at someone's house.

Alexis Casiano: And what kind of things?

Norma Valdez: Just a dinner, anything everybody takes you know, it's like a potluck. You know the main person. Like let's say my mom is gonna make the main, like *carne guisada* or whatever and everybody else brings the sides.

Alexis Casiano: oh okay

Norma Valdez: The thing is just to get together, and be together, and talk. What they mostly talk about is doctors you know. I tell my mother you don't get together to talk about that. You need to talk about other things you know.

Alexis Casiano: Has there been a progression, like maybe earlier they would talk about different things and now that they're older it's just about doctors?

Norma Valdez: Yeah, it's just doctors. Last time I took her to this uh party when everybody was there and I was just watching them and they were like talking about doctors like when kids are little my dad is better than your dad. It's like my doctor is this and my doctor is that. It's like I go "ay mom". Comparing doctors...

Alexis Casiano: Oh uh was there any other events? I know we went way off from the Kennedy thing, but um anything else you remember?

Norma Valdez: Beulah. Yes that was scary, cause there was water everywhere.

Alexis Casiano: Really?

Norma Valdez: I remember... When we used to live over there, it was the two room house that we lived in, but there was a huge house next to us that belonged to the people that owned the property. And my mom would take care of it, clean it and all that. So we went in there when Beulah came, and I remember waking up after it passed and looking out the window and there was no land. There was water all... I mean completely water... Mhm. And that was really something cause that was when we used to have pigs, and you know calves, and cattle. Uh And that's when all the pigs decided to have their babies. So we had the little

pigs and they were in the water floating and it was like come on. At that time, and it was really devastating because all the fruits from the trees had fallen. And the neighbor had an orchard and there was oranges, all I mean green, the ground was green. And it was lingering for a long time, and you could smell fish odor, and it's like it started, you know, smelling bad and I remember it.

Alexis Casiano: How long did it, did the water stay?

Norma Valdez: It stayed for a while because there's a ditch back here and that overflowed. You know, so it was just until it receded but it was, it was scary.

Ramiro Garza: Do you remember any buildings that might have gotten damaged or houses...that...that you can remember at that time? How old were you at that time?

Norma Valdez: Uhh...it was in '67...I was like nine right?...if I was born in '58. That I remember very well, it's like...and then there was no electricity. So we used to have those oil lamps you know with kerosene you had to...umm...and then just watch out for snakes and stuff like that cause there was stuff in the water coming from all over the place damaging, I think there was a lot of damaged property you know. Umm...I can't recall what buildings but I know downtown floods a lot. There's water I mean even if it rains a little bit it just floods from one end to the other...yeah.

Ramiro Garza: I know that Lyndon B. Johnson came down here at that time. He rode in a helicopter. You don't remember anything about that during that time?

Norma Valdez: I don't...No...I don't remember.

Alexis Casiano: And you guys prepare before the hurricane; was there anything that you did besides just going to the bigger house?

Norma Valdez: Prepared as much as possible as in umm you know making sure that umh everything was put away of, of course trying to get enough food you know in case there was...but get this I'm going to tell you something. We had some people that stayed with us and the lady was pregnant...OK...so she decides to have her baby right in the middle of Beulah so my parents, my mom and my dad, take her and my uncle to San Juan to a maternity clinic and as there driving well it's—the water is like really high the car keeps turning off and it keeps turning off. Finally they get to the hospital and my mom was saying that when they get to the hospital which is just a maternity ward there everybody was—had there umh rubber boots on and all that—the water was so high and they took her in there to have her baby. She had her baby right during Beulah. No electricity mind you...OK...and there with flashlights and stuff. That is uh you know weird and they went through it...they saw it.

Alexis Casiano: And so they just left all the kids home with who was watching them?

Norma Valdez: Uhh, my, we had, there was older adults...yeah...my brothers and I were there and then umh my aunt. I had some other people that were staying there but they left and my uncle left with my dad just in case—you know. Yeah, but the car would turn off and it would turn back on, it's like you know. It's the grace of God that got them to have the baby and not have her there you know, having a child here at the house...can you imagine?

Alexis Casiano: I can't imagine. I don't know what they would have done...

(overlap **Norma Valdez:** I know)

(overlap **Alexis Casiano:** if that was the case?)

(overlap **Norma Valdez:** ahha).

Alexis Casiano: Any other hurricanes?

Norma Valdez: Uhh...

Alexis Casiano: That stand out?

Norma Valdez: Here in the Valley way back then that's the main one. But then now, it's like, as ah, now that I'm older I went through Hurricane Allen that was, I had that was like in 80...80 something I think it was but not as bad as Beulah.

Alexis Casiano: So that was the worse.

Norma Valdez: I would...I think Beulah would be something like what happened in Louisiana but not as bad just because of the water. There was so much water. And I remember, OK I remember Hurricane Gilbert that passed...uhh...it was a few years in the 80's I think it was. Any way I was living over there in Las Milpas. That like they had to let the water come. There was water all over the place and there, there was a lot of damage. And there was a lot of...uhh...debris and animals, wild animals going through the water. Snakes and all that to where they were alerting the people about that, that lived close to the—the levies there in Pharr. And then there was no crossing. My crossing I would have to go all the way to 10th street to come and drop off my kids in school in Pharr and that would be like you know...but other than that besides the damaging of the signs falling and stuff like that you know.

Eloise Montemayor: Norma I have a question for you umm...

Norma Valdez: Uhha

Eloise Montemayor: The freeze in I think it was when we had the white Christmas

Norma Valdez: Uhha

Eloise Montemayor: That was something very difficult for your brother Ruben to talk about and he really couldn't say much because he was so choked up.

Norma Valdez: Yeah.

Eloise Montemayor: Do you think you can give us a little bit of details on how that really affected you all as a family? Cause if it affects your sibling it affects everybody.

Norma Valdez: Right.

Eloise Montemayor: Umm...(overlap **Norma Valdez:** Umm)

(overlap **Eloise Montemayor:** Do you want to tell us a little bit about that event?)

Norma Valdez: My brothers have always been...uhh...they followed my dad's footsteps either trucking or farming and it effects in both ways. Uhh...cause are way of life is you know whatever is being produced will you know that would be part of what we would eat and stuff. So when the freeze comes everything is gone, there's nothing. You know, and it really affects in everything. Uhh...like there's no more produce you know and then everything you put into it and all that is lost and um...there's no work cause there's nothing to haul, there's nothing to cut. So it really effects in your way of life. And in his case like it's really into this it really affects him very emotionally cause that's his life you know. And there's nothing he can do to provide for his family. And for my parents too, because you know. So, um...that's one of the, the, the hardest for him. And in reality it, it always happens when I see him like so depressed and all that it's because something went wrong and that was you know a person can go crazy thinking stuff like that and it really, really affects him that way. And it still does, he still remembers and it's you know. So, it's really...and um...I remember also one time when it froze at my house—it froze right and its devastating to see everything gone and it's just the vegetation around you but compared to him that it's his livelihood you know his money making and there's nothing and its hard. And then um...they do get help but by the time you know you have nothing to live on and it's really hard for them.

Eloise Montemayor: Growing up where umm...was there uh...kind of like ah...ah...distinguished roles for the woman and the men? Umm...I know that you mentioned you would get the water in, in the buckets and everything. Growing up on the farm (**Norma Valdez:** ahha) did you notice that there were specifics things that just the women did and any things that just the men did? Could you explain a little bit about that?

Norma Valdez: See, the thing is like, O.K. us as women we would have to do everything around the house and all that and we never finished doing are stuff right. As a man you go

work and you do, you're days over you come home and you can relax and we have to keep going and going. And being at home since they were gone we had to feed the animals you know and help with the washing, getting the water and you know stuff like that. There gone they don't worry about what at home and they come home and it's like it's already done. So it's just that's, not only you know the difference there...

Eloise Montemayor: It never stops...

Norma Valdez: It never stops and it's still going on believe me.

Ramiro Garza: Well, I wanted to ask another question also...um...Mexican culture, just because were from down here. Often times...uhh...during family gatherings...uhh...the men would be in the inside...or no actually the men would be on the outside and the women would be in the inside and that was just a separation. Did that happen at times during?...**(Norma Valdez: yes, always.)**

Norma Valdez: Another thing I failed to mention. That, the men always sat down to eat first back then and then the women and the children. But, but they had to eat first all the time.

Eloise Montemayor: And does that still happen today?

Norma Valdez: In some families it does. Our tradition now is, no everyone sits together but I remember like with my grandfather also, my dad's dad like that too. That my aunt would you know provide for him first always, all the time. And a good thing, the thing that I remember the most from my grandfather when I was growing up that every morning him and my aunt would come visit us. Like us, and then they'd go to my aunt's house to come and see us. Every single morning there was the first stop was here and then over there. Just to come and see how we were. I mean there were no phones or anything right. But that was every single morning.

Ramiro Garza: Umm...in the Mexican American culture there's a fifteen birthday, a *Quinceanera*. (overlap **Norma Valdez:** Right.) (overlap **Ramiro Garza:** Did you have one?)

Norma Valdez: I didn't have one because at that time my father had had an accident. He was climbing onto the truck and he accidentally fell back and you know he was hurt so I didn't get to have one. Umm...but my nieces, my daughter had one, you know my nieces have had there's but I didn't get to have one. And I really, really wanted one cause that's like the tradition right...but...

Eloise Montemayor: Can you talk a little bit more about that tradition? What goes on? What, as a young girl what were your expectations? What were, was that excited you about a *Quinceanera*? What did it, what did it entail for people who may be from up north who don't know what a *Quinceanera* is?

Norma Valdez: Well, just that fact that you are turning fifteen you know it's a special time in your life. Ahh...and having all your friends join you know it's going to church, being blessed, umm...you know cause mainly that's the, the main, now it's more commercial then it was before. Because before it was you go to have your mass at church and they would actually do a mass for you. You know now it's like they combine the mass and then they'll just bless you. You know, you're in your dress and all that and that's it. Before, you would have to go like to all the, the, the meetings that you had to go and you had have your, you had to be baptized, your communion, you had to have your sacraments in order to be able to have your mass in church. You know and that, that was the whole thing. Now if you just had a party, O.K. it was just a party but a *Quinceanera* going through the whole rituals you know that was the main thing.

Eloise Montemayor: So did... Would you consider *Quinceanera* strongly tied with the, the Catholic church or would you hear of...umm...other girls having *Quinceanera* who weren't Catholic?

Norma Valdez: I did, but though they were the ones that would just have the party with the Damas and the whole yeah. But being a Catholic it's the church.

Eloise Montemayor: And you went through all...

Norma Valdez: The whole process...ahha...see my daughter does *Quinceanera's* so I've seen the difference. You know some they just have the party they don't have anything and then some still do go to the church and they have the, the mass and you know the blessing and they now there's a tradition where your bouquet one of 'em you go and you give it the Virgin you know. That's you know...ahh...something that there doing now as part of thanking you know being, for being blessed, being there you know. So it's the tradition as changing a little but it's somewhat still there. (voice overlap) But to me it's mostly in the, the Catholic.

Alexis Casiano: Umm...had you been preparing for one anyway going to classes and

Norma Valdez: I hadn't started going to classes. I was just preparing as in what I wanted you know. But of course you, that is part of what you had to do. And still, as a matter of fact now when you do have a *Quinceanera* and you're going to go through the church you still have to go through the classes and you have to be going to CCD, you have to do your communion, you have to be like or else they will not do it.

Eloise Montemayor: What does CCD stand for?

Norma Valdez: Umm...it's for your...umm...(voice overlap)...catechism...Catholic catechism diocese. I don't know what it is but it's like you get baptized and then you do your, your baptism and then umm...your *Quinceanera* or whatever then you get confirmed as a during high school I think and then that's your last sacrament before you can get married...if you're going to get married by church you need to be confirmed.

Alexis Casiano: Have you gotten all your sacraments?

Norma Irene Valdez: Yeah...but I didn't get married by church I just got married. But, ahh...my daughter did. You know she had and all my kids have their sacraments.

Alexis Casiano: And was it...was it different maybe the classes for your children getting the sacraments than what you had growing up or is it the same?

Norma Valdez: Ahh...it's almost the same it's just the, the way they are being taught now. Because now it's like they are really strict as you going and the preacher will tell you like once you've done your sacraments and he tells you, O.K. I know that I'm not going to see half of you here coming back because you've already done. And it's true, once they do their, their first communion a lot of the kids don't go back because what for I mean they already got there sacrament right. Before, like when my mom was growing up they would ahh...my grandfather was real strict with the Catholic church like they would fast everyday till noon. I mean that was a must in their family. Their fasting.

Eloise Montemayor: Now Norma...umm...what do you identify yourself more as? You can be a combination of any of these: Latina, Mexican American, Hispanic, Mexican. Which one would you identify with most or all of them or either...(some laughing).

Norma Valdez: Well...I would say...I guess Hispanic.

Eloise Montemayor: Hispanic.

Norma Valdez: Because Mexican O.K., yes I have you know because of my parents but I think Mexican would be more like people that come from Mexico that have their you know their different ways and being a Hispanic is like the, the, the mixture of the Tex-Mex and you know.

Eloise Montemayor: Now growing up in the Valley and being a Hispanic, how do you as a woman Hispanic, how was it back then what do you think it was...umm how different is it for a Hispanic woman growing up back then to a Hispanic girls growing up now. How do you...what differences can you see umm...in every aspect?

Norma Valdez: O.K. back then, being Hispanic I mean as I, I remember you had to, you weren't, as had as much freedom as you do now you know. You had to do what your parents told you like really strict like you had to be home at ten, you'd be home at 9:59 because or else you know. And now what I see it's, it's so much easier for the, the women now to do and to get ahh...their education wise, their career going you know because it's so different. Cause now you can, if you a family person you can leave your children. There's places you can leave your children. Back then there was you know; you had your children O.K. you, you're going to take care of them. That's the way and I mean yes there was people that did have their careers and all that but it took a lot, it took a lot. And ahh...but now I think it's easier because there's a lot of things that you can do. You know if you have to like for example like the day cares and all that. Back then there was nothing like that. Like if you worked out in the field you had to take your kids with you. You couldn't leave them anywhere you know.

Eloise Montemayor: Now did you ever experience any discrimination or witness any discrimination based on your gender or your ethnicity or maybe you heard stories from your family, from your parents or grandparents who have?

Norma Valdez: Yes, I've heard that umm...my parents, my on my mom's side her family used to travel a lot like to go to Michigan to go pick apples or whatever it was and a lot of towns didn't accept Hispanics at all. You couldn't go grocery shopping where other people went. And I rem..my mother-in-law used to say that too. You couldn't walk into a restaurant. They wouldn't serve you, you know. They went through stuff like that. Like going on the road and then you have children and they need to stop for something and they won't they wouldn't accept Hispanics they would just ignore you or tell you to leave. And those are stories that I get here from my aunts you know and my mother-in-law saying that cause they used to travel to Idaho and the same thing would happen to them.

Ramiro Garza: And during what years were those, do you have an idea?

Norma Valdez: Those were like in the, the '60s I think. Cause, I remember I was little when that was going on.

Ramiro Garza: Now with the Anglo population down here do you remember feeling anything like that here or did you...was there a clear cut line you know Mexican's here, Anglos over here? Was there anything like...that going on here?

Norma Valdez: I don't remember anything like that here you know because ahh...once you were in school there was a mixture you know. I didn't see that, that happening. Ahh...I'm, I'm sure there, there could have been something going on but it didn't happen to me and I didn't see it. And as a matter of fact everybody that I've known este were still friends and you know nothing like that happened.

Ramiro Garza: So when the generation you were talking about previously do you think there was a clear cut distinguishing between that generation?

I think there was you know. I think there was. Ahh...I don't know about here because I never heard my parents saying anything about anybody here in the valley discriminating them. Ahh...but as you left and went further up north that's where it was.

Eloise Montemayor: Umm...Norma you mentioned that whenever you did get a chance to see T.V. at someone else's house, I know Bonanza (overlap **Norma Valdez:** Ahha) was the main thing back then can you think of any other shows or what was it that about Bonanza that intrigued you all or, or how did you all relate to it?

Norma Valdez: It was, I guess the western, the farming, the, the horses you know, like the cattle all that it just fit in with our life you know. But yes, once we started watching cartoons like the Flintstones there were like normal cartoons, you know. But, Bonanzas' the one that, O.K. and another one was...umm the Wizard of Oz. Always on Thanksgiving. I remember that. Always we would wait for the Wizard of Oz to come out. That was sweet. Until this day it's like the Wizard of Oz.

Alexis Casiano: So on Thanksgiving even today you still watch Wizard of Oz (overlap

Norma Irene Valdez: uhha).

Norma Irene Valdez: And my kids now they know that it's a tradition Wizard of Oz Thanksgiving you know so that's what we used to watch, all the time. It's amazing like the years you remember of what you used to do like watching the Wizard of Oz for that you know and then Bonanza every Sunday. That was our treat before we got home because we had school the next day. So...

Eloise Montemayor: Now what about singers? Were there any singers at the time that you identified yourself with or that you still have favorite singers from back then and, and maybe you tend to listen to songs from then or what can you tell us about how the, because right now it's all pop culture technical stuff you know. What about umm...the music you listened to then and, and maybe something you experienced you really liked.

Norma Valdez: Of course, Elvis Presley back then...ahh...Mexican (overlap **Ramiro Garza:** Of course, of course)...ahh back you know my parents used to listen a lot to the music from Mexico like the *corridos*...ahh...*baladas*, the polkas and of course there was like umm...they liked umm...Carlos and Jose, like from back then you know old time musicians that played the music that my father liked which were the *corridos* and he loved them. Antonio Aguilar...umm...

Ramiro Garza: Pedro Infante

Norma Valdez: Ahh, Pedro Infante, este Pedro Ayala used to play the accordion you know, those kind of musicians way back then.

Eloise Montemayor: Did you ever go to, to music halls or go out and...umm dance or anything like that?

Norma Valdez: Umm...not really, the only times were like for weddings that you would go to and you know. Cause my mom and dad they danced a lot and they still do. They still dance...umm...and ahh my dad used to like you know. H—as we got older there were two places that he used to like to take us and that's when the livestock show would come in Mercedes. We went to go see when...ahh Fess Parker came which was Davy Crockett we went to see him. And then we saw ahh...I don't, I can't remember he used to come out in the Virginian and other westerns and then we would go to the La Feria in Reynosa because of all the you know so almost similar to it but it was in the Mexican and those were the only times that he would take us to either Mercedes or to La Feria.

Ramiro Garza: Do you remember when you were growing up...um it seems...ah that Mexican music was a big part of your life. Do you remember hearing stories of your dad ever brought umm.. a serenade to your mom or...ahh during Mother's Day or on her birthday or even on yours or another sibling...do you remember anything like that happening where the mariachi's would come or?

Norma Valdez: Um, actually not really mariachis, but he would always have a band play whenever, even if it was two or three people, because he always like the atmosphere of being outside and hearing music and having his friends over, but we would do it as a family type thing, but he always had someone come and play, even if it was just an accordion and a base player or a guitar player, because he loved that.

Ramiro Garza: That was during Mother's Day or was it any day?

Norma Valdez: It doesn't, not necessarily, it could have been a holiday or it could have just been a regular Sunday, whenever he felt like he wanted it, because it got to where my dad, could, to me, he was well known here. Because I remember, get this, I was supposed to, I was getting married on a Sunday. I didn't have a license, courthouse was closed. He calls Santos Saldana, back then, he was on a fishing trip. This man stops his fishing trip; he comes to open the courthouse on a Saturday to get my marriage license, thanks to him. Can you believe that?

Alexis Casiano: Wow! Why was he so important? What did he do that everybody would stop for him?

Norma Valdez: Just, I guess it's just the way he was. Because even if he wanted to go purchase, let's say, today, I need a new truck. Because I don't know how they did it, back then to where, they would get brand new vehicles. Brand new! To where I can't even do it now because it's like your credit is so bad. But, he would actually go to Robert's Chevrolet or wherever, and whatever he wanted, believe me, he would be able to drive off with it and not have to pay anything. He had pull with that. I guess his credit, I mean, I don't know, it's so different now. But back then they got their money and the first thing they did was pay off whatever they had. So their credit was awesome. My mom has excellent credit right now, to where just because of her age, but just the fact that he could go and tell Mr. Roberts or whoever, I want this or whatever and drive off with that, amazing. And a lot of people know my father. Because of the farming and trucking and the deeds that they've done to help other people in need because they do.

Alexis Casiano: What kinds of things?

Norma Valdez: Ah, if they came, you know, and they're like, they're in need of maybe money or food or shelter, they were always there for them. Or, if they needed a ride to go somewhere. You know, they never said no. Or even if it was on the truck that they drove on, they would take them where they needed to. Yeah, that I can remember like...

Alexis Casiano: And still to this day?

Norma Valdez: And still to this day, people that are still alive that they helped, they actually come to see my parents. They stop by. Young kids that used to go work with them when they were getting, the uh, picking fruit and all that. They all left, they all have their lives, but they come back here. To come and visit mom and dad.

Alexis Casiano: How often would you say?

Norma Valdez: Maybe once or twice a year. Or they, she all of a sudden gets a phone call and it's someone she actually helped raise and they've never forgotten my parents. And it's amazing because then I'm out there and the first thing they ask for is mom and dad. You know, so...

Eloise Montemayor: I have just two more questions, ok?

Norma Valdez: Uh ha...

Eloise Montemayor: As far as the foods, like folk foods. Are there certain dishes that maybe you prepare? *Tamales*, *capirotada*, anything that's very, food that's more regional from around here. Something that you learned maybe from your parents? From your mom and then now you still do it, or maybe, the opposite? Things that you used to eat but you're not eating anymore now because of the changes?

Norma Valdez: Uh, no, it's like the *capirotada*, which I haven't learned how to make yet. Ah, the *nopalitos*, like for the *quaresma* during Lent. The tamales, you know. Just the tradition, the *menudo*, the meals that we would have like once in a long time. And, uh, the chocolate, the Mexican chocolate. The pan she used to bake, just regular bread. Ah, I remember all that because it was not something that we did often. But when we did, you know, it's a lot of work. I remember, let me tell you about the *tamales*. Now you can buy

the, everything. We used to have a little back room where we had corn and we had to go and chuck the. Okay, we had to do, go and, so we would grind the corn and all that and get it, then she would cook it. Take it to grind it, to make the *masa*. And then, I would have to, all of us would have to go and get the *hojas*. (door shutting) (**Alexis Casiano:** The husks?) Uh ha, We had to do all that. Now you can go to HEB and buy them, but back then we had to do our own. That was only the bad part about that, but other than that, we would make it a little game. Who would get the most and the best and....

Ramiro Garza: How about the art of making *tortillas*? Because I know in our house, my mom make *tortillas*. It was a fight for the *tortillas*. Was that something (**Norma Valdez:** Uh ha) here too or you had when mom make *tortillas*, it was....

Norma Valdez: No, it was the *tortillas*; you were just waiting like the first one that came out. And of course, from scratch, everything and she still makes *tortillas*. And the refried beans. The everybody, I'm not kidding, would come just for that. I mean she could have anything else laid out. We'd go for the beans and the *tortillas*.

Eloise Montemayor: And these were *tortillas de harina*?

Norma Valdez: ...*De harina* (**Ramiro Garza:** Ok...) And I had a cousin that would actually go into the refrigerator and take out cold beans and put it in a *tortilla* and he would eat them like that.

Ramiro Garza: Ok, did you learn to make *tortillas*?

Norma Valdez: See, the first thing that my mom told my husband when I got married, she can cook anything you want, but don't ask her for *tortillas*, because she doesn't know how to make them. Which I didn't, I learned, and I make them once in a while, and my kids make fun of me. They're like, oh my gosh, what are those round things mom? No, but, I've learned to make a lot from her, because my mom cooks really well, I mean really good. Ah, to where there's still some things that I wanna learn before it's too late, and uh....

Eloise Montemayor: Like what are some dishes that you want to learn?

Norma Valdez: Ok, she made her tamales, I can make tamales, but here tamales are excellent. Because she used to make tamales that went to Germany. Pan Am used to buy tamales from her all the time. Yeah, uh, that to where she makes them all one sized, excellent, like Delia's. You know they, uh, the *capirotada*, which I don't know how to make, that I would like to make. Because I like it, I'm not crazy about it, but I like it and I know that my kids like it. Things like that are, *menudo*, I learned. But I learned from her, what I've. Like making rice and the. Because the rice has this trick to it, and you have to. I've learned from her a lot of stuff.

Eloise: And, uh, I guess my last question is a little bit about folklore and herbal remedies. Growing up as a child were you ever told stories like La Llorona you know? Mija, don't stay out to late because La Llorona's going to get you, or something like that. And also herbal remedies, growing up your supposed to get teas, herbs, you would use when you're sick or whatever. Can you give us some...

Norma Valdez: Yes, *La Llorona*, yes we've heard a lot of stories about that. And actually, I think we saw one the other day across the street before they built all those houses. It used to be the reservoir right there before they cleaned it off. We had some workers in the back and they decided to go walking. I mean, before we know it, we hear they were all scared. They saw the *Llorona*. They actually saw her. And she went into the field that was there. So, you know, like, OK! As in remedies, yes, and they still use them. Like of course, I remember back then that they're used to be *curanderos*, that if your baby was *empachado*, or whatever, they would take them and they would do the egg or with a lemon or whatever, for your tummy, the back or whatever it was. And they're still doing like the *manzanilla*, the, they do

the *estafiate* for your stomach. And believe it or not, they do work. The teas that you take, yeah, but there's a lot of thing out there that....

Eloise Montemayor: do you continue to do these teas?

Norma Valdez: Yea, the teas yes. Because my kids can drink the *manzanilla*, the camel meal, every day. Well actually, all the grandkids, they ask, grandma, have you make *manzanilla*? She always has it.

Eloise Montemayor: And is this, you know. Does she get the regular camel meal tea bags from HEB? Or does she get the... (voice overlap)

Norma Valdez: No, she gets like the...She boils it and then strains it. (voice overlap) I get the tea bags.

Eloise Montemayor: So she grows it?

Norma Valdez: Well, sometimes, right now she doesn't have anything but in the back she had *estafiate*, she had the *salvia*, she had *ruda*, the *hierba buena*, a little bit of everything. And, uh, whenever we're sick, just get a few leaves, boil them, and you know, it was there, yeah.

Eloise Montemayor: And the other folk stories, can you think of aside from *La Llorona*?

Norma Valdez: *La Llorona*.

Eloise Montemayor: Growing up as a child, were you ever?

Norma Valdez: Gosh, (voice overlap) uh, I know there is. (**Eloise Montemayor:** The devil, the *chupacabras*?) Well I remember like, the *chupacabras*. The one I remember (laughing) ah, what they said that happened at the Villa Real, when the half man, half horse or what, the devil or whatever it was. Ok, there's another one about, apparently, my husband told me this one, that over there in Pharr, on Jackson. There used to be right there on Dicker on the corner, a little store, there used to be. They had gas and all that. And there used to be a black limo that passed, you know. And one time it stopped and the man didn't have any money, and he needed gas. So the man said OK, get your gas and just leave me your address and information so I can go collect. So it happened then the man goes to collect, gets to the place and the wife if like, what are you talking about? My husband's been dead for so long, so, no but look and he had proof that he had been there. That he told me because, yeah. And it's like I try not to travel on Jackson when I go home because it's like, ahh, it's scary because I remember that....

Alexis Casiano: Where did he hear that story from?

Norma Valdez: Because he's from over there. He grew up over there and over where they live, according to my mother-in-law, where like, my house is built over like, Indian burial grounds back there. And there's something because you hear all these noises and stuff at my house. And there's always things going on and they were saying, there's, that they see the mama pig with her piglets crossing the street. And people have actually seen that. There are things that happen on that side of town, like, a lot. Yeah, but when mom was telling me about *La Llorona* crossing the street, like, OK! (voice overlap)

Alexis Casiano: And did you believe it?

Norma Valdez: Actually I like to hear about it, but I really don't, because it hasn't happened to me. But, if it would happen, then I would say it's true. (laughing) But, I have not seen it myself. I've only heard, yeah... (voice overlap)

Ramiro Garza: I would like to ask. Quick question, uh, while you were growing up, did your father, or mother, which I'm sure that they both did, did they give you any advice when you were growing up? Of what to do when you're married? How to be as a wife, as a mom, or your father, how to be as a daughter? What was your place? Do you remember any advice that your parent gave you when you were growing up and you still hold today? And that you may pass on to your own kids?

Norma Valdez: As advice from my mom, of course, the being a wife. Attend you your husband. Ah, your children, take care of your kids. And always be, I guess, a lot of mothers, what I would actually tell my own, is like, the communication that you have with our husband, always keep it, because then, look at them, together forever, it's like, according to my mom, You get married and it's a lifetime (voices overlap) she made it to where, I was supposed to be married forever to my husband. And my dad is real different. I had a closer relationship with my father than I did with my mom. I would be able to talk to my dad and tell him everything, more than I would my mother. (voices in background) He just always told us to just be careful in what we do and reach for the stars because there's nothing to stop us. And I remember, and I loved being with my dad. My kids love being with my dad. Because not everybody got to enjoy him the way we all did. (laughing in background) And only (voice overlap) two of my kids got to enjoy my dad, the way. And they have a lot of memories about that also. When they're in the back, barbecuing all they always talk about is how grandpa used to be and where they used to go, but my dad, he was not as strict as her. And he only spanked me once. And I still remember it to this day, and I still feel them. It was me and my older brother and never again. If he ever had anything, we would sit at the table and he was waiting for us at the table, we knew what was going to happen all all we did was cry. And he wouldn't ever raise his voice or anything. But that's just, to follow our dreams and the sky is the limit. And we've tried. And I see him, and I love my father so much, it hurts to see him...

Alexis Casiano: I think one of, I guess the last thing we wanted to talk about was how the land was used. You said your father was ranching, (voice overlap) things like that?

Norma Valdez: Was used mostly for farming. (horn in background) (door slamming) My nephew just got here or he's leaving. That's the sign that he gives my mom, like I'm here or I'm leaving. It was mostly for farming. And I, the, what I remember the most they ever did was the grain. And I remember we had beans one time. That I had to go and pick of course. But it was mostly farming. Nothing else like buildings or anything like that.

Alexis Casiano: So you mentioned grain and beans, anything else that was grown?

Norma Valdez: Corn, tomatoes, uh, what else? Watermelon and I think I want to say cantaloupe. Because I remember, yeah.

Alexis Casiano: And so you had to pick up some of the stuff, who else helped pick all... (voice overlap)

Norma Valdez: Well, there, my brothers had to, we all had to, then of course people that would come in and ask if we had work or whatever. And it was horrible because it was during school time and if like, I told you, if we were playing instruments, it was during that time, it's like my parents couldn't really go. I mean, they would allow us to go and do it, but they were not there for us to see us perform or anything like that. That was the bad part, yeah.

Alexis Casiano: And so you said they hired workers, so where did those people come from? Like were they immigrants or were they living here?

Norma Valdez: They were here, they were like actually school kids that wanted extra money to spend. Uh, or like their parents would actually come and ask and then they would bring their kids. Yeah

Alexis Casiano: And so it was men, women, and children. (voice overlap)

Norma Valdez: All kinds of.... Rain or shine, we were out there. Believe me.

Alexis Casiano: During school time or after school. (voice overlap)

Norma Valdez: After school and Saturdays all day long.

Alexis Casiano: And so these people would, they were living off the property and they would come every day? (**Norma Valdez:** Uhha, yeah, very punctual too)

Norma Valdez: You know, it's amazing, back then, we used to go pick cotton, because we used to. My dad would be out of town. My mom would take us all, and from the oldest to the youngest. We would have our own sack and we'd be picking right. She wouldn't let us go sit under the trailer or play or anything like that. And there was another family and it was the same amount of kids. And they were the same age-wise. It was a challenge to see who would pick the most pounds at the end of the day. (voice in background) And she wouldn't let us. I mean, she was strict. To this day. (voice overlap)

Alexis Casiano: So that's, you would turn the work into a game? That's how you would get it done? (voice overlap)

Norma Valdez: Yes, that's the only way, it's like if you didn't, it would be so long and boring.

Alexis Casiano: And who would usually win these games?

Norma Valdez: It varies, sometimes hers, us, sometimes the others. But it was like nobody wanted to leave, it was already getting dark and we were still, it's like they were *amachadas* to stay and see who was going to win. But it was fun.

Alexis Casiano: And that food that was picked, would be, did you guys eat some of it? Did you sell any of it?

Norma Valdez: It was, yeah. They would sell it. It would actually, some was taken to the market place in Houston. Because that was one of the, they would haul it, or actually people from different warehouses would come down and see what they had. And they would come and make an offer and that's the way they did it. Not like now that they tell you, like my brother, they tell you, I need so many acres of this, this, this, and this. So he had, because they were already gonna get it. It's gonna belong to them, to the packaging shed. And before somebody used to come and, oh, I want so much of this or whatever. It wasn't like already sold to them. They were already...

Alexis Casiano: So I guess that's how the trucking started? That they had to send it to the, who was the one in charge of that? (voices in background) Who started it?

Norma Valdez: My dad, and my mom used to drive the truck too. Oh god, you get on top of the truck, she'll take off. Oh yes, you know she's got her driver's license. And my dad and her, he would take one of the trucks to the field and she would follow him in the other one to go, they were going to go pick and then my dad would take the trucks to go ad load it and she would stay in the field with the workers and taking over of the truck to move it when it had to be moved.

Alexis Casiano: So when did they start with the trucking?

Norma Valdez: They started, oh gosh, they had already been trucking before we were born, I think. My dad because I remember we were already older and we were already going out to different places, because they used to haul the rice and grain. There was nothing here in the valley so we had to travel. And that was the only thing we never picked fruits and vegetables anymore because it was just the trucking that he did. But when they were here, the good thing was that we got to eat off of what they would harvest so we got the corn and watermelons fresh off the field. (Laughing)

Alexis Casiano: And the fruit stand, (**Norma Valdez:** Uhha) when was that started?

Norma Valdez: It started over here as just a little table. Many years, I don't know about, gosh, maybe 20 years or something. (voices in background) (door shutting) And she started out with just onions, watermelons, little bit of tomato. People would actually stop. And then they made it a little bit bigger. And they just, a few years ago, redid the street. She had to move from there and put it in here. But they let her keep it, which was good. They let her keep it but it's not the same. Because it's real, there's a lot of traffic but they don't stop. Sometimes they do, it depends.

Alexis Casiano: So has there been, like have you noticed when it grows or declines over the years? Some things are selling better than other things? They get more business during certain times of the year?

Norma Valdez: During watermelon season, or when there's citrus.

Alexis Casiano: And where do they get that fruit from?

Norma Valdez: Where ever they're hauling. One of my brothers, goes to different places to get them. The watermelon sometimes we get them from our field here. Just bring it straight here or we go to different places. (voices in background) Or he brings them from San Manuel or where ever they come and they offer it here. Like when we have corn, we sell it but as they're coming to buy, they go in there and pick it fresh. Or like the squash or whatever so it's fresh.

Alexis Casiano: I think that's all I have. Is there anything else?

Ramiro Garza: Well there's one other thing, just so we can wrap it up. In anticipation of the interview, was there any particular story or particular subject that you want to talk about? I'm sure that you probably thought about the interview. OK, I wonder what they are going to ask me. But did you think of anything in particular you want to add? A subject, a story, you could tell?

Norma Valdez: I could tell? Hm...

Ramiro Garza: You don't have to, I mean, I know that we've asked you a lot of different things. (voices overlap) You probably have already covered everything, but maybe you thought, I wish they would ask me about this. (voices overlap)

Norma Valdez: You know, the only thing I think is interesting now is that now, when we were growing up we, the fact that we didn't have all the luxuries that everyone else had. No running water, and out house, and all that, it's like that's the way we grew up. And I wouldn't change it, my life, the way it is. Because I've learned from what it is to have those things. And I tell my kids all the time and they make fun of it. Oh yeah mom the dinosaur times. It like, now, the way we were raised, it's just totally different from where we are now. But I wouldn't change it. It just got better as time went on.

Ramiro Garza: Well I think that we're done and we would like to really thank you for giving us your time. (**Norma Valdez:** Uhha) On behalf of our group, but even the university.

(**Alexis Casiano:** Thank you so much) Thank you very much for sharing your time.

Norma Valdez: Thank you, you're welcome.

Eloise Montemayor: Norma, if you could just quickly, I don't think you did this at the beginning, just state your name and date for the record, that would be all. (voices overlap)

Norma Valdez: OK, my name is Norma Irene Valdez and today is October the 5th, 2012

[End of recording]

Interviewee: Ruben Cantú Sr.

Interviewers: Ashley Leal and Luis Reyes Jr.

Date: September 19, 2012

Location: Cantú Family Property off Jackson Rd.

Ashley Leal: State and spell your first and last name.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Ruben Cantú, R-U-B-E-N C-A-N-T-U

Ashley Leal: Okay, Umm.... okay, so go ahead [cue for Luis Reyes]

Luis Reyes Jr.: Um,,, what else besides corn do you use to grow? Just corn?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Grain, sorghum, watermelons and um, Uhhh... this past season I had a whole bunch of a vegetables, uh... mustard, cilantro

Ashley Leal: MmMm...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: uh, balluts [cannot understand], you know, there was a whole bunch of uh... I don't know if you guys are interested look seeing at some seed?

Ashley Leal: Yes, I love it. Actually, I live in an apartment across the street but uh, and behind my home, behind my home, I have uh, like, I guess you can say, a kitchen garden [chuckles from Ruben Cantú Sr. and Luis Reyes Jr.]

[Loud sound from a chain that Ruben Cantú Sr. is moving out of the way in the seed storage room]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: [looking in seed packets] what's this uh, turnip greens, [hands seeds to Luis Reyes Jr. and looks for more seed] let's see if I can find some stuff that's already open. [shuffling through box] Okay, uh, aw heck, I need my glasses what is this? [Looks through an open bag of seed]. Oh okay, this is a dandelion.

Ashley Leal: So you grow, um, you grow, right now you grow pretty much corn?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, Yeah, for the fall.

Ashley Leal: uh huh, and it's all uh, do you get paid by the government or do you get paid at all?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, uh, the government sets a price on the, on the least commodity, like corn, grain, cotton and all that.

[Ruben Cantú Sr. closing the metal gate to the storage shed where seed is held]

Ashley Leal: Uh huh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: It's not like uh... vegetables or watermelon, the market is the market, it goes up and down.

Ashley Leal: Yeah, up and down? yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: What about oranges and stuff like that?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, we don't have any orchards.

[Ruben Cantú Sr's phone rings]

Ashley Leal: no problem.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Okay I think this is one of you guys. "Hello, uh huh [talking from the other end of the phone very lightly coming through on the recorder]

Ashley Leal: Yes, that's her.

Luis Reyes Jr.: She's parking.

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yes, okay. [.4] You guys didn't bring any tacos right?

[Chuckles from Ashley Leal and Luis Reyes Jr.]

Ashley Leal: No, we should of. Next we will do it. This time we know to bring tacos.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [chuckling] it would have been better if I would of brought you what you were ordering when I called you [chuckling]. And they have breakfast.

Ashley Leal: Oh yeah. But uh, so she has equipment and stuff like that but I gunna uh, I guess we can have her wait so we can figure out like, you can show us around if you don't mind. 'Cause what we are focusing on is water, and um... as well as,,

Luis Reyes Jr.: Like hurricanes, disasters or... stuff like that.

Ashley Leal: Natural..

Ashley Leal and Luis Reyes Jr.: Stuff like that.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh...what do you want to know that?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Like, if any natural disasters occurred and has prevented your like, your work.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh wow.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Like hurricane Beulah.

[Shuffle]

Border Studies Archive Representative (BSAR): Hi, nice to meet you.

Ashley Leal: Hi, we are going to be talking with him right now, do you have a recorder or no?

BSAR: I brought the video and the recorder.

Ashley Leal: Recorder? Okay, so um, I have my little one right now but I guess we are going to be talking with him real fast and um, looking at the property and then we're gonna sit down interview to have the stabilizer.

BSAR: Yes, I have the... camera, well basically I have...

[Unzipping bag]

[Loud passing vehicles on the road]

Ashley Leal: Okay, okie doke. So... Here you go, I think we are the first ones to interview, interviewing anyone, anyone of your family yet.

[Chuckles from Ashley Leal and Ruben Cantú Sr.]

Ashley Leal [cont.]: So, I just want to show you here, um, we have, these are our two. We are going to be dealing with water, freezes, Beulah, hurricanes, land respond, and if there are any wells on the property, you can show us, if there are some, if you know of any, [uh huh] recall from stories or anything. Garbage and human waste um...and architecture. So, where was trash put on the property.

[Shuffling sound coming through on recorder]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Back then? Or...

[shuffling of papers]

Ashley Leal: Whenever. You can go, yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, um, {sigh} Wells or a, water wells or oil wells?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uh, both.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well threes a... a gas well there but it's plugged it's been abandoned for years now.

Ashley Leal: Where, where's that exactly? At the corner... or? We are going to go over there I don't know you want to follow us or stay here?

BSAR: Okay, do you want the recorder or uh?

[shuffling]

Ashley Leal: um, yeah I guess you can have the recorder, um.

[shuffling and opening camera bag]

Ashley Leal: It's cuz I've got em...

BSAR: I'll catch up to you guys in a little bit.

Ashley Leal: Okay.

[walking]

BSAR: XXXX

Ashley Leal: No, we couldn't get a hold of him.

[walking]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Before all these people came and invading our place. Uh, well, we used to have uh, eggs and uh, cattle, and uh, chickens and uh. And well, we had to get rid of them. And a the last ones were the chickens.

Ashley Leal: hm..

Ruben Cantú Sr.: They started going across [chuckle] and um, them roosters started to um.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [Chuckling] across the street.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Ashley Leal and Luis Reyes Jr.: Why did the chicken cross the road? [chuckling]

Ashley Leal: I know.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, go make their lives miserable. [Chuckle from Luis Reyes Jr.] And um, then they, they, called the cops and uh, we had to put them in that uh, that, chicken coop. And they're, were not used to it, they weren't used to it and they started dying. They all died.

Ashley Leal: What, wha... around what time was that?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Um... [sigh] I want to say about ten years ago.

Ashley Leal: Around ten years ago? Okay.

[walking around property]

[wind]

Luis Reyes Jr.: XXXX

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, I mean we were, I mean, there was nobody, nothing was here.

Luis Reyes Jr.: XXXX

[Walking]

Ashley Leal: Do you uh, do you want to use this? [Passing over recorder] Or this one's fine XXX

Ruben Cantú: That's all the equipment I'm using [pointing]

Ashley Leal: So are these still... you still, you still use all these?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, all of this stuff. Uh... except for those trucks. Uh... well their junk now. I mean, well, they weren't junk but uh we parked them and uh... yeah.

Ashley Leal: And so how much land do you, do you all own?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Um, just right here, uh from the, see that uh, that mound of brush?

Ashley Leal: uh huh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: front that, over here.

Ashley Leal: And how, but do you take care of more land then this?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh yeah.

Ashley Leal: You do.?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: mhm. And uh, were uh, throwing all that, those uh, that's lemon from the shed. You know all the waste. We come and dump it here, that's good for the soil.

Ashley Leal: Yeah, wow. Is this um, uh, I guess what do you plant here or harvest here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh, we plant whatever. Uh, corn, squash, uh, it all depends I mean, we've had watermelon.

[Ruben Cantú Sr.'s phone sounds]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: [Looks at phone] Excuse me. Oh, well anyway, um.

Ashley Leal: So, is there a canal right there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, in the back?

Ashley Leal: yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: That's a drainage, uh, ditch.

Ashley Leal: Drainage ditch?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah. You guys want to walk back there?

Ashley Leal: Sure. Wherever.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: um... tell you a little bit of stories about these trucks.

[walking across field]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: That's a, the vegetable planter. The vegetable planter and the regular planter are completely different.

Ashley Leal: Different?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Ashley Leal: Um... how are they, how are they so different?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, uh, because of the seed. The seed is so small. You need a special plate.

Uh, you can't plant it with a regular planter that plants corn and you know all that.

Ashley Leal: Yeah, larger.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Has this place ever been flooded? Completely flooded?

[sigh from Ruben Cantú Sr.]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: In Beulah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: In Beulah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh,,well there was nothing here right. Uh,, my dad had planted the whole field. And uh, it,it,it a dips in here. And if you would have walked in here, the water would of come to your waste.

Luis Reyes Jr.: That, that bad?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah. And um... I mean it, it drowned up. He had planted some corn at that year. I mean, it completely destroyed it. And across, over there, the man had uh, some small orchards, some, some trees he had planted several years ago and they were putting fruit, you know, he was going to get his first crop out of there. And all of it ended up in the, the road.

Ashley Leal: wow.

[Birds chirping in the background]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: All of the, the fruit. And it was going down the road. You know where the water was taking it.

Ashley Leal: mhm, yup.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And back here at that canal, back then it was smaller. Every bridge thatwould go across, was gone. And uh, it was scary. When we went out there, when the wind had died and everything. We went, I mean you could hear the water flowing and it was scary. And I was what? Six years old.

Ashley Leal: Six years old? [Ruben Cantú Sr.'s shuffles Whataburger cup I hand}] And that was what, 1967?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: mHm.

Ashley Leal: I think.

Luis Reyes Jr.: It completely destroyed everything?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: The what?

Luis Reyes Jr.: The crops and everything you had here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: mhm.

Luis Reyes Jr.: How long did it take that, that to recover?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh, it took a long time. Uh,, I mean, we couldn't do anything until, aw heck, after the year. And um...

Luis Reyes Jr.: And at the time, was this your only, your only field you that you had, that you owned or?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, yeah, well my dad farmed some other places you know. But since we used to live here, I mean, this is where, and um... it was pretty bad. And uh, going down the road down on Chapin, I mean on 17 ½ right there. [mhm] It's lower, I mean the whole road was gone. I mean all those people were flooded.

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: We were kinda lucky back over there. The only place that was flooded was here and back over here, where we were, we were okay. In that big house...

Luis Reyes Jr.: Your house?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Nothing happened to the house?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, except for a big tree that fell and broke a window. And that was it.

Ashley Leal: wow.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And [chuckle] I, I was sitting like right here and all of a sudden I hear a big boom you know and um, uh, glass shattered and uh. It was scared, it was scared. And uh, and we were {sigh} in that, when Beulah was there I mean came, we were {sigh} in that house, in that big house. I want to say, were were {sigh} about thirty people in there.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Why were there so many people in there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, they had to, they wanted, they seeked a shelter.

Ashley Leal: mhm.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: ‘Cause it was my grandparents on both sides, um.. friends and um, that came and um, they were looking for a place, a stronger place then what they had.

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: ‘Cause uh. {Phone} um.. it was a pretty bad storm and um, that, that big house could withstand anything. So like I said, I mean we were like thirty people in there and it was crowded.

[chuckles]

Ashley Leal: yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: It was not a, a camping uh huh deal there.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And this the two bedroom place that you said?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, it was that big house. The two bedroom when we got out of there and when into the big house...

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: ... and everybody was there. And um, well, that um, to me it looks huge.

Ashley Leal: And, uh where was that house?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Right there.

Ashley Leal: Is was next to the same place?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah. Next to it.

Ashley Leal: Okay.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: It had a one, two, three, four. Four big rooms and the kitchen and the, it even had an altar.

Ashley Leal: wow.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And uh, but like I said, around thirty people were in there. And after a while, it was um, it started smelling in there.

[All chuckling]

Ruben Cantú Sr. cont.: Needed a shower! Uh, but that, I mean, we didn’t have no shower. We had to bathe in tubs.

Ashley Leal: In tubs?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: yeah.

Ashley Leal: wow.

Luis Reyes Jr.: How long was it flooded? Do you remember how many... till the water went away?

[car beep in background]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Aw, heck I want to say at least a month.

Ashley Leal: Yeah, it was. I think it was flooded for about, at least for the area it was from the eighth to the twenty...third or twenty-seventh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And then, you know, my grandpa, my dad’s father uh.... the original, where he was, I mean where he grew up, it’s on Hoan Road. And uh... well, he was here.

My grandpa and uh, well my grandmother passed away before that. And um, every morning we had to take, we had to go and um, this cousin of my dad's would go and milk his a goats over there. And we would go down 107 and get to Hoan road and we would just drive um, maybe a quarter of a mile. Then my um, my um, my dad's cousin had to walk 'cause it was flooded. And right there the water, I mean, when he came back it was up to here.

Ashley Leal: Wow.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And he went and milked the cows, I mean the, the goats came back and he would bring some milk from the goats. But he had to milk 'em because um, if he wouldn't they won't won't mess up.

Ashley Leal: Well, um.... do you wanna start a little recording here or... is it kinda hot for you here?

Ruben Cantú Sr. : I don't care, I mean, I am used to the heat.

[Chuckles from all]

Ashley Leal: Um... or we could just, I dunno cause I don't want.

BSAR: I'm totally fine, don't worry about it.

Ashley Leal: You're okay, okay.

Luis Reyes Jr.: We can just record it.

BSAR: I do think that it would be a good idea to get a shot here 'cause then you can see the area.

Ashley Leal: Yeah, I think so too. Okay, well, yeah we'll just do like a, if you don't mind, we will do like a... video tape you just uh, standing here just so we can have the uh, uh land in theback. And um, just ask you...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You want... I am gunna be in there?

[chuckles]

Ashley Leal: Yes [chuckles]. Um, but um, so it'll just be a small, we will ask you just one or two questions and we'll move on.

[Shuffling of the tripod]

Luis Reyes Jr.: Any other ones that you can think of that..XXXXXX.... freeze?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Freeze {sigh} back in 1983, that I remember uh there were more freezes before that.

Luis Reyes Jr.: The worst ones?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: uh...1983...

Ashley Leal: Can I help you? {to Border Archives girl}

BSAR: Um...yes, please.

Ruben Cantú Sr. (cont.): um..all the orchards were gone.

Luis Reyes Jr.: XXXX

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, no not me. But uh, I started to work for the Edinburg Citrus Association as a harvester. And uh, I had just gotten married in uh, '82. Of December of '82.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [Chuckles] Oh hehe... going into '83 already.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And them um, uh as soon as we got into '83 we got that big freeze. I told my wife, well that's it [laughs].

[Soft talk in the background from setting up the tripod and camera]

Luis Reyes Jr.: It froze everything or..

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh yeah, it froze up. I mean, when you have temperatures in the mid-twenties and high nineteen's, high teens, um.. the tree can withstand some cold weather but not for a long, not for a very long period. And we had I mean, days in the freezing, I mean, it looked ugly once the trees lost all their leaves and all the fruit was on the ground and it um... a lot of people didn't bring back the orchards. Um...They sold it off for houses and all that. And uh, then in '89 we got another one and that was the same way.

Luis Reyes Jr.: What about, your, your field here. What, what happened to it during the freeze? You also lost...?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, uh, at that time we didn't have anything. You know it was just like right here we were just getting ready to plant for the spring. So, we didn't lose any, anything. What we did lose like I said, I started working with the, the Edinburg Citrus.

Luis Reyes Jr.: So you were with the TXC also?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, well uh, there, there the same.

Luis Reyes Jr.: My father works with the TXC also, and I told him that I was interviewing um Cantú family and he said, "I think they sometimes go to the TXC also".

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Who's your father?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Luis Reyes [chuckles] the same as me, I am just the Jr.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Okay, so he works at the juice pump?

Luis Reyes Jr.: At the one, at the TXC one.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: At mission?

Luis Reyes Jr.: In mission, yeah. He's been working there for over ten years, so. So in '83 and '89 those, those are the worst freezes? Droughts?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, we've been in droughts forever. [chuckles] Um.. except for this past year, I lost a whole bunch of grain up, up in San Manuel.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh, you have several properties. Where are your properties located?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well a, I lease most of them. There around here in Edinburg and some stuff up there in a San Manuel. um,,,

Luis Reyes Jr.: And there all the same, just you grow whatever?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

[Camera set-up]

Ashley Leal: Trial-and-error

BSAR: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And to grow it, you grow it personally? Or a...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: What?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Workers? Or what do you do here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, I do most of the work uh but uh, when it comes to irrigating and stuff, I hire people. And uh, well, me and my brother work the land. But I do more of it.

[Dog barks]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You know...

Ashley Leal: Is that your dog?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Do what? huh?

Ashley Leal: Is that your dog?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, uh, you know, that dog has had {sigh} over a hundred puppies.

[chuckles]

Luis Reyes Jr.: I just saw it right now walk with one behind it and earlier.[chuckles]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: I mean she's a fertile myrtle is there is one. [chuckles] And uh, she's old now and uh, but uh, there's a little pup that's out there. And that's her latest litter you know. She had three and two of them died and that's that ones left. See that big red dog? That's one of hers and the one that's walking out of the way, that's another one of hers.

Group: Aww...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And, but between them, there's, aw man I don't know. Like I said, there's over a hundred puppies.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [chuckles] Over a hundred puppies, I hadn't of thought. It's like a dog in my neighborhood; there was a dog in my neighborhood that also had like, over twenty puppies. She got crushed by a fence one though once.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: This truck and that truck over there. I was uh, a junior in high school and I took my date to the prom in that truck.

Luis Reyes Jr.: In that one?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh,, and it had everything in the back there too?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, it didn't, it didn't have that. You know my dad, he worked for the Edinburg Citrus as a, as a harvester and he had those big bins in the back. And uh, ah it wasn't the prom it was uh, it was uh.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Homecoming?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Homecoming.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah [chuckling]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And a... and I took my date in that thing. And then uh, after the, the homecoming and all that well we went to eat and everything here was closed. We went to McAllen, down 10th street, and we went to Shoney's. In that.

Luis Reyes Jr.: In this one?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: In that thing.

Ashley Leal: In this thing?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah. [Chuckles] And in that one over there we used to go to the movies to the drive-in. Right there were Wal-Mart is.

Ashley Leal: Uh huh.

Ruben Cantú Jr.: Well, back then when it was a drive-in and there were no one there.

Ashley Leal: What year was that when the drive-in was there?

Ruben Cantú Jr.: I wanna say late '70's.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Where this Wal-Mart is located at?

Ruben Cantú Jr.: Yeah, where this Wal-Mart is, there was a drive-in and they had two uh, uh

Luis Reyes Jr.: Screens?

Ruben Cantú Jr.: Screens.

Ashley Leal: I wish they still had that, I know they have one in Weslaco.

Ruben Cantú Sr. and Luis Reyes Jr.: Um hum. Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And uh, and uh I don't know, back then those girls weren't shy. Heck, she just wanted to be with me I guess, she didn't care in what!

Luis Reyes Jr.: [Chuckling] yeah. And what year was this, '70? '70 something? '60 something?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: That year, my dad uh, that truck my dad bought brand new in 1970. And that one, he bought it brand new 1973.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [chuckling] so they were brand new trucks [chuckles]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: They were brand new trucks.

Ashley Leal: And um, how long has your family been on this land?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: We were, heck, you can say I was born in that place. That's what?... 50 years ago.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And they were already here before that?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah. So, been a while.

Ashley Leal: Yeah. So your family has always been, um, farming?

Ruben Cantú: Farming, my dad has always farmed and trucked.

Ashley Leal: wow.

Luis Reyes Jr.: We used to do that as a little kid. We just run around here and stuff like that. Hunt. You ever hunt before here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh we used to hunt but now we can't do anything.

Ashley Leal: I know.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: The last time we did {Luis Reyes Jr.: It's way better.} the last time we did, yeah... the sheriffs came and uh, "no more!"

Luis Reyes Jr.: The city grew around here.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah it. We used to farm there. And uh, right there in the corner {**Ashley Leal:** Yeah.} where the white fence is {**Ashley Leal:** Yeah.} in that little corner, we used to farm that {**Ashley Leal:** Is that..?} We used to farm that, right across and well it just went right into houses.

Ashley Leal: And that land there... I'm sorry... the land that's there, is that something you guys take care of too?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, it's uh, it's uh our neighbors here. And uh, sometimes they hire me to do work on their property.

Ashley Leal: Yeah, okay. Were trying to fix this so... {Referring to camera}

BSAR: It looks very white so I am trying to fix whiteness, the, how camera catches the light.

Ashley Leal: Well, if you want we can try a new location.

BSAR: Um.... No, it's okay.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Were you guys there when I went out there to talk to you guys?

Ashley Leal: Yeah. The first day?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah, the first day, I think I was sitting...

Ashley Leal: I was sitting in the back.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah, not, two desks behind you. [Chuckling] You were with Ms. Dorsey right?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Ms. Dorsey started interviewing you? I remember that. And I was right behind Ms. Dorsey.

Ashley Leal: We have two other, another gentleman and another lady that's in our group. Um, she works for the, I mean she's interning with the USDA um but uh, so I think she had to work this morning. It's kinda hard for us to get a hold of them. But um, we're hoping to that maybe there will be more times available that you have available so we can come and hopefully talk a little bit more I guess better focus on uh, the questions. Uh, but you said there was a well, it's not a water well but its uh an old mining well I mean for oil?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, this is the old well. Over there we had the uh, cistern, you know where we get the water to drink. {**Ashley Leal:** uhuh} uh its just a bit, I mean, you dug it up and then plaster it up and all that. Then you bring water and put it in there you know bring it out with a bucket and then uh, we moved up. My dad bought a motor and pumped it out. And um, with, and bring it the, inside the house and my mom had a little bucket where we put the water in there and cover it with a little towel or whatever. Then we would just take a glass or whatever little mug and drink water out of it. And she would put water in the refrigerator to get cool.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And this is a water well that you had?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, it's not a water well. It's a cistern.

BSAR: Oh there it is.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And um, and we got one there too when we um, when we moved over here. In uh, you know where the house is. And uh.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And what are those called? What, what did you say it was called again?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Cistern.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Cistern-er?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: It's uh it's *CISTERNA* in, in Spanish. And uh, it's uh, you, you dig a hole that's as big as you want. And then you put cement around it, you know, we used to haul the water from the city. Um... well, we used to hire this man, that's what he used to do. He would take water out to the people {**Luis Reyes Jr.:** All around?} The people who used to live down this road. You know we were few, I mean, you go down another half a mile, there was another house. And uh, every one of them had a cistern. We would hire this old man from town and he would bring the water.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh, so basically worked together, everybody, maybe?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, you know, everybody had {**Luis Reyes Jr.:** Had their own?} were the same I mean, no indoor plumbing we had an outhouse.

Ashley Leal: Where was the outhouse located?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Um... okay where uh, well, where the barn is {**Ashley Leal:** uh huh} Okay, there's a another little building right there, well right there was the outhouse. Okay.

Ashley Leal: And how did you all kind of keep away from the smell? [Chuckle]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, after a while we would have to throw it out and make another hole. {**Ashley Leal:** Okay} You know, it would fill up and um, yeah we would move it {**Ashley Leal:** move it.}. But it, it would be there for a long time {**Ashley Leal:** Yeah} Then after awhile then move it to another...place

BSAR: Okay.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Actually, maybe for the camera can you um, can you show us maybe how, this place used to look before? Maybe just like point, like we had a house here, we had a house over here, the outhouse here, maybe how you remember it as a kid growing up, and that would help us out a lot. Maybe you can point and move it to where it is.

Ashley Leal: So, Ruben can you tell us where um... I guess {**Luis Reyes Jr.:** Or how you remember the place} where you're standing in front of first {Sound of plane flying overhead} Um... what, what is this land and, uh also too, just point, you don't have to, just point maybe where you grew up and uh, just the land if you can talk about it.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, uh, this is where we grew up, my dad would farm this property and uh, when we were small I mean, he used to farm it and if we needed to thin it out, we used to get the hoe and get out there and clean everything out, just the family. And uh, water it, my dad would water, and then we would be in there, the kids we would jump in the canal we would think we were swimming in there, we got more mud then ... but anyway it was fun. And um, then when we got bigger we started doing that work, watering, irrigating {**Ashley Leal:** wow} I remember one time when we were doing that, I mean we were kids, I mean small. And uh, the only Whataburger we had here in town, was the one over there on uh, 281 going out of Edinburg. And uh my dad goes, do you guys uh, want some Whataburger? Man, we jumped this high.

[chuckles] Hey, that was a treat. You know, we wouldn't get burgers {bird chirping} you know, maybe once or twice a month. He brought us some Whataburger's {chuckles} and we ate them up. I mean it was great, it wasn't a treat, it was a feast. [chuckles]

Ashley Leal: Is that, and you still um, you still like Whataburger? [chuckles]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Every morning I get some coffee. And you know, that was fun. But you know growing up it was fun but it was also hard work. And uh, we would uh, my dad had a little tractor and uh he would work us. I mean, he work work during the week with the Edinburg Citrus and during the weekends he would uh, do the land. And um, they hardly had any time off. And uh he would bring me and he would put me on his lap on the tractor. Okay start driving, you know, that's how I started learning. And um, after awhile I started doing it on my own. And uh, and uh, you know from there on, I've been doing it.

Ashley Leal: You're stuck, you liked it. And um, you said this is all lemons?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, all this stuff is lemons right here and we've just thrown it there for fertilizer for the ground and uh, and we have a little truck there, right now its full we can't get into there and dump it so we have to wait till it dries up a little bit so.

Ashley Leal: And so, um, can you tell us a little how you um, irrigate the property um...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Sure, um, over there there's a where the water comes out, on that corner.

{**Ashley Leal:** mhm} Well, we can't see it through here, we can move over there if you want. And um, we open up the valve, and um, the water comes out, and I cut a ditch on that end and then we water this way {**Ashley Leal:** this way}. And uh, it doesn't, it's a small block so it doesn't take too long, maybe one day. And uh, right now I'm watering a block over on Doolittle, and that one's taking forever.

Ashley Leal: wow.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Hopefully I'll be done with it today. I uh, started on Friday. And um, hopefully it'll be done this afternoon.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And during Beulah, you said it was, how, how big was the water?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, like right here. It's up to your waste.

Luis Reyes Jr.: It's up to your waste.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And I remember the mosquitoes after a while, oh man... Then we saw those big airplanes, you know spraying {**Ashley Leal:** Spraying.} and um, the, the National Guard was um, you could see all them trucks out there, and um you could see the soldiers out there helping people, there at Pan Am, I mean it was bad, I mean it was flooded. The whole town was flooded. And um heck it still gets flooded. So, um, not the, the... that hurricane sticks out in everybody's mind. And kids, like me, I mean at that time, I remember, {**Ashley Leal:** Yeah.} just like uh, I remember when they killed John F. Kennedy. I was what... 2 years old, and uh, me and my mom were out here in the field, and uh, we would go into the house and that, that funeral was going on all day, everything. And I can still see the carriage taking the president and I was what... 2 years old.

Ashley Leal: Wow, what great memory. {Group laughs} That's wonderful.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And during, and, during the freezes, how did you guys, uh, did you guys, what, what years was this? 83?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: 83 and 89.

Luis Reyes Jr.: 89.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {inaudible} I got married in 82, and I started working with uh, UCA in citrus and it didn't last long cause when I got married in December in um, in January we got that big freeze and all the trees were wiped out. So I told my wife "Well, what are we gonna do?" {Group laughs} We got back on the tractor and let's get it, and uh, we did it, so.

Ashley Leal: Do you remember how long you had to wait, for the, till uh, you started up again after that freeze?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, we started just back up again and, you know the field and started planting and, you know our stuff, but the trees, the orchids, I mean it took another five years before they started putting out any production.

Luis Reyes Jr.: So that, basically that freeze made you lose that from over there, from the...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah well, you know, uh, everybody, there's a lot of people who work for the citrus industry and a lot of people were hurting, and uh, then in 89 we got another one. You know it was uh, a double wammy, the same decade, and that, that hurts. And a lot of people depend on {phone rings}. Oh boy.

Ashley Leal: It's okay. Um, okay well, um I'm gonna stop this recording and we can just finish off with, if you could, just showing, if you could show us the, uh, you were talking about the irrigation?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, uh, you guys wanna move, go walk all the way to the back?

BSAR: You want me to take the camera?

Ashley Leal: Sure. Or, are we, are we done with the camera or do you wanna take it again?

Luis Reyes Jr.: It's up to you.

Ashley Leal: I think we're okay, right?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah.

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: I prefer just voice.

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [distorted]

Ashley Leal: You're not doing this, or yes you are? [Pointing at the audio recorder.] Are you doing it?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah it should be recording, it's recording.

Ashley Leal: Ok, so if he wants to use that one.

BSAR: Ok.

Ashley Leal: Is that ok?

BSAR: Um, huh.

Ashley Leal: Ok we are going to be walking.

BSAR: Sure.

Ashley Leal: Is that ok?

BSAR: Yeah that's fine.

Ashley Leal: Okay.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You don't mind getting muddy?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Nah.

Ashley Leal: No.

[Walking]

Ashley Leal: [inaudible]... being outside in the mornings.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Do you use that truck?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah that truck, uh, you know uh, we were hauling every, every summer we would go up to, uh, El campo Texas. That's, uh, this side of Houston, around an hour this side of Houston. We would go haul rice, rice and grain and, and, and one yearuh we were out there and where they unload them they would pick them up since it didn't have a hoist on it they would pick it up from the front and uh...it fell

Ashley Leal: Uh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You know...and then they picked it up again and it fell and then that's why it's all messed up its all bent.

Ashley Leal: Wow

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And uh... that was the end for that truck and uh... my car that I would take my date out.

[Group laughs]

Luis Reyes Jr.: {inaudible}

Ashley Leal: It's not?

Luis Reyes Jr.: No. {Distorted}

Ashley Leal: It's ok.

Luis Reyes Jr.: {inaudible}

Ashley Leal: So all this corn that is just left that's here right now, is that just corn that was missed or not good or...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well it's already {inaudible} uh

Ashley Leal: Uh, huh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: ...uh....we had corn here in the spring.

Ashley Leal: Uh, huh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And this is how it looks after they combine goes through it.

Ashley Leal: Oh okay

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And uh...water brought all that stuff up you know...

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Should have come on, uh, a vehicle {inaudible}

[Group laughs]

Ashley Leal: I know {inaudible} I got...I got mud...that's fine...uh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh I thought we would see some rabbit every morning there's rabbits all over.

Luis Reyes Jr.: There, there's different animals now from when you were a kid?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: What?

Ashley Leal: Or do you remember seeing some, some animal a lot that you probably don't see that often anymore on the land?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh, no not really aside of all I remember we still see, well there are a lot of less snakes that's for one, but same bird, same rabbit, jack rabbit. Big cats? I never saw a big cat here. uh but there were. uh I don't know, but I never. I never saw them.

Ashley Leal: And this, this is yours too?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, uh, that belongs to another person.

Luis Reyes Jr.: So your property belongs from here to that way?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, we can walk over there.

Ashley Leal: You're okay? You want me to help you?

BSAR: No I'm fine.

Ashley Leal: Ok.

BSAR: Just walking slowly.

Ashley Leal: Yeah.

[Luis Reyes Jr. and Ruben Cantú Sr. talking in the far distance (indiscernible)]

Ashley Leal: So all the brush comes here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, we come pile it here.

Ashley Leal: And then you all haul it off at some point or...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah well...

Luis Reyes Jr.: You burn it?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: We've been...

Ashley Leal: Just burn it?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: We've been saying were going to burn it, but we haven't burned it.

[Group laughs]

[Walking]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Show you where the water comes out of.

Ashley Leal: Golf ball!

Luis Reyes Jr.: Golf ball!

Luis Reyes Jr. and Ashley Leal: {Laugh}

Luis Reyes Jr.: Do you golf here in the dirt?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No. {Laughs} you know I've never been on golf uh...

Luis Reyes Jr.: Course.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Course.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: I don't think...well... {Inaudible}

Luis Reyes Jr. and Ashley Leal: {Laugh}

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {inaudible}

Luis Reyes Jr.: There's a golf ball right there.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah {inaudible}

Luis Reyes Jr.: Somebody's been golfing here.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yup.

Luis Reyes Jr.: {inaudible while walking}

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Nope, no uh, {Inaudible} {Ruben clears throat}, or dogs come and go.
[Walking]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You could see uh, a little bunch of turtles in there, you could see where the water came up to, but I've seen it way up here. {Pointing at canal.}

Ashley Leal: Wow.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Like maybe up to right there, and see all them bridges right there? During Beulah they were all gone.

Luis Reyes Jr.: All of these?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, all these bridges.

Luis Reyes Jr.: So water passed all of this and even got higher to that and maybe like up to here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well it, it took it.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Took everything?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: It was smaller at that time.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Ah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And uh they dug this thing out, several years ago made it bigger.

Ashley Leal: I just want to get you real quick, uh, cause it was so good you just, you sure telling us that, it very good information I want to get it.

Ashley Leal and Ruben Cantú Sr.: {Laugh}

Ashley Leal: Thank you. That's really nice
[Ashley Leal and BSAR talking in background (indiscernible)]

Luis Reyes Jr.: Where does this one run to from here to?
[Ashley Leal and BSAR talking in background (indiscernible)]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: This, all this uh, there's another canal coming in, and it, it hits in here, eventually this...
[Ashley Leal and BSAR talking in background (indiscernible)]

Ruben Cantú Sr. (cont.): ends up at the, at the bay over there in Laguna Madre.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhuh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: All this stuff ends up over there, and uh...

Luis Reyes Jr.: So you say all these bridges were gone?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah all these bridges, all of them.

Luis Reyes Jr.: That one?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Where that truck just went over,

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhuh

Ruben Cantú Sr.: All of them and uh...the, the noise of the water was something uh, it was unbelievable how the force of, uh, the nature I mean you can't mess with that.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [chuckles]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: and uh...the water was just going and going and uh taking trees and uh bunch of other stuff that it would carry, but uh all those bridges were out and we couldn't get you know, it took a long time before they repaired them and put new bridges on them, and uh luckily we haven't had a storm like that that would do that anymore or maybe they just build better bridges.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [chuckles]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Now I've seen the water, see that pipe over there?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhuh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: I seen the water hit underneath the pipe and uh further down it gets to go over those pipes, so we've been uh pretty lucky. And uh, you see that water running and it's uh, pretty scary just going 100 miles an hour. [Chuckles]

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well it seems 100 miles an hour.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Destroying bridges and stuff.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And you say there's another canal right there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah that canal comes from uh I guess from McAllen and uh...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {inaudible due to plane flying overhead}

Luis Reyes Jr.: Is it where those...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {inaudible}

Luis Reyes Jr.: Where those stones are at?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah

Luis Reyes Jr.: Is it blocked or?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Let's walk over there.

Luis Reyes Jr.: You guys used to fish here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah when, years back.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Years back.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: There's still some fish around.

Luis Reyes Jr.: What did you guys used to catch?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh catfish.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Catfish?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: You can't do that no more?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well, we haven't done it.

Luis Reyes Jr.: No?

[Walking]

Luis Reyes Jr.: Did they block it?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh no.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No.

Luis Reyes Jr.: I thought they had.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No....

Luis Reyes Jr.: Stones...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: That's uh, they put those stones there, so the water won't take uh, eat up on the banks.... {Ruben clears throat} and right here, when I irrigate, the water comes through this pipe...

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhuh.

Ruben Cantú Sr. (cont): and we open up these gates here, we open up, uh, the gates it comes out through over there and goes into the field. The field gate, if you wanna call it, the water comes out through there.

Luis Reyes Jr.: That's how you irrigate the land?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, yeah make a ditch alongside here, the water comes out through there, goes into the ditch and we water the, the ground. But all these uh, come through all these canals that you see out, there those big canals and then they come into a smaller canal into these pipes and uh, all these people here they water they also get water from this pipe go across and uh.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Where does this water come from though?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Just, all this water well all our water comes from the Rio Grande River.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And uh the water we use always gets pumped up at Penitas, just uh west of uh La Joya I think its west uh La Joya.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah that's where it is; I live, well I went to school over there in La Joya {chuckles} uh, Penitas.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well we pump it from over there and that's where we get it that's where all the towns get there water.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh, from, uh, the districts that we have here and, uh.

Luis Reyes Jr.: There's another canal here this is where...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah this is the canal that I'm talking about that it comes in here.

[Walking]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You guys like palm trees?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Palm trees? Yeah

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You guys can have these little palm trees if you ever want to come and dig them out.

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Laughs} Where are they, which ones?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: The little palm trees, you see those little palm trees?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh I see them, yeah.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: There's one there and there's some over there... You see the turtle?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhuh, is that a fish?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, turtles.

Luis Reyes Jr.: A turtle?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah look.... {Inaudible} see one sticking out there head over there?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh, yeah. {Laughs}

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And one, uh, one year when, uh, where all them apartments are, we had corn there, and uh, I was, uh, there's a turtle there, I was uh in my combine and, uh, it was getting dark and I wasn't going to be able to finish the land, I mean the uh field, so I told my dad and brother "Let's take it in.". So my brother took the truck that way and my dad and I came through with the combine through here. See this little curve here? My dad was driving my pick up and uh I don't know what happened, he didn't see the curve, he came straight and the pick up just caved right here...

Luis Reyes Jr.: Tilted. [Chuckles]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah balanced, luckily my dad went out the, the passenger side if he would have come out this way he would have fallen in. And we got over there to the shop and we were waiting there for my dad and my dad and he never got there you know and finally we saw somebody walking over there and it was my dad.

Luis Reyes Jr.: [chuckles]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And what happened? Well...he was real pissed off. {Luis Reyes Jr. laughs} And uh, so we had to come with the tractor and pull the pickup out of here.

Luis Reyes Jr.: So you said you used to get corn from where those apartments are at?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah we were farming that property. It used to belong to Mr. Lee Walker. He used to have an oil fill out here in town long a long time ago and we leased that property from him and we farmed it.

Luis Reyes Jr.: This one here or the apartments?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, where all those apartments are.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh okay.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah and, uh, yeah we were {inaudible} corn there and, uh, it got late so we just came back over here and my dad didn't see this little curve here.

Luis Reyes Jr. and Ruben Cantú Sr.: {Laugh}

Luis Reyes Jr.: It's interesting how everything looks different now right?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Very different.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Very different, so now you got, now you got neighbors, you used to have neighbors when you were a kid?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, uh I mean, when we used to live there this used to belong to uh a doctor named doctor Fortcher. He build that house and he had uh, he put them little trees, I mean nice orchard that he built here and ,uh, you know like I said when Beulah came all the fruit just went and you know fell off the trees and went down the road, but you know then they came back and they did good. But, uh, that was our neighbor, our only neighbor then we had to go maybe a mile down...

Luis Reyes Jr.: For another neighbor?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah and this way, well the houses are still there but they're not the, now there at the border {inaudible} and, uh, the other houses out there are not there anymore, but uh I mean we could be out here doing whatever, uh, we used to play on Jackson.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhuh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh, we used to play there, we would lie on the street, on the road, and I mean you could count the cars that would go by there.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Was it a road, road or was it dirt?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, yeah it was paved.

Luis Reyes Jr.: It was paved?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah it was paved but it was maybe this size. [Measures with hands]

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhuh

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And yeah we used to play there. I mean we'd count, the roads every once in a while we'd get some, uh, you know, uh, young guys that would have the hot rods {phone rings} and they would drive their cars there {Luis Reyes Jr.: [chuckles]} and that was that was fun, but that was {inaudible} but anyway.

Luis Reyes Jr.: What else do you remember changing about after Beulah? The trees, the whole crops?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: After Beulah, well after Beulah I mean everything almost stayed the same, I mean after the water receded you know people just got back to what they were doing.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Nobody gave up on anything, it's just everybody came back?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Ah yeah a lot of people did lose their house I mean what's inside and everything the water went in and it was bad.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Did you lose any big, did you lose any big property maybe like tractors or um...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, not just the crops that my dad had...

Luis Reyes Jr.: Just the crops?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah. And uh I remember he had two 1954 Chevrolet trucks and he put them across the road, he got them stuck you know he wanted them to get stuck so, uh, just to make sure that the wind wouldn't

Luis Reyes Jr.: Turn them away.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: turn them over or whatever he went in there and he made sure he got them real stuck.

Luis Reyes Jr. and Ruben Cantú Sr.: {Laugh}

Luis Reyes Jr.: I might come back for those palm trees. {Laughing}

Ruben Cantú Sr.: There you go. There's, ah, well I, we didn't see any snakes, but there's snakes in there. Fish.

[Ashley talking in distance, inaudible due to wind]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uhuh.

[Ashley talking in distance, inaudible due to wind]

Ruben: Well what I can remember... {Laughs}

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah.

Ashley Leal: You know we can, uh well, will record {inaudible} gives us a chance to think about other questions maybe this will help with, uh, remembering a couple of things.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Alright.

Ashley Leal: Um cuz' uh for me at least uh I come and ask questions and then I remember oh we should have asked another question {**Ruben Cantú Sr.:** [Laughs]} so it helps.

Luis Reyes Jr.: I find it interesting how. I probably.ahh you must have seen this place changed a lot.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {Sighs} Oh yeah. see over there see all them big apartments?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Uhhuh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: That was an orchard. Across this way there was another big orchard, and, uh, now it's all houses and right here there was, uh, you know farm land, all this was farm land.

Ashley Leal: And um, and you said the, the outhouse was over, located over there next to the uh...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, I'll, I'll show you where it was, very important piece of history there.

[Group laughs]

Luis Reyes Jr.: An outhouse.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: I hated it when it rained oh man {**Luis Reyes Jr.:** [Laughs]} boy I hated it.

Ashley Leal: The stench or...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Um you'd get all wet, you know the water would come in and... especially when it was cold, the winter, you know back then it seems like we used to get colder weather than we do now and rainy weather. You know they would get some rain for long period of times and, uh, that... {Runner passes by and greets group: "morning", Ruben Cantú Sr. responds "morning"}

Luis Reyes Jr.: What is that, [inaudible]?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh, there's uh a gas line that runs like this, and, uh, it hooks up down the down the road over there and it would, that well hooked up to here and, uh, that's what it is and there's a gas well that runs, I mean a gas pipe line that goes underneath.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Underneath from here? So that one's connected to the one that's...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Over there?

Ashley Leal: When you all were farming were you all already well aware of the gas pipe that was, that was there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah uh huh.

Ashley Leal: So it's been there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah it's been there for years.

Ashley Leal: And, so it still works?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah.

Ashley Leal: How neat.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You know, back then we didn't think about people coming into your place and stealing stuff.

Luis Reyes Jr.: They do now?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Now it's a shame. Yet these, uh, people move in, you don't know what you're getting, you see people coming here they start walking down here you know, and uh, then they see us and they high tail the heck outta here and uh....

Ashley Leal: Is there always somebody on the property or uh...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: My parents well they're there but you know they don't, they're just up on the front, and I'm here, and uh and my brother, he's not here right now he's up on in El Campo. He's doing a little bit of hauling.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Who's your brother the one that's a truck driver there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: The what?

Luis Reyes Jr.: He drives a truck over there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, yeah. You could smell the lemon.

Ashley Leal: Yeah smells good.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {Laughs}

Luis Reyes Jr.: You used to have pigs here? I imagine pigs running around and chickens and stuff like that.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {Laughs} Well we had them coped up, the pigs and everything. These things here are heaters. Fill them up with diesel and, uh, when that cold weather would come in a lot of orchard people use them or used to use them. We would turn them on and try to try to save the crops.

Ashley Leal: Crops.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Um.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: We used to do it. Like we used to grow tomatoes, and uh we had many more but like I said people tend to take what's not theirs and, uh, we had tomatoes here and me and my brother that night we put them, scattered them all over and lit them up.

Ashley Leal: And so you put them in, in, in between the crops?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Um huh, you know on the side in the middle.

Ashley Leal: Wow.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: stuff. So we'd turn them up and we'd let the flames show and it was around two or three o' clock in the morning, I mean that flame was going and it looked nice.

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Laughs} Did you use those for the freezes?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah, it worked?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah but if you're not gonna get a big freeze yeah, but if a freeze is gonna come regardless, um, you put that stuff out there you're still gonna...

Luis Reyes Jr.: You still to used it on 83?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: What?

Luis Reyes Jr.: You used to, still used it on 83?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: No, no, no I think the last time we used those was on, in the 90's. {Phone rings}

Ashley Leal: you can answer it.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Let me take this. {walks away}

[Inaudible]

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Laughing} Yeah somebody probably over there.

[BSAR inaudible in far distance.]

Ashley Leal: Are you recording on that one?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Um, yeah on both of them, except I think we should have brought the....or we should have used the other one here.

BSAR: The external?

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah

Ashley Leal: No.

BSAR: I thought about it but I didn't thought it would be uh

Ashley Leal: No that's usually for like when you're sitting down on a table.

Luis Reyes Jr.: On a flat surface. Its cause this one really doesn't pick up that much of...

Ashley Leal: Really?

[Walking]

[Ruben Cantú Sr. joins back]

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Pointing at floor} A Whataburger cup.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh yeah , there's plenty of those.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Big Whataburger fans.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Those things were used for irrigating {pointing at pipe on floor} when, uh, the ground it {can't understand} stuff and we can't cut a ditch through we run that thing, we uh, we put a bonnet, you know like over there where that water comes up...

Ashley Leal: Uhuh

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And uh then we put this to that bonnet and we run it, where we, you know where we need the, where we need the water to go.

Ashley Leal: Wow, and so you still use those or only.....

Ruben Cantú Sr.: I haven't used them in quite a bit.

Ashley Leal: Do they seem uh you know successful or...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: That what?

Ashley Leal: Is it successful when you use them or...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh yeah

Ashley Leal: I mean does it help?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Oh yeah, oh yeah cause you can water what, and you can, uh, uh, put it, adjust it to what you want.

Ashley Leal: Uhuh

Ruben Cantú Sr.: It's got little windows like that to where you open it and they want that water to go slow so it can soak up um the moisture...

Ashley Leal: Uhuh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: You open it and it all depends, you want it to go pretty quick you open it all the way and the water will go.

Ashley Leal: Wow, amazing.

[Walking]

Ashley Leal: And so how many acres is this?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Right here?

Ashley: Uhuh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh its ten acres

Ashley Leal: Ten acres?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uhuh

Ashley Leal: Okay. And its, and you've owned and your family has owned this ten acres or they've owned more or less or throughout the years...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well they have my, my parents have some more over there in San Carlos.

Ashley Leal: Okay.

Luis Reyes Jr.: You said you've been here since maybe like over fifty years?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well yeah, between over there and over here.

[Walking]

Ashley Leal: Now do you all collect, is that your hay bales or...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah uh huh.

Ashley Leal: So you all, I guess collect hay or hay bales?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah they build that for me this friend of mine and I'm selling them.

Ashley Leal: Okay.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: If anyone ever wants to buy them.

[Group laughs]

Ruben Cantú Sr.: This gentleman here he works for us. {Points to man leaning on tractor}

Ashley Leal: Hi, I'm Ashley

Luis: Luis.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Luis.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: *Tocallos*.

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Laughs} Yeah *tocallos*.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: He helps me on the tractor. He's a mechanic also anduh pretty much knows a little bit about everything.

Ashley Leal: Everything

Luis: {Laughs}

Ashley Leal: It's what you need.

Luis Reyes Jr.: A handy man

Luis: Yeah.

Ashley Leal: And that, um, the outhouse was? [**Ruben Cantú Sr.:** Yeah] Right there?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah, can't forget the important.

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Laughs}

Ashley Leal: I'm sorry, very nice meeting you. {To Luis as the group passes by}

Luis Reyes Jr.: How about these houses, when were these built or they were always here?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Uh, this we built this, these...this was uh (inaudible from distance)... the outhouse was here, right here.

[Group laughs]

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Laughing} You're so interested in the outhouse.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: This was, uh, yeah back then we had the house right here, and uh, you could still see there {Points to circle shape on ground} but that was, uh, not part of the outhouse it was the water from, uh, the sink from inside the house, my mom would wash dishes and all that the water would come here...

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah you could see it still...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah it's still

Luis Reyes Jr.: Yeah you could...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: {inaudible}

Luis Reyes Jr.: So then these were built in...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: This is, uh, from here back over there we built it in late 80's. It was our office. We used to run pickle here. We made it into a pickle shed and we would, uh, run pickle and, uh, we would farm the pickle and also hire other farmers to farm, uh, pickle for us and then, uh, we would, uh, there were some belts and stuff and then we hired people to run the, uh, clean up the pickle and size them and all that and then we would load up the semi-trailers out of here and, uh, we would send them to, uh, Ohio, North Carolina and here in Texas and, uh, we send some uh also to, uh, Green Bay.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Oh.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah and, uh, the pickle that we send it was for the company called MJane Pickle and then, uh, the Green Bay packers out of the Green Bay area bought them out so we were working for them.

Luis Reyes Jr.: For Green Bay.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well then in the early 90's we got a whole bunch of infestation of little white fly coming from Mexico. Every morning we would have millions of them little suckers and, uh, they ate up our pickle crop. And a bunch of other crops, you know, other people's cotton, watermelon, cantaloupe, all that stuff, white fly tore everybody up and we lost, we lost a great deal of pickle, you know in that time. We would spray whatever we had. You know we couldn't control them the way it's controlled now and, uh, we lost a lot of money a lot.

Luis Reyes Jr.: And, uh, what animal was this?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: It's called, ah we call it, it's a little white fly, a little bitty thing like that {Measures with fingers} and, but, their millions of them and every morning, during about those years we got swarms of them coming in. We would kill them like today the next morning they were back you know from Mexico all coming in and, uh, well we, like I said we lost a lot of money and a lot of pickle cause of that white fly and, uh, heck, nobody knew what to put on them there was a lot of people just putting soap and even beer.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Beer? {Laughs}

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah beer, beer, uh you know not the good stuff you get the cheap stuff.

Luis Reyes Jr.: {Laughs}

Luis Reyes Jr.: You're not going to be wasting good beer on that, c'mon.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And, uh, we'd spray it on them and, uh, we would spray chemicals and whatever chemical we could.

Luis Reyes Jr.: What year was this?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Early 90's.

Luis Reyes Jr.: Early 90's.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: 90, 91 somewhere around there. And, uh, a lot of people were hurt from that, and then, we like I said, we lost all that stuff and that was the end of our pickle business.

Luis Reyes Jr.: That's how it ended? With that animal?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Yeah. And, uh, and, uh, you know, the, all the machinery the people came and you know, took it out, I mean we were, we couldn't farm that stuff anymore. It was the white fly. Eventually, chemicals started coming in, better chemicals started coming in, sort of got rid of it, I mean it's pretty much under control now but for a while mean they really didn't know...

Luis Reyes Jr.: Do you remember any other crop incidents like that, that you lost all that crop cause of an animal or insect?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well that's what I can remember.

Luis Reyes Jr.: That one.

Ruben Cantú Sr.: And, uh, it's like for the orchard people, a lot of, big concerns for the fruit fly and, uh, it's pretty bad plus other stuff and, uh, but our deal on the pickle was that white fly. And we also have cotton you know it got the cotton and it destroyed all these crops that little thing just got underneath that leaf and sucked the juice out of the plant, and then to would bring in diseases and, uh, there was some fields that we didn't even get to harvest.

Luis Reyes Jr.: So there been like three major incidents like the Beulah, the freezes, and maybe that, those would be the...

Ruben Cantú Sr.: Well if you wanna call {inaudible}

Luis Reyes Jr.: Were you lost all your crops?

Ruben Cantú Sr.: That, uh, that, that really hurts. But you know now you can control it a whole lot better.

Luis Reyes Jr.: I think, I think, are good for today?

Ashley Leal: Yeah were, uh, I think we're good for today, I don't know, uh we will uh

Luis Reyes Jr.: {inaudible}

Interviewee: Ruben Cantú, Jr.

Interviewers: Alyssa Aparicio, Arturo Cortez, Ryan Lanoy

Date: October 1, 2012

Location: Border Studies Archive

Ruben: What am I looking at, or who am I looking at?

Ryan: Umm, you're gonna look, you're gonna look at me right now.

Ruben: okay

Alyssa: You can look at anyone

[Arturo says something undistinguishable]

Ruben: All right

Alyssa: Is the camera? Yeah.

Ryan: Uh, we were just curious, where, where was your trash put out?

Ruben: My trash?

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Growing up?

Ryan: Yeah

Alyssa: Yes

Ruben: It was, our house was about maybe a hundred-fifty yards away from, from the road

[**Ryan:** Yeah] so we would take the trash, I mean, the city would come pick it up [**Ryan:**

Yeah] but we'd have to drag it out a hundred, a hundred-fifty yards to the road.

Ryan: When did the trash truck arrive?

Ruben: Once a week. It was, it was every, I wanna say every Tuesday or Thursday [**Ryan:**

Yeah] and it was about maybe eight or nine at in the morning.

Ryan: Ok

Ruben: Yeah, so we would take it out. Usually, my dad would've been the one to take it out.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: I was getting ready for school.

Ryan: Oh ok.

Ryan: Do you know what's in the area now? Do you know what's there now?

Ruben: Right now, uh the house we built is still there. Cause we went ahead and built a home there [**Ryan:** Yeah] and then we moved in to the city, to the city limits.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Uh so there now, is the house that we built and whoever's in there now, they re-modeled it.

Ryan: Oh okay

Ruben: Umm the neighbors are still there.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Uh the neighborhood of [cannot distinguish this word] homes is still around the area, [Ryan: Yeah] Edinburg North high school is in the area still.

Ryan: Oh okay. Umm, what did you, what did you all do with your garbage, I mean did you, did you ever recycle it or burn it like once in a while?

Ruben: No, not really. Uh, we just took it out for the city to take care of it.

Ryan: Okay, how often would you have to take out the garbage, around what time was it taken out? Isn't that like the second one?

Alyssa: Yeah, it is

Ryan: Yeah, the second one, okay.

Ruben: Uh, it had to have been, we would, well I remember if it wasn't me most of the time it was my dad. We would take it out the night before so [Ryan: Yeah] we wouldn't, he wouldn't have to rush to get it out early in the morning.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: So around nine at night or so we would take it out.

Ryan: Would you also throw glass bottles away or, or recycle them?

Ruben: Uh, no we really didn't, never really recycled, [Ryan: Yeah] we just uh, we just threw it away.

Ryan: Oh okay

Ruben: Uh, we didn't really have a lot of glass bottles.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Umm, it was just Domino's boxes, Whataburger stuff [Everyone laughing] you know.

Ryan: After a meal, were there any bones thrown away with the garbage?

Ruben: Yes, Church's Chicken.

Ryan: Yeah

[Everyone laughing]

Ruben: Stuff like that.

Ryan: Was there anything that was considered garbage but was not thrown out with the rest of the trash, like something that

Ruben: Me, I'm, I like to hang onto stuff.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Yeah, umm, old clothes that for some reason I kept meant something to me.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Uh, that, old pictures I mean easily could've been thrown away but I kept them cause they just meant something to me.

Alyssa: My section is human waste

Ruben: Okay

Alyssa: So, I know, umm, basic question: indoor plumbing, yes, no?

Ruben: Indoor plumbing, yes. Well, we first, growing up, my whole elementary, all my elementary years [Alyssa: mmhmm] and junior high, so pretty much all the way up to eighth grade we lived in a mobile home, and uh, we had, well there was indoor plumbing there too. But uh, after that, we well yeah, we built a home still had indoor plumbing.

Alyssa: So you never had like any experiences with outhouses?

Ruben: No

Alyssa: Do you remember umm your dad saying anything about that like his experience with an outhouse?

Ruben: With an outhouse, no. Maybe, maybe at our, at our shop [**Alyssa:** mmhmm] slash farm. Pretty much.

Alyssa: Guess that moves us on to architecture.

Ruben: Ok

[Arturo says something undistinguishable]

Arturo: Uh, what was each building used for?

Ruben: Each building, uh, each building, which buildings are we talking about?

Alyssa: Your family home, how many buildings did ya'll have, was it just your house or did ya'll have separate buildings with it?

Ruben: Umm, where we lived it was just our home [**Alyssa:** okay] and uh we would have, I mean, yeah like I said we lived in about a 15 acre block [**Ryan:** Yeah] I guess and it was all farm, for farming.

Arturo: Okay

Ruben: Umm, at my grandma's house that's where we had our farm slash shop where we would have our tractors. At some times, we have some cattle, uh a bunch of roosters and that was at my grandma's house over on Jackson road and uh you know we would have our tractors there, the trailers, they're still there.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: We would just, we don't uh own anymore cattle [**Ryan:** Yeah] or roosters, the, I mean, the city pretty much told us do away with wildlife or animals like that, of that sort.

Arturo: Okay. Were there any buildings that used to be on the property that aren't there anymore? And why were those buildings taken down? =

Ruben: Uh as far as I can remember they're still there. Umm there might've been, where my grandma's house is, there's another, there was another home just on the other side, not across the street but across, uh parallel to my grandma's home. That's where their first home was, and that's not there anymore. Uh, I guess just to make space, they, they widened the road Jackson road uh over the past four, five years I think it's been. And uh, I guess they, I'm pretty sure they knocked it down for that reason.

Arturo: Okay.

Ruben: So.

Arturo: Uh have any of the buildings been worked on or expanded in any way? Why were they, why were they worked on?

Ruben: Umm they've been worked on, uh to some extent, to some, uh, yeah, extent. Not too much, maybe just tweaking here or there just because now uh the past couple of years we've been having more family get-togethers. For new years or uh, family reunions, we, I know we had a couple. One, we had one there this past year and uh just other people that have come to see the property for whatever reason we've had to do some fine tuning around the place.

Arturo: Yeah.

Ruben: So...

Alyssa: Are uh...

Arturo: Did uh...

Alyssa: Sorry to interrupt, but like were storms, hurricanes, has that had any effect on the houses, like did ya'll have to, like, were tiles blown away or something?

Ruben: Actually, uh, no. I mean as far as I can remember, uh, our shop's, uh farm has always been there. Hurricanes have come and gone and they've really hasn't done anything to it.

Alyssa: Nothing real bad?

Ruben: Maybe some, some pieces of sheet metal. I can just count maybe one or two off the top of my head that my dad and his workers have had to replace. But other than that its' been standing strong, I don't know how much longer it'll stand you know, but.

Arturo: OK. Were there any new buildings built, why were they built?

Ruben: No, no new buildings were built. Not that I can recall.

Arturo: Ok, that completes this section.

Alyssa: [giggles]

Ryan: Now, now we're gonna talk about plants.

Ruben: OK

Ryan: Umm what types of plants were there on the property, are all those plants still there today?

Ruben: Plants, uh, if we're talking about crops?

Ryan: Like, cr ... crops.

Alyssa: Yeah, crops.

Ruben: Okay, well umm, I mean crops we harvest them.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: So obviously at a time they won't be there.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: But, my dad would always, I remember growing up he would always, uh, he would uh grow grain and corn.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: Sometimes he, growing up I remember watermelon. There were some times where he would do uh cherry tomatoes.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: Ummm, what else? I don't think, he might've done cotton, once, a long time ago.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: But that was way back, I don't really remember.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: You know he doesn't do that anymore.

Ryan: And they're, and they're still there today?

Ruben: As of today, yes, he's, he's still growing them.

Ryan: OK

Ruben: Yeah.

Ryan: All right, were their orchards or mesquite trees on the property?

Ruben: Uh, definitely mesquite trees.

Alyssa: [giggle]

Ruben: Yes.

Alyssa: They're everywhere.

Ryan: Were any of these plants used for specific, something specific, or were they descortative? Example, Alee vela?

Ruben: Aloe Vera?

Alyssa: Aloe Vera.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: Umm really they were just used for uh harvesting.

Alyssa: Mmhmm

Ruben: The grain and then corns would go to uh, umm sheds, elevators.

Arturo: Yeah.

Ruben: I guess, like uh here on I think it's, I don't know if its Chapin or 17 ½, there's this uh place called Maseca.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: It's a big corn place. And uh sometimes we would take corn over there and from there that's when they're, where they were distributed or goes to cattle or wherever it goes to.

Ryan: Did you have any vegetable gardens, and what kinds?

Ruben: Not so much gardens

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: uh, just we would always plant them as crops [**Ryan:** Yeah] in ten acre blocks.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: Uh, we would plant, uh, maybe cucumber, [**Ryan:** Oh okay] ummm.

Ruben: I don't really remember anything else. Vegetables, you said?

Ryan: Yeah, vegetables.

Ruben: Oh cherry tomatoes. Oh, tomato's a fruit I guess.

Alyssa: [giggles]

Ryan: Did you ever sell the vegetables?

Ruben: Actually, yes. Uh, my grandma has a stand [**Ryan:** Yeah] uh, right out, outside, right outside her house [**Ryan:** Yeah] next to the street and uh we would take stuff there [**Ryan:** Yeah] and she would sell out.

Ryan: Oh okay. What types of trees were on the property? Are they all still there today?

Ruben: Yes, as far as I can remember all the mesquites are still there and if I'm correct oak trees are still there.

Ryan: OK.

[Papers shuffling]

Alyssa: When ya'll would harvest, did ya'll have workers that would harvest, or would...

Ruben: Depending on the crop.

Alyssa: mmhmm

Ruben: Uh let's say it's grain. Uh what cuts the grain is the combine. So, we didn't have a combine, but we would know other farmers that did. So, my dad would, would hire that, the combine driver and pay him a certain amount uh to cut our, our crops, the grain or the corn, or whatever it is. And uh, loaded up onto our trailers, then take the trailer; go dump it to wherever it needed to be. Umm, with other things, maybe like the cucumbers and squash, now that I remember that we did squash, uh the shed that he would take 'em to, that shed would already have people assigned. So my dad really wouldn't, I don't think for the most part, he wouldn't pay them, the shed would pay the workers.

Alyssa: Oh okay.

Ruben: So, and there was maybe crews of like twenty people.

Alyssa: Ok, how long would it take though? From like, just to harvest a certain crop?

Ruben: Umm, I know with corn it takes about [A phone goes off with an incoming text message] maybe four months. So, like right now he's got corn in the ground, just, he just planted that, so, October, November, December, hopefully by January if there's no freeze going on

Ryan & Alyssa: Yeah.

Ruben: It should, uh, should produce.

Ryan: What other types of vegetation was on the property, is it still there today?

Ruben: I can't remember what else, what other type of vegetables, as far as the cucumber and the squash.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Umm maybe, no, I can't remember anything else.

Alyssa: Besides the mesquite tree, did ya'll have like any other shrubs or cactuses?

Ruben: Actually we did. We had uh cac, some cacti out there. Uh, it was just one, one or two cactus, that, that were there.

Alyssa: Do you remember what kind it was?

Ruben: Not really, it wasn't, it was just a big old [**Alyssa:** Just a regular one] cacti. It wasn't one of those standing up ones [**Alyssa laughs**] you see in the desert.

Ryan: Yeah, yeah.

Ruben: Yeah.

Ryan: Have plants, vegetation patterns type changed over time?

Ruben: Yes, with, uh with the weather changes going on [**Ryan:** Yeah] and uh, the, I mean, sometimes it just depends on the rain.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: You know if it rains, the crop will produce. If it doesn't, well, good luck.

Ryan: Yeah.

Ruben: You know.

Ryan: Has the weather in any way had an effect on any plants, trees, or other vegetation you had during the winter. Were any plants or trees susceptible to freezes?

Ruben: Yes, sometimes they will freeze uh when, sometimes it'll mist [**Ryan:** Yeah] in the winter and I know that might act as a blanket [**Ryan:** Yeah] towards the leaf of the plant.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: So that sometimes saves it. Uh, sometimes the, I remember one time when it snowed uh, a lot of the crops were frozen over.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: But one block that he uh he planted he did late. He planted late for some reason [**Ryan:** Yeah] and it wasn't out of the ground yet.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: So the snow didn't really affect it that much and actually I'm guessing it helped it with the melted water maybe.

Alyssa: Was that in 2004?

Ruben: Yes, I believe so.

Alyssa: I remember that.

[Undistinguishable noises]

Ruben: That was the only time I've ever seen snow.

Ryan: Yeah

Alyssa: I was a freshman in high school

Ruben: Yeah, ok, 2004, I might have been a sophomore, yeah

[Ryan says something undistinguishable]

Ryan: During the summer, when there was a lack of rain, would any plants or trees die?

Ruben: I'm sorry, repeat the question.

Ryan: During the summer when there was a lack of rain would any plants or trees die?

Ruben: Definitely. Umm this past summer was uh was uh proof of that. Umm he had, he just farmed some uh maybe like I don't know 250 acres out in San Manuel.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Uh that was the first time he did that type of block and he got some good rain out over there, but even with the rain the heat was just too much for it during the middle of the day.

Ryan: scorching

Ruben: Yeah, so.

Ryan: Would storms such as hurricanes or floods have an impact on your vegetation?

Ruben: Yes, they would. I mean they would produce uh for the most part we haven't had any tragic winds, gust of winds that would just knock 'em out of the, out of the ground.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: So the rains that come with it pretty much help. Sometimes they would, if we did I mean it would not go over maybe uh some grain or corn, that's just yay high, [**Ryan:** Oh, yeah] not to strong at the base I guess.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: You know, so.

Alyssa: [Coughing] Sorry, did ya'll have any uh livestock on your property?

Ruben: Yes. Uh, growing up on, where we lived umm we would have we only had maybe might've been a total of four at a time. Umm on our farm, we had eh maybe, if I remember correctly, maybe a total of twenty [**Ryan:** Yeah] at one time and then sold those, and then later on got another twenty or so.

Alyssa: What sorts of animals were they?

Ruben: Uh cattle. It was cows, bulls for the most part. We had, I don't know how, a deer ended up on the place.

[Everyone Laughing]

Ryan: Oh wow

Ruben: Yeah, a little baby deer.

Alyssa: Wow

Ruben: So we caught that. We kept it in the pin you know, [**Ryan:** Yeah] but I guess it got out. I really don't know how it got there.

Alyssa: Did you ever show any of these animals like in high school?

Ruben: No, uh now that I think about it, I mean, I should have. I never did any FFA things. I maybe took an Ag class once. But I was uh, I knew I never wanted to go into farming after seeing my dad go through all the hardships he did. I respect him a lot for going through it and keeping on doing it to this day.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: Uh, but it's what he loves doing. I mean he pretty much I guess you can say feeds America

Ryan: Yeah

Arturo: Yeah

Ruben: You know uh, and doesn't get really much recognition or enough to show for it.

Ryan: No

Ruben: Especially down here, where the farmers down here in the Rio Grande Valley. But I guess to get on topic, no I really, we really didn't show 'em at all. I never was in FFA I was always doing athletics, going a different route [**Alyssa:** Yeah] trying to get away from agriculture.

[Everyone laughing]

Alyssa: It's okay. Now you mentioned the farm with 20 or so animals, did you have people that were hired on to take care of them, or?

Ruben: Yes, we always had a person. I don't know, my dad and my uncle were always good at finding uh workers and uh they would always I mean if for some reason they weren't there I mean my dad and my uncle were always there. So the animals were always fed. But for the most part we always had workers feeding them in the mornings, late in the evening.

Alyssa: Umm I gotta ask. Were any of these animals slaughtered? That you know of?

Ruben: To my knowledge, no.

Alyssa: Okay.

Ruben: I mean we sold them, so they might've been slaughtered elsewhere.

Alyssa: Yeah.

Ruben: So that might've happened.

Alyssa: But you're not sure.

Ruben: I'm not too sure. The, I know my aunt did play a prank on me one time. The time when we had, I don't know why I remember it but I do, uh the time where we had that deer. All of a sudden we didn't see it anymore, and then we had a big barbeque [**Alyssa:** Oh no] one day. And then here comes my aunt Norma saying, "you know, you know we don't have a deer here anymore and we're having a barbeque". [**Alyssa** laughs] Makes ya think, so.

Alyssa: Oh wow.

Ruben: But no, I mean I've never really witnessed [**Alyssa:** Yeah] that.

Alyssa: Umm besides the deer, did any other animals come across your property, like did you ever see any snakes? Err those..

Ruben: Oh yeah, there were snakes [**Alyssa:** Oh okay] all the time. Uh, umm, there were always cats and dogs.

Alyssa: Yeah

Ruben: Uh snakes you'll see for sure maybe three or four times a year. My dad would see them more, he's there every day.

Alyssa: Yeah

Ruben: You know, I'm not there every day.

Alyssa: What about those umm, I don't know if it's the horned toad frogs or something, lizards, I don't know.

Ruben: Uh, yeah, we would see frogs. I would see uh some toads now and then especially when it would rain.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: They would come out. But uh lizards were always there [**Alyssa:** Yeah] but they were, it was nothing you know, they were there and its like just seeing a cat or a dog.

[**Alyssa** laughs]

Ruben: It's really no big deal.

Alyssa: Yup. Oh, another one I wanted to ask, back to the animal question. Whenever an animal died of natural causes, what would y'all do with it? Would y'all just like bury it or send it off somewhere?

Ruben: As far as I can remember, with the cattle, umm I don't remember one dying of natural causes. They would always, we would always sell them before anything would happen. As for cats and dogs, yeah we would, I, we would bury them.

Ryan: Yeah

Ruben: You know at least give them a proper burial,

Alyssa: Yeah, you have a little pet cemetery going on?

Ruben: Yeah, I mean if you walk on that place, who knows you might be walking on someone's burial, some animal's burial.

Ryan: Yeah

Alyssa: Sparky's

[Cannot distinguish what's said here.]

Ryan: Did you ever use cattle as [cannot distinguish this]

Ruben: You mean plowing?

Ryan: Plowing, yeah.

Ruben: Uh, no cause we always had our uh tractors going, so thankfully.

Ryan: Yeah

[cannot distinguish what's being said]

Alyssa: Umm that's it for me
Ryan: That's it for me
Alyssa: Umm do you have any information you wanna share with us, that you can think of?
Ruben: uhuh
Ryan: That just crossed your mind
Alyssa: Can we relate it to the topics, it doesn't have to?
Ruben: A lot of it has to do with farming, so I mean going back, I guess farmers down here really don't get a lot of recognition and [**Ryan:** Yeah] I don't know if the words credit, but uh, are not taken advantage of either, but they go through a lot of hardships down here especially when the weather has a mind of its own.
Ryan: Yeah
Ruben: You know, or God just decides to say, "I'll let it rain today"
Ryan: Yeah
Ruben: you know, umm
Alyssa: We did get rain today
Ruben: Yeah, yeah the weather's been, well the weather's changing.
Ryan: Yeah
Ruben: So hopefully nothing drastic comes our way [**Ryan:** Yeah] but some good rain, that's pretty much it.
Alyssa: All right, well thank you for your cooperation and for being our test subject.
Ruben: Yeah, no problem.
Arturo: We appreciate it.
Ryan: Thank you very much for being here.
Ruben: Yeah not a problem, gets us back home to the Cowboys.
 [Everyone laughs]
Ryan: Do you need help getting...
 [End of recording]

Interviewee: Marcos Ramirez (cousin in Ruben's generation)
Interview Team: Daniel Nicholson (primary interviewer), Francisco Gonzalez (camera), Randall Ramirez (audio)
Border Studies Archive Representative: Eloise Montemayor
Date: October 6, 2012
Location: Border States Electric, Edinburg Texas.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm, hold on.
Daniel Nicholson: Sure. Ok, Mr. Ramirez. We have a few of questions for you, but first off we would like to establish how you're related to the family and uh how long you spent on the property. We know that you're a cousin of Ruben but was it through the mothers side, fathers side? How was that all articulated?
Marcos Ramirez: Our relationship is uh on our mother's side, or my mother's side. Uh Mother was the oldest of uh 4 kids and uh Ruben's father is the youngest of the four kids. So we are first cousins.

Daniel Nicholson: And what is your mother's name?

Marcos Ramirez: Aurora.

Daniel Nicholson: Aurora, Okay perfect. Okay. And did you spend a lot of time on the Cantú farm site as a kid?

Marcos Ramirez: My uh, grandfather, uh Jesus Cantú Serna of course, he was the one who came over originally from Mexico down here, roughly I don't know mid-1920s. When I was born my mother got married, and when I was born my dad died 6 months after I was born.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh wow

Marcos Ramirez: So my grandfather raised me and my mother went to live with my grandfather and he had a small farm, uhm a little west of Edinburg. And of course I spent all of my time there

Daniel Nicholson: Is that the-

Marcos Ramirez: Except for the time that I was in schools

Daniel Nicholson: Is that the same farm site that Ruben is currently living at now?

Marcos Ramirez: No, no this one was over here three and a half miles west of Edinburg on Hoehn drive-

Daniel Nicholson: Ok so-

Marcos Ramirez: Which is where I currently live now,

Daniel Nicholson: Oh ok. So was that the original I guess, settling place for the Cantús when they came up north from Mexico, or...?

Marcos Ramirez: No, They uh... they lived uh, in a couple of other places I really don't know where they were. Where I currently live now where my grandfather had been here for a few years, he bought some property and that was the original twenty acres plat that he bought, and he had a couple other fields. But where I currently live now is where the home-
stead was.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok do you mind stating the address for that on camera so that we look into that a little bit, because we weren't sure originally what the actual you know where kinda the first or more primary places of settle- settlement occurred at so...

Marcos Ramirez: The current address now is eleven twenty-seven North Hoehn Drive, in Edinburg seven eight five four one. And the physical address roughly three and a half miles west on 107. Three quarter miles north on Hoehn drive.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok, thank you. Ok so now that we've kind of established some of this stuff. We'll go ahead and get into the questions. Start with our music stuff. So what type of music did you listen to growing up

Marcos Ramirez: Growing up it was all Spanish music, from uh, of course from Mexico. I don't know. I guess Ranchera, Nortenas what it was called. Of course, basically it was all on the radio, that's all that was available back then.

Daniel Nicholson: Was it , was it completely Spanish language radio or...?

Marcos Ramirez: Completely Spanish.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok did you venture out and listen to any English bands or anything like that.

Marcos Ramirez: I did when I was older, of course in my teens or pre-teens. But uh, in a, of course back then radios were a luxury item. It's not like there were several around the house ya know. We all didn't have our radios.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok and uh do you remember some of the names of your favorite artists and bands from yesteryear

Marcos Ramirez: Oh, Miguel Aceves Mejia, Antonio Aguilar, Ruis Aguilar, I dunno. That was a long time ago.

Daniel Nicholson: [Laughter]

Marcos Ramirez: I still listen to the music but I don't pay attention to the names.

Daniel Nicholson: And uh, was this the same type of music your parents or grandparent listen to or did they have ya know maybe something a little bit older.

Marcos Ramirez: No it was the same kind of music.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, let's see... so as far as family gatherings went. Was it the same music type that was set up or?

Marcos Ramirez: It was the same type of music

Daniel Nicholson: Just all throughout*-

Marcos Ramirez: Basically back then. That's what was available of course the rock and roll era and all that didn't come in until considerably later.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm and now at these family gathering did you guys ever have live music? Did anyone in the family play any instruments or anything like that?

Marcos Ramirez: There was a lot of that. Sometimes our family or sometimes the neighbor or whatever would have a pachanga and say Friday night or Saturday night or whatever. And people would be invited over to party and dance and of course all of the dancing was done out on the dirt patios and all that. It. It was a good fun time.

Daniel Nicholson: And uh, did you all usually eat at these uh gatherings?

Marcos Ramirez: Yes. Usually there was plenty of food

Daniel Nicholson: What would you all prepare, typically?

Marcos Ramirez: Uh regular barbecues. Ya know red meat, chicken. And uhm some of the ladies would make some popular plates, rice other, other sopas.

Daniel Nicholson: Was there a particular dish that was kind of known within your family to be known to be just excellent within the community

Marcos Ramirez: Not really, back then. People didn't complain much about eating. Ya know everybody ate hearty.

Daniel Nicholson: And uh, let's see. You mentioned the radio, but did you guys have any other music technology in the home, record player? Anything? Even over time, uhm...

Marcos Ramirez: No, not that I recall of.

Daniel Nicholson: Did you and your family consider music to be an important part of your lives?

Marcos Ramirez: Yes, ya know, one of the things of course the Mexican culture or Hispanic culture most of the Mexican music were balanced. Corridos, or whatever and a lot of the older time or people would identify with that. Folklore.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm ok, uhm let's see. As far as family stories, did uhm. How did your parents meet? Do you have any tales about some of your older relatives? I'm sure you had a lot of tales about your grandfathers. And uh kinda just general things you remembered from your childhood. I know that's a very general question, but I guess in a relation to stuff from the family, trips or anything... like that.

Marcos Ramirez: Well I really don't have that many tales, uhm. My grandfather on my, well of course, on my mother's side uhm. They came in from Mexico, uhm I understand that he used to be a sheriff down there.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh.

Marcos Ramirez: In a little community, north of uhm Monterey. And uhm, back then of course the revolution was still going around, over there. Pancho Villas, the vistas* and these people, they were after him. So in fact one time they had him stretched out and they were going to hang him from a tree, and uh I understand that a gentleman intervened uh. Of course this gentleman was my grandmother's uhm brother.

Daniel Nicholson: Hm

Marcos Ramirez: So I guess he escaped and came on over here.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm, Do you know why he was a target during revolutionary times? Just cause-

Marcos Ramirez: Not really, of course back then

Daniel Nicholson: Being the law or-

Marcos Ramirez: -Ya know there were two groups, the rebels and the federales. Who knows? I heard some stories, but they were so long ago I really don't recall.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm, so uhm. So what was your house like growing up, what did you do in the house as far as chores. How were you all's living conditions.

Marcos Ramirez: Well... Ya know, fortunately back then. Living, living conditions were very poor and all that, but everybody was happy. We didn't have anything else to compare it to. By the time I was eleven years old, I was uhm... driving the tractor uhm, plowing, disk-ing and all that out in the fields. That was on non-school days of course. During school days, I would go to school and all that, but as soon as I got back from school, I would have to go and work out in the fields. Hoeing or whatever, we always had crops, fields that needed taken care of. Ya know, we would get up early in the morning and work until dark, uhm. And then when we had a little more time on Saturday and Sundays, we would go out to town. Movies, little recreation and back to work, then again it was a happy atmosphere, uhm. And you know, we weren't really missing out on much. And everybody basically did the same thing

Daniel Nicholson: Mhm

Marcos Ramirez: Or at least the people that lived in the farms, not necessarily the... the city slickers

Daniel Nicholson: [laughter] Right... Do you mind describing the house that you grew up in? About how large it was -

Marcos Ramirez: We had -

Daniel Nicholson: -The number of rooms

Marcos Ramirez: -A very small home, there was a kitchen and bedroom, living room or whatever. It had a concrete floor, and uh... of course a wood sides, but the outside had like concrete plaster, so it was well insulated. Both winter and summer... and basically my mother and I and my grandparents we slept in the uhm... in that...big room...And uhm that...later on when I was in my, close to my teens or whatever, then uh we bought a larger house. I think, a three bedroom house or whatever. But in the beginning it was very simple.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, let's see. Do you remember any major occurrences that altered your life? Uhm these could be global changes in uhm politics, ideologies to local occurrences ya know... sort of things like that. I dunno, Vietnam was a big time

Marcos Ramirez: Well-

Daniel Nicholson: -For you or something

Marcos Ramirez: -One of the major things that happened that affected everybody of course was when John Kennedy was assassinated, I was in high school. And uh, ya know they announced the news right after lunch, and let everybody home, and you could see everybody was scared to death, everybody was looking at the sky waiting for missiles to come in or the planes or whatever... that was the strongest event that I remember. Other than that, it was business as usual.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm, ok. Now let's get into our water stuff. Since we have another farm site that we're talking about. That's really cool because I thought we were going to be talking about the Cantú farm site, and ya know how long you spent time there as a young man, so. We can apply this to what's going over to what's going on at your grandfather's farm.

Marcos Ramirez: Right.

Daniel Nicholson: So what type of irrigation canals did you guys use over time?

Marcos Ramirez: Of course they were all dirt, the only concrete canals were the main arteries coming in from the Rio Grande, uhm from there everybody else that was, you would go make your ditches and all that, and irrigate that way. Sometime during the same time frame, some of the people that had better means and all that would put in a big concrete pipes to tie into the canal, but even now our neighbors, the Lunas and of course one of the bigger farmers over here, they still use uhm... the uh... dirt canals. In fact they still plant, or work on my fields. That's how they irrigate.

Daniel Nicholson: So is it still dirt around your property then?

Marcos Ramirez: Yes.

Daniel Nicholson: Which also* dirt canals?

Marcos Ramirez: Yes.

Daniel Nicholson: Let's see. Did you guys have problems with soil salinity? For farming?

Marcos Ramirez: That was always an issue of course, the more that you work on the fields, on the land itself it would ... fix itself to some degree, but we were always having to use fertilizers and chemicals... of course we got our advice from well there were farm agencies around and uhm. Also the feed and seed stores they provided a lot of advice to what might be required.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhm, uhm. Okay. Let's see... do you remember any significant hurricane events, like Beulah would have been a big one I'm sure.

Marcos Ramirez: Well I remember Beulah, but fortunately I was not here,

Daniel Nicholson: Oh

Marcos Ramirez: I was in the service, stationed in Phoenix Arizona, all we could uh... see and hear was what was on the TV. Uhm...they of course, my parents who were here, and uh, we communicated as, as often as we could. Communications were very hard, It was the Red Cross that kept us in touch until, the worst was over.

Daniel Nicholson: So, that's interesting because we've, we've talked about Beulah and I'm sure it's come up with other family members.

Marcos Ramirez: Mhm

Daniel Nicholson: But it's also come up with the Norquest last year, uhm we're actually interviewing someone who wasn't here for Beulah.

Marcos Ramirez: Right

Daniel Nicholson: So what I'm interested in is how did the nation, kind of... Portray things going on during Beulah? Was it just strict news coverage or did they act like it was a wash out. Like people were being wiped away or just... kind, kinda curious how the media presented things.

Marcos Ramirez: Well I believe, as usual, the media overstates and sensationalizes much... Oh... Yeah, we could see all the flooding and all that. Which indeed was occurring in uh a lot of the places...where I currently live right now, in the original homestead, was sort of on top of a little hill. A little knoll. Of course you all know where one o' seven is.

Daniel Nicholson: Yes

Marcos Ramirez: West of Edinburg, understand of course we're three quarters of a mile north. Understand that there around One o' Seven and for almost another half mile north some of the water was around as much as eight foot deep.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow

Marcos Ramirez: Okay? Now where we lived, uhm, water was a long ways from getting from us because we lived on top of this little hill. Uhm, sowe didn't...uh experience much damage beyond some wind damage, but uh. Some of our neighbors didn't fare as well

Daniel Nicholson: How high did that hill put you guys up?

Marcos Ramirez: I'm guessing that it's...it's probably ten to twelve foot.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh wow...Let's see, were there any significant freezes that affected particularly the crops on site, uhm-

Marcos Ramirez: Yes, there were several freezes-

Daniel Nicholson: Do you remember--

Marcos Ramirez: We hadn't had any strong freezes in quite a few years-

Daniel Nicholson: Do you remember the, some of the big years where just a really big freeze just really hurt things on farm, on site.

Marcos Ramirez: I think there was one on...one of the worst ones I believe was in the late eighties. Somewhere over there, that uhm. There were several days of low teen temperatures; of course, back then one of the major crops was uh citrus.

Daniel Nicholson: Hmm

Marcos Ramirez: So that devastated the citrus, and back then of course, cotton and some of these other crops were also major crops but during the summers there was, there was no issues there. Then uhm...then... what was back in O' Four. We had several inches of snow out here, but I think the temperatures stayed in maybe the low twenties. It harmed some of the citrus, but not as bad as prior years.

Daniel Nicholson: And how about droughts?

Marcos Ramirez: Well here we've experienced some droughts lately, and, and back then we did too. It seems like it was a cycle, it would be severe droughts then it would start raining and seemed like it would never stop. Now they blame the Nina, the Nina back then they didn't have anybody to blame. But yes, for farmers, droughts are very severe, it can make 'em or break 'em.

Daniel Nicholson: Do you remember any particular years where the drought was just really critically bad?

Marcos Ramirez: Not really, because keep in mind that of course that was a long time ago for me, but as soon as I graduated out of high school, I got out farming.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh okay

Marcos Ramirez: I went to California to make my fortune, and then Uncle Sam took over for four years. So by the time I came back I was not involved in farming anymore, I uhm, I looked for a different source of life.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay—and, uh, growing up, y'know, where did your water come from and, uh, the water you used, uh, for bathing, drinking? Where did you guys get that water from? Um...let's see...how did it change over time? When did the city finally put water in? You know, those kinds of things.

Marcos Ramirez: Well, back then, as I stated, some of the main arteries or some of the main canals were concrete canals.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhm.

Marcos Ramirez: There was a concrete canal that came and it was just across the street on our, uh, east side of our property. So, from there, we got *pos* drinking water and, of course, we would bathe in the canal or we would bring water over in pails, heat 'em up and, uh, and take showers that way. Of course, we didn't have indoor plumbing. We used a cup and, you know, a wash tub and all of that. Also, our drinking water, we had a cistern—a hole in the ground, you know, brick, concrete and all of that and which was common back then.

Uhm...again, everybody was quite healthy, you know. There were no issues by not having all this water whatever process the way we do now. Uh, again it was a happy way of life 'cause we always put in a full day's work and at night, you were ready to go to bed.

Daniel Nicholson: Uh, that runs us through our official list, but I just have a couple of follow up things that that have kind of drummed up in my head as we were talking. Uhm, but

you mentioned citrus being on property at your grandfather's. Uh, what else did they grow there?

Marcos Ramirez: Cotton was a, uh, one of the main staples. Uh, corn...grain. Back then, when I was considerably younger, I know that, of course, my uncles Ruben's father and his brother and all that were also involved. And watermelon was a good crop and watermelon, once it was ripe, we would harvest a load, load it up on our uncle's trucks and haul it over to Houston. In fact, one of my younger brothers (Ruben's cousin, too) him and I would haul watermelon. We would load up here, drive to Houston and turn right back and another load. We would do a load a day.

Daniel Nicholson: Is that, uh, Roy or...?

Marcos Ramirez: No, well, again, keep in mind Roy, Ruben's older brother, he's several years younger than me. I'm talking about his...their parents.

Daniel Nicholson: Ah! Okay, okay, okay.

Marcos Ramirez: Yeah, Roy's parents.

Daniel Nicholson: Well, because I know that Roy currently is trucking and
[indistinguishable]

Marcos Ramirez: Correct, yes, again that came—he started doing that considerably after my time when I got out of the farming.

Daniel Nicholson: I was just wondering, you know, if there was, it sounded like, oh, like the beginnings of the trucking business--

Marcos Ramirez: And that carried on from the start on our first farm over there. They would, whatever crops, whether it was corn, vegetables, of course watermelon and all that. We found that they could get a lot more money if it went to the market in Houston than just trying to sell it down here.

Daniel Nicholson: Now, uh, what kind of trucks would you guys haul things up in? Just a regular pickup truck and?

Marcos Ramirez: No, it was, uh...I guess back then we called them 3-ton trucks, but it, uh...a big truck, not a semi-trailer, but a big truck. We called them tandems. They would extend the flat bed or the and we could carry 30 to 40 thousand pounds.

Daniel Nicholson: And what type of markets would you take these watermelons to? Were they kind of farmer's markets, or...?

Marcos Ramirez: Well, like in Houston, they had a huge farmer's market. There you could find basically anything—all kinds of fruits, vegetables and all of that and I guess the big store buyers and all that in Houston would go and buy their products there. It was always fresh, so...

Daniel Nicholson: And, uh, y'know, do you have a, I guess a qualifier for about how much more you would make in Houston versus the Valley for your watermelon sales? About half, quarter?

Marcos Ramirez: You know, now I really don't know.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay. Just....enough to make it economically viable to drive to Houston to do this?

Marcos Ramirez: Well, what I'm guessing is....take a watermelon. Back then, of course it would they would sell by the pound. Here we might have been able to get five, seven, eight cents a pound. Over there we probably got 30 cents a pound or something like that and, of course, when you're talking about 30 or 40 thousand pounds and you know that makes a significant difference. Of course gas back then was probably in the low teens...low to middle teens. Even myself, once I started driving, I remember buying gas for 15, 17 cents a gallon. So, that overhead was never much of an issue.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhm.

Marcos Ramirez: So, it was a significant difference.

Daniel Nicholson: And did you guys take anything else ever, even just once, up there to--

Marcos Ramirez: Yes, of course. Corn--

Daniel Nicholson: Okay.

Marcos Ramirez: --cabbage, you know, many of the winter vegetables. So, it was just something that people got in the habit of doing.

Daniel Nicholson: And, uh, do you know what drove Ruben to choose the site where he's at right now?

Marcos Ramirez: Why he decided to move there?

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah

Marcos Ramirez: Well, he probably got run out his house when he got married and all that.

Daniel Nicholson: [chuckle]

Marcos Ramirez: No, you know not. Obviously that's a place that they must have liked it and it was available and possibly the right price. Uh, I know where Ruben lives right now is not far from his parents and it's quite close to where his wife's family was. Just accessibility and...

Daniel Nicholson: Okay. Just didn't know if it was maybe connected to the family, you know, an extension--

Marcos Ramirez: As far as I know, no. I believe that piece of land that he lives in had no connection. He went out and bought it.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay. Fantastic. Uh, let's see [addressing crew] do you guys have anything you guys want to ask?

Francisco Gonzalez: Was there any bodies of water that you remember around the area in particular that you might have gone to that might not be there anymore, or anything like that?

Marcos Ramirez: There was one that, uh, you know, of course, being a boy being on a farm and all of that, I've always been interested in hunting and fishing and all that. Back then, there was a body of water, Edinburg Lake, just north of Edinburg that still it still exists to a small degree.

Francisco Gonzalez: I've been there.

Marcos Ramirez: But back then it was very accessible for us to go fishing, uh, and not far, you know, it's a handful of miles from my house. Another place that I used to go a lot to was a irrigation canal and which still exists, uh, the waterways that bring the water from the river to Edinburg, McAllen...all that. We were constantly fishing there. We would occasionally go to Falcon Lake. Of course, that's a little far out. And, of course, when we had a chance to go the island, I mean, that was a big deal.

Francisco Gonzalez: Okay.

Marcos Ramirez: Usually over there the family gatherings for whatever for Easter or something like this. That was something to look forward to.

Francisco Gonzalez: And, uh, what kind of fish did you all catch at these Edinburg Lakes and these canals?

Marcos Gonzalez: We used to catch a lot of catfish, gaspergou, uh, bass, some carp, but the main fish was catfish and, uh, some people would go and we would go to especially for garfish because if you caught one of those...you might catch one a night or whatever, but it could easily be a hundred pounder.

Daniel Nicholson: Eat for weeks.

Marcos Gonzalez: And then it was time to party.

[group laughter]

Eloise Montemayor: Mr. Ramirez, uhm, how do you best identif—or with what word do you best identify with as far as “Hispanic”, “Mexican American”...what do you feel most comfortable, uhm...calling yourself?

Marcos Ramirez: Well, I was lucky. Again, like I said, I was basically born and raised on a farm. My father had—my grandfather...I always called him dad, but, uh, my grandfather had several acres. We always had people to help us in harvesting work in the fields and all of that. And, of course, these were people from Mexico and we would put out big tents for them to live and all of that and, of course, they would work for us daily and back then the Bracero Program came into being. So, I was, you know, every day I was around people that all they did was speak Spanish and all that and, of course, then I went to school. I think I started school when I was five years old. So, basically I grew up bilingual. I grew up knowing how to read and write. I'm fluent in both Spanish and English and that's from when I was five or six years old or whenever I learned that so I've never, uh...you know, of course I've always been around the Hispanic culture more. But, you know, in fact, my wife is an Anglo, uh, it's uh, yes, I was constantly around Hispanic people as I'm sure you all know the Anglo population here is a small fraction of what the Hispanic population is. That has never changed, so...

Eloise Montemayor: And I was going to ask you as a follow up, how was it, the demographics back then and what do you see as the differences growing up back then as a young Hispanic man compared to now with the current demographics?

Marcos Ramirez: Back then, there was still some racism, uh, but not necessarily from the Anglos that were involved as farmers. Okay, racism was in other businesses, other let's say the retail business and, of course, the Anglos that were involved in farming and all that [snicker] all of their employees were Hispanics...er...whether they were legal or illegal, uh, you know, and, in fact, I knew several back then. They could speak Spanish as fluent or better than I could and, of course, that was to communicate with their working people and really it was just like a big family, uh...

Daniel Nicholson: So, uhm, in a follow up to that 'cause you brought up some very interesting points there. Uhm, so, would you reject kind of the model of—that a lot of people apply to this area as far as “Oh, well, you know the Anglo farmers were very patriarchal and exploitative to their employees” 'cause, y'know, when we looked at the Norquests last year, we found evidence that said, “Okay, well, there were overall good relations” and so with you saying, well, you know, the Anglos they have their employees as Hispanics they had good relations, so, would you say that would be a fallacy or...uh, this claim?

Marcos Ramirez: Well, again, all of this is, uh--

Daniel Nicholson: I mean as far, as far as you're concerned in your little network of farms, uh...

Eloise Montemayor: From your observations.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, yeah, from your experience.

Marcos Ramirez: I really did not experience any problems, okay? Uh, of course, it's no secret...the Anglos had the money and all that. Of course, all of the Hispanics, it was an influx of people coming in just the way it is still now, so those people didn't have anything or much. So, of course, they'd go to work for these Anglo farmers or whatever and, like everything, the people that have the money will keep increasing to that, okay? So, a lot of perceptions come from this. Really, I just stated, there was some racism back then—I personally never encountered any. I believe that many of these racism issues come up because some people are out there looking for it...you know. But again, y'know, it's-what I perceived could be completely different from other people that came in not knowing the language and

everything else, okay, and the history. Uh, you mentioned Neil and them, uh, all of the, of course, Norquest was not an easy name to pronounce, so all the Hispanic people--

Daniel Nicholson: The *Nortehños*

Marcos Ramirez: --call 'em *Nortehño*. Right. And, really, the people, I never heard any bad comments on 'em. *Estoy trabajando con Nortehño*.

[group laughter]

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm, you had mentioned the Bracero Program. Did your family participate--did you guys have Braceros working for you, or...?

Marcos Ramirez: Yes [indistinguishable]

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, so how did that work out because the Bracero Program was not supposed to be in Texas, uh [laugh].

Marcos Ramirez: Well, I don't know where you got that information, uh--

Daniel Nicholson: Well, it's just, it's just true, uhm there were a couple states, but there was a kind of a good old boy system where it was kind of Bracero.....not.

Marcos Ramirez: Again, we had these Braceros, but here in, okay, there as a big Bracero camp there that was sanctioned by the government, okay, and there was thousands of people...thousands of Braceros there, I don't know, fifteen hundred to two thousand or whatever. That was here and I believe there were also some of these camps elsewhere, okay? Uh, we would go and get people from there or there were other arrangements. Again, I don't remember all of that because I wasn't interested in it back then, but it was successful for a while, of course, so many of those Braceros wound up making families here, staying and all of that.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, there's a, I don't know if they're still fiddling around with it, but there's a project at Pan Am where they're trying to locate Braceros and get them at least recognized and there's even some folks that still need money from Mexico that are trying to get that, so, it's a complicated affair.

Marcos Ramirez: Well, it's very hard because all of those people are probably dead by now, y'know, they would be several years older than me and that's getting up there.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm, now, being that you have, you guys had Braceros there on the property working, did you guys also employ illegal labor?

Marcos Ramirez: Yes, uh...like take the cotton fields, of course, we had trucks that, uh, would go around the neighborhood picking up kids, adults or whatever. Of course, most of the cotton was picked during the summer when there was no school and everybody to--willing to make a buck or whatever, so, yes, uh, there was always other people involved.

Daniel Nicholson: So, just, so was it a mixing of legal and illegal labor just throughout the history, or was there more of a dominance of one over the other?

Marcos Ramirez: Well, later on when some of the penalties started getting more severe with the illegals, you know, we backed off and just used local whether it was hoeing the fields or picking cotton or whatever. These trucks or crew leaders or whatever would go around and fill up a truck full of people to work the fields. Back then there were no safety issues or anything like now that, I mean, however many people--

Daniel Nicholson: No W-2s...

Marcos Ramirez: --would fill in the back of the truck [while laughing with Nicholson].

Eloise Montemayor: What would you say would be the ratio of men to women workers and children to adult workers from your experience?

Marcos Ramirez: A lot of kids would go, of course, with their mothers or fathers or whatever. Keep in mind back during that era, everybody was looking to have large families. The fathers wanted large families to put their kids out to work to make money for them. You know, I don't know the ratio...I might say ten to fifteen percent kids, probably another fifteen

percent women and probably the rest of it men depending on the type of work, but obviously that was an easy place for females to work and, uh, everybody was always looking for work in the fields, you know, to stay alive.

Eloise Montemayor: Was there music out there in the fields when they would work or in the trucks or anything?

Marcos Ramirez: Any what?

Eloise Montemayor: Music.

Marcos Ramirez: Some people would carry around some radios with them and uh, they would turn it on, uh, yes, the music was a.. an important part, yes it the..people worked better. There was always a little of it, uh...obviously back then we didn't have portable radios and all this. A truck or a vehicle, whatever, they would open the doors and the windows and turn it up!! Everybody was happy!! (laughter)...

Eloise Montemayor: And and the the.. in the corridos and the music that you listened to, would they ever talk about work in the fields? What were the main..

Marcos Ramirez: There was some ballads of Brazeros, yes, uh, of course not all of them were favorable. Uh, lotta, uh or some of the ballads, uhh...of course always uh..exploiting the border patrol or whatever, and who knows how much of that was true or not, you know, I don't know, but like I say at the end of the day most people went home happy, and eat and go back to sleep and get up at 4:30 or 5 o' clock the following morning. That's when I made up my mind that I was going to go get some education. (laughter)

Eloise Montemayor: So where did you go to school?

Marcos Ramirez: I went to school in Edinburg, my first year in school I went to Sacred Heart School, then I went to Stephen F. Austin, and then Lamar, and then of course I graduated from EHS. Back then we only had one highschool. So, but, and then of course the day after I graduated a good friend of mine and I, we went to California and uh..doin alright until Uncle Sam caught up with me, so then I was going to be drafted, so I volunteered for the Air Force, and uh did my four years in and came back. I got married while I was in the Air Force, came back and while I still lived in the plot of land over there I let somebody else work it and I went and found me another way to make a living.

Eloise Montemayor: Now is this your business? Is this what you went into right afterwards? Is there..

Marcos Ramirez: Well this..this type of work right here we have an electrical and plumbing distributorship, we are wholesalers. I've been doing this type of work since I came back from Vietnam back in 71' so 41 years. It's not my business, I've been the manager. Again this company that I'm with is an employee owned so, I guess yes it's my business too, but uhh it's been a great way to make a living. Here I don't have to worry that much about droughts, freezes or whatever, but of course that is very important to our livelihood too cause if a... Yeah, the economy down here was based on agriculture all of this time, so if the agriculture is not good all of the other businesses suffer to a degree. So, yes we all stay on top of it. (clears throat) (silence)

Daniel Nicholson: Anything gentlemen?

Francisco Gonzalez: Do you remember any folk tales that were told to you as a child uh..for any particular reason around this area?

Marcos Ramirez: Well you know folk tales of course there are still some that uh. One of the ones that was very popular was the ol' uh the evil eye deal, the curanderos, uh was the other one, Mal de Susto or whatever.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah susto

Marcos Ramirez: Uh.. I myself experienced a lot of this stuff, of course my

grandmother coming from Mexico and all that, they knew a lot of herbs and this or that, and whether they were helpful or not, I guess the main thing was that whoever they did it to those people believed it would help them. Again like that evil eye I think science still cannot determine if it is effective or not, but they know that it works. Also that *Mal de Susto* and all of this stuff..its uh...well of this stuff out there some of it is bound to be true, but the important thing is whether you believe in it or not.

Daniel Nicholson: So your grandmother, did she practice a lot of *curanderismo* or..

Marcos Ramirez: No.. this was just for the family

Daniel Nicholson: Just within the family folk medicine as far as.. Do you remember what kind of plants they would utilize?

Marcos Ramirez: Uh there was... I think *Manzanilla* was one of them, for uhh..stomach aches, uhh..shit my mind is blank right now, but uhh we would have some plants we would grow around house for instances like this. Of course back then there was many more place available that uh sell herbs. I think there's still a few places.

Daniel Nicholson: There's still quite a few around.

Marcos Ramirez: Yes of course they probably have more than herbs in there, but anyway, back then it was popular, I guess like going to the pharmacist.

Daniel Nicholson: So when you went to grandma what would she do? What were some of the things that she did for you when you were a kid that involved some of the folk medicine?

Marcos Ramirez: Well being young and all that uh, the *susto* deal uh, of course they would lay you down and put some mud crosses and all that in your forehead and other stuff. Do some incantations, and maybe put a blanket over you, and uh, you know basically by believing that it would work, by the time she finished people were relieved.

Daniel Nicholson: Did you experience relief?

Marcos Ramirez: Yes, you know, but again, now I probably wouldn't consider, but being young naive and all that you believe what your elders told you.

Eloise Montemayor: What exactly is *Mal de Susto*? Or how do you get it? Or how...

Marcos Ramirez: It's when uh people get scared or whatever, they have a freight, you know especially kids, and uh you know after this session or whatever these come out much more settled. You know uh..now you really don't hear much about it. Of course another popular one back then was *Mal de Ojo*. Especially, you know the Hispanic culture is still..If somebody, if a lady comes in with a baby or whatever, other ladies will go and touch her face or this or that so they won't give them *Mal de Ojo*. And some cases you know it's been proven that it was effective cause a kid or whatever would be in serious pain. Some ladies, especially in the ladies side, they would claim that they had a very rich strong eye and that if they didn't touch the kid or whatever would suffer from this *Mal de Ojo*. And if a kid was suffering and all that and if they could identify who the person might have been and they took the kid to that person, that person would fondle his face and all that, the kid would walk away with no pain. Who knows? Of course many of the Hispanic people still, and especially the ones from Mexico are very..uh they believe in uh.. in magic. Bad magic or good magic or whatever so.

Eloise Montemayor: Black Magic

Marcos Ramirez: Black Magic yes.

Javier Gonzalez: Do you remember anything being told to you about that, or any occurrences of that in the community, or any stories being told in the field or anything?

Marcos Ramirez: Well of course we would hear it from our parents, you know, in circumstances that they had heard of. We would also hear it from our neighbors. Back then we would do a lot of visiting with the neighbors. We'd go to their house in the

evenings after supper or whatever, chat for a couple of hours or whatever. Back then we were always visiting with neighbors. Now I've got neighbors a hundred, two-hundred yards from us we never visit, but back then we did a lot of communicating, so it was like a family atmosphere, and that's where all of this folklore was exchanged.

Daniel Nicholson: Now, being that it was kind of like one big family, was there co-operation between farms as far as maybe helping out with a harvest or anything like that, or is everyone kind of, as far as agricultural output kind of self-sufficient?

Marcos Ramirez: We would all work together. Now keep in mind especially during the winter when a.. when a..the vegetables, it's the vegetable season a..cactus, lettuce, watermelons, cantaloupe, whatever. Us farmers, or our neighbors, we were basically always welcomed to walk into somebody else's field get a watermelon, this or that, or corn or whatever. It would not be an issue. It would be an issue if other people went you know, but uh.. the farmers basically uh..blended our work together, and yes we would help each other. (silence)

Daniel Nicholson: That's all I have, unless anything else, at least thank you for the support. You are way better at this, you've only been to about a hundred of these and uh..work for BSA for a living (referring to Eloise Montemayor)

Marcos Ramirez: Well back then, you know uh..of course my grandfather was a farmer and basically we would have two crops a year ok, a spring and a fall crop. And there was never any big money, I mean, yes you could make a decent living if the starve* where lined right and droughts and freezes and all that, but also a lot of other people, and back then let me say, people were natu..well..i guess they were a lot more honest than they are now. Ok. Of course the population was just a fraction of what it is now, but what I mean about being more honest, a lot of the vendors like the grocers downtown. My grandfather would go and they would open him an account. They would carry you until the crops came in, when the crops came in he would go clear that account. O.k. Right now you are not going to find anybody to do that o.k.. Things have changed, but back then..honesty and all of this, basically the people, the contracts and all that were a handshake. And people honored them.

Daniel Nicholson: *Con confianza*

Marcos Ramirez: Yes, and people honored them, but uh we had two grocers downtown that uh..carried us here in Edinburg. One was Fernandez Grocery Store, and the other one was Federico Perez Grocery Store. Fernandez is still there, and there was a store in San Juan that they used to call La Tienda Maria. That store basically sold wholesale. It was all by the case not individual deals. And I know for a fact that my granddad, as soon as the crop came in, the cotton crop or whatever, the first place he'd go to was to take care of these people, and uh.. like I say everybody was happy back then. We didn't have all of these shysters that we do now. Really you have to be careful and everything, you have to be looking over your back all the time. I mean uh.. those were indeed the "good old days" (laughter)

Eloise Montemayor: Mr. Ramirez your grandfather was your father figure definitely growing up. What age were you when he passed away and how did that impact your family? Did you have to take on that same he had for you for others?

Marcos Ramirez: Keep in mind, by the time my grandfather passed away, he was uh, he was in his 70's. All of his family, his immediate family were all grownups, each on their own and all that. Uhm...you know, again, yes I lost a loved one, but other than that uh.. no effect, you know I was an adult, mature and all that with my family and I have always believed that we are all going to die at some point, and I believe he was ready to die, uh same as my mother was, uh again they were all up in age and all led a full life, but it

gets to a point when he gets old with problems and all that, that life is not a quality life, hey it's better to pass on. And I know my time will come as you all's. It's..I have pretty well accomplished more than I ever wanted. My dreams weren't all that when I was a kid. So hey when my time comes I'm ready, I'm not looking for it, and I hope that my kids will accept it, but a person dies, and the living, they gotta go on. Yes, it's good to be remembered and all that, but other than that, nothing we can do. (silence)

Daniel Nicholson: O.K. we'll call it a close then. Thank you Mr. Ramirez.

Mr. Ramirez: Well I thank you all

Interviewee: Carrol "Kelly" Norquest, Jr.

Interviewers: Jenarae Alaniz, Joel Rodriguez, Ryann Fink, and Raul David Lopez

Date: October 28, 2012

Location: Home of Carrol "Kelly" Norquest, Jr.

Border Studies Archive Representative: Eloise Montemayor

Eloise Montemayor: Click it again. And now it's recording...

Jenarae Alaniz: Yes.

Eloise Montemayor: And uh and if you had...you can take this one on your carpet... uh your binder.

Jenarae Alaniz: Yeah.

Eloise Montemayor: And that way you can walk with it, if you guys want to walk somewhere.

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh ok.

Eloise Montemayor: Hahaha.

Jenarae Alaniz: I got it.

(Walking, rustling, branches breaking)

Eloise Montemayor: Let me help you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Quite number of years maybe...Ummm...Odie Norquest. Odie...

Joel Rodriguez: Oh yeah Odie. My dad worked with her.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh who's your dad?

Joel Rodriguez: My dad is Victor...

Eloise Montemayor: That way you can put the microphone on...and you don't have to carry them both.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Prieto yes my wife

Joel Rodriguez: Yeah

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah Caroline worked out there too.

Caroline Norquest Twist: One summer

Joel Rodriguez: One summer?

(Joel, Caroline, and Carrol laugh)

Caroline Norquest Twist: Actually high school.

Jenarae Alaniz: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Prieto is his grandfather.

Ryann Fink: Are you recording?

Jenarae Alaniz: Yeah.

Ryann Fink: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Caroline you ought to call mom and tell her...tell her that Prieto was at the sale yard and his grandson is one...You know everyone...We had about 8 groups of kids last year out here talking to different ones of us, everyone had somebody we had a connection to...

Ryann Fink: Should I start recording?

Eloise Montemayor: You can start recording...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Some were actually relatives, blood relatives...

Eloise Montemayor: that way you can get everything...

Jenarae Alaniz: Yeah a little bit more than...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Some were relatives by marriage...

Ryann Fink: Wait...it's recording right?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And others like you, someone we knew or someone we knew growing up. And Mr. Cantú's saying the same thing. He says...

Raul David Lopez: Saying about today's students?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Raul David Lopez: In this project?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah yeah...Hey did you know the one in charge of interviewing me he says turns out he was a friend of one of my children when they were...

Joel Rodriguez: Oh wow...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: When they were in school. (Mr. Norquest laughs)

Joel Rodriguez: Is the video recording?...Alright.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok.

Jenarae Alaniz: Does that mean that how...

Eloise Montemayor: You should...

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh (chuckle) let me.

(Rustling of grass, walking)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: About right where we're at...And it was taken in that direction over there and...And here's....

Joel Rodriguez: So north northwest...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And here's an enlargement that you can...you can look at.

Raul David Lopez: Thank you, sir.

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh thank you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I have two of them and if... we're standing somewhere almost approximately. Here's Sugar Road right here. You can see the difference then...that was 1951.

Jenarae Alaniz: Uh.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: You can see the difference there. Here's Chapin Street going right through...can you see the line?

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's Chapin Street going right through there...and you see those...uh...You see those two stand pipes?

Raul David Lopez: Yes

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Irrigation. There's one of them right there (someone clears throat)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: and the other one is short....shorter.

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh wow.

Raul David Lopez: Did they cut it off? (Chuckle)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah it got cut it off...I think a car hit it one time and they just left it off.

Raul David Lopez: I see.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And then you can see the difference in traffic. The difference in...

Raul David Lopez: The asphalt...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The difference in asphalt, in everything. You can see the difference across...where those trees are. You got uh...you got uh...You got subdivisions right across here...subdivisions. You're not seeing...it looks like its way out in the country...which it was...at the time.

Raul David Lopez: Not even the mesquite trees were there.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, no, not even. And what you're looking at right now of course this was a field at that time. And now it's a holding...a holding pond...a retention pond for flood waters. Now here's uh...now here's another one...a blow up. That's 200%. And this is 300% and what...in the original picture...In this small one...you see this...

Jenarae Alaniz: Here...you can move that.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh ok...You see this dark area you don't...you can't tell just what in the world that stuff is. Well...Yeah you can't tell what it is...But you get into the enlargement that 300 and apparently that's equipment that they were storing here that was used over there.

Raul David Lopez: Huh.

Joel Rodriguez: Give or take what year was this picture taken?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: This was 1951...1951.

Raul David Lopez: Did uhhh...these...uh...thank you...umm did they refer to these also as (Tories) or...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I don't know what they called them. I don't know what they called them. They uh...this...these are...now these are they pipes.

Raul David Lopez: Mmmhmmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...that go into it. And there's a man up in here that would hold, move the pipe over when they were changing pipes adding to it down here. They'd swing it over down here and he'd move it over there.

Raul David Lopez: Ok

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...and so he worked in the top there.

(Clears throat)

Raul David Lopez: And this is all because of oil not gas? It's just...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...Uh...

Raul David Lopez: Or combination?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Combination

Raul David Lopez: Ok

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What any specific one was looking for I don't know. Of course I don't know...they uh...gas became more popular later. Initially people were thinking in terms of oil. And uh they would come around...(car revving) and the oil companies and lease land from the farmers and they would...then drill and block them off and put them in blocks...and make contracts with the farmers to...to uh...so they'd get so much of the proceeds...when...when and if there was...

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Joel Rodriguez: So was there a specific business?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What's that?

Joel Rodriguez: Do you know...do you know what company was...was drilling?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I don't...uhhh...I have no...you know we got...probably got records...and this...this could even be find along with...ummm...the property land records...at the...

Raul David Lopez: County courthouse?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...Hidalgo courthouse.

Raul David Lopez: Ok perfect.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah that's where all that stuff was recorded...the land men that once were working on these contracts of leases.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's where they worked; they worked in the land records over there.

Raul David Lopez: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So all of these lands...it's all described and if you go back in ours...in our land records which they did last year. You'll be finding our names and our land and everything with these things. Registered with 'em.

Raul David Lopez: Mmmhmmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's how it can be located. How easy it is, I don't know.

(Everyone chuckles)

Raul David Lopez: Well we'll find out.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Experts...experts know where. And this is probably what you're doing with Mr. Cantú's.

Jenarae Alaniz: Yes.

Joel Rodriguez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh now what the ones did with us last year I'm not sure...I don't know what... The final reports that they published...The published reports did not get into any of it. Probably they were unaware of it because we never talked about it like we are now.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So that'd be an interesting story all of that in itself.

Joel Rodriguez: So this is one of four?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...

Joel Rodriguez: That's 19...

Raul David Lopez: ...50s

Joel Rodriguez: No no

Carrol Norquest Jr.: One...

Joel Rodriguez: ...the oil

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The drillings rigs that were around here...1 of 5.

Joel Rodriguez: Five.

Jenarae Alaniz: Five...ok

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I'll give you a map in a little bit so you can see where they're located.

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh perfect.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And you've...I think you've probably all been on the land where Mr. Cantú's...

Joel Rodriguez: Yes

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...Two of them...where two of them are.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Jenarae Alaniz: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah the one over here...where he...their headquarters may be...where they have

Raul David Lopez: Where the fruit stands at...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: fruit stand... Yeah...there was one...that was in the 1970s...and then uh...the other one with the oil...

Raul David Lopez: Next to the canal right?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Huh?

Raul David Lopez: The one next to the canal was that the first property or is that the second property we went to?

Jenarae Alaniz: The canal would be the second property.

Raul David Lopez: The second property...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The second property. Yeah there's a drain ditch to the east of it...yeah and then over here on that property you got the other drain ditch on the west of it.

Jenarae Alaniz: Mmhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The west side of it and that ones got the oil...one of the oil equipment that's still there.

Raul David Lopez and Joel Rodriguez: Mmmhmmmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Or at least part of it or some of it. Now that one I think was drilled probably at the same time this one was.

Raul David Lopez and Joel Rodriguez: In 1951?

Jenarae Alaniz: 51.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's when I think it was. I have no exact remembrance of it. But based on when I became aware of it...and when other activity was going on...My best guess is it was drilled...I'm contemporary with that one.

Jenarae Alaniz: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Two others were drilled, the one over here where the fruit stand is. That one was drilled in the 70s...Along with one just north of us...It was drilled in the 70s. They were specifically looking for gas.

Raul David Lopez: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: These I believe were looking for oil if I was to guess they were looking for oil but would have taken gas if they found it. And the one under the Wellness Center they were probably looking for oil.

(Everyone chuckles)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So uh...

Jenarae Alaniz: And when did the...the one where the [UTPA] Wellness Center is...when did they dig, drill...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The best guess I have it must have been around 1941 or 42.

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: 42 or 43.be sometime between 1940 and forty...forty-four...Probably between 1940 and 44...the early forties.

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It would have been...there's this little story I can tell...

Jenarae Alaniz: Of course.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Pertaining to that, so that if...I wanted you to see this while it was still daylight.

Raul David Lopez: Well thank you so much sir.

Jenarae Alaniz: Yeah it makes more sense.

(Walking to seats, rustling of grass)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What did your mother say?

Caroline Norquest Twist: She asked how Joey's doing.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What's that?

Joel Rodriguez: Joey? Oh yes he's doing fine.

Caroline Norquest Twist: Oh good.

Joel Rodriguez: Joey.

Caroline Norquest Twist: She was concerned.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yes, We used to see him quite a bit at Whataburger.

Joel Rodriguez: Yeah... Yes he used to work there.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Is he working somewhere now?

Joel Rodriguez: Yes, he's working at Chick-Fil-A I think.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: At where?

Joel Rodriguez: My uncle Joey, yeah, he's working at Chick-Fil-A I think.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh ok, well we ought to...uh...

(Adjusting seating and setting down Tascam)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Any other questions pertaining to that we can continue with that same discussion on that...On the...uh...the video I guess. I have....I have a couple more pictures I can show you that my brother, Erik took from, Rikki took, He took from up here in the house...this one is the uh...another picture of that rig. Now it was a...At that time the technology was a jack knife rig...

Joel Rodriguez: Jack knife.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: You see how they're...

Raul David Lopez: And this is the same property that we are referring to?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's a...Yeah that's a picture of the rig...that's a picture of the rig...yes that's the same one. That's the same one...This one...These two pictures here...this is when they were raising it or lowering it...you see that's why they would call it a jack knife.

Raul David Lopez: Oh...yes sir...ok...thank you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And this one here...you can see the stand pipes and everything...and this one is laying down. I don't know if that's when they were raising it or lowering it after they finished...But I thought that would be of interest to you so you can get an idea in your mind what the rig was like.

Raul David Lopez: Thank you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...And that was the one from the 1950s...

Joel Rodriguez: 1950s?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah well....yeah 1951. I made...uh...I made some maps for you....A map I don't know how many you want but anyway...

Joel Rodriguez: Uh...this is excellent...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: This shows the...uh...well I'll tell you... I'll just give 'em to you and then I can explain it to you so you can find these things. As you're...Of course as you're looking... As you're looking at these different places you can see how the...uh...rural...rural

Raul David Lopez: And these are the five oil rigs

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Raul David Lopez: That you're talking about?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah going around and looking at these different places you can see as far as from rural to urban. You'll be able...What you were looking at was rural here.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir

Carrol Norquest Jr.: These pictures here...that's rural gives you an idea.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: As you go into these different locations you can see how it's either transitioning into urban or where it has become urban. Like the wellness center.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And all the apartments that are around there.

Joel Rodriguez: This is the wellness center. Right?...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Joel Rodriguez: This is the Cantú property?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Joel Rodriguez: This is the second Cantú property?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...

Joel Rodriguez: This is where you are? This is where we are?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's where we are.

Joel Rodriguez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And that's the...and this...Clear up at the top is the...the one that has the oil...the oil equipment...

Raul David Lopez: Ok

That's over at mile 17 ½. Just north of us, a half a mile to the west.

Raul David Lopez: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, You can see how that I've highlighted the names of the streets there.

Raul David Lopez: Yes. (Coughs)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And that...this...this yellow block right there...That's where we are right now...that's the uh...our farmstead here...this part right there.

Raul David Lopez: Ok, so then this X...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And that's the one you were looking at...yeah.

Jenarae Alaniz: Yeah, So we were looking at this one and I assuming we've been to these two...because these should be...That should be Mr. Cantú's.

Joel Rodriguez: Yes.

Raul David Lopez: And the second property.

Joel Rodriguez: We've been to this one and this one. This is the one we have not been to.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right these are the two you've been to...right...this one...this one was originally part of our farm and Mr. Cantú is farming it right now.

Raul David Lopez: This one here sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That one...yeah...it's directly north of us...if you look when you get up there the open land that you see...there's what looks like a pile of brush...brush piled up.

Raul David Lopez: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Where they cleared some of the land and it's piled up there as if they're going to burn it someday. Well that's where that well was located. This one right here if you were to walk out there you can find what's left of that well because there's a pipe sticking up in the air. Like this. And It's got a small...small iron little fence around to keep the tractors off of it. So if you walk right out there now you can find that and then the other one the next one just north of us I think it's under that pile of brush.

Raul David Lopez: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: You would have to dig it out to find it. I think that's why the brush was piled there.

Raul David Lopez: To hide the oil rig?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...uh...I have...In more recent years...there's been some pretty tough laws I understand about the oil companies, going down and sealing those things off underground. But when these were done they haven't...they didn't do that...even the one with Mr. Cantú's...they even left a lot of the old earth works and stuff over there. They never cleaned up. Uh...and the way...the way oil companies went and merged everything...why

there's probably no way of getting back and making them go do it either...So any-ways...that's

Raul David Lopez: Well my question...in relation to this... (Cough)...and if you don't mind me

Joel Rodriguez: Oh no...go for it.

Raul David Lopez: ...asking this one. Mr. Norquest what would you say...uh...With these oil rigs being constructed so they can extract oil from underneath the ground...would you say it altered local agriculture dramatically or drastically...or it was basically left alone where agriculture by the local farmers here in this area continued like it was without any interruption.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No it continued like it was...uh...there was...I guess where it would impact people is where they did strike gas or strike oil. With our ranchers north of here or even in the case of what is now farmland. For the farmers if they struck oil or gas...if it was any quantity of course...they changed their whole lives.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Most of the time though, like I'm thinking of Walt Gutenfelder. A farmer who was north of here, northeast of here. Uh...he came down from Iowa when he retired. He'd been in the café business up there and bought a little ranch over here. Whole farming and ranching and even had cattle...They struck oil on this land...and it was not enough to uh...it was not enough to change from what he was doing. But it enabled him to do it.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It was a small amount and when they do if it's on farmland...on ranchland...back up to ranch land. On ranch land well the owner owned a whole bunch of land...And of course the oil and gas...and he gets royalties from all of it since his land is a large area. But farmers they had... Irrigated farmers especially their land was smaller, in smaller segments.

Raul David Lopez: I see.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And what the land men would do that were putting together a unit for a well they would go to all the different farmers around there and get enough for say 640 acres in a block and then maybe there'd be 10 different farmers from 10 or 12 or 15 different pieces of land. Maybe you had 5 acres of land maybe you had 40, maybe you had 80 and you'd get royalties based on the percentage of land that you had.

Raul David Lopez: Oh ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So if they were getting \$1000...\$1000 per month out of that well. I have no idea what they would be getting. It would be divided up accordingly...the \$1000.

Raul David Lopez: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So it might just put (Raul clears throat) enough in their pockets so they didn't need to worry where the food was coming from anymore

Raul David Lopez: Correct.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Or where they could comfortably, like Walt Guttenfelder, comfortably in his retirement do all the kind farming he wanted just for the fun of it.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And if someone owned the whole lot of 640 acres, wells...wells lease then they'd get the whole amount...the whole \$1000.

Raul David Lopez: He'd reap all the benefits instead of dividing it with the other farmers

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right.

Raul David Lopez: Because in this case he would own all the land.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Then uh in order when they were wanting to set up the rig they would con they would con contact all the farmers or the owners of the land and make contracts with them to that they could legally go in and drill and and and when you have a binding contract you get so much of the royalties and so forth. Um and you wouldn't you wouldn't allow anyone else to come in and drill they'd have exclusive rights to it over a certain period of time and uh so they'd tie it up that way and they'd pay you uh a certain amount of uh money to do that on a on a yearly basis. Maybe they'd lease it for ten years so they could sometime in those ten years if they wanted they could drill on it so everyday you'd get your basic, its basically like renting land under the ground.

(David exhales)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So that's and that's with us that's basically all the money we ever got was whatever those leases would be. It was not a huge amount but it was nice to have a little bonus (both Mr. Norquest and David laugh) come in.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Out of these five wells...the uh (Mr. Norquest coughs) excuse me. The one with the oil over here produced for quite a number of years but I don't think it produced much.

Raul David Lopez: mmhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The others the one where Mr. Cantú is his home I mean his headquarters where his parents live and the one up here that's under the brush pile we were in both both those leases our farm here and we did get some money out, they found gas and we got I think about three thousand dollars for one and about maybe a thousand dollars for other before it all turned into salt water. So that was our particular fifty acres (car passes by) with all the other farms around here maybe got the same amount. Then it turned to salt water and that's why they are all plugged up.
(coughing)

Raul David Lopez: Those oil wells after being uh pumped out completely of oil there's nothing but salt water underneath, or

Carrol Norquest Jr.: At that uh...you know your geology (both David and Mr. Norquest laughing) teacher could probably answer that better than I could because salt I've heard that salt and salt domes and so forth, it kinda goes together with the uh geology that they're looking for when they're looking for oil and gas but I don't know just how.

Raul David Lopez: Maybe the salt

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That'd be a good question to ask

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir. I'll ask uh

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Mr. Gonzalez, is that his name? Ya

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir, Dr. Gonzalez

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I understand when he found out about these wells he was just overjoyed (both laughing) so, hey Patrick.

(Patrick enters the patio)

Patrick Twist: Hi everybody

Carrol Norquest Jr.: We got another another gang over here (laughing). This is Caroline's husband Patrick Twist

Raul David Lopez: Hello sir my names Raul.

(Patrick greets everyone)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Both Patrick and Caroline are both graduates of Pan-Am

Ryann Fink: Hi I'm Ryan nice to meet you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: We just been talking about these oil wells here, Patrick

Patrick Twist: Oh, across the road?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ya, have Caroline show you the pictures there. Oh I made some blow ups, she might want to show you those too. He hadn't seen em. Oh, go ahead.

Joel Rodriguez: I have one quick question. Could you discuss the relationship between farmers in Edinburg?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Do what?

Joel Rodriguez: Could you discuss the relationships between farmers in Edinburg?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh ya, you know that's a interesting, interesting question um and that's a change that's something that's changed through the years. The um (long pause) farmers are very independent people and so throughout the years I'm thinking back to when my grandfather came here and then through the years how things changed, farming technology and everything which and um changing to urban settings and so forth it changed it changes the relationship between them. When my father and his father came here they came here and they were farming together. Uh your neighbors this house was here and then neighbors maybe half a mile away and the next farm house another half mile away over here and a quarter of a mile down this way and so forth and there were no, no communications. You didn't have telephones. You could walk over to their house you could get on a horse and go over or uh if uh if you had gasoline for the model T-Ford well you could go, (Raul laughing)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: During the depression you didn't have money for it

Raul David Lopez: Yes

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And during World War two it was rationed and you hardly had the money. So uh they tended to in some ways help each other out more during those days even though the distance was there they got they got a little closer together and they knew the people around them as neighbors and they'd help each. I don't know other things about that other than what I heard from my father

Raul David Lopez: Mmhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Stories about him about things. When my grandmother was dying one neighbor that lived down there quarter half mile uh came over and helped out. She was somewhat of a nurse I believe and helped out with her and uh and then when they had other things, other problems or other things that they needed to get together and help with they did it. Not in large groups but just as neighbors would if in town if neighbors are helping, if you were on good terms with your neighbors around.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Helping each other out you know and I do know that they had. This was the largest house around, all the other farm houses were one story this was big this was a big one that was uh put in uh they it was actually a show show house brought farmers down here to induce them to buy land here. So they did have social activities here. They had dances in a big living room they had here. My grandfather was a fiddler, a Swedish fiddler my grandparents came from Sweden on my father's side.

Raul David Lopez: Yes

Carrol Norquest Jr.: They were immigrants from Sweden and he was a fiddler, a Swedish fiddler they'd have dances and he'd do the fiddling and my uh my father would play with him on the piano

Raul David Lopez: Mmhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: He'd play with him on the piano and they had dances and gatherings like that and uh other places. I remember one time my mother and when she married my father in 1934 and she moved they moved out here while my father got together with some of the other farmers' wives around here made a surprise birthday party for her and that was at somebody else's house. So they did things but I don't know too many details about them.

Raul David Lopez: (cough) you mentioned that this house next year will be one hundred years old, sir?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Next year

Raul David Lopez: One hundred years

Carrol Norquest Jr.: One hundred, 1913 is when it was built right

Raul David Lopez: 1913

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right

Ryann Fink: Will there be any parties?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What's that?

Ryann Fink: Will there be a party?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (laughing) Ya you know hey you know you're going to have to ask them.

Raul David Lopez: Patrick!

Carrol Norquest Jr.: They're living here so ask them.

Patrick Twist: (inaudible voice)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Birthday party Patrick you might think about it. But uh then during the depression I know they helped each other out and uh nobody had anything they didn't have money they didn't have money to go money to the to buy gas even.

Raul David Lopez: Correct.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And uh so I know they helped out swapped each other with each other and then into the 1940s when the war was going when things were coming along way, farming got more intense and then into the 1950s after the war why you had better farming technology. Farms grew they consolidated farmers become more isolated from each other. Other people were moving in the urban areas were starting to grow and then uh later into the 70s where you had the farm equipment went from two row machines to four row to six row to eight row to ten row and it became so you became you got farmers that now could farm many acres of land many hundreds of acres of land and the smaller farmers were squeezed out and there was not the uh the close neighborly relationship anymore we're taking you through the years. And then many of them like uh and that's why you don't have many of them on the land around here too they the smaller farmers were forced out or they died or

Raul David Lopez: Or they sold off their land

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Or they sold off their land because of the urban growth. And uh their children did not want to hassle with farming they were getting educated they didn't want to be out doing the labor in the fields anymore and uh so forth so the dynamics changed here. But one thing that I was thinking about cooperation among the farmers it took a different turn because in the even as early as the 1930s I think they formed together in a co-op for the citrus.

Raul David Lopez: Okay.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ya the farmers instead of other people coming in and big companies shipping out all the fruit and everything and the produce and so forth. They got together and formed a formed a citrus association where they owned the association and they were all members of it they were all owners of their own packing shed and they'd ship it out and they'd sell it up north that way and they had quite a number of them in the valley in the 1940s and into the 1950s and uh on into the 60s also and they even formed a co-op where they could take the fruit that was not good for the fresh market but was had some blemishes or something and it had cause.. they built a juice plant in Weslaco that was a co-op they all shared in the profits

Raul David Lopez: Mmhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And uh they all shared in the losses they shared in everything you know and it was they were the owners they had meetings they had a board of directors and so forth. And then they also did that at one time with a vegetable co-op. That did not last many years for some or whatever reason I think it had something to do with the drought 1950s and some of the freezes it was a little more of a touchy thing for a group of farmers to do. Citrus was more stable they also formed cotton gins and there are still cotton there was one in Edinburg. Farmers got together and had a cotton gin right here in town right here on right now there is a parking lot for Pan-Am and it's on top of where the gin was by the railroad and uh (laughing) and that's at Shunior and Sixth street I believe it is. Right there, there is still the old co-op office building is still there the University didn't tear it down it's still it's still there.

Raul David Lopez: I believe Sixth street just uh maybe going on a little less than a year ago or probably a year ago exactly it got paved and uh whereas before it was a dirt road.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ya the uh that's been the history of things here they had. Another thing they formed uh oh ya there was along with the cotton they formed a grain elevator, a co-op grain elevator here in town and other places not just here in Edinburg but the other places they had it. It also was located, hey you all getting chilly?
(Everyone laughs and says "I'm fine")

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okay, the uh the grain elevator was there and as Edinburg grew and they and homes and subdivisions grew around there, there was complaints about the dust and everything from the uh grain elevator from the cotton gin and so forth so eventually they moved them out of town. Azteca Milling right here they moved over to that location the citrus association is over there right now

Raul David Lopez: Mmhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And uh the Edinburg Citrus Association. It's still a growing concern the grain elevator eventually was sold to Azteca Milling and they started grinding corn for tortillas there.

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So that's that was originally a farmers' co-op for grain. Another co-op was uh (coughing) for electricity and that is now what is called Magic Valley Electric Company that was the REA the Rural Electrification Act that came uh it was passed in the 1930s where farmers could where they could band together to get electricity out to the farms.

Raul David Lopez: Oh I see.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And it was about 19 around 1940 when we first got electricity here. Before we didn't have electricity at the house when I grew up we didn't have any electricity we didn't have uh we didn't have telephones we didn't have electricity we didn't have indoor plumbing you know that all came later so.
(Everyone laughing)

Raul David Lopez: I can only imagine has to how the lifestyle was.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Let's see now that's this is this is these are some examples of how farmers worked together I guess and I guess they still uh I quit I wanted to farm here with my dad and but like other farmers the economy we were small farmers

Raul David Lopez: Mmhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I had polio I didn't have the strength to really do that and uh so I ended up working for the Texas Employment Commission many years and uh we still kept the land had cattle on it and so forth but uh and we row cropping. Another way farmers would help each other out was to rent each other's land which like Mr. Cantú does, like we did, and like other farmer s that I know of rented ours after I had to quit farming.

Raul David Lopez: Where they would rent out their land to other people so they could work the land.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ya mhm well you know as an interesting that's a way farmers uh that's the way farms are here it's not they're not like ranches. Uh Mr. Cantú whom you're working with, he doesn't own much land but he rents it around. Okay most farmers do that they'll have a certain a certain core amount of land area that's their land that they may have had for generations and then as farms have gotten bigger and agricultural uh agriculture and uh farms have gotten bigger.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: They've had to rent more land from other people that are not farming that maybe were farmers or that maybe somebody else owns it. So with the result uh part of your farming is on your own land part of its leased.

Raul David Lopez: I see.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And even ranchers are that way too they do that ranch a ranch will be have maybe five thousand acres and they'll maybe rent out another twenty from the government or from someone else.

Raul David Lopez: Or lease it out to hunters (laughing).

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Well that's a new uh that's a new innovation over the last number of years. Where they're finding this type of thing

Raul David Lopez: Oh okay

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Gets to be more lucrative than raising the beef. When they find that uh for recreational purposes

Raul David Lopez: Yes

Carrol Norquest Jr.: uh find other ways of using the land, ya.

Joel Rodriguez: Well that was my question.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That was your question.

Joel Rodriguez: Yes that was my question so.

(Everyone laughs)

Raul David Lopez: My bad.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh okay

Joel Rodriguez: So you want to go?

Raul David Lopez: I've got one more question for you, sir. (Coughing) Well, maybe two

Jenarae Alaniz & Joel Rodriguez: That's alright go for it.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Now when you get done you'll probably think of a dozen others but that's the way that's the way It always goes.

Raul David Lopez: Well you mentioned that in the 1940s during World War two and a little bit during the 1950s how agriculture was becoming a little more technologically inclined

Carrol Norquest Jr.: mmhmm.

Raul David Lopez: Would you say that um with the uh this equipment being introduced did it make or did it did agriculture go through that transition were it used to be traditional and no its becoming more uh mechanized slash commercialized during the 40s and 50s? Would you say those were the two decades that were the ones uh that uh basically took place?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: uh.

Raul David Lopez: Or not necessarily?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I would say 50s and 60s

Raul David Lopez: 50s and 60s

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ya I'm thinking your question makes me think back when uh in the 1920s what they had when they came down and then the 30s there was transition there and then the 40s um I'm thinking as I go along.

Raul David Lopez: Yes sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The 40s have a transition then the 50s another and 60s another one then the 70s. Each decade each decade I would say the uh. Want me to go through some of them?

Raul David Lopez: Sure. Absolutely!

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okay, well when my father came down here his dad was his dad was up in age he died five years after they arrived here my dad my grandfather traded his farm in Kansas and moved down here for health purposes and he farmed my dad and he went partnership.

Raul David Lopez: Okay.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: and they brought to my dad came down here uh on what he called an immigrant car on the railroad and brought the equipment they didn't sell to other farmers leave in Kansas. Came down on an immigrant car and took about a week to get down here and he was bringing four mules he was bringing uh bringing horse drawn equipment of all kinds and that's what they started with in the 1920s. They started with their mules and doing it uh doing their farming that way.

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: and uh their plowing their planting their harvesting and everything. They even there was even a hand scythe where you cut hay with by hand you know one of those big blades like that.

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: that was we still got it out here.

Raul David Lopez: Curved right?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ya mmhmm.

Raul David Lopez: Like a half moon?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...they were kind of using both—both things. See, tractors are pretty primitive to what we think of now.

Raul David Lopez: Yes

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And then in the 30s, they... the Depression hit, and they pretty much struggled along with the—with the tractor. I know they had a tractor then; again it was a little more primitive. By then they were pretty much out of the—of course they still did work with a combination of horse drawn equipment and—and some tractors.

Raul David Lopez: OK

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The tractor did the heavy work; the tractor did the other: hay bailing, cutting and other stuff like that. Then... The second World War came and now we're getting to the 1940s, and my uncle came out here to farm with my dad—one of my mother's brothers—they farmed together. Between them they had a couple of tractors by then. And I'm remembering that as a kid. They were no longer using the horses, other than maybe to ride around here once in a while; you know...go somewhere.

Raul David Lopez: Yes

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Or for some special purpose. But they, uh, they had those tractors and they were somewhat of an upgrade from what they had in the late 20s and the 30s. And they had, uh, they were doing planting and about all the crop work with them. Uh, but it was two-row equipment and it was, uh, what we'd think now, like I said, rather primitive.

[cough] Another problem in the 40s, the war was on and they were starting to get money. The money was starting to flow because they needed, they needed crops. They needed money, I mean they needed, uh, food for the whole war effort.

Joel Rodriguez: So then the money came from the government?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, because they needed to feed all the thousands, hundreds of thousands of troops they had.

Joel Rodriguez: Oh, I see

Carrol Norquest Jr.: They had to have uniforms for ‘em. They had to have boots for ‘em. They had to have, you know, stuff you were raised on the farm. So the farmers were able to, uh, able to start, uh, getting returns for whatever crops they had. But the funny thing about it was, everything was rationed. Gasoline was rationed. Rubber tires were rationed for cars and, and you had to have, uh, you had a certain allotment of gasoline that you could buy, I mean you had coupons where you had to buy it and where you had to present you were gonna buy it. Everybody, it was rationed to everybody. Farmers were a little bit exempt from that because they were producing food and stuff for the whole war effort.

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And so, uh, that’s when, uh, that’s when—that’s when farmers started making some money and getting themselves out of the depression, but they couldn’t buy any new equipment, there’s no, there’s just none being manufactured. All the war effort was going to make tanks and guns and that’s where all of our horse drawn equipment was out there on the other side of the corrals, over there where the other houses are. All of that went to the, uh, that went into the, uh, scrap piles for the scrap iron that would be melted down, made into guns and tanks and trucks and everything; that’s where all of that went. They would collect, the government was collecting it from everybody, everywhere. Patriotic, you gave it to ‘em. And besides, by then, you had, you didn’t need all that horse drawn equipment so much anymore. So it was just sitting around here rusting.

Raul David Lopez: Becoming obsolete...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. And so my uncle and my dad, along with other farmers, they farmed with the two row equipment, and, uh, during those years all the young men were gone to the war and of course they were depending on the Mexicans, the illegals to come across and do all the—do all the farm work and help out with the harvesting and everything. So that’s the way it went through the 40s. Then after the 40s, manufacturing started and everything. They started making new tractors and farmers had to get on lists because they couldn’t make them as fast as they needed them. And, and uh, they started, and then by, uh, the uh—and then of course the Valley was hit by a very bad drought at that time.

Joel Rodriguez: A drought?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, during the early 50s. It was really bad. There was no Falcon Dam, Amistad or anything. I mean, the river was dry and a lot of farmers quit and left, but they had better equipment to work with now. My father was able to get some new tractors, finally. But they had to wait for them. And, uh, and that’s what they did in the 1950s. And then by the time they got into the 60s, technologically they were making better equipment then, so that’s when the cotton-pickers, the early 60s, late 50s—cotton-pickers were developed. There’s a one-row cotton picker at first that fit on the tractor. Then it was a two row cotton picker. And then, uh, the country was prospering so, uh, costs of farming were going up and the costs of equipment were going up. Tractors, if you wanted to buy a new tractor it cost a lot more than [unintelligible]. Minimum wages, congress was setting minimum wages to go up and it became more expensive to farm. New government regulations at all times and farmers by then were producing surpluses of crops. And, uh, because of the new technology they had, and they were developing hybrid corn and other scientific developments that way. Plants, better ways of growing plants, fertilizer they could use. They were getting poisons now, that could control the insects, and all kinds of new technologies and methods and uh, and then along with it came government regulations. Farm wages were going up.

Minimu—Every time the minimum wage would go up, it got more expensive for hand labor of any kind. And so then they start going from two-row machines to four-row.

Joel Rodriguez: It's a compass.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And then, on through the 60s, things continued. Then you got six-row machines. And then, on into the 70s, it was just kind of a cycle like that. Your smaller farmers just went out of business, or they had to lease their land out to some other farmer, go find a job somewhere else. Getting better educated so by the time you got into the 70s, and on into the 80s, you had your large corporate farms everywhere coming in. And a lot of our Valley farmers even were going to Mexico in the 60s. Starting in the late 60s, early 70s, they were moving their operations to Mexico, because the labor was over there now. It wasn't coming over here anymore. All the hand labor they had just, uh, they uh, they could not afford to pay the kind of wages here. So a lot of our produce business went over there.

Raul David Lopez: Mostly citrus or any particular...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Well yeah, they had uh, citrus, vegetables, all kinds of—this is Othal Brand; that's where he got started. I can name you half a dozen farmers I knew that farmed here that moved, that actually moved down there. Even cotton gin, the guy who had been the manager of the co-op cotton gin for many years moved to Mexico over there to run the cotton gins over there because it was

Joel Rodriguez: Economically feasible?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. A lot of these folks are moving and going over there.

Raul David Lopez: Would you say, Mr. Norquest, that a majority of these farmers who could afford more equipment, were they paying it off like, through credit or did they get loans and then they were paying off the government or the banks or...how did that work?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: [laughs] All of the above. Anyway you could get the money. Hey, that's another credit for the Valley. I mean, the farmers banded together. The Valley Production Credit Association, that was a co-op where they were able to form, like, I guess you know like the credit unions they have now?

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It was similar to that, only it was for farmers. You could get your crop loans. Banks didn't do that. You know, they wanted something more solid than that, and I think that was set up, I think that was some kind of act of Congress that made that available where the government guaranteed. I don't know for sure, but I think so. Anyway, I know when we're gonna plant the crop. My dad would go down, and even when I was farming, go down and get a loan for the coming crop year. Estimate what you're gonna need and uh, and what you're gonna need to live on and so forth. When the crops came in, you paid it back. Banks were not set up to do that kind of thing. It was too risky for them to try and do that. But it was a very, I don't know whether that organization is still going or not, but it sure was when we were farming.

Raul David Lopez: I see. [pause] I'll let her sit down for a while]

Jenarae Alaniz: They pretty much asked everything I was thinking of, there's just one other thing, because we're the only girls. Were there like, any female farmers, any female landowners at all? At any point?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What now?

Jenarae Alaniz: Were there any female, any women farmers or landowners?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh, [long pause] actually it was a farming operation, actually. I know there were, but not necessarily independently. I can't really give you any specific names, but I know there were women involved.

Jenarae Alaniz: Oh, ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Involved in it. Basically a farm, farm operation was basically the whole family involved. Like my mother. You might say she was the general financial manager of the whole thing. She...[laughs]

Jenarae Alaniz: [laughs] She made it run smoothly.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, she did. [laughs] Yeah she did that. My dad did all the outdoor work and everything and he went down and argued with the credit association when they needed more money and all these kinds of things. And my mother had the bank. She had the checkbook she did all that...

Jenarae Alaniz: She kept the ledger together.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Then of course, the property it's, uh, it's owned in common; the man and the woman both. So my mother was part owner of the farm. And that's the way, I guess, that's the way it is here in Texas. I've forgotten the legal term for it. But that's what...So they owned it..it, uh, and that's the way it probably was with just most of them. And, of course, the wife primarily took care of the children, but then, the way a farmer's life was, while he was very involved, like my father, very involved with raising the children too. It was just...and then the kids [laughs] the kids were part of the labor part. We all worked out in the fields. We picked cotton, we hoed weeds, we did, we took care of the cows, the chickens, everybody was

Jenarae Alaniz: Everybody was a part of it.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It was a joint effort, but uh...And I guess when a wife would lose her husband that was a farmer, why, uh, she'd take over and run it. Run the whole operation because somebody had to. Of course, she'd figure out what to do later on. And then, as far as payroll with the hands we had when we were picking cotton and stuff like that, my mother did a lot of the work on that. Keeping the books straight. She was a bookkeeper when she was young, so she knew, talking about our own particular family. So in a nutshell, that's kind of the way it was. Now, unless you have any other specific questions...

Jenarae Alaniz: No, I kind of figured it would be a joint partnership, but I was just wondering if maybe there were any...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, women could get out and work in the fields, drive tractors and do things too, you know? And as far as starting in the early days, I'm thinking back, you know farmers did, the family did most of the work; that's one reason you had large families back then.

[all laugh]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: My grandfather, my mother's grandfather, he had 13 kids, and that's how he developed a big farm in Illinois. He was able to have—that was his workforce, you know! Then, the same way with my grandfather, her father, he had 11 children here in the Valley, same way with him. Then more recent farmers, nowadays, they don't have large families to do that, and if they did have a large family, they'd have to farm so much land that the family couldn't handle it. It would just be totally impossible. You don't get that much return on your acreage—you have to have a lot of acreage to have..

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...have a decent income.

Raul David Lopez: You said your grandfather on your father's side had 11 children?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Let's see, no, my mother's father; she was the oldest of the 11. Right here in McAllen.

Raul David Lopez: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right here in McAllen

Raul David Lopez: This is on your mother's side..ok

Carrol Norquest Jr.: On my mother's side. On my father's side, my father was one of 7,8,9...no. 10. 9 or 10 children, my father was. 3 of whom died. Two twins when they were little, then he had a sister who was about 6 when she died. So that left 7 of them.

Raul David Lopez: Oh, I see.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Now right here, with us, there was 7 of us, so there were plenty of us to help out.

[laughter and indistinct chatter]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So through the years, families have gotten smaller.

Raul David Lopez: If you guys don't mind me asking one more question?

Group: No.

Raul David Lopez: This question Mr. Norquest is on language.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: On what?

Raul David Lopez: On language, yes Sir.

Raul David Lopez: You mentioned your grandparents were Swedish immigrants?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yes.

Raul David Lopez: I take it that when they immigrated to the United States, language for them was a bit of a challenge because they were now having to learn English, but I would like for you to talk a little about that if you can and then talk a little about when they decided to move down to the Valley particularly your father and how the Spanish language down here was a bit of a challenge for them if it was at all and if it wasn't how did they learn to incorporate it into their daily lives if you don't mind Sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And then go on to this current generation.

Raul David Lopez: Yes starting off with your Swedish grandparents and then going on to the Spanish language with your father and your mother.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah I will go through with, Ok.

Raul David Lopez: You mentioned your father and your mother are from the Midwest or were from the Midwest? From the states of Iowa and Illinois correct?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah my mother is from Illinois, they were German.

Raul David Lopez: Your mom is from German extraction? Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. Ok. Okey dokey. Let's go back to my Swedish grandparents. My Swedish grandparents they came over from Sweden when they were young and they of course their parents came over too. They all spoke Swedish, Swedes assimilate very quickly. My great grandfather when he came and brought his children, the first thing he bought when they got to New York was a bible that was half Swedish and half English. So he started learning English and he worked on the railroad in Nebraska until they could get a farm they had the Homestead Act over there and got a farm and started farming and they learned English right away of course they continued speaking Swedish, my father continued speaking Swedish my father grew up speaking English and Swedish both. When they came down here, my grandfather even though he was born and educated in Sweden, he never went past the second grade the grandfather that lived right here but my dad said that when his father died in 1929 he would not have gone up against him in a spelling match in the English language which my grandfather had gotten that accustomed to it. Now my father then when he got here, they been here about five years, my father had been down here for five years and they started the Edinburg Junior College here, in 1927 this week they are celebrating no next week

Raul David Lopez: 85 years.

Jenarae Alaniz: No it's this coming week they are celebrating it.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: yeah this week. My dad and his sister my aunt Florence, who lived right here they were in the first class that they had there at the Junior College they were in

the first class and my father signs up there to study Spanish so that is what he studied while he was there. Of course we not only had Midwestern farmers around down here but also Mexican farmers and neighbors too and my Dad got with them right away and started learning Spanish with them and then when he did hiring before us kids came along and he was hiring other people to help around here while he had been studying Spanish in college and he just became very fluent in Spanish that way. So when he died he had or knew three languages.

Raul David Lopez: He spoke three languages? English, Swedish, and Spanish.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Spanish.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Then my mother, well my mother's first language was German. The Germans held onto their language much longer so my mother did not learn English until she went to school and they forced her to learn English it got kind of rough and they would swat her on the hand if she did not speak English which made my grandfather very mad. They came down in 1911 my great grandfather bought land down in McAllen around McColl Road and my mother's family they and her father which eventually had 11 children here, he had nine at that time when they moved down here in 1914 and of course my uncles, well I don't know if my grandfather learned Spanish, German was his main language but English also and he moved from the farm and became a businessman in McAllen and they owned a cotton gin and produce place but I don't know if he ever learned any Spanish or not but all my uncles were pretty fluent in Spanish and all of my brothers were pretty fluent and my mother knew Spanish too she picked up Spanish a lot and here on the farm also and on the farm we would use Spanish all the time my dad and the workers that came here with, all the wetbacks that worked for us for many years that were good friends of ours and everything we all used Spanish here, some of us more fluently than others.

Raul David Lopez: Are you fluent in Spanish?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I wouldn't call, I speak Spanish, but yeah I wouldn't call myself fluent but I would use it for many years at the Texas Employment Commission after I used it on the farm, but yeah I can speak Spanish.

Raul David Lopez: What about any Swedish?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I know some Swedish, I know words but I know more German than Swedish.

Raul David Lopez: German? Is it because of your mother?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yes because of my mother. My mother and other people that we know that were of German extraction here friends and neighbors especially at church. We are Lutherans. Which Scandinavians and Germans many of them are. That is another thing cooperation among the farmers here many of them Midwesterners and quite a bit of Lutherans and that is how our Lutheran Church got founded these farmers it was a rural farm a whole bunch of farmers got together and founded that church and so that is another way that they helped each other that way and plus church is a good way to see each other and socialize and if somebody was in trouble help each other and we are musicians also all of us, my dad and my mom saw to that. So we have been involved in that, years are called our lives, bands and symphonies orchestras we have all played in the symphony orchestra and sung in the chora here with the university here and help found the beginnings of it and everything through the years and when we get together there is always music put together for our barbecues and whatever parties and so forth and we sing a lot our sister Dixie and Neil they play the guitar anyway we sing songs in four languages, English, Swedish, German, and Spanish.

Raul David Lopez: Holy Cow!!!

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah of course my wife is from Mexico. She has dual citizenship. Caroline's mother, my wife and so we within our family our extended family there is a lot of Spanish. Spanish and English both

So we got relatives that only know Spanish and we got relatives in Mexico.

Raul David Lopez: What state in Mexico is she from?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: She is from Tamaulipas from Mier on the border. Yeah her family has been down here for 300 years I have traced her family back that far. So we are just multicultural.

Raul David Lopez: Yeah absolutely.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah and then you go into the next generation and it gets even worse. It gets even worse. Patrick here is Scottish and Irish and my daughter Caroline that is Caroline here, but my other daughter Catherine she married a young man out here from Sebastian who is in the Border Patrol stationed in Rio Grande City. They live here with their little kids. She married a young man Modesto Vazquez his mother is part Anglo and his father is part Navajo Indian as well as Mexican. So my little grandkids have gotten a mixture of all that. One of Neil's daughters married a young man that was born in Cambodia and he came here after the Vietnam War you know and they live in Colorado but he is from Cambodia.

Raul David Lopez: Holy Cow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: One of his other daughters married a cousin from one of my brother-in-laws Eddie Flores is his name and he has been here forever and so let see oh my brother Erik who took these pictures his son is married to a young lady from Taiwan so I've got this little niece that is Taiwanese. They live in Arizona so you get down to the next generation and it gets even more interesting and add more languages to the group, but that is what America is. That is what the United States is.

Raul David Lopez: Laughs and so does the rest of the group.

Raul David Lopez: Multicultural and interesting huh?

Raul David Lopez: You mentioned that your mother when she would speak German that they would look down upon her or would scold at her for speaking German?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. At school you hear about teachers getting after kids speaking Spanish but they did that with the Germans. As a matter of fact it was even rougher during World War One because the government closed down; you see there were a lot of parochial or church schools.

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That were taught in German, Lutheran or Catholic and all and they forced them during those years, they forced them to quit using German in the schools and even suspected of them in the church services using German and they really repressed the German language there and even during the Second World War here right here in Mission some people were interred somewhere like they did with the Japanese because of their German background.

Raul David Lopez: In Mission?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Raul David Lopez: Was it because of the Anti-German sentiment because of the

Carrol Norquest Jr.: War.

Raul David Lopez: Because it all stirred up because Germany was the enemy?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Well because they all like Mexicans here they all had ties in Germany and had relatives there and they were highly suspect because of that. They still had ties to the old country maybe they're spies you know they did that with the Japanese during the Second World War.

Raul David Lopez: Correct.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I heard a lot about that. If this was also happening in the First World War with those kind of anti-people whatever you want to call it, ah they just didn't trust them so they made laws and rules where they could no longer speak German, they could no longer print the German newspapers, and they could no longer teach the kids in German at the schools.

Raul David Lopez: Or have sermons in German.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah or have sermons in German even. Yeah.

Raul David Lopez: And all because we entered the war with Germany and Germany was seen as the enemy.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah Germany was the enemy you're right.

Raul David Lopez: Well as history is my major and I love that kind of stuff, so that is why I had to ask that question about Language.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Laughs

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's fine, now of course what I am telling you is off the cuff. There things that I have heard.

Raul David Lopez: Yes Sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Now you may get reactions from other sources saying something different, it is quite possible I don't know, but what I am telling you is what I have heard myself.

Raul David Lopez: Yes Sir.

Raul David Lopez: Well that is extremely admirable that you speak four languages.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What's that?

Raul David Lopez: That pretty admirable that you basically speak four languages, English, Swedish, German, and Spanish.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah and we would sing in Swedish songs even though we don't understand them anymore.

Group: Laughs.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I know we used Swedish words around on the farm a lot.

Raul David Lopez: To this day or back then?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Not so much it's going the way of the old folks who passed on but its well you know we had a cow named Lila ku. Little cow in Swedish. WE used those kinds of terms but more German though and with my kids I still have used German phrases or German that comes back to me that I grew up with and that they heard.

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I had an interesting experience the other day. As an example I went to go get some medicine at the drug store at H-E-B, and there was a young man with the other clerks kind of busy on a Saturday afternoon and he looked like the others you know and no I did not recognize him as I did the others, as you get older you take a lot more medicine and you know all the people who work there, anyways I looked at him and I was "well he looks like all the other kids here Mexican like." So forth but he was talking with no accent or didn't sound like anyone from down here but he didn't have an accent. Anyways he saw my name Norquest and said so are you Scandinavian? I said and I answered him yeah Swedish. I said yes "Swedish" "Svenska." And he answered me in Swedish. I did not recognize, I knew it was Scandinavian but he asked me "Are you Scandinavian," so I asked him what language is that? Well that is Swedish, I said, "I wasn't sure." Well he said "You answered me in Swedish so I answered you in Swedish."

Raul and the group: Laughs.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So I said “I know words but I don’t know any conversation so I can’t answer you.” “I know certain words so when I said “Svenska.” (That means “Swedish”) So I grew up knowing these terms.

Raul David Lopez: Yes.

Raul David Lopez: So how do you say little cow in Swedish?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Lila Ku.

Raul David Lopez: Lila?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: “Lila” just think little. Lila Ku, “Cow.” Lila Ku.

Raul David Lopez: For transcribing purposes.

Ryann Fink: Thanks.

Jenarae Alaniz: It sounds so much easier when you just print.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So you can see how it is related to English there.

Raul David Lopez: Yes Sir, because it is Germanic.

Jenarae Alaniz: Yeah.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And I find when I know enough Swedish I have been familiar enough with words that when I see something in Swedish when I see it written out, I was looking at an old Swedish hymn book, a service book, looking at the church service and I was reading and I was reading it and I was surprised at how many words I could identify because of knowing what my father had used and also kind of the similarities in English and even some of the spelling, so I was figuring out some it just that way, but I am not literate in Swedish or anything. Laughs, Oh boy. Caroline anything you want to add to that?

Caroline Norquest Twist: Ah you covered a lot.

Group laughs.

Raul David Lopez: I am good with the questions.

Jenarae Alaniz: So am I.

Joel Rodriguez: Yeah me too.

Ryann Fink: Yeah and I can’t see you guys anymore.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Are you picking up any picture?

Ryann Fink: Nope, but I have awesome sound.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh Ok.

Raul David Lopez: Mr. Norquest well on my behalf and everyone else I want to thank you so much for your hospitality, your patience, and your knowledge.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And the good time we had

Raul David Lopez: Yeah, because I feel much more wiser.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Laughs, Well I don’t know if you’re wiser but you are a little more knowledgeable anyways. Laughs. Wise comes from a little more experience. Laughs.

Raul David Lopez: Maybe that wasn’t the right word. Laughs.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No that’s fine that’s fine I am just kidding you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Well anything that you think of again and want to follow up on just let me know.

Raul David Lopez: Well thank you so much Sir.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Raul David Lopez: So we can keep these Sir?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Jenarae Alaniz: So you can just hit the button.

[End of recording]

APPENDIX B: OBITUARY DEDICATIONS

ROGELIO CANTU



ROGELIO CANTU EDINBURG - Rogelio Cantu, 91, went home to be with our heavenly father Friday, February 28, 2014, at Edinburg Regional Medical Center. Born in Los Ramones, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, Mr. Cantu had lived in Edinburg all of his life. Rogelio was a harvester contractor for over 40 years at Edinburg Citrus Association and was a member of the Edinburg Farmers CO-OP. He was a loving, caring, husband, father and grandfather. He is preceded in death by his parents, Jesus and Carmen Cantu; two sisters, Aurora Ramirez and Francisca Ayala; a brother, Felipe Cantu; and a great-granddaughter, Emily Grace Cantu. Rogelio is survived by his wife of 61 years, Hermelinda Cantu of Edinburg; six children, Dora (Clemente) Alonzo of Edinburg, Gloria (Eugenio) Garcia of San Antonio, TX, Ramiro (Sabina) Cantu of Lubbock, TX, Rogelio (Rosa Yarrito) Cantu, Jr. of Edinburg, Norma (Miro) Valdez of Pharr, Ruben (Noemi) Cantu of Edinburg; 21 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild. Visitation will be held Monday, March 3, 2014, at Memorial Funeral Home, 208 E. Canton in Edinburg. Funeral service will take place at 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 4, 2014, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Edinburg. Interment will follow at Palm Valley Memorial Gardens in Pharr. Pallbearers will be: Rogelio Cantu, III, Ruben Cantu, Jr., Miguel Valdez, Damian Valdez, Ramiro Cantu, Jr., and Robert Alonzo. Funeral services are under the direction of Memorial Funeral Home in Edinburg. Sign the guest book at www.themonitor.com/obituaries

Published in The Monitor on Mar. 2, 2014

MARIA L. CANTU



MARIA L. CANTU EDINBURG - Maria L. Cantu, 89, died Monday, July 22, 2013, at Doctors Hospital at Renaissance in Edinburg. Mrs. Cantu was born in San Marcos, TX and had lived in Edinburg all of her life. She was a member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church. She is preceded in death by her husband, Felipe Cantu; and a son, Felipe "Pipo" Cantu Jr. Mrs. Cantu is survived by four sons; Leonel (San Juana) Cantu, Jesus (Angelica) Cantu, Armando (Petra) Cantu, Rodolfo Cantu, all of Edinburg; a daughter Maria Cruz (+ Emeterio) Vega, of Mercedes; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Visitation will be held from 5 to 9 p.m., with a 7 p.m. rosary today, July 24, 2013, at Memorial Funeral Home in Edinburg. Funeral service will take place at 10 a.m., Thursday, July 25, 2013, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Edinburg. Interment will follow at Hillcrest Memorial Park in Edinburg. Funeral services are under the direction of Memorial Funeral Home in Edinburg. Sign the guest book at www.themonitor.com/obituaries

Published in The Monitor on July 24, 2013

APPENDIX C: LAND TRANSACTIONS OF JACKSON PROPERTY

DEED	DATE	AMOUNT	GRANTOR	GRANTEE
Warranty Deed with Vendors Lien	Wednesday, March 25, 1914	\$2,400.00 down and then ten equal in- stallments of \$240.00 due once a year for ten years.	John Closner And W. F. Sprague	Merrill M. Jackson
Warranty Deed	Wednesday, March 25, 1914	\$1.00 down and subject to the Warranty Deed with Vendors Lien be- tween John Closner and W.F. Sprague. The total amount being \$2,400.00.	Merrill M. Jackson	Clyde H. Boyd
Warranty Deed	Saturday, April 20, 1918	\$3,500.00 down and then seven equal in- stallments of \$1,500.00 due once a year for sev- en years.	Clyde H. Boyd	Charles Magee
Warranty Deed	Wednesday, May 1,	\$10.00 down and then five equal installments	Elsie M. Magee and Elon O. Magee	R.D. Proffitt

	1929	of \$225.00 due once a year for five years for the North one-half of the North one-half of Lot Nine in Section Two Hundred and Thirty seven.	acting as executors and trustees of the estate of Charles Magee	
Warranty Deed	Wednesday, May 1, 1929	\$10.00 down and then five equal installments of \$225.00 due once a year for five years for the South one-half of the North one-half of Lot Nine in Section Two Hundred Thirty Seven.	Elsie M. Magee and Elon O. Magee acting as executors and trustees of the estate of Charles Magee	R.D. Proffitt
DEED	DATE	AMOUNT	GRANTOR	GRANTEE
Warranty Deed	Wednesday, May 1, 1929	\$10.00 down and then five equal installments of \$225.00 due once a year for five years for the South one-half of the South one-half of Lot Nine in Section Two Hundred Thirty Seven.	Elsie M. Magee and Elon O. Magee acting as executors and trustees of the estate of Charles Magee	R.D. Proffitt
Warranty Deed	Wednesday, May 1,	\$10.00 down and then five equal installments	Elsie M. Magee and Elon O. Magee	R.D. Proffitt

	1929	of \$225.00 due once a year for five years for the North one-half of the South one-half of Lot Nine in Section Two Hundred Thirty Seven.	acting as executors and trustees of the estate of Charles Magee	
Quit Claim Deed	Friday, July 12, 1929	\$1.00 No further dollar amount mentioned in the Quit Claim Deed	Elsie M. Magee and Elon O. Magee acting as executors and trustees of the estate of Charles Magee	Clyde H. Boyd
Quit Claim Deed	Tuesday, July 16, 1929	\$1.00 No further dollar amount mentioned in the Quit Claim Deed	Elsie M. Magee and Elon O. Magee acting as executors and trustees of the estate of Charles Magee	R.A. Howland, Trustee for the creditors of the Stewart Farm Mortgage Co. and the W.E. Stewart Land Co.
DEED	DATE	AMOUNT	GRANTOR	GRANTEE
Warranty Deed	Tuesday, June 14, 1932	\$900.00 down and then four equal installments of \$225.00 due once a year for four years for the South one-half of the South one-half of	R.D. Proffitt	W.H. Wilson

		Lot Nine in Section Two Hundred Thirty Seven. However, the four equal installments were cancelled.		
Warranty Deed	Tuesday, June 14, 1932	\$900.00 down and then four equal installments of \$225.00 due once a year for four years for the North one-half of the South one-half of Lot Nine in Section Two Hundred Thirty Seven. However, the four equal installments were cancelled.	R.D. Proffitt	W.H. Wilson
General Warranty Deed with Vendor's Lien	Wednesday, September 2, 1942	\$10.00 down and then equal installments of \$100.00 due March 1, 1943 and September 1, 1943 and each year afterward until the sum of \$800.00 was paid in full.	Agnes H. Wilson, surviving wife of W.H. Wilson, Har- old E. Wilson, Edna Wilson Hart and Edward E. Hart, her husband and Edith H. Man- dery, all heirs of W.H. Wilson.	J.R. Monroe
DEED	DATE	AMOUNT	GRANTOR	GRANTEE
Warranty Deed	Wednesday, September 2, 1942	\$200.00 down and then agreeing to pay the	J.R. Monroe	S.J. Forman

		Vendor's Lien payable to Agnes H. Wilson Et Al in the amount of \$800.00. Then, on March 1, 1947 a \$100.00 to be paid to J.R. Monroe.		
General Warranty Deed	Wednesday, September 2, 1942	\$200.00 down and then agreeing to pay the Vendor's Lien payable to Agnes H. Wilson Et Al in the amount of \$800.00. Then, on March 1, 1947 a \$100.00 to be paid to J.R. Monroe.	J.R. Monroe	S.J. Forman
General Warranty Deed	Monday, October 11, 1943	\$10.00 dollars down and then agreeing to pay the unpaid balance of \$600.00 to Agnes H. Wilson Et Al. Then, pay an additional \$1,300.00 in eight equal installments to S.J. Forman. The first five installments in the amount of \$100.00. The next two in the amount of \$300.00 and	S.J. Forman	Pedro Hernandez

		the last payment in the amount of \$200.00.		
DEED	DATE	AMOUNT	GRANTOR	GRANTEE
Warranty Deed	Friday, June 16, 1972	\$10.00 No further dollar amount mentioned in Warranty Deed	Manuela N. De Hernandez, Ramon Hernandez, Miguel Hernandez and Gilberto Hernan- dez, all heirs of Pedro Hernandez	Guadalupe Her- nandez
Warranty Deed	Friday, June 16, 1972	\$10.00 No further dollar amount mentioned in Warranty Deed	Guadalupe Hernandez	Hermelinda R. Cantu