

Discovering the Rio Grande Valley

Reports from the

Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools Program

The University of Texas - Pan American

Report # 1

The Norquest Family: A *Porción* of Edinburg

Report # 2 (coming soon, 2013)

The Cantú Family: A *Porción* of Edinburg

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The Norquest Family: A Porción of Edinburg



A Report Prepared for

The Norquest Family

And for the UTPA and CHAPS Program Class Titled

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

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2012

Final Version

Cite as:

Hernandez-Salinas, Sandra, Lupe A. Flores, Daniel Nicholson, Maria Vallejo, Rolando Silva, Mary Noell,
Geoffrey Waters, Amanda De La Fuente, Geoffrey Shwartz, Oscar Ysasi, Pedro Rodriguez, Michelle Marti-
nez, Eduardo Robles, Robin Galloso, Miguel Gutierrez
2012 The Norquest Family: A Porción of Edinburg. A Report Prepared for the Norquest Family and for
The University of Texas-Pan American, Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools Pro-
gram. University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas.

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Acknowledgments



We often peruse a report or see a class syllabus and see it as the culminating effort of an individual or a small team. The reality is that there is a vast supporting cast who bring it to life.

First and foremost, we wish to thank the two generations of Norquest family members who cooperated with us during the fall semester of 2011. These included Carrol Norquest Jr., Odie Peña Norquest, Marie (Norquest) Sleeth; Dixie Norquest Setti; Neil Norquest, Virginia Fankhauser Norquest, Caroline (Norquest) Twist and Patrick Twist. Thank you for sharing your stories and for opening your lives. We are well aware that our requests seemed incessant and sometimes poorly-handled, but we hope you, your family and others will find an accurate picture of your family, the land, and people of your community. Bless you all for your forbearance during the project.

An everlasting thanks to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and their on-campus representative Dr. Ruby de la Garza for the “Hispanic Serving Institution” grant, which provided funding for the purchase of field equipment and other technology used in this study.

From the City of Edinburg we wish to thank Ramiro Garza, City Manager, and Fernando Martinez, Right of Way Acquisitions Coordinator, for their help in planning the geological portions of this work. Some of the geological testing was conducted on the campus of the Business, Education, and Technology Academy (BETA) school of the South Texas Independent School District in Edinburg. We extend our thanks to Principal Magdalena Gutierrez and Mr. J.P. Villareal, Administrative Support Services for their cooperation in these endeavors.

Our research on the land records pertaining to the Norquest property were immeasurably aided through the kind cooperation of Rene Salinas and Arturo Guajardo, Jr. of the Land Records Department of Hidalgo County located in the Edinburg courthouse. Your support for this and other projects is gratefully acknowledged!

Dr. Lisa Kay Adam, Registrar and Curator of Artifacts for the Museum of South Texas History, provided two excellent lectures on the human geography of South Texas to the class on September 17 and 24. Her overview helped guide us to this integrative report. Thank you for your time and thoughtful observations.

Thanks also to Drs. Linn and Jack Keller of South Texas Archaeological Consultants for help identifying part of the Norquest’s projectile point collection.

Janette Garcia, Head, Special Collections and Archives in the UTPA library and her colleagues in Special Collections - Mayra Gonzalez, Lisa Huerta and Adela Cadena gave an overview of the holdings to the class and worked with the students during their local history research. We thank you for all of your efforts. We also gratefully acknowledge Mr. George Gause, recently retired from the Special Collections and Archives for his support of the CHAPS Program.

Nancy Schindele, Mary Kathryn Slayton, and Eloise Montemayor from the Border Studies Archives filmed the class and interviews, and worked assiduously to ensure the oral history transcriptions were accurate and complete.

We also wish to thank Roseann Bacha-Garza, CHAPS graduate associate, for her work in helping with the class, from creating the syllabus, obtaining equipment, to finding maps and other illustrations for us to use.

Thank you to Raul Tomas Zavala Soto for transcribing the Maria Rita Ochoa and Virginia Mata interviews. We truly appreciate your hard work in making our transcriptions complete.

Iris N. Miranda, from the Department of Physics and Geology, who, while not a member of the class, kindly drafted Figure 3 in the geology chapter. Thank you.

Thanks to Dr. Kimberly Selber, Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communication, and her staff at Studio Twelve01 for their endless support on this project. To the designers: Thank you for letting us invade your space in order to produce this report!

Last we wish to thank our CHAPS professors and Dr. Shelia Pozorski of the Anthropology Department for editing parts of the manuscript.



Preface



We often feel we have nothing but time. Our lives, our families, our communities, and our memories of same seem forever etched into our very fabric. *Tomorrow, I will tell or write that story. Tomorrow, I will ask grandmother or father that question or will sit with them and identify the people in the aged and sometimes fading photographs.* But like life and time, our opportunities often escape us and the stories are lost forever. Sometimes we are fortunate enough to find preserved the stories of those who preceded us. This, however, is the exception. Most must work to preserve these stories so that others will know what was here and who we were.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) has a rich and nuanced story which encompasses more than five hundred generations of occupation by people. Each has left its mark on the land and its flora and fauna. Fifteen generations ago in the second half of the eighteenth century, new families brought new technologies, plants and animals, creating the first permanent communities and ranches in the LRGV. These founding families witnessed, five generations ago, the region's transformation into commercial agriculture and the influx of new peoples, languages, and ideas. All of these generations drew their lives directly from the land whether through gathering and hunting, the running of cattle, or the tending of orchards and fields. Then, less than one generation ago, in the 1990s, another shift toward manufacturing and the service industry brought yet more new people and began separating away from the land those who were already here. Such inexorable change comes at a cost. Lands were changed, orchards grew housing developments and the landmarks of generations were destroyed in fits of urban renewal and development and, in so doing, took with them the memories of the past.

In August of 2009, fifteen years into this new era, visionaries at The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) created the Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) Program to work with students, the community and faculty researchers to preserve and so better understand this rich legacy through thoughtful study. Formulated as an interdisciplinary program faculty with locally-focused research projects in the humanities, sciences, and social and behavioral sciences with their respective Deans, the Provost, and President Robert Nelsen, saw the value of the Program as a means of promoting and integrating community engagement, experiential learning, and faculty research. Soon we were working with K-12 educators from Edinburg, La Joya, Donna, and Hidalgo and were making classroom visits across the county.

At our first presentation to *Las Porciones*, a local genealogical society, longtime members and proponents for such studies Dr. Lucas Hinojosa, Mr. Eloy Gonzalez and Mr. Kelly Norquest asked, "What took you so long? We want to be part of this." They were the first community members to be interviewed as part of the CHAPS Program.

In the spring of 2011, the UTPA/CHAPS Program faculty composed of anthropologists Margaret Dorsey and Bobbie Lovett, biologist Kenneth Summy, geologist Juan Gonzalez, and historian Sonia Hernandez created and had approved the first interdisciplinary class at UTPA, titled, *Discovering the Rio Grande Valley: The Natural and Cultural History of South Texas*. Taught in the fall of 2011 with this talented and dedicated faculty, and with the complete cooperation of the Norquest family, our students have "discovered," recorded, and so preserved for all time some of the memories and stories of the Norquest family's century in Edinburg.

It is our sincere hope that this is the first of a series of studies which will illuminate and celebrate the natural and cultural history of South Texas. Please join us on this voyage of discovery.

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Abstract



Humans the world over have adapted to their respective geographic locations throughout recent geologic time. Adaptation usually entails the utilization of resources in an environment, a sort of manipulation of the land. The South Texas-Mexican border does not fall short in such cultural-ecological processes. Before Spanish colonization reached this semi-arid desert, indigenous Coahuiltecos lived on a boundless terrain that, geologically, remained the same since the Pleistocene until further human development slightly altered it. The natives made stone tools and subsisted on flora and fauna now extinct or displaced. Human-land interaction continued when Spanish colonizers such as José de Escandón entered the area and founded the Villas del Norte. Cycles of cultural and environmental transformations took place as pastoralism then agriculture became the dominant subsistence and economic strategies for the accretion of capital by the few elites. Anglo migration to the area resulted in further alterations to the region. The Norquest family immigrated to their farm site in 1925 as part of a larger wave of Midwestern immigrants to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Valley also experienced an influx of Mexican migrants in search of opportunity and work. They joined their Mexican-American counterparts laboring as agricultural workers on the farms of Anglos and Texas-Mexicans. Some of these individuals found their way onto the Norquest farm site, allowing them to share experiences and customs with the Norquests and other families such as the Templins. This dynamic between the social actors involved, at least for a moment in time, created bonds and memories that attest to a hybrid culture in an obvious contact zone. This multidisciplinary report posits a nuanced way of looking at human-land interaction on a farmsite in South Texas, where racial and class conflict existed, but where, in certain pockets of exception, people from culturally different backgrounds came together to labor and laugh in order to make ends meet.

ONE



Setting The Stage



The Community Historical Archaeology Project with Schools (CHAPS) is a program that brings archaeological and historical awareness to the community. It focuses on the cultural and natural history of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) and emphasizes their importance to Valley students and residents. One objective of the program is to promote the preservation of archaeological sites in conjunction with ethics and laws that affect non-renewable local resources.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, developing border towns like Edinburg forced English onto society at the expense of students' native languages. Mexicans were not the only ethnic group reprimanded for speaking non-English languages. Many Europeans of German, Swedish, Polish, and Irish decent lived alongside a Mexican/ Texas-Mexican population and attended schools that segregated them by language. Because of their similar complexion, Europeans here were simply seen as "Anglo" people and, in the racial climate of the time, were afforded more privileges. It was in this milieu that some prospered at the expense of others, yet there were some who did not adhere to those oft overused stereotypes.

The history of the Norquest farm site, from 1925 to the present, offers an unusual view of the LRGV. The Norquests were a working-class Swedish-German family that labored alongside other working-class individuals in the area where The University of Texas-Pan American now operates. The family is inseparable from the history of UTPA, as are the Mexican/Mexican American farmhands who worked this land. Their story offers an intimate perspective of pivotal periods in UTPA's history and of the cultural landscape from where the University and thousands of its students emerged.

This study serves as a model to understand the profound socioeconomic, environmental, and biological changes that occurred in the LRGV. By applying an interdisciplinary approach, we recreate a nuanced and complex narrative of the human-land interaction on the Norquest farm site.

Literature Review

It is unusual to encounter positive aspects of working-class life amid evidence of exploitation and oppression, unless one is documenting the adaptations to particular oppressive systems of interest. The South Texas-Mexican borderlands, as some scholars have argued, are not exempt from such exploitative processes as government-regulated field labor and grower-worker conflict. Recent research contends that the Norquests, like other South Texas growers, deceitfully worked and interacted with their predominantly Mexican and Mexican American workers, making them believe that positive relationships existed between them. It claims that the workers' perceived mutual relationships were mere reflections of a larger paternalistic scheme in conjunction with the Border Patrol to control labor mobility – when the workers could and could not work. This is undoubtedly true in many agricultural sites in the Valley and throughout the United States. However, when one considers the Norquest farm site in an interdisciplinary way, a different story falls into place. Evidence collected at the site, located contiguous with UTPA, shows an unusually modest view of positive interactions between grower and worker. They manifested in the most intimate ways: through the shared struggle of farm labor and the diffusion of customs between Anglos and Mexicans in and off the fields. In addition to Spanish documents and

the works of Valley-born scholars such as Jovita Gonzalez, Emilia Schunior Ramirez, and Americo Paredes, some documentation exists about the sociocultural processes between the different peoples who have called this region their home at various points in time. Accordingly, an account of overlooked aspects of certain grower-worker interactions is needed before a generalization of grower-worker conflict is readily accepted as the only relationship present between the two in this border region.

The research uncovered by the CHAPS course reveals a much more complex history of the South Texas-Mexican borderlands. It is a contact zone where cultures clashed and sometimes meshed. The human-land interactions on the Norquest farm site inform our understanding of social processes, the idea and practice of community, and labor relations on the farm site located at the intersection of present-day Sugar Road and Chapin. Mexican laborers helped clear the chaparral and dig ditches as irrigation-based farming replaced traditional methods of agriculture and ranching.

In 1962, Carrol A. Norquest, with a helpful suggestion from his son of the same name but known as “Kelly” to family and friends, decided to record his personal experiences as a Swedish immigrant in the LRGV. In 1972, Carrol published a book replete with personal anecdotes that included the experiences he had with the farmhands whom he respected. *Rio Grande Wetbacks: Mexican Migrant Workers* is Carrol’s attempt to describe and bring to life his family’s daily interactions with fellow campesinos, many of whom were Braceros. Just a few years back, some of these men later visited the Norquest in search for evidence of their work-contracts to petition the Mexican governments for reparations.

Carrol captures the lives, hardships and cultural practices of the Mexican laborers and farmers in *Rio Grande Wetbacks*, an ethnographic narrative that gives readers insight into both Mexican and Anglo cultures during the mid-20th century in the Valley. His book and unpublished manuscript, labeled *The Swarming of the Wetbacks*, is proof of workers’ contribution to the development of the Norquest farm site and the greater LRGV borderlands. The term “wetbacks” in the title is indicative of the way in which Mexicans were identified at this time history. Landowners used the term to distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants. The terms “wetback,” “mojado,” “seco,” “gringo” were used in everyday conversations. In Chapter 9, we address Paredes’ view on the creation and perpetuation of cultural profilings, such as the term “wetback,” and the implications of such stereotypes.

Within his account, Carrol offers a rarely seen dimension of the Anglo-employer/ Mexican-laborer story. Some of the family members and workers labored on the same farm site from the mid 1920s to the 1970s, up until the invention of the mechanical cotton picker. The Norquests trusted and respected their laborers. It is through this shared experience that Carrol transcended the usual sense of “white privilege” and identified with his Mexican farmhands, and that allowed him to humanize them in his writing. The various stories in *Rio Grande Wetbacks* and his unpublished manuscript shed light on Anglo-Mexican relations and are key to understanding Mexican labor relations on the Norquest farm site in Edinburg and other LRGV towns.

Similar dynamics of mutuality and positive interactions occurred a few miles south, in San Juan, where Carl Schuster employed a similar labor force in the mid-1900s for his Rio Farms on Stewart Road and Military Highway. Roseann Bacha-Garza’s pictorial account of San Juan’s history tells of positive relations between farmhands and growers. Schuster “exhibited a fondness for his employees and often provided barbeque meals for them”; they taught him Spanish and Schuster enjoyed interacting with them (2009:32).

Carrol learned Spanish, “el idioma de la frontera”(1972:xii), from his ethnic Mexican and Mexican American worker-friends while interacting with them in the fields or when sharing meals, such as the times when they made tortillas and frijoles for themselves and the Norquests. The dynamics between growers and workers in certain farms of the LRGV point to moments of accomodation and cooperation despite pervasive anti-Mexican attitudes. Recently, some scholars have overlooked or misinterpreted evidence of overall positive relations between farm workers and landowners. These scholars adopted an earlier interpretation, arguing that farm labor relations were strictly paternalistic and exploitative, despite data that informs of both cultural actors’ humanity as it manifested around daily life on the farms, in the fields.

Methods

For more than five months, graduate and undergraduate students employed a multidisciplinary approach to produce a report on the biological, geological, archaeological, historical and cultural information collected from the Norquest family and property. We conducted ethnohistoric interviews, cultural inventory analysis, researched courthouse documents and drilled boreholes to measure mineral and soil composition. Photographs preserved by the family, along with their oral histories, were analyzed throughout the time of research.

The Norquests have resided in the LRGV for nearly one hundred years. Eight members of their family were interviewed for the original project, and one individual, Kelly, was consulted throughout the production of this report. Once the Fall 2011 CHAPS Interdisciplinary (4301) class ended, a team of nine students further researched the social and cultural interactions that resulted from such human-land interaction on the Norquest farm site. During the extended research period, an additional two interviewees, Maria Rita Ochoa and Virginia Mata, were included to bring forth the farmhands' perspective. Virginia's father and husband worked on the Norquest farm, while Maria Rita's husband was a foreman for a McAllen farmer.

We carried out this assignment based on the premise that the physical landscape where people live represents more than just a receptacle for human behavior: it is the interrelationship between place and its people that gives rise to culture and social structure. More specifically, we witnessed in raw form the making of a border culture through the agricultural labor (or land alteration) of both the "Mexican" and "Anglo" cultures in the LRGV borderlands; we saw the emergence of a hybrid culture through shared experiences, customs, and behaviors. This report is the result of those findings and our contribution to LRGV history through the study of the Norquest farm site.

TWO



The Norquest Farm



Norquest Headquarters

In 1922, Peter Magnus Norquest, a Swedish immigrant who lived in Central Kansas, traded his farm for an 80-acre tract of land in South Texas. The trade consisted of five payments of \$900.00 to N. W. Brown beginning February 26, 1925 (See Appendix B). Peter suffered from rheumatism and sought ways to alleviate his pain. Fellow Midwestern neighbors convinced Peter and his family, numbering four at the time, to join in the acquisition of land surveyed in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, which was advertised as a “paradise”. That same year, Peter sent his youngest son Carrol, then 21, to scout this “Magic Valley” to verify rumors of fertile land. Peter’s daughter, Edith, migrated to the LRGV two years before along with her husband Bluford Eby and their son Duane. Carrol arrived on an immigrant railroad car that contained their household goods, farm machinery, and two teams of mule colts. Due to a nationwide railroad strike, the journey that normally took two or three days to complete took nine (Norquest 1972:107).

Carrol lived with Edith while reviewing the prospective lands. Once he felt that LRGV land met his expectations for farming, he returned to Kansas to help his father “close up shop” and prepare for permanent migration. In 1925, upon receiving confirmation from his son, Peter, his wife Mary Caroline, their daughter Florence and Carrol migrated to the LRGV; the eldest siblings, Amanda, Ernst, Eskel, and Aurora, stayed up north. According to Kelly, his grandfather Peter created two families because of their migration: the children who settled in Kansas, and the others who set out to live and farm in what they saw as an exotic region. As hoped for, Peter was relieved of his rheumatism within their first year in South Texas.

A portion of land the Norquests farmed is now part of a rapidly growing university community in Edinburg. At the time, the town previously named Chapin, was a community of five thousand residents located in the center of Hidalgo County. The land, described in detail in Chapter 2, was covered with mesquite, huisache, nopales and other brush. In Peter and Carrol’s eyes, it was full of agricultural potential.

The Big House

The Norquest house, now occupied by Caroline Norquest Twist and her husband Patrick, was originally selected from a catalog and mailed-out via rail cars as a Sears, Roebuck and Company kit-home in 1913. Initially used as a model home for a few years, then as crop storage for a few more, the house became vacant and abandoned until the Norquest family purchased it. Peter and Carrol renovated the house over time. After extensive use for many years, Carrol removed the chimneys to prevent rainwater from entering the house; this also served as pest control, preventing bats from entering the home. Carrol eventually rotated the westward-facing staircase 180° to its current east-facing direction. An oak tree brought from Falfurrias after the death of Car-

rol's father still grows in front of the house today. A barn only a few meters eastward of the house was known as "Rancho Colorado" by farmhands because of its bright red color. The dilapidated, unpainted house would become residence to future generations of Norquests, as well as to their fellow Anglo and Mexican farmhands, many of whom entered the Norquest property escaping political upheaval from their home countries, as we will see later.

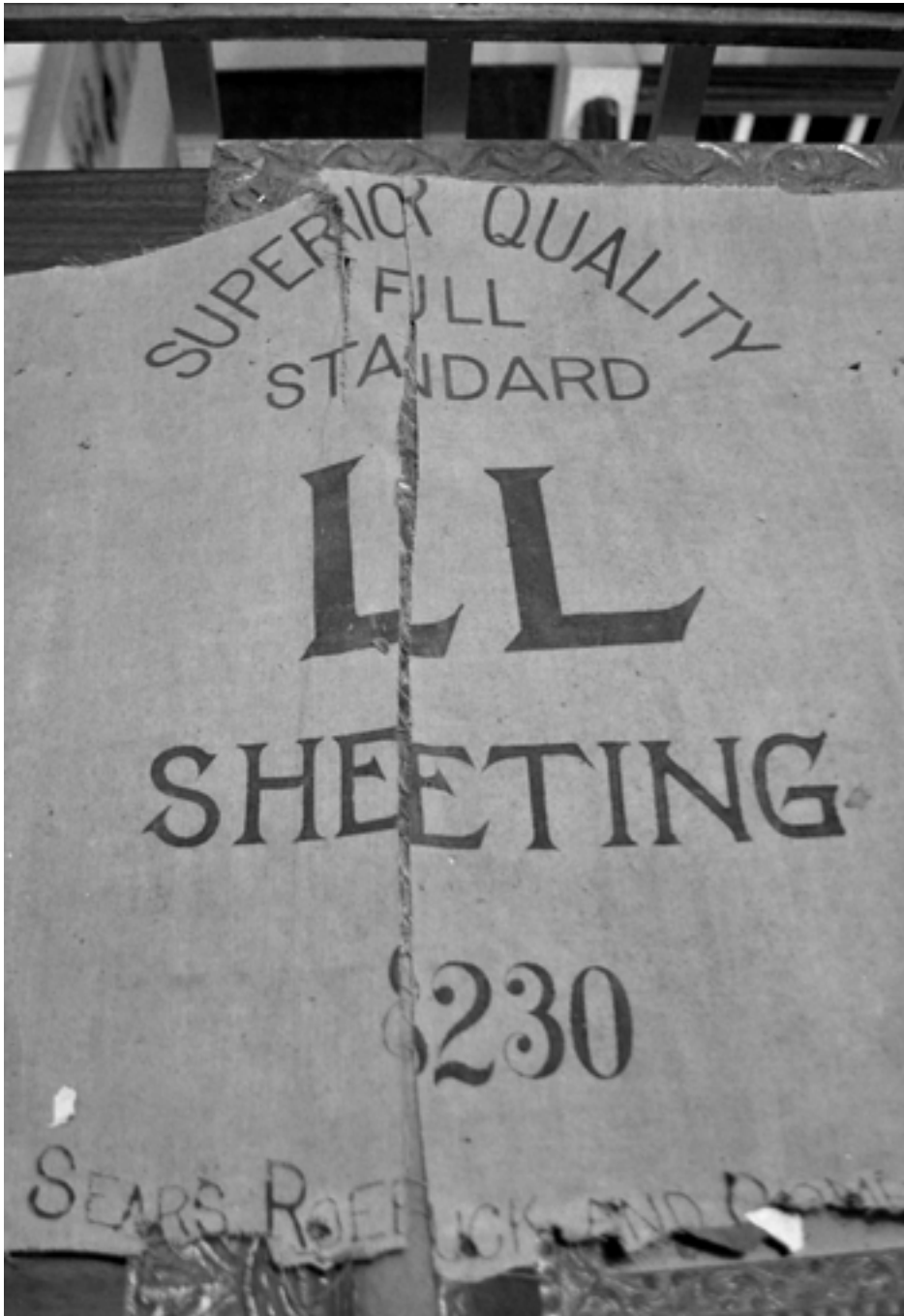


Figure 1. Original wallpaper removed from the Norquest Sears, Roebuck and Company home, built in 1913. Photo by Sandra Hernandez-Salinas.

Figure 2. (below) The Norquest "Big House" [2011-2012]. Photo by Mary F. Noell.



Figure 3. First Lutheran Church Ladies Group, Nordmeyers, and Norquest family posing in front of the Big House before it was painted [1942].

The following pictures are of TheBig House” and its many renovations throughout the twentieth century, along with some family heirlooms.



Figure 4. (above left) “Big House” renovations [Left-top 1925, bottom 1930; Right- top 1940, bottom 1955]. Collage by Rolando Silva and Mary F. Noell.



Figure 5. (above right) Commode used as a wash basin, and secretary. Family heirlooms from Kansas and Nebraska. Photos by Mary F. Noell.

Carrol and Florence hit the ground running as soon as they relocated to Edinburg. They both attended Edinburg Junior College, and Carrol learned to manage the family farm. In 1929, Peter Magnus Norquest passed away. Mary Caroline passed away nearly a decade later, in 1937. Both Peter and Mary Caroline are buried at Roselawn Cemetary in McAllen. The parlor of the Norquest family's home, now partly the music room, housed both memorial services. These events required Carrol to assume the role of patriarch of the family. He inherited the Big House and five acres while the other 75 acres of land were distributed among his siblings. His sister Florence married Bob Hancock, the then Health Inspector for Hidalgo County, and moved out of the Norquest Headquarters. Carrol eventually purchased her land, as well as the rest of his siblings' shares.

Gaining control of the entire 80 acres in such a short period of time came with consequences. Due to Edinburg's expansive development, land value increased, directly impacting taxes. Carrol sold the northernmost 40 acres of the property in ten-acre pieces to local and absentee owners in order to offset the cost. Once established as a successful farmer and landowner, he purchased the 60 acres south of University Drive (Kelly Norquest, personal communication). Currently, the University of Texas-Pan American, BETA, and Robert E. Lee Elementary are located on acreage once owned by or leased to the Norquests. Another 20 acres to the east of Carrol's 40 acre plot were eventually purchased. Some of the Norquest property is historically linked to terrain contested by Spanish Mexican and U.S. empires; it is located toward the end of what was once Porción 69, granted to Narciso Cavazos by the Spanish Crown in the early 19th century; it was cut off and added to property acquired by the Mexican American Railway Company during U.S. takeover. The picture below is a modern map of the Norquest Headquarters.

Figure 6. Norquest Headquarters Map.



The next chapter explores the natural history of the region through geological investigation as well as through historical memory of biological and climatic events that, in turn, necessitated human reaction in order to maintain farm life and labor viable.

THREE

Natural History of Hidalgo County and the Norquest Property

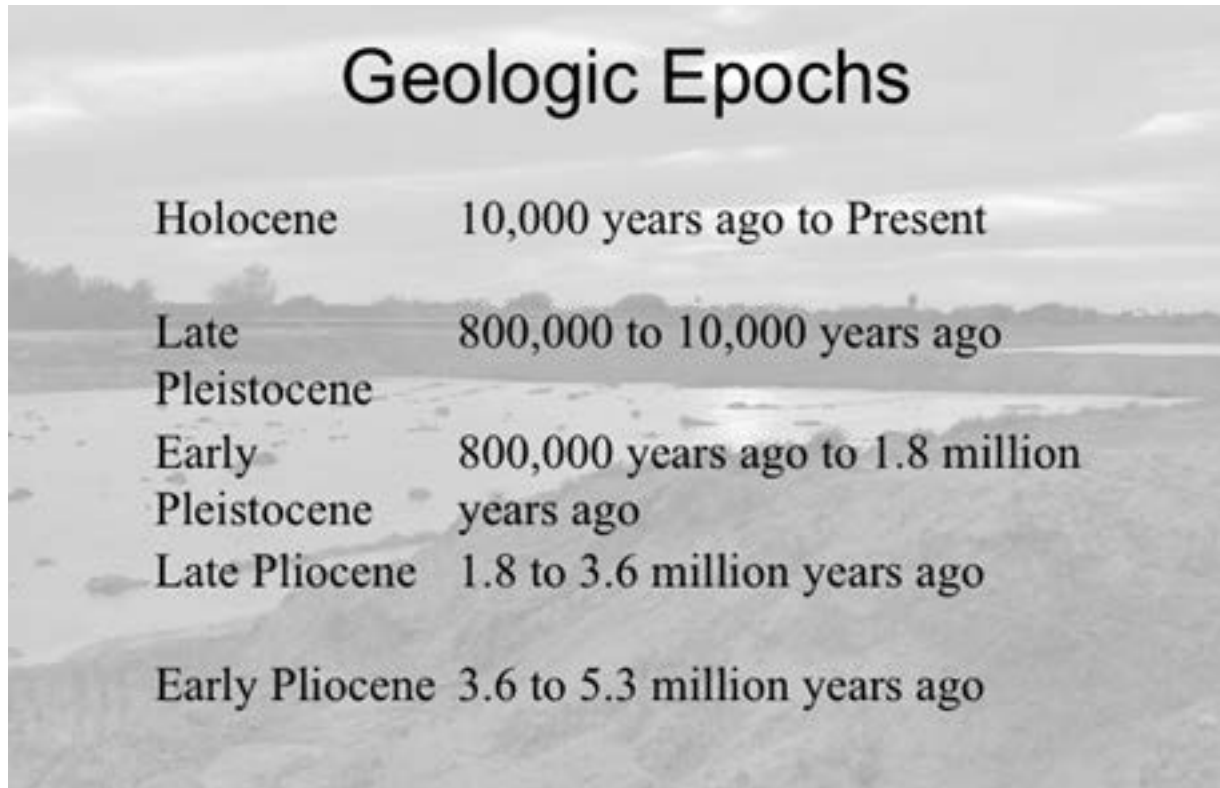
Geomorphology

The topography of Hidalgo County has low relief with elevations ranging from around 15 to 70 meters (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976). The highest elevations are located close to the border between Hidalgo and Starr Counties, and the lowest elevations are at the border of Hidalgo and Cameron counties (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976). Throughout Hidalgo County there is a marked eolian imprint in the form of northwest lineations or wind eroded hollows that indicate the dominant wind direction (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:98). There also has been burying or modifying of older soils by flooding of the Rio Grande during the Holocene (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:98).

The Lower Rio Grande Valley's chief geologic feature, the Rio Grande, has a wide floodplain crisscrossed by a meandering channel. Toward the coast, the river formed a sizable delta with a complex depositional history. Geographically, the Valley divides into four counties: Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy and Starr, encompassing 2.7 million acres (Bice et al. 1976:1). Our study area is located in north central Hidalgo County, situated between Starr and Cameron, in the border town of Edinburg.

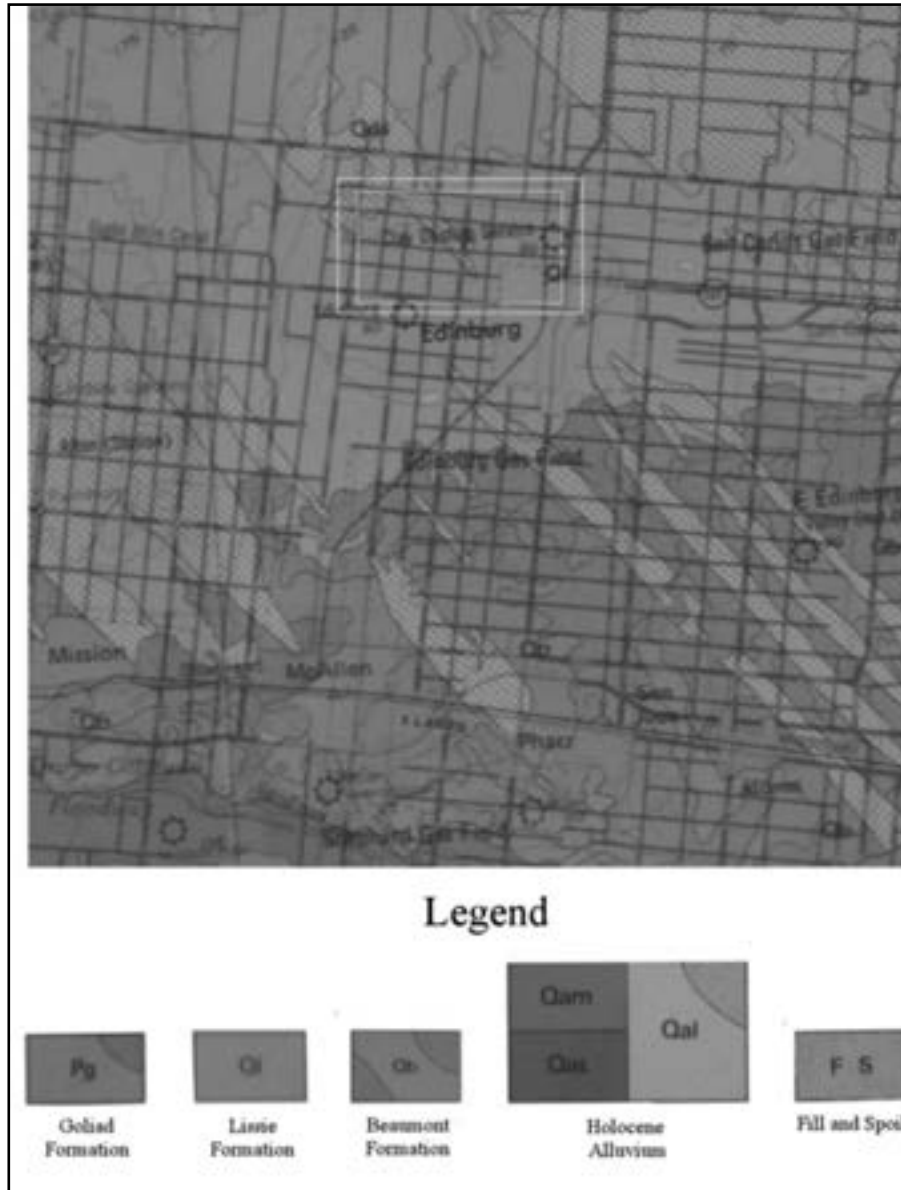
The surficial geology of Hidalgo County consists of Holocene and late Pleistocene unconsolidated fluvial and eolian deposits that dip gently toward the Gulf of Mexico (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:98). Locally, the Pliocene Goliad Formation is the oldest unit. It extends from approximately the city of Mission on the west to the City of Donna on the east, and in a northward direction from the Arroyo Colorado on the south to the Edinburg Gas Field, where it is in contact with the overlying Pleistocene Lissie Formation (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976). The Goliad Formation consists of sand, gravel, caliche, sandstone, and conglomerate; the Lissie Formation consists of clay, silt, sand, gravel, and caliche with deposits that range from nodular to massive (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976). The Lissie Formation comprises three unit types, according to Moore and Wermund: (1) general alluvium that has not been categorized in terms of source region and texture; (2) fine grained channel facies that are made up of sand, silt, and clay; and (3) fine-grained overbank facies of silt and clay ("Lissie Formation" n.d.). The northern part of the county is covered by the South Texas Sand Sheet that overlies parts of the Lissie Formation that dips underneath the Beaumont Formation ("Lissie Formation" n.d.). The Sand Sheet includes Holocene and Pleistocene sediments (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:99). Holocene Rio Grande alluvial deposits cover the southern parts of the county (Bureau of Economic Geology 1976).

Figure 7. Chart of Geologic Epochs



The discontinuity between soils and the local geology makes it impossible to correlate some soils with a specific geologic unit, according to the USDA Soil Conservation Service’s survey of the county (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:98). In the northern part of the county, the South Texas Sand Sheet is one of many factors causing differences between the local geology and the soils because wind action has redistributed and shifted the positions of older fluvial deposits. The survey also accounts for a high concentration of calcium carbonate in the soils that is caused by low rainfall and high evaporation rates in the area so that, regardless of age, the soils tend to be similar (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:98). The Norquest property is situated on the Lissie Formation, (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Portion of a geologic map displaying a majority of Hidalgo County.



Soils in the vicinity of the property are classified within the Hidalgo series. This soil type consists of loamy soils that formed in calcareous loamy and clayey sediments. The A, B, and C soil horizons consist of sandy clay loam or fine sandy loam, sandy clay loam or clay loam, and sandy clay loam or clay loam, respectively (Jacobs and Aronow 1981:86). In arid and semiarid regions, such as the LRGV, as water from both rainfall and irrigation reaches the B horizon, it evaporates rapidly due to plants and capillary action that leave the soil laden with salts; and at times, enough calcium carbonate accumulates and hardens to form caliche (Thompson and Turk 1994:196).

Kelly added how salt content in the ground was transported via the Rio Grande from the deserts of Mexico, Texas, and New Mexico.

The salts came from the river water. It came out of the deserts of Mexico and

Texas and New Mexico. When they got a lot of rain the water would go in and get in a flood, so anyway, it would be carrying a lot of minerals of all kinds, so when you irrigated, the water would go down into the soil and the minerals would stay in the soil and be used for the plants. Over a period of time, especially during the time of dirt canals, it would start getting salty out from those canals, and you couldn't grow anything there, so around the 1950s or maybe the 1940s, the Soil Conservation Service gave a lot of help for that around here and these drainage canals that we have now, you know for where the flood waters flow now, they were to carry the salts away. (Sleeth/Salinas/pg C-28)

Although the soil is naturally salty due to more evaporation than precipitation, there may be additional salts brought by the Rio Grande. This is probably why the leeching process needed the manpower it did.

CHAPS Geologic Investigations Field Methods

To better understand the geology and soil composition at the Norquest property, we drilled two boreholes. The first borehole, designated CHAPS I, is located just north of the Edinburg Baseball stadium (98° 10.532' West, 26° 18.846' North) and was drilled on September 19, 2011. The second borehole, designated CHAPS II, is located on the north end of the BETA campus (98° 10.638' West, 26° 18.045' North) (Figure 9). Fieldwork for CHAPS II took place on September 26, 2011. Both boreholes were drilled using an Edelman-auger. Sediment textures and color, presence or absence of plant remains, and observable sedimentary textures were recorded at ten-centimeter intervals. Colors were also recorded at various intervals using a Munsell color chart. Under suspicion of being reworked, the first meter of both boreholes was not described.

Data from CHAPS I

After passing the meter mark, we encountered the following: silty clay loam and silt loam. The colors fluctuated among light brown, brown (10YR 4/3), and dark brown (10YR 3/2) within the first 3.5 m of the bore hole and from light gray, light brown, light gray-brown, to gray-brown following a general darkening trend for the latter portion of the bore hole. All of the ten-centimeter intervals of CHAPS I contained plant remains, manganese, and calcium carbonate concretions and displayed signs of oxidation. One particular interval of note was the 530 to 540 cm span that was extremely oxidized, unlike the rest of the borehole. The last twenty centimeters of the borehole were almost entirely made up of calcium carbonate to the point of being designated as a caliche layer. This finding along with the difficulty to manipulate the auger through the caliche resulted in over-torqued field equipment and caused the team to call off investigations for CHAPS I.

Data from CHAPS II

Like CHAPS I, this borehole also consisted of irregular, alternating layers of silty clay loam and silt loam. The color of the sediment at various intervals in this borehole was not as varied with light brown (2.5YR 5/3), red brown (7.5YR 5/3), and gray-brown (most closely matches 2.5YR 5/3) sediments present. Present throughout the core was oxidation, manganese, and calcium carbonate concretions. There was a disparity between the two boreholes when it came to the presence of plant remains: CHAPS II only had plant remains in the 350-390 cm range. We also encountered what appeared to be the top portion of a caliche layer toward the end of the borehole. Due to the difficulties experienced during fieldwork conducted at CHAPS I, the team stopped drilling.

Figure 9. An aerial view indicating the location of boreholes CHAPS I & II. Courtesy of Google Earth.



Information regarding the stratigraphy and other findings recorded for CHAPS I and II can be located on the following figure.

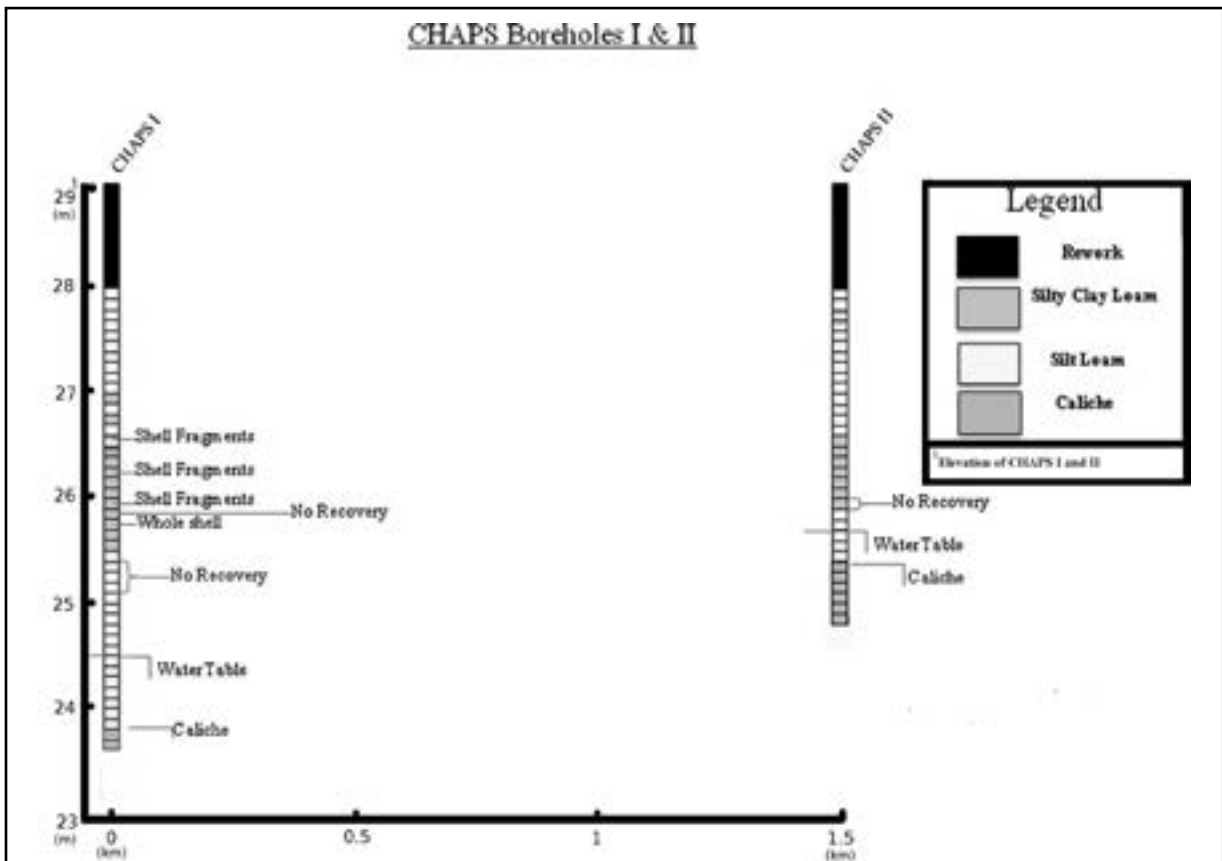


Figure 10. Chart of CHAPS Boreholes I & II. Chart created by Iris N. Miranda.

Interpretation of CHAPS I and II

We encountered silt sized sediment throughout both boreholes, suggesting the environment of deposition is within the floodplain or a natural levee of an ancient river channel. The silty textures encountered further suggest that this deposit is a part of the Lissie Formation due to similarities to the lithology of the formation. Although there is a 110 cm difference in the level of the water table, this may be due to differing thickness of the caliche layer, but not because the boreholes differ lithologically. The observed depths of the oxidation horizon as well as the presence of manganese and calcium carbonate concretions indicate that soil-forming processes dominated over fluvial or eolian processes in recent geologic time. Future fieldwork will elucidate the articulations of this silt sized sediment deposit within the larger context of the ancient Rio Grande's movement.

Biology and Climate Through Historical Memory

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is a region rich in biodiversity; a substantial amount of the flora and fauna are unique to our geographical location. The Norquest family witnessed many changes brought on to the biology by the expansion, or development, of cities. They also contributed to that change through their agricultural and ranching endeavors. This section contextualize the changes the Norquests have made on the land into the larger biological history of the region. We draw from historical and scientific literature as well as from the oral histories collected from the Norquests in order to paint a clearer picture of how the Norquest's relationship with the land helped produce and shape the landscape of Edinburg over the past century. The story of the changes to the biology of Edinburg and to the Valley tells the story of how human-land interactions have affected non-human life and the way in which plants and animals have adapted or failed to adapt to these changes.

Native Flora and Fauna of the Property and Beyond

The LRGV brushland is considered an ecological transition zone between the tropics of Mexico and the temperate zone of the United States; thus, it contains the only subtropical area in Texas (Judd 2002:346). The native flora have gone through several changes over the years because of agricultural and urban development. The Valley supports a diverse array of rare, threatened, endangered, as well as common species of animals. It is also an area that sustains a large neo-tropical bird population (United States Department of Homeland Security 2007). The region has undergone dramatic changes since the Norquests settled in Edinburg in 1925. Many of the family members remember the fauna that has disappeared in recent years, and they, along with many residents of the Valley, are witnesses to the new ecosystem that has emerged over the course of the last century.

The lush undergrowth of the LRGV is home to a number of native grasses including grama (*bouteloua gracilis*), buffle grass (*bouteloua dactyloides*), Texas wintergrass (*nassella leucotricha*), and tobosa (*hilaria mutica*) (Everitt 2007:222). These hardy grasses have maintained their claim on the Valley and have stayed out of the endangered species list. Native woody species that are also rich in the Valley include the mesquite, huisache, huisachillo, brasil, granjeno and lotebush (Everitt et. al 2002:248). Other species of vegetation that were not fortunate enough to survive the centuries are a mixture of shrubs, herbs, and cactus species (www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/species/endang/). Texas ayenia (*Ayenia limitaris*), Walker's manioc (*Manihot walckeriae*), and Star cactus (*Astrophytum asterias*) are three endangered plants that were once abundant in Hidalgo County but over the years have found it harder to exist in this changing, developing environment.

The Valley provides a habitat for a diverse population of migratory, seasonal, and local birds with over 300 species (Lane 1978:1) documented in these borderlands. There has been a visible decrease in the population of "colorful birds" in recent years that Virginia Norquest attributes to the rising number of grackles (Norquest/Pena 2011/pg F-2). Of these birds, Dixie Setti recalls hummingbirds on the property that were attracted to various plants, like Queen's Wreath and Turk's Caps, that their mother planted in the yard (Setti/Vallejo/pg D-9).

Various indigenous fauna roamed the natural, untilled brushland of the LRGV, such as javelinas, deer, rattlesnakes, turkeys, descendants of longhorn cattle and burros (Norquest 1972: ix). Kelly mentioned how "There were wild donkeys up until the late 1930s" witnessed by his father and other residents. He emphasized that burros grazed in the LRGV, and the fact that they rarely come up when talking about this area historically

(Kelly Norquest, personal communication 2012).

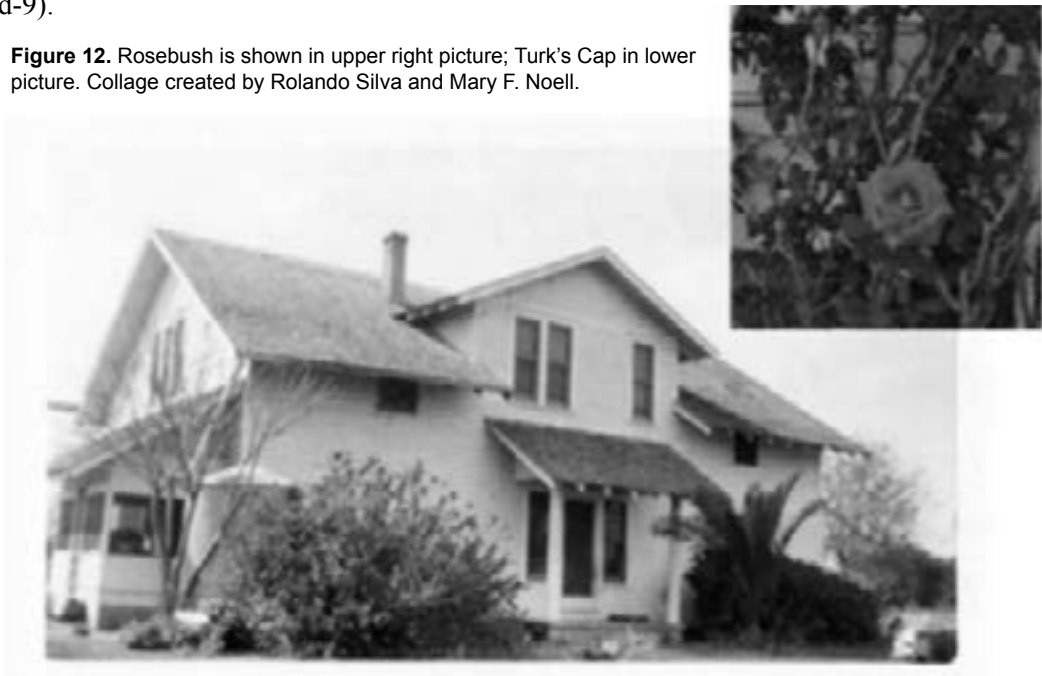
Carrol wrote that mesquite trees, huisache, ebony, jara, catsclaw, and prickly pear cactus were abundant upon his arrival to the LRGV (Norquest 1972: 56). He wrote stories about rattlesnake-infested cotton fields, and how a group of Mexican laborers in the story referred to as “The Quereteños” would make sport of them. “They liked to catch snakes and put them through acrobatic routines,” he stated. “When they got through playing with a rattler they snapped his head off like you’d crack a blacksnake whip” (Norquest 1972: 51).



Figure 11. Kelly Norquest displays cochineal, an insect that lives on cactus. When squeezed, the cochineal emits a red liquid used since the pre-colonial period. Collage created by Rolando Silva and Mary F. Noell.

Virginia also recalled horned lizards, dragonflies and several species of butterflies that migrated to and from the South Texas-Mexican borderlands during the 1950s; cicadas were abundant during summertime. She recalled seeing horned lizards here until the 1980s (Norquest/Pena 2011/pg. F-2). Dixie also mentioned the rose garden Lydia eventually set up in front of the big house; two of the four bushes planted still bloom today (Setti/Vallejo 2011/pg d-9).

Figure 12. Rosebush is shown in upper right picture; Turk’s Cap in lower picture. Collage created by Rolando Silva and Mary F. Noell.



Climatic Setting

The LRGV, as mentioned earlier, is considered a transitional zone: it lies between a tropical rain forest and a desert climate (Peel et al. 2007:1639). As such, seasonal fluctuations, and the more extreme meteorological conditions that may occur during the grander climes (tropical monsoons and nightly freezing desert temperatures, for example), do not typically occur. Other sub-category designations for the area include semi-arid, subtropical, or semi-humid. This quasi-desert's seasons are defined by long, hot summers from May to August and short winters generally from late October to early March. The winter season's lowest temperatures occur during the months of January and February (Tunnell 2002:346). Using data obtained from 1931-1962 for Weslaco, McAllen, Mission, and McCook, the mean record-low temperature for Hidalgo county was -8°C. Mean daily temperature averaged 16.75°C for the winter's coldest period. The summer's most extreme temperatures occur in the months of July and August (Tunnell 2002:346). Calculating results from the four cities yields a mean of 41°C in Hidalgo County. The mean daily temperatures for the summer months averaged to 29.5°C.

Freezes, Droughts and other Climatic Events Endured on the Property

Due to the tropical air currents of the Gulf of Mexico, freezes do not occur annually in the Rio Grande Valley (Bice et al. 1963:18). Temperature data collected between 1954 to 1964 show that an average of nine days out of the year experienced temperatures below freezing, typically between November and March (Bice et al. 1963:104). Kelly recalled the freezes of 1949 and 1951 that particularly affected the crops grown in the area. Also noted in the interview was the freeze of 1962 that considerably damaged the citrus industry (Norquest/Nicholson/pg A-12).

Another major freeze hit the LRGV on Christmas Eve 1983, when a cold front passed through the region, dropping the air temperature -8.8°C. The following day, temperature rose to -3.9 °C (Travis 1997: 2). The effects of freeze damages on the economy of the LRGV estimated at \$510 million, with at least \$200 million in damages to agricultural interests including citrus and vegetable production (Lonard and Judd 1985:10). Virginia Norquest said of the 1983 freeze:

I do clearly remember the bad freezes in the 1980s that took out a lot of the citrus orchards that existed at that time. You used to drive down country roads and there would be orchards on both sides you know, it was a large orchard of grapefruit and oranges. And at that time it was very noticeable the most of them were pushed out and most of them were not planted again. (Norquest/Pena 2011/pg. F-3)

In 2004, light snow blanketed the LRGV. This was the first general snowfall in South Texas in 115 years. Younger generations of Norquests witnessed this snowfall, like the Twists and Liana Ryan, Dixie's daughter. The pictures below show the big house covered in snow, as well as some Norquest family property.



Figure 13. Photos of Norquest home covered in the snow of 2004. Courtesy of the Norquest Family.

The Valley's dry weather also has additional factors that bring dry spells besides lack of rainfall, such as irrigation water access and the permeability of the soils in the region. While these factors facilitate dry conditions, drought is generally defined as severe lack of rainfall in an area over a prolonged period of time. The Palmer Drought Severity Index uses a scale of 0 to -4.00 and below (zero being explained as normal for the place analyzed, and -4.00 being of disastrous proportion) (Palmer 1965:1-3). An extreme drought (-4.00 and below) of 64 months was recorded (excluding Starr county) from 1949 to 1954 for the LRGV (Bice et al 1967:73). This drought period was associated with the freezes of 1949 and 1951 that provided impetus for many families to abandon farming pursuits in the area (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-12).

Hurricanes/Floods

Since the construction of Falcon Dam in 1952, no major flooding has occurred here due to the Rio Grande's discharge (Bice et al. 1963:21). This does not account for floods due to hurricanes. Hurricane Beulah, to date, remains the single most devastating climatic event to hit the area. Beulah made landfall in the LRGV on September 20th, 1967 as a category 5 hurricane; at the time, it was the third largest hurricane on record (Peavy 1970: 8). Beulah claimed eighteen lives (none in the LRGV), and injured over 8,000 people; it demolished 740 homes and 519 small businesses, and wrecked 119 yachts and shrimp boats (Flitters 1970: 12). Moreover, Beulah inundated over 1.4 million acres, spawned a standing record of 115 tornadoes, and caused property and crop losses of more than 150 million dollars, virtually making the growing season a total loss. An official Army Corp of Engineers report estimated losses that exceeded two billion dollars (Army Corps of Engineers 1967:16).

The Norquest property received minor damages from Beulah; the original big house received very little flood damage because the water only rose within an inch of entering the home (Norquest/Nicholson/pg A-7), which would have ranged approximately 18 to 24 inches in height for the flood waters caused by the storm on the property. The Templin house (present guest-house), however, flooded during Beulah. In 1980, Hurricane Allen swept through the region; Kelly recalled the water flowed into his home – built in 1976 and located east of the Big House – at a depth of about five to six inches (Norquest/Nicholson/pg A-11). The Templin home also flooded at this time to the depth of 12-15 inches in the lower portion and six to eight inches in the upper floor. Aside from the flooding in the Templin house, there was a wide range of flooding that effected the biology of the property.

But all of that water killed out all the buffalo grass we had in the pasture. And the cows, we had about thirty cattle, we turned out in the pasture so they can find a dry place during that time. It took about a month for the water to go down around here, but the cows found a dry place over on the other side, and we had another kind of grass, called African star grass that we planted and it didn't get killed. It has long runners, like bermuda grass has short runners, but it has long runners. All the runners were about six to eight feet long and floated to the top of the water and started growing. So every day the cows would leave their high place over there and walk out into the water and they would graze on the grass that was growing on top of the water. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg. C-19)

Marie Sleeth remembers the native red-winged black bird population, "we used to have lots of red-winged blackbirds, and I understand they were, they got blown off by Beulah, Hurricane Beulah or something. You just don't see them anymore now, you see them around in the Hill Country side but not down here" (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg. C-5).

It is clear through the investigation of geologic properties and historical memory of flora, fauna and biological/climatic events that the Norquest farmsite is a place where humans often interacted with the land, by altering it in order to facilitate farming, maintain crops and their homes from harm, and to spur urban development. Before we delve further into the Norquests' and the farmhands' contribution to the changing LRGV landscape, the following chapter condenses the region's nearly 10 thousand years of prehistory and history leading up to the Mexican Revolution, which spawned Mexican migration northward, a few years before the Norquests arrival.

FOUR

The Social Environment of the Norquest Property, Prehistory -1900

The borderlands of South Texas and Northeastern Mexico share a rich cultural tradition that developed from the blending of different cultures. The LRGV was originally home to bands of gatherer-hunters in a region that later became known as Nuevo Santander, where Spanish colonization radically changed native lifeways and influenced many generations thereafter. Before discussing the modern history of the LRGV through the lens of the Norquest family, it is fitting to discuss the lifestyles of the early occupants of their property, as well as the historic events that helped create the environment for the Norquests' migration to the region.

Paleo-Indian	9200 to 6000 BC
Early Archaic	6000 to 2500 BC
Middle Archaic	2500 to 1000 BC
Late Archaic	1000 to 300 BC
Transitional Archaic	300 BC to AD 700
Late Prehistoric	AD 700 to AD 1600

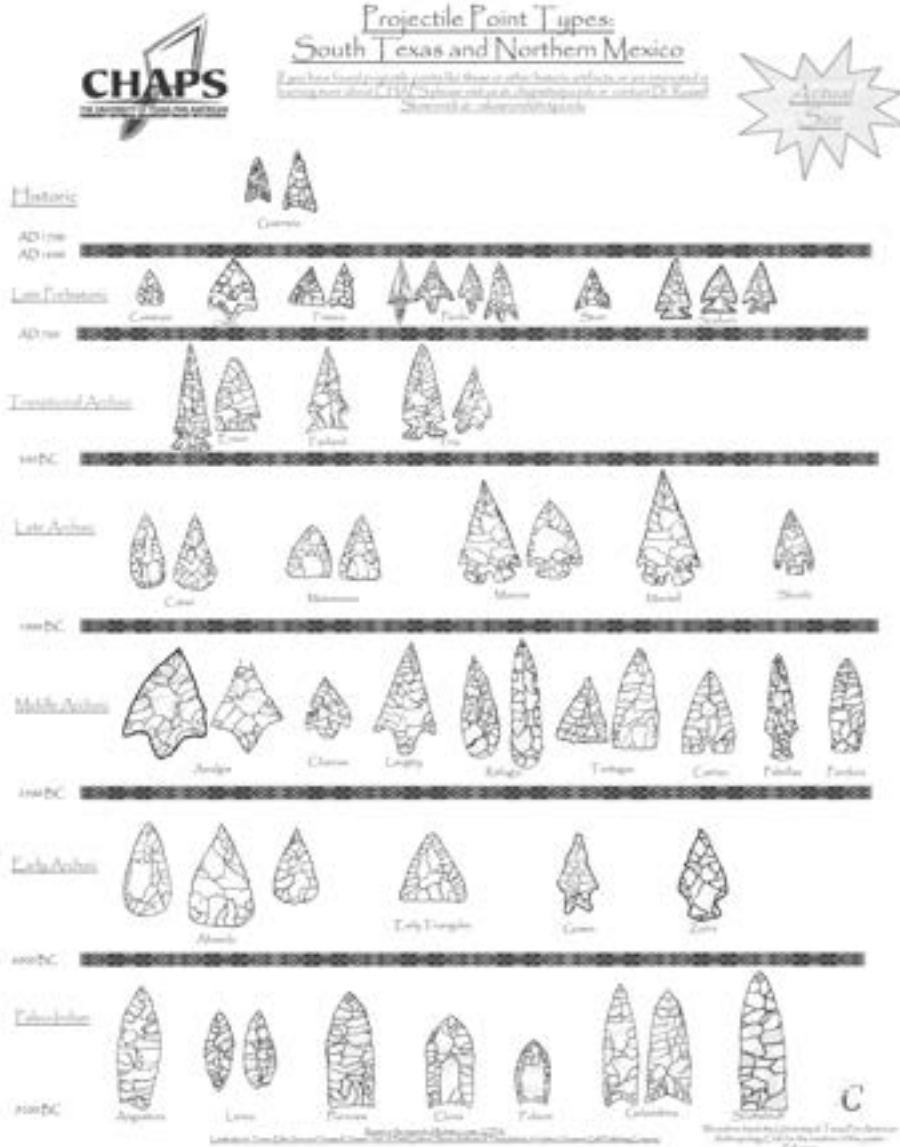
Figure 14. Chart of American Indian Eras in South Texas

The natives, generally referred to as Coahuiltecan, inhabited an environment that constituted a mixture of grasslands and forests (Hester 1976:2). As all humans do, the native populations adapted and formed distinct cultures in response to their environment. Of these cultures, various cultural sequences can be traced to the region. The first that developed is the Paleo-Indian sequence classified by the use of fluted Clovis and Folsom

points (Hester 1976:3). There was a shift in point technology during the Archaic period that consisted of triangular and subtriangular dart points identified by archaeological work done in the Falcon Reservoir area (Shafer et al. 1995). The Late Prehistoric period had Savanna adaptations of the Rockport and Brownsville Complexes which include the development of the bow and arrow and the use of ceramics around AD 1200 (Hester 1976:4-5).

The area now known as the LRGV shifted to small game hunting and agriculture around 6,000 to 7,000 years ago, and has been largely undocumented. The archaeological record indicates that the Late Prehistoric period in South Texas began approximately AD 700 and is characterized by a thriving shell industry and Huastecan-style pottery. Upon Spanish contact, European-made objects such as metalworks, trade beads, and ceramics were introduced (Shafer et. al. 1995: 10). According to Kelly, many of the artifacts found on the Norquest property were found by his father (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-17). Projectile points represent the most prominent prehistoric artifacts recovered from the Norquest property. This is no surprise as they were made from readily available material for both hunting and inter-group conflict with other groups. The following figure was used by the researchers to identify the points that were found on the Norquest Property. The Anthropology Club at UTPA constructed this figure for the CHAPS program. Results will be explained later in this section.

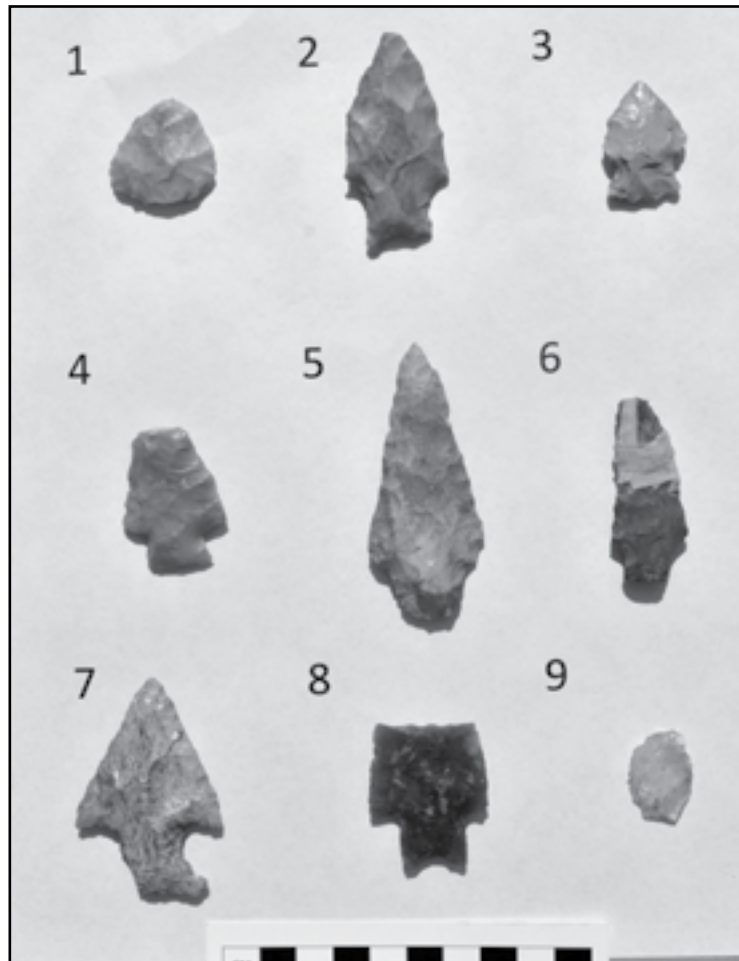
Figurs 15.
Projectile Point Types:
South Texas and Northern
Mexico



The points discovered through the years on the Norquest property indicate that native occupation dates as far back as 8,000 years ago. The points the Norquest family provided us for examination are displayed below in Figure 16. The Early Archaic was represented by points from the Gower (2, 8) and Zorra (5) cultures. The recovered Palmillas (6) and Ellis (7) points are younger, dating to the Middle Archaic. The Matamoros point (1) dates to the Late Archaic period. The projectile points that dated earliest are members of the Fairland (4) and Zavala (3) cultures of the Transitional Archaic and Late Prehistoric to Historic periods (Turner et

al., 1999:113, 117, 128, 153, 167, 198, and 238). The final point in the Figure (9) is actually a non-diagnostic quartz debitage.

Figure 16. Projectile points collected by the Norquest's on their property. Photo by Mary F. Noell.



The Norquests also provided the team a whelk shell and a stone pestle that are difficult to accurately date due to lack of context.



Figure 17. Whelk and pestle found on Norquest property. Photo by Mary F. Noell.

The Coahuiltecan were made up of an array of distinct gatherer-hunter groups present throughout the delta region. These groups contained “Coahuilteco-speakers” who retained distinct cultural markers and contained seasonal subsistence strategies (Fagan 2005: 313). Cultural artifacts discovered on the Norquest property are evidence that indigenous groups occupied or traveled through the property thousands of years ago. Limited archaeological research has been conducted on these groups, and as a result we have only gleaned basic concepts of their daily lives and culture.

Native Bands of the LRGV Under the Coahuiltecan Umbrella

As stated earlier, there is no extensive information recorded about the native inhabitants of this region. The exploration period of Nuevo Santander (1749-1757) brought about the largest repository of information regarding the pre-Columbian people of this area (Salinas 1986, vol.1:8). The 14 *villas* established by José de Escandón were inspected in 1757 by José Tienda del Cuervo and Agustín López de la Cámara Alta who reported on the colony’s progress. The reports also discussed various native groups in the region such as the *Catanamepaque*, who lived near a salt lake thought to be the area known today as El Sal Del Rey (Salinas 1986, vol.1:52). The *Gummesecapem* were located just south of La Sal Vieja in modern day Willacy County. The *Uscapemes* or *Usapemes* were located in Cameron County, north of Brownsville, according to Martin Salinas (1986:52). Most of the men and women who lived in these groups were tattooed and used the bow and arrow.

The *Comecrudo* were located in three regions of the colony along the Rio Grande. During Escandón’s *entrada*, he gained information from *Comecrudo* leader Captain Santiago. Santiago provided Escandón with “native names of 30 Indian groups said to be living along the lower Rio Grande, 16 groups south of the river and 14 north of it” (Salinas 1986, vol.1:65-66). The *Comecrudo* eventually relocated to the mission of San Joaquín del Monte in Reynosa and remained there (Salinas 1986, vol.1:66).

In the vicinity of the *villas* of Camargo and Revilla and on the northern side of the Rio Grande were the *Cotoname*. They are associated with the salt lakes known as El Sal del Rey and La Sal Vieja (Salinas 1986, vol.1:70). Juan José Ballí received the Salvador de Tule land grant and recorded information on the *Cotoname*, a group concentrated on the northern end of modern day Hidalgo County. In 1886, A. S. Gatschet observed *Cotoname* living in Las Prietas on the south bank of the Rio Grande and recorded part of their vocabulary that included 125 words (Salinas 1986, vol.1:74).

The *Mayapemes* were first recorded by José de Escandón during his initial visit in 1747. Cámara Alta described these Indians as the *Auyapemes*, located on the southern bank of the Rio Grande near present-day Valle Hermoso, Tamaulipas (Salinas 1986, vol.1:88). Many of these natives later joined the missions of Reynosa and Laredo (Salinas 1986, vol.1: 90). During the visit, Escandón also recorded the *Saulapaguemes*, who were located on the southern banks of the Rio Grande. By 1770, they were located about sixteen miles from Reynosa (Salinas 1986, vol.1:111). This group of natives moved into the missions of Reynosa and Matamoros (Salinas 1986, vol.1:113).

First mentioned in Escandón’s 1750 report, the *Guajolotes* and *Cacalotes* were mentioned as having six families living near Camargo (Salinas 1986, vol.1:80). In 1750, other natives moved into the mission of San Agustín de Laredo of Camargo. From 1788 through 1818, the *Cacalotes* were located near the towns of Reynosa, Camargo and Revilla (Salinas 1986, vol.1:86).

The *Pinto* Indians lived near Reynosa, and were native to the north of the Rio Grande area (Salinas 1986, vol.1:108). The *Pintos* were also reported in Spanish documents written by Cámara Alta and Tienda de Cuervo, who mention members of this cultural group near Reynosa and modern day Hidalgo County (Salinas 1986, vol.1:108). The Mission of San Joaquín del Monte was a final destination for members of this group (Salinas 1986, vol.1:109).

Throughout the nineteenth century, mention of native groups in Spanish and later Mexican documents all but disappeared (Salinas 1986, vol.1:9). The development of the Nuevo Santander region led to a decline in the native population. Many of the bordering *villas* on the Rio Grande built missions where some of the remaining natives relocated. For example, a mission in Reynosa housed natives from the *Catanamepaque*, *Comecrudo*, *Comesecapemes*, *Gummesecapem*, *Narices*, *Nazas*, *Saulapaguemes*, *Tanaquiapemes*, *Tejones*, and *Uscapemes*

groups (Cámara Alta edited by Osante 2006:41). In the mid-19th century, there was further decline in native populations and their cultural lifeways as mission life replaced their gatherer-hunter activities with larger agricultural and ranching practices. Before the introduction of agriculture to the region, native groups hunted deer, peccary, rats, mice, birds, wild horses, and bison, when available. The Spanish introduced cattle, horses, sheep, and goats into the area that became a target for native hunters (Salinas 1986, vol.2:215). The names assigned to these native groups by the Spanish were not their own. Spanish acronyms or brief descriptions were used to classify the natives which made it difficult to accurately distinguish one native group from another (Salinas 1986, vol.1:10-11).

These natives included the *Ayapaguemes*, who were recorded during the latter half of the 18th century. López de la Cámara Alta placed them along the Rio Grande in 1757, where this group is listed as one of many located in modern day Cameron County (Salinas 1986, vol.1:56).

The natives known by the Spanish as the *Casa Chiquitas* were recorded during the survey of the Llano Grande Grant in 1777. In 1798, there were 48 *Casas Chiquitas* in the vicinity of the Llano Grande grant; they included 23 men, 13 women, six boys, and six girls (Salinas 1986, vol.1:58). Some were congregated in the Mission San Joaquín del Monte of Reynosa (Salinas 1986, vol.1:58).

In the vicinity of Reynosa lived the *Como Se Llaman*, within the “Las Mesteñas y Petitas y la Abra” grants where Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties meet (Salinas 1986, vol.1:68). These natives joined the mission of Reynosa, as well as San Agustín de Laredo of Camargo and Matamoros.

The *Mulatos* of the Rio Grande Valley were first documented in 1777, although there were accounts of this group throughout the Nuevo Santander colony. The *Mulatos* were not akin to the *casta* system’s designation of *mulato*. The *Mulatos* were associated with the Spanish ranch known as El Rosario owned by Pedro Cantú, located a short distance away from modern day Matamoros (Salinas 1986, vol.1:93).

Spanish Exploration

The LRGV saw Spanish presence in the early 16th century. The Age of Exploration in North America brought Europeans to the Western Hemisphere, and the Spanish, at one point, controlled most of North America. In 1517, Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda led the first Spanish expedition along the South Texas coastline and produced the first map of Texas (García 1982: 17). A second expedition was conducted by Álvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, who in 1528 explored the Texas coast and provided valuable information about the natives. Cabeza de Vaca recorded information on the subsistence strategies, religious and social practices of the natives encountered, as well as the flora and fauna of the Texas region (Adorno and Pautz, vol. 1: 109-125, 140-141, 180-195).

While the Spanish consolidated their empire and settled vast regions to the north, the colonization of the LRGV did not take place until the mid-18th century. The colonization, as mentioned earlier, was directed by José de Escandón, who served as governor and military leader. Out of the fourteen *villas* originally established as part of Nuevo Santander, five were founded along the Rio Grande, known as the Río del Norte (Greaser 2009:7). These *villas* were Reynosa, Camargo, Revilla, Mier, and Laredo. These settlements were strategically placed in order to gain water access from the Rio Grande and tributary rivers that helped develop farming and ranching (Greaser 2009: 17-18). These two systems remained as the major economic determinants of the region.

In addition to ranching and farming, the Spanish also introduced missions. Most were located near Spanish settlements and areas where native populations were relatively dense. All Spanish missions farmed and were located near irrigation canals or major perennial streams, but not all succeeded (Salinas 1986, vol.2: 295). Missions were typically within 150 miles of the Gulf Coast. The missions of San Agustín de Laredo of Camargo, Purísima Concepción of Mier, and San Francisco Solano de Ampuero Revilla serviced more natives than the Nuevo León area (Salinas 1986, vol.2:299). Mission San Joaquín del Monte of Reynosa on the Río Grande, named was home to the *Comecrudos*, *Pintos*, and *Tejones* (Salinas 1986, vol.2:285). Sadly, few civil records exist on the native people who lived in the mission, as they could have provided more information (Salinas 1986, vol.2: 300). Many missions were relocated due to flooding river channels. Missions rarely produced enough food through farming, so natives adapted by reclaiming hunting and gathering strategies. By the 19th century,

most of the native groups disappeared (Salinas 1986, vol.2: 301).

The General Visit of 1767 was conducted by Escandón and Tienda de Cuervo. Both of their reports on the colony were sent to the king, although considerable time passed between the drafting of the reports and the actual development of the grants. Visits such as this were ways to monitor the conduct of officials in charge. The viceroy appointed two men in 1766, Field Marshal Palacio, and José Osorio y Llamas (Greaser 2009:24).

Palacio and Llamas not only conducted an investigation of Escandón's progress, they oversaw major developments of the Nuevo Santander colony, such as divvying up land among settlers and the reorganization of the local military (Greaser 2009:24). This visit was not only for dividing land between settlers, but constituted a major shift in administration that resulted in the Escandón's removal from office.

The town and the mission (bordering the town limits of Camargo) were surveyed and established before *porción* were granted. Most of the *porción* included land accessible to the Río Grande, with the exception of *porción* 70 through 80 (Greaser 2009:67). *Porción* 48 through 72 were located on the northern banks of the Río Grande and constituted the political boundaries of modern day Hidalgo and Starr County. Seniority and merit were factors that determined the size of the *porción*. For example, Captain Juan José Ynojosa was granted *porción* 69, twice the size of most *porciones* in Reynosa (Greaser 2009:67). *Porciones* 70, 71, and 72 were given to José Antonio Velasco, Narciso Cavazos, and José María Ballí, respectively (Greaser 2009:75). Portions of many of these areas would become the City of Edinburg.

The majority of the *porciones* were assigned in 1767, but no large grants were awarded on the northern banks of the Río Grande until 1800 (Greaser 2009:79). The grants came under conditions that included payments made to the Spanish crown through a procedure called *composición* (Greaser 2009:79). The Viceroy was the ultimate director of such grants, but a whole bureaucracy, with consent from the Spanish Crown, managed the land assignments.

Large land grants in modern day Hidalgo County include Concepción de Carricitos, Las Mesteñas, Petittias y La Abra, Santa Anita, and San Ramón (Greaser 2009:83-84). The Llano Grande grant was given to Captain Juan José Ynojosa and his son-in-law José María Ballí, who applied for *composición* on July 4, 1776 (Greaser 2009:81). Juan José Ballí was granted San Salvador Del Tule, which he applied for in 1794. The Salvador de Tule grant contained "71 sitios for large livestock, 9 caballerías, and would measure 15,328 square varas" in size (Greaser 2009:87).

What now constitutes the LRGV was once granted to Spanish colonists. By 1821, these large land grants ceased to exist and Nuevo Santander became Tamaulipas. Figure 18 shows the northern portion owned by the Texas-Mexican Railway. (See appendix B for a list of the Norquest Land Transaction History)

The colony of Nuevo Santander ceased to exist when the War of Independence against Spain ended in 1821. Nuevo Santander became the state of Tamaulipas in Mexico. In the Texas region, the Spanish and, subsequently, the Mexican government encouraged Anglo settlers to populate the area. By the mid-1830s, Anglo settlers and Tejanos declared and gained their independence from Mexico in 1836, but went unrecognized by the Mexican state (this was also around the time the U.S. annexed Texas, causing issues over the placement of the international boundary). This prompted the Mexican government to con-



Figure18. Map discerning *porciones* granted by the Spanish Crown. Courtesy of The of Texas- Pan American.

test the transfer and break diplomatic relations with the United States. United States would in turn send General Zachary Taylor and his army of 3,000 men to Corpus Christi on July 7, 1845 (Greaser 2009: 126). Mexico then sent their forces to the banks of the Rio Grande; soon war would break out between both nations. The first battles of the war were fought in the Lower Rio Grande Valley: the Battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de La Palma on May 8 and 9 of 1846, before the Declaration of War on May 13, 1846. Palo Alto was won because of a weaponry advantage among Taylor's troops. General Arista, commander of the Mexican forces at Palo Alto, lost 102 men with 129 more wounded compared to Taylor's loss of nine soldiers with 44 wounded (Mauck 1996: 9). Soon General Zachary Taylor marched into Mexico and took control of Monterrey, which was well defended but eventually penetrated by Taylor's forces in Saltillo, where Taylor's 5,000 men defeated General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna's 20,000 men at Buenavista (Mauck 1996: 14). General Scott marched from the port of Veracruz and took over Mexico City. Mexico lost the war to the United States and signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which stated Mexico would lose 1,200,00 square miles of territory that the United States paid \$15 million for (Mauck 1996: 26). The treaty would establish the Rio Grande as the border between the U.S. and Mexico.

The Mexican American War broke out in 1846 and was short-lived, lasting until 1848. The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma were fought along the northern bank of the Rio Grande in present-day Cameron County. In the spring of 1848, both governments signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, putting an end to the war. The porciones originally granted by the Spanish crown, and respected by the Mexican government, now had to be registered in the new state of Texas. Many of the grantees lost their *porciones* for a variety of reasons, including lost original titles, attorney fees, intermarriage, and outright violence.

The Rio Grande settlements were initially part of New Spain, then Texas, and eventually the United States. The Spanish land grants had to be re-registered with the new nation, and had to go through the process of being legally incorporated into the new Texas territory. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, under article VIII, gave Mexican citizens residing in the US side of the boundary the right to return to Mexico or stay with full rights over their property in the US (Greaser 2009:127). However, the Treaty did not establish the procedure for settling land claims within the ceded territories. There were "loss" and "theft" of documents and it was difficult to locate the originals in the Mexican archives. Article X of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was not approved by the United States Congress, and would have provided a provision which would have made the Mexican Land Grants equal and valid as American Land Grants (Greaser 2009:128). The confusion of land ownership caused "legitimate buyers risked expropriation and sellers were subjected to depressed prices. Indian hostilities added to the problem by keeping many of the Mexican owners off the land and thus even more posed to title forfeiture" (Greaser and De La Teja 1992:449). Several boards were created to handle the issues but they all ultimately failed, resulting in the land issues going to the courts (Greaser and De La Teja 1992:461). All of this confusion caused "South Texas lands previous to and immediately following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo [which] resulted in a transfer of large amounts of land into Anglo-American hands from the original Mexican owners" (Greaser and De La Teja 1992:463).

As the Rio Grande became part of the United States, an influx of Anglo settlers migrated to the area. The "Gringo" came to politically and economically dominate the region between the Río Grande and the Nueces. Between 1848 and 1850, there was an increase in border commerce and trade. These new systems gradually replaced the existing cattle- and sheep-based pastoral economy that by the 1860s, commercial ranching was thriving. By the 1870s ranching and cotton were the main staples in the state of Texas (Dugas 1955: 159).

The emergence of Juan Nepomuceno Cortina, as a social revolutionary, portrayed the sense of injustice and frustration felt by the Mexican population of the area. On July 13, 1859 Cortina entered Brownsville and witnessed Robert Shears, a former Texas Ranger, abusing an elderly Mexican and confronted the officer (Thompson 2007:7). He returned on October 31, 1859 and took over the town of Brownsville (Woodman 1950:31). Cortina's War, as it became known, brought forth issues of corruption and intensified race relations in South Texas. Mexicans felt economic and political marginalization as more Anglos moved to the area.

The American Civil War supplied an economic boost to this region given its role (particularly Matamoros

and Puerto Bagdad) in the smuggling and selling of Confederate cotton. The late 19th century and early 20th century witnessed uneven economic development: the railroad first arrived in Laredo; it was not until 1904 that it reached Brownsville.

In 1910, as a result of the Mexican Revolution, the Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz was removed from power. This launched the Mexican nation into civil war and disarray. The revolution saw power struggles between Francisco Madero, Victoriano Huerta, Venustiano Carranza, and Francisco Villa. On the northern bank of the Río Grande, there were many acts of violence against Mexicans and Mexican Americans perpetrated by the Texas Rangers, moles, and vigilante groups.

Many Mexicans/ Mexican Americans who found themselves in this region during the conflict were considered “bandits” simply because they were of Mexican descent. There is a general misconception that bandits plagued the region, not only during the Mexican Revolution, but throughout the border’s history. There were cases of banditry and abuse, such as of the abduction of women as described in Carrol Norquest’s story “Ramona”, a wife of one of his laborers:

“How many years had Ramona when you stole her?” I asked Renato later.

“Ramona had eleven years when I stole her.”

“Eleven years!”

“Yes, Carlos, I had a struggle to make a woman of her. Batalla mucho!” He didn’t elaborate, and I didn’t ask again (1972:66).

During the Mexican Revolution, close to one million Mexican citizens fled into the United States. In recalling her family history, Odie Norquest explained that her grandfather fled Mexico during the Revolution in 1913. As a resident of Mier, Teofilo Peña Reyna, was forced to help Carranzistas that took control of Mier. Because he was an affluent rancher, the Carranzistas forced him to supply cattle and money (Norquest/Schwarz2011/ pg. B-4). After exhausting Teofilo’s money and cattle, the Carranzistas demanded more than he could provide. The Carranzistas then took him to the cemetery to be executed. Unexpectedly, a lieutenant intervened, vouching for Teofilo, convincing the soldiers to give him a chance to escape with his life.”(Norquest/Schwarz 2011/ pg. B-4). Teofilo Peña Reyna, like many Mexicans during this time, crossed the border into the United States to find refuge.



Figure19.

Teofilo Peña Reyna, Odie’s grandfather [1920].

The family eventually ended up in Kenedy County where Odie’s father grew up and spent most of his youth (Norquest/Schwarz 2011/ pg5). Mrs. Norquest explained how their situation later improved due to her grandfather’s ranching experience, so they fared well enough and he gained some measure of prestige in the Kenedy region. After the death of her grandmother, Odie’s grandfather and his children returned to Mexico. The Carranzistas lost power, so Mrs. Norquest’s father, Teofilo Peña Peña, relocated to the LRGV through connections with family and loved ones, while trying to regain some of their family’s original entitlements in Mexico. The Peña family provides an example of the fluidity and the interconnections along the border as well as the flexibility of migration.

Figure 20. (left) Teofilo Peña Peña, Odie Norquest's father [1948]. **Figure 21.** (right) Peña Family-Odie's grandfather Teofilo Pena Reyna, standing. Her grandmother, two aunts, two uncles and a young man they raised, all seated [1920].



We see the cycles of human-land interaction begin with the pre-Columbian gatherer-hunter Coahuiltecan, who were invaded and reinvaded by Spanish and American empire as the latter sought to colonize the place we know today as the Lower Rio Grande Valley. In respect to the Norquest farm and family, both Spanish-Mexican and American histories contributed to their total family history and individual lifestories. Odie and her family's past (Mexican migration to LRGV because of political situations), coupled with Kelly's family's past (Anglo migration from the Midwest for different life and farming opportunities using Mexican migrant workers), captures the dynamism inherent in the border culture of the LRGV contact zone. As outcomes of conquest, colonization and modernization, social relations in this region, like many others, developed unequally. Yet as we will see later, the Norquests and the farmhands made time to laugh, love and heal around daily life on the farm. The following chapter explains the modern technological advancements in the LRGV, such as transportation, which facilitated migration like that of the Norquests during the 1920s. It will set the foundation for the next chapter on life in early Edinburg and its developments.

FIVE



The LRGV in the 20th Century



At the turn of the twentieth century, LRGV border towns developed and expanded. By the 1920s, commercial agriculture became the major economic staple of the area, replacing ranching as the leading economic venture. The establishment of the present-day U.S.-Mexico border brought with it far-reaching changes to the region, as briefly mentioned earlier. The arrival of the Norquest family, their interactions with the Mexican and Mexican American communities, and the dynamic unfolding of events surrounding irrigation innovations, commercial agriculture, to name but a few, are captured in the following sections.

Border history and culture formation

The border between the United States and Mexico was formally established at the Río Grande in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This geopolitical boundary was home to peoples of various ethnic backgrounds that came from both north and south of the region, yet the culture that developed after the Spanish and American empirical takeovers has its unique characteristics. People brought with them their own ways of life and adapted them into the old and newly established communities. Despite cultural conflict, two distinct traditions meshed into the hybrid culture prevalent in the LRGV.

In *Rio Grande Wetbacks*, Carrol Norquest describes the different values and beliefs he and the farmhands shared about the world they live in. These cultural practices are produced through the experiences people share with their communities and the ways in which those experiences produce meaning in their lives. “The Radio”, one of the stories told in Carrol’s book, describes one of the farm workers named Faustino, who arrived from Durango. He saved money and one day decided to head into town to buy a radio. Not being fluent in English, Faustino stumbled through his dialogue with the store owner regarding the purpose and price of the radio he was interested in. Faustino inquired “does it speak Spanish?” His unfamiliarity of the radio sheds light on how the introduction of modern amenities in this region created culture shock. The adoption of technologies shows the resilience to adapt to their new environment.

Carrol also describes Doña Luisa, a squatter who lived near the floodgates of the irrigation canals and regularly housed Mexican migrant workers. She let them sleep in a small shed in her backyard and fed them meals in return for chore work around the house, which forced many of the men to perform roles reserved for women such as cleaning the home and grinding corn. Life was hard and very different for all of the people migrating to the region, but the LRGV was seen as a land of work opportunity. The gates by which Doña Luisa lived were newly installed at the time, thus earning the title “Puertas Nuevas.” This name was ambiguously appropriate in describing both the physical landscape in the area she lived as well as expressing the opportunities this region posed to the many different types of people that came to the Valley searching for “Puertas Nuevas.”

History

The LRGV stretches more than 200 miles along the South Texas border with Mexico; the antiquity of this delta region is multifaceted and widely regarded for its rich and long-standing history. Early records involving

the region's social, political, cultural, and economic history provide accounts of a rich past. At the turn of the twentieth century, the LRGV was well on its way toward an agricultural boom that eventually made the territory's existence well-recognized. In particular, the township of Chapin, known today as Edinburg, expanded with its agricultural potential. The decline of ranching and the introduction of irrigation and modern technology paved the way for development and success in commercial agriculture. Following the start of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, an influx of Mexican refugees relocated to the LRGV borderlands, as was the case with Odie's grandfather (see chapter 4). This migration allowed for the growth of the area as it supplied an inexpensive labor market and increased the region's population. The establishment of a railroad system sparked further expansion, especially for the town of Edinburg. Much of the growth thereafter can be attributed to the continual expansion of city and The University of Texas-Pan American, which sits on land once farmed by the Norquest family and Anglo and Mexican farmhands. Other developments include commercial businesses, public schools, churches and neighborhoods (see chapters 6 and 7).

The history of Edinburg in the early 20th century is also significant considering the major political, social, and cultural changes that occurred in the region. These changes impacted the development of situational realities of the time, which had lasting effects on people living here today. Many individuals were instrumental in the formation of Chapin, including Anglos and Mexicans, both natives and migrants. It should be noted that while there were local historical figures born in the LRGV, individuals who controlled the economy and politics were for the most part Anglo-Americans from the Midwestern and Southeastern United States. The historiography of the region has concerned itself mainly with men, and women are mentioned usually only in reference to and in association with their husbands.

Transportation advancement in the LRGV

In 1847, Hidalgo County unveiled its first transportation system, the steamboat. That was more than half a century prior to the arrival of the railroad. Before the railroad system was introduced in the LRGV, trade with other states was made possible with steamboats and the use of ox carts that operated using harnesses much like the antique one still found in the Norquest home. Many men took their herds into New Orleans by traveling on foot, and they lost many of the cattle as they made the long trip. The ox carts were not reliable. Steamboats were effective in expanding the geographic area available for trade, but became inefficient once the railroad system came in. The implementation of the railroads in the LRGV was a costly and tedious process. By the 1910s, thousands of acres of land were cleared of chaparral, and the land became the basis of a strong agricultural economy. Due to the construction of the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexican Railroad in 1904, the population of the LRGV boomed by the 1920s and, as a result, railroad excursions brought many Anglos to the area to take advantage of the availability of cheap land. During the early 1920s, an estimated five to six thousand travelers were attracted to the area by complimentary trips and lavish entertainment at clubhouses belonging to developers. The railroads created convenient interstate transportation for interested migrants, primarily Midwesterners to come visit and enjoy the natural landscape and warm sub-tropical climate that the LRGV offered. Consequently, many jobs were created for local citizens and newcomers looking for a better life.

Railroads

Aware that the dusty Hidalgo-Reynosa trail was no longer efficient to move supplies, Closner and Sprague financed the building of an eight-mile long road in Chapin from the track that already extended from Brownsville to San Juan. In 1910, the railroad had been constructed with advanced funds in the name of trustee Sam Robertson of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad Co. (Frisco). Although railroads on the Mexican side of the South Texas-Mexican border were established before railroads in South Texas, the same was not true for all parts of Mexico (Cisneros 1998:140). Migrants displaced during the Mexican revolution came from all parts of Mexico, from villages to urban centers. Some were of indigenous descent, and compared to *mestizos*, some wore minimal clothing. In *Rio Grande Wetbacks*, Carrol writes about undocumented migrant laborers in the early 20th century and how often they were found dead on local rails with their bodies dismembered by the train. Many times, rail workers saw a person sleeping on the tracks, but were unable to stop the train on

time. Although many local residents were shocked, they attributed the horrific incidents to so called “Mexican laziness” (laying their head on the rail as a pillow), or drunkenness (another explanation for their fate). As he explained, they chose to sleep between the rails to avoid rattlesnakes. Carrol remembered one particular night when two people were killed in different places along the same line as the last time such an incident occurred. He attributed this to people adapting to new ways of life and communicating these changes through transborder networks reaching far into Mexico. The workers adapted and the locals realized that it was not the laziness, stupidity, or drunkenness of the migrant laborers that caused these deaths but the oversight of rail companies and land developers who disregarded the danger their industries posed, and took their little knowledge of modern technology for granted (Norquest 1972:58,59).

Figure 22. Chapin Railroad. [June 24, 1910] Courtesy of the Museum of South Texas History.



The construction of the railroad connected the Valley with the rest of the United States and Mexico, allowing for the shipment of construction materials. Soon after building the railroads, boosters and land developers like John Shary organized land excursions where eager home buyers came by the trainload to purchase land (Barton 1975:122). Canals and irrigation systems were constructed and became a significant part of the “Magic Valley” place-myth that attracted many enthusiastic farming families like the Norquests. The canals and irrigation systems quenching fields across the Valley were dug and routed manually by Mexican workers.

Paved roads and the introduction of the first American automobile in 1910 gave Midwesterners unprecedented mobility. Cars began to arrive in the Valley by train and soon road paving began. Afterwards highways and trucks replaced rail service; Edinburg was able to benefit from its location on a major highway intersection. Autos, trucks, and paved roads increased significantly after the railroads helped the LRGV and Edinburg grow with the rest of the country.

Creating the “Magic-Valley”

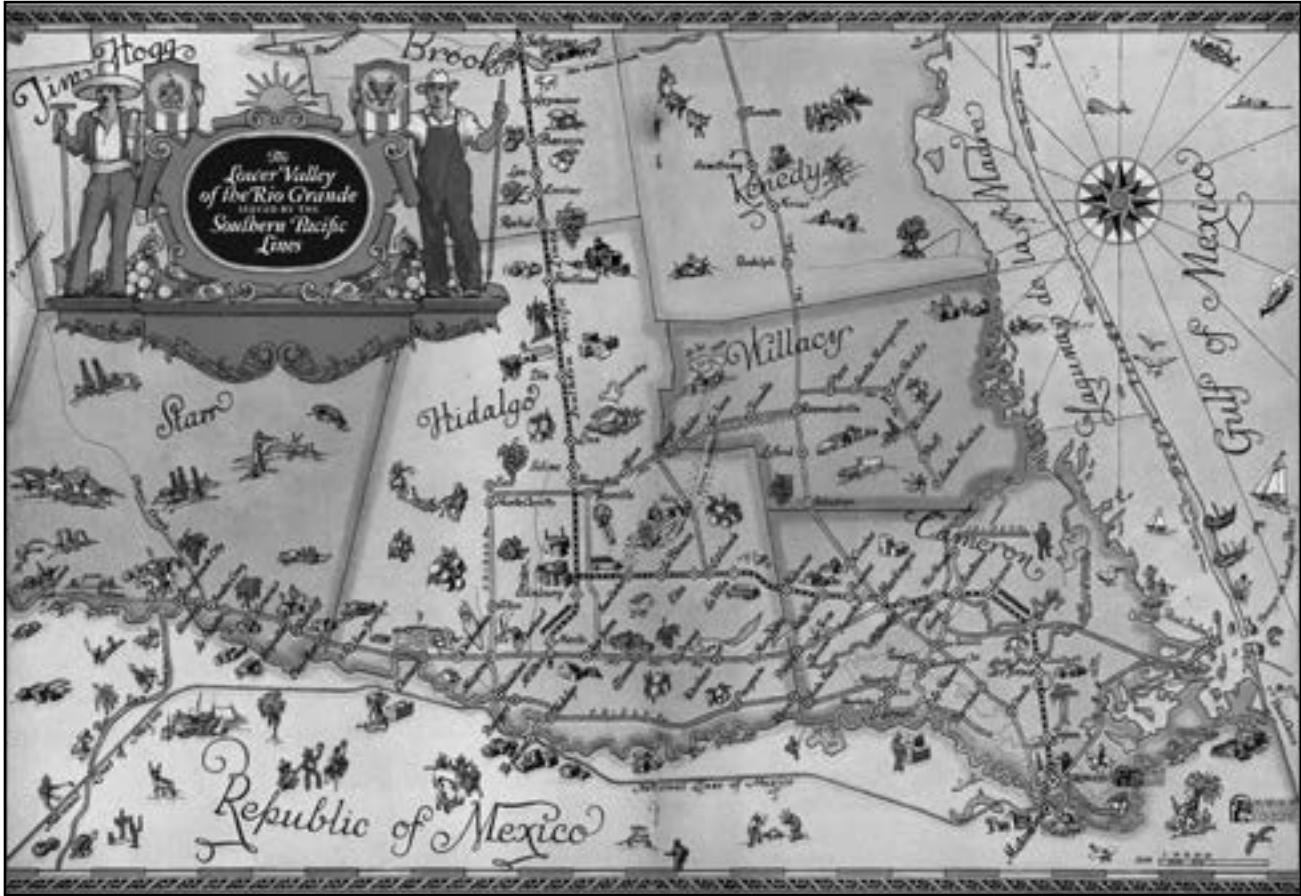


Figure 23. Map promoting the Magic Valley. Courtesy of the Museum of South Texas History. [Early 1900s]

Valley propaganda advertised South Texas as a rapidly modernizing region with plentiful water for irrigation, a virtually limitless cheap labor supply, and fertile soil – it was the ‘Magic-Valley’, a farmer’s dream. Print advertisements for the region invoked American expansionist aesthetics to emphasize the ‘good-life’, the promise of its investment, and its warm climate (Brannstrom and Neuman 2009: 125). Moreover, the “Magic-Valley” endorsement techniques perpetuated the idea that settlers were pioneers of a frontier landscape. Advertisers marketed an identity based on notions of American imperialism, race, and the ‘old’ West (Bowman 2011:3). The symbolic power of the iconography, imagery, and written descriptions in the ‘Magic-Valley’ marketing campaign created a myth surrounding the Valley. Place myths evolve in conjunction with land developments to reflect the changing cultural and material landscapes – core images radically change and dissolve into irrelevancy and the myth is updated into a more accurate representation (Shields 1991:60). Place-myths “enable and legitimize social practices that alter the material landscape” so that the landscape comes to resemble the place myth (Brannstrom and Neuman 2009:125). The place myth- the imagined landscape, the cultural landscape, and the physical landscape have a mutually interdependent relationship. While this is true, however, various cultures already thrived in the area and the transformation of the LRGV into such a myth was only partially realized.

Migration

In the early twentieth century the LRGV was predominately a Tejano ranching area with small-scale agriculture across its counties. Beginning in the 1910s, local land developers and boosters eager to capitalize on the Valley’s agricultural potential promoted the region in newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets throughout

the Midwestern United States, as described above. The Norquest family, enticed by the prospect of fertile land and easy access to water, were part of this large-scale migration. The Midwestern migration converged with the contemporary migration of individuals fleeing the Mexican Revolution, who would intermarry with resident Mexican-American, long-time Tejano families and the some Anglo families. These groups brought with them a world view that informed the way in which they interacted with one another and with the land; this had a lasting effect on Valley life and culture. The influx of farmers into the region necessitated the construction of infrastructure that would allow for agricultural developments including canals, roads, and fields that were constructed using Mexican labor at cheap wages. By the early teens, the stage was set for the large-scale transformation of the Valley from a rural community of scattered *ranchos* into a transnational site of political, cultural, and economic development.

Anglo Influx

The City of Edinburg, along with much of the LRGV, has undergone cultural changes over the centuries as the land passed from native inhabitants to Spanish settlers and missionaries, to Mexican ranchers, to Anglo settlers, and in later years, for the most part back into the hands of Mexican American citizens. Many families, like the Norquests who came from Kansas, have stayed because of the LRGV's welcoming environment, sunshine, its year round greenery, and access to the Gulf.

Over the years this land has become a haven for northerners fleeing the cold winters of their home states. Many have migrated to the Valley because of its semi-tropical climate and compelling atmosphere. The following pictures are of the luggage cases the Norquests used during their emigration from Sweden.



Figure 24: Luggage cases used by Norquest during their emigration from Sweden.



Mexican Migration

Economic disparity became increasingly pronounced during the Mexican Republic in the thirty years leading up to the Revolution of 1910. By the early twentieth century, states along the Mexican border benefited from the routine migrations of seasonal Mexican farm workers seeking higher wages. This could not have been more convenient for the burgeoning Southwestern economy which required the plentiful, low-cost labor supply. American farmers took advantage of the Mexican influx often by exploiting workers and by paying lower wages. By 1914 an estimated 100,000 Mexican nationals had come to the United States (Kanstrom 2007:155).

Other Migrations

Hidalgo County in 1900 was one of two counties (the other, Cameron County) with the highest rates of interracial marriages. The black population grew during and after the Civil War as migrants from the Deep South came to the southernmost region of Texas for sanctuary. In Hidalgo County at that time, 40 percent of the interracially married couples owned land (www.blackpast.org/?q=perspectives/border-love-rio-grande-african-men-latinas).

Four major multiethnic families who migrated to the LRGV during the years following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Webbers, Jacksons, Singletarys, and Rutledges, gradually identified themselves as ethnic Mexicans. Kelly, in a follow-up interview, mentioned attending school with the son of a Japanese farming family that owned land along the river and remembers hearing of such families as the Jacksons and the Singletarys, whose relevance in LRGV history he later discovered through his work with the First Lutheran Church (Kelly Norquest, personal communication 2012).

Odie Norquest also spoke of her memories of Rio Farms, a mid-valley institution that practiced experimental agriculture. One year they had an abundance of crops and were in need of farmhands. Odie remembers they brought in “a bunch of black families” into the community for that purpose. At her young age she remembers the little corrugated metal buildings Rio Farms provided for the worker families. Sympathetic to the working families, she felt it must have been a difficult living situation considering she lived in a frame house that provided comfort during the hot summer months (Norquest/Schwarz 2011/ B-9).

Development

Their occupation as farmers in Sweden, and later in Kansas, helped prepare the Norquests for the rough terrain in the LRGV. In addition to a variety of crops cultivated on the Norquest property, they also raised cattle and other livestock. Changes in the land over the years have produced effects on the ecosystems we see today. Members of the Norquest family, as well as many local residents of the Valley, noticed the change in the area’s biology (see chapter 3). In addition to their contributions to and observations of changes in the natural landscape, the Norquests were in a strategic position to participate in the development of their growing community.

Several factors contributed to the success of agriculture in the area, including capital investments from influential individuals, the subsequent rise of commercial industry, and the increase of the population. When the Norquest family relocated to the region, their land was harsh, unfamiliar, and underdeveloped. Unfazed, they cultivated a significant portion and made it their own. They contributed to the agriculture of South Texas and were present when much of the Valley entered the commercial agriculture period. The changes they witnessed, and the experiences they shared with us have been instrumental to our understanding of the area.

The next chapter explores the context in which the Norquest family and the larger community in general experienced some of Edinburg’s developments briefly highlighted earlier; it retraces the major stages in the city’s modernization, as well as highlights the Norquests’ and farmhands’ contribution to that development.

SIX

A New Family in a New Community, or Chapin-Edinburg and the Norquests

The birth of Edinburg is historically unique. In October 1908, the Town of Chapin was established through countywide elections as the new county seat for Hidalgo County. The original county seat was formerly located in Hidalgo along the river. In the early 1900s, the LRGV became an area where Anglo settlements, financed by credit, took over earlier Spanish-Mexican and Tejano settlements that succeeded those of the native inhabitants (the Coahuiltecas described in chapter 4). The aspiration for growth and development of Edinburg were just as high as any other place in search for progress. The first structure created in the new town was a brick vault constructed to hold documents in, a necessity as the documents were temporarily stored in tents (Garcia 2011:38). Land was donated by the Valley Canal and Irrigation Co. including the town center and the land that the first official courthouse was built on in 1909. In May of 1954, the new courthouse re-opened its services. The construction effort cost 1.5 million dollars and was constructed of four different types of stone (Edinburg: A Story of a Town 1977: 102). The courthouse was completed in 1954, and was partially destroyed by a bomb set off on October 27, 1954, by Henry Miller, who was involved in a Worker's Compensation case. Miller was killed in the blast and was the only victim (Edinburg: A Story of a Town 1977: 114). This bout of violence against the American capitalistic development resonates with historical rebellions such as *El Plan De San Diego* and The Mexican Revolution. A new courthouse was constructed in 1954, shortly followed by the destruction of the original. Formed as a political project, the towns' beginning was not characterized by the organic growth of communities from nearby people, but instead came about to satisfy economic needs.

Ranching

The ranching market provided substantial capital for South Texas from the end of the Civil War through the turn of the 20th century with large cattle ranching "empires" dominating the landscape. In the early 1910s, the prevalence of ranching declined significantly and continued on a marginal scale in the LRGV. Many of the newcomers turned to farming fruits and vegetables, which required construction of irrigation canals (Matthews 1938: 30, 36). Although this change occurred decades prior to the Norquests' arrival, ranching was, and to this day still remains, an essential element in the maintenance of our economy. Like most other farmers of the area, the Norquest family supplemented their farm production with livestock, primarily cattle, but also hogs and chickens. In a newspaper found in an "unclassified box" in Special Collections at the UTPA Library, we discovered that farmers and larger agricultural operations in this area found it useful to combine citrus and vegetable industries with livestock and dairy due to the ability of the "animal industry [to] convert waste, or by-products, of the farm into marketable merchandise" (Reference File "S" Agriculture: Farms and Ranches/Farms-General). Kelly Norquest recalls feeding agricultural waste products such as harvested corn stalks to cows and throwaways to hogs (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg.16) which agrees with the archival data collected.

In 1910, Edinburg's first meat market was established on the first block of East University. Oral histories shed light on slaughterhouses located on the corners of Schunior and 18th Avenue, as well as on Freddy Gon-

zales and 18th Avenue (Kelly Norquest, personal communication 2012). Kelly remembers how the family sold their eggs, poultry, and milk to local grocery stores that would place these items on their shelves (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-22). Before homes had electricity and refrigerators, local residents rented meat lockers in McAllen up until the construction of a rental site in Edinburg (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-20). Auction and sale yards were, and still are, an important aspect of farm life in Edinburg. Kelly, in a follow up interview, recalled that as the town grew, owners of the local sale yard expanded and relocated on two separate occasions and that Odie Norquest used to work part-time at a cattle yard (Kelly Norquest, personal communication, 2012).

While the cattle industry required large amounts of water, it did not come close to farming demands. What irrigation did exist was extremely minimal with most farmers using windmills to draw water from wells on their land. On the Norquest property, a cistern was dug into the ground and used as a reservoir to hold water for the cattle, as well as to store for domestic use. These cisterns are still present on the Norquest property. Later, after the family no longer raised livestock, it was filled with filtered canal water and used as a swimming pool (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-6). Other technological developments associated with cattle ranching include the use of vaccinations for disease prevention. South Texas was one of many areas quarantined and treated under state mandated legislation. The Norquests still possess syringes used to immunize their stock. The white fence between the barn and the Templin House consists of original corral material used for the cattle.



Figure 25. (left) Syringes used for care of the Norquest cattle. Photo by Sandra Hernandez-Salinas.



Figure 26. (right) Stock tank used for watering cattle on Norquest property. Photo by Mary F. Noell.

Irrigation

In 1913, the Texas legislature created the Board of Water Engineers to account for and approve the use of water in the state (Matthews 1938: 49). Each LRGV district was responsible for constructing its own irrigation works and selling the water to local farmers to pay for the construction cost (Matthews 1938: 60-72).

The American Rio Grande Land and Irrigation Company built many of the canals necessary for the development and growth of the city despite the fact that many of them were unusable. A large reservoir and levee system was constructed to prevent silt build up in canals (Matthews 1938: 86, 87). A similar maintenance reservoir is located across Sugar Road from the Norquest property today (see map of Norquest Property). It was built to control flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Allen (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg.13).

Irrigation canals are the veins that circulate water throughout the Valley, and although not explicitly detailed in the Norquest oral histories, their extensive use and function are a critical feature of the physical landscape. John Closner, a native of Wisconsin, garnered the attention of land developers, financiers, and agriculturists with his prize winning sugar cane entry in the 1904 World Fair (McNeese 2005: 11). In 1909, capitalizing on the interest generated by Closner, John C. Conway, J.C. Kelly, H.N. Pharr, and A.W. Roth incorporated the Louisiana-Rio Grande Canal Company with lofty ambitions of developing an elaborate irrigation system that

would divert water to what was then only a small community of farmsteads (McNeese 2005: 10). Many of the original irrigation canals were dug by Mexican laborers. Two pumping stations were then constructed in Hidalgo County to divert and circulate water throughout the region via a network of interconnected canals.



Figure 27. Workers in irrigation ditch using horse drawn slips. Courtesy of Museum of South Texas History. [Early 1900s.]

The construction of the canal system was a milestone in engineering history for this region and helped bring the Rio Grande Valley to the forefront of Texas agriculture. The accessible water supply spurred the Midwestern migration of farmers of which the Norquests were a part.

With the canal systems water became a necessity for agricultural economic success for the Valley. The construction of Falcon Dam and our local canal system has helped the Valley manage and distribute water across over 40,000 acres of farmland. During times of drought, water has been a point of contention for residents, especially farmers, who make extensive use of it for irrigation. Before the construction of Falcon Dam, west of Roma, Kelly recalls that, “cotton, corn, and citrus used a lot of water during droughts and would have to be rationed, especially when the lake was up there. There was a lawsuit that went on for many years in which the water rights were determined. During the drought of the fifties, of course, there were no dams to hold water and they just had to pump what was in the river if there was no water there they didn’t pump it.” Kelly further related that:

Farmers would get angry and fight with each other to get some water when there was only a small amount coming down. So it was not a very happy time... during periods of intensive drought folks on this property and locally tried to switch the crops they were growing, in response to the heavy drought (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-13).

Prior to the dam’s construction, droughts represented a major barrier to entering competitive agricultural markets; farmers had to grow less profitable crops. The construction of Falcon Dam unlocked the potential of the Valley as a farming community and quelled the disputes over water access among farmers in the region.

Farming

Once irrigation channels were well established, Valley farm life flourished. Among the abundance of staple crops that were grown throughout the Valley, including cotton, red-top cane, feteria, milo maize, kaffir corn, hegari, darso, alfalfa, cow peas, and sweet clover, only cotton was cultivated extensively. Kelly notes that his father grew cotton, corn, milo sorgum, carrots, and other crops. He also remembers oranges orchards in front of the current site of farmed land (the field north of the current Edinburg Baseball Stadium). Over the years, the Norquest land has produced citrus from their orchards and cotton from their fields as their primary crops.

Many farmers used modern tractors by the early 20th century, replacing the ox plow and increasing crop production (Norquest/Garza 2011/pg E-3). The cotton picking tractors sped production yet it was costly and only a handful of farmers had access to them. Access to a cheap large labor pool was an often sought-out alternative as farmers could pay migrants low wages instead of purchasing expensive equipment. Mr. Norquest, did not want “to spend 11,000 dollars on a machine to put on” his tractor. According to Kelly, their longtime “cotton pickers” asked his dad not to buy the machines as they would no longer have summer work for their whole families. He felt he “had no choice,” so Carrol listened to them and did not purchase it (Norquest 1972:13-15).

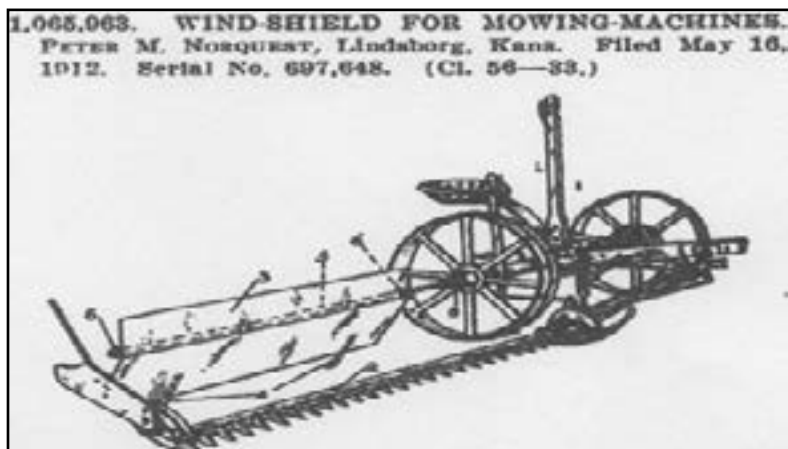


Figure 28. Peter Magnus's Patent.

Carrol also had farming ideas. He created a project out of “sweetening” his infertile ground. Upon first arriving in the Valley, Carrol viewed the black soil of his land akin to the rich black dirt of Kansas, wholly unaware that anything planted would fail to grow due to soil salinity (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-31). The soil on his 40 acres was too salty for him to farm; it was saturated with soluble salts and alkalis. Eager to “find something profitable for them and practical for [himself]” Carrol, along with his workers, dug trenches seven to nine feet deep for placement of cement pipes to carry mineral-laden water to the drainage ditches. He employed a modest group of laborers to assist in reclaiming his land’s agricultural potential. After six months, his idea worked; the undesired salts and minerals in the topsoil leached down and outward, leaving the topsoil sweet and fit for growth of vegetation. “Anything will grow there now,” he wrote (Norquest 1972:21-23).

There was also a cotton gin located southeast toward the rail-road, at 6th Street and Schunior Road, that the local residents used to process their cotton yields (Kelly Norquest, personal communication, 2012).



Figure 29. (left) Horse cultivator handles.

Figure 30. (right) Horse plow harness and wood working tools.

In northeastern Hidalgo County, there are 17,000 acres of irrigated land known as Rio Farms. Rio Farms was created as a non-profit farm corporation under a loan from the Farm Security Administration with the ultimate goal of serving underprivileged farmers, share croppers, and farm laborers. Rio Farms would accept tenants to work the land, learn farming techniques, and ultimately graduate from the program into home/land ownership. In 1945, Rio Farms paid back their loan in full to the FSA and the transition to a for profit big business institution was secured. As part of their “good business management” the average per acre rental price increased, from \$12.00 in 1945 to \$33.57 in 1951.

As stated in the Rio Farms’ 1952 promotional booklet, each tenant would be given a one-year trial, in which they had to fulfill the land rental, make sufficient profit, and prove receptive to the experimental farming practices. If successful they would then be given four more years of tenure with the stipulation that there would be progress made in the creation of a well-balanced farm and home plan for their ultimate departure from the Rio Farms program (Rio Farms, Inc. Monte Alto, Texas 7,15,43).

In 1967, and 1968, test crops were grown on Rio Farms near Monte Alto. Observations were recorded of different corn varieties’ crop yields, days to silk, shelling percent, test weight, moisture percent, plant height, and even such information as earworm damage. Similar agricultural tests were conducted in the 1960s in the same region on cotton varieties. (ReferenceFile”S”Agriculture:FarmsandRanches/Farms-General).

In the mid-20th century, pesticides were frequently used and, ultimately, proved detrimental rather than beneficial to the increasing worldwide production of food and fiber. Their potential harm was not initially realized by the general public. Pesticides were also used carelessly without an understanding of the damage they inflicted on the environment or to people using chemicals such as DDT, a well known and formerly used synthetic insecticide. Used by small and large operators at the time of their development, insecticides proved beneficial to commercial crops. Like other farmers, the Norquests never used pesticides or artificial nutrients on their crops before their development in the mid-twentieth century, aside from the use of organic sulfur on particular occasions (Kelly Norquest: Personal Communication). Kelly also recalls a frugal and less environmentally-hazardous method of reducing pest populations, particularly boll weevils and other insects that feed of cotton crops. The pest would nest in large overgrowth of weeds and tall grasses that grew uncontrollably along road ways due to the lack of tractor pulled shredders at the time. Setting fire to infested overgrown weeds along the road way proved to be beneficial in protecting the cotton crop (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-25). Other insecticides were used to deal with other kinds of insect infestations such as mosquitoes. Virginia Norquest recalls the mosquito problem in Edinburg and talked about how the spray machines would come around and spray clouds of pesticides into the air. She recalls going outside when she was young, while the clouds were still visible, and walking into them, which she now assesses as being risky. The use of dangerous pesticides undoubtedly effected the Valley environment. Many residents along with the Norquests, remember that animal life diminished as a result of pesticides. Horned toads, butterflies, moths, dragonflies, and many colorful birds have gone missing or are no longer as common as they once were. It is difficult to discern the precise impact that chemical sprays had on native plant and animal species due to hunting and urban development. However, one thing is certain: the interaction of humans with the land, of which these processes are a part of and through which these people eked out a living, has taken a significant toll on the biodiversity along the Rio Grande.

Other vegetation, like hackberry trees, were at one time planted on the property but did not endure the freeze of 1962. The oak tree planted in 1929 in the front yard however still stands strong and has convinced “Ed Kuprel [who’s] the forester here in Edinburg... that [it’s] the biggest oak in town” (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-40). Hurricane Beulah in 1967 had a major effect on the area, most of the land being underwater due to flooding. Patrick Twist talks about the Valley-wide wipeout of citrus in the freeze of 1983, followed by the freeze of 1989, it was these succession of freezes that lead to the fall of the RGV as the “King of Citrus”. Farmers did not find sufficient resources to replant/restart their orchards, which generally took twelve years to finally reach ripe age and produce sufficient fruit to provide enough money to pay for itself (Twist/Saenz 2011/pg G-14). Natural disasters and climatic changes had an effect on the terrain, as presented in chapter 3, but there were also manmade factors that contributed to changes in the region.

Drought and freezes led small farmers to abandon the citrus orchards in search of crops that could turn a

profit in desperate times. Kelly remembers that from Brownsville to Harlingen he saw citrus crops disappearing, extending to the mid-Valley, in the Edcouch-Elsa area, which once had seventeen packing-sheds. Small farming operations declined and resulted in the gradual push west and northward of citrus crops. Much farming land was transferred over to low maintenance crops such as the Milo grain (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-20,21).

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, farming operations on the Norquest farm dwindled and eventually ceased; cattle were kept on site as a supplemental form of income for ten to fifteen years afterward (Norquest/Garza 2011/pg E-5). Larger commercial operations made it difficult for small family farms to compete with them. Farming families as a result adapted to the new changes and found different ways to make a living.

Commercial Development

Before the appearance of large commercial grocery stores, family members such as Dixie (Norquest) Setti recalled, “The Valley Store... my mother did a lot of shopping in there... [it was] owned by [the] Trevino Brothers” She also remembers that, “before we had H-E-B, the [store] that we went... shopping [at] was Piggly Wiggly.”

There was also a J.C. Penny located on one of the corners of the town square, as well as “2 or 3 dime stores” in the city (Norquest/Vallejo 2011/pg D-2). As a child, Kelly sold eggs and small chickens in town. He distinctly remembers the Piggly Wiggly grocery store, at the time located along the town square, buying half a dozen fryers which the employees butchered in the open air north side of the store, cleaned, and took place on the shelves (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-23). Odie remembers with the establishment of the H-E-B and the arrival of franchises, a lot of family-owned grocery stores and businesses declined, with only a few surviving (Norquest/Schwarz 2011/pg B-19).

When Edinburg was first established there was no hospital in town. Residents of the city relied on small clinics run out of people’s homes for their medical needs, or dealt with those issues on their own at home. Kelly and all of his siblings, like other children during the time, were delivered at home (The Big House). In Carrol’s book, he discussed two separate stories in which members of the community became sick and required doctors to make house calls (Norquest 1972: 76-78). By the next generation, however, children were delivered in hospitals. Odie delivered her daughters and paid \$75, \$150, and \$300 respectively, at local hospitals. Later in her life, she worked for an OB/GYN. She noticed that the medical industry “has changed so much” (Norquest/Schwarz 2011/pg B-6).

Entertainment was a central part of the community. Kelly’s earliest memories involving commercial development with regards to entertainment was in the late ‘30s to early ‘40s with the construction of the Citrus Theater. The Citrus Theatre operated around the same time as the Aztec Theater. There were also three Spanish language theatres along Harriman Street, present-day University Drive. The Citrus Theatre was located in the town center, on 12th Avenue, and is not in use today. Odie’s very first cinematic experience was a religious film about the life of Norman Vincent Peal, the author of “Power of Positive Thinking”. Later on, Kelly asked his future wife, Odie, out on their first date to the theater for a movie (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/notes).



Figure 31.
Present-day Citrus Theatre.
Photo by Mary F. Noell.

Roads

Edinburg's major roads and the plat of the original town site were donated in 1908 by John Closner and William F. Sprague, owners of the Valley Canal and Irrigation Company at the time the city was created. Before this time, records indicate, Closner and Sprague purchased the plat from William Brewster, whose family intermarried with the Webber and Jackson families mentioned in chapter 5. Roads were important considering that transportation was primarily accomplished by ox-drawn carts. Caliche extraction was and still remains a profitable industry due to its availability and affordability for road construction projects.

Peter Magnus Norquest was the first person responsible for clearing the section of road extending from Sugar Road to Business 281 (modern day Chapin Road). The road was first paved using gravel, later with caliche and finally asphalt were laid over it for the entire run of the road (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-10).



Figure 32. Juxtaposition of Sugar Road and University Drive (107) in 1926 and 2012. By Rolando Silva and Mary F. Noell.

With the automobile, roads became even more important to the community. As a result, road size increased greatly and required more maintenance. The LRGV initiated building projects for roads including the construction of multiple highways that would further serve to connect Valley residents to the rest of the nation. Odie Norquest remembers her first car, which her protective father ensured was a large and theoretically safe vehicle. "It was a 1966 car, I was 20 or 21... already out of high school... paid for everything myself, a big ol' Sedan," she said (Norquest/Schwarz 2011/pg B-20).

Sewers: Storm Drainage

After a Hurricane made landfall at South Padre Island in September 1933, the torrential rainfall in the Edinburg-McAllen region was recorded at over 13 inches within the first day. National attention of the disaster likely provided impetus in Valley cities receiving federal funding to build storm sewers to divert flood water. Plans to expand storm drainage had been on cities' tables for some time without the budget to support projects of that magnitude. McAllen's sewer was constructed using funds appropriated by the CWA, one of many "alphabet soup" organizations chartered under FDR's new deal program. The construction is connected to the Norquest family in that the city engineer (therefore the man responsible for designing the structure) at the time of construction was none other than Edward Fredrick Nordmeyer, father to Lydia Norquest, and Kelly's grandfather (Kelly Norquest: Personal communication 2012).

The system began on the south side of the intersection at Oakland Avenue and 19½ Street, with a diam-

ter ranging from 4 to 7 feet, and ran south for approximately 1¼ miles along 19½ and 20th Streets, emptying into a reservoir. The project required 2 million bricks, none of which were shipped from outside sources. The bricks and the mortar were made locally and specifically for this project, which saved the city money. Lime was burned and collected in Edinburg using locally harvested mesquite wood for fuel and caliche to create lime from. It was then taken to McAllen where it was hydrated and stored. From there it waited to be mixed with sand, which was also locally mined and used in the construction effort. Edward worked hand in hand with approximately 500 laborers contracted for the job and was paid \$1,000 for his work with the city that year. His engineering experience, despite a lack of formal education, was largely based off his work with similar projects. His father specialized in draining marginal lands and the two opened an engineering company in the 1920s that developed irrigation and drainage systems (Nordmeyer 1998: 4-10).

The brick was made at the Valley Brick and Tile Company plant in Madero which the City of McAllen leased out. The factory only had one brick-firing kiln with a carrying capacity of 60,000 bricks. Additional kilns were built for the project; however, the kilns themselves were made of the same type of brick they were firing so this increased the number of bricks required for the project. When the city returned the property to its owners, they had leftover brick in the yards as well as several more kilns that were abandoned after the project (Nordmeyer 1998: 12). Eventually, Rudy Nordmeyer, Edward's son, acquired the Madero brick plant and operated it for many years (Norquest 2012: Personal communication).

Some of the deeper sections were completely dug by hand, while the other areas were partially dug using a machine borrowed from the San Juan Water District. Bricks were lowered into the trenches where workers laid them by hand. The main sewer along 19½ and 20th streets was the longest and most labor intensive part of the job (Nordmeyer 1998: 32,34). Edward H. (son of Edward F.) Nordmeyer was the only person known to have inspected the sewer from the inside before March of 1998, 64 years later, and found that it was still in working condition and still doing its job. He reported that there were no "apparent signs of collapse or pending collapse of the system" (Nordmeyer 1998: 35,40,43).

Edinburg received its first storm sewers as a result of WPA programs in 1934. A 20" concrete pipe storm sewer was installed along Harriman Boulevard. The sewer extended from 12th Avenue to the Hidalgo County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1 main canal (located to the east of Edinburg). While this line was sufficient in serving the community directly surrounding it, residents living in rural parts of Edinburg were subject to extensive flooding. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, through a combined effort of the Edinburg School District along with rural property owners financed the construction of a series of concrete additions to the sewer system. In 1952, a modest sewer system was built in the city center and was followed by extensions of that same system through 1954. By 1957, drainage had become a priority in Edinburg with the city approving 290 thousand dollars for storm sewer projects.

It was not until 1962 that the city extended the system to rural communities west of the courthouse. The West Main Storm Sewer Project effectively drained from Sugar Road (as far west as the Norquest property but not as far north) southeast to the center of Pan American College. It would later extend as far as the intersection of 4th Avenue and Stubbs Street. A drainage system was built a year later just southwest of the courthouse in the residential neighborhoods between 4th and 7th Avenue (Melden 1965: 2,3).

All the Modern Conveniences: Electricity, Gas, and Water

In the early 1940s, the Norquest family had electricity connected to their countryside home. Kelly attributes the REA (Rural Electricity Act) for providing access to services which led to the removal of the Norquest's windmill (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-5). Before the Norquest family home was powered by electricity, their home was lit using kerosene lamps. They also used kerosene during this period to power their stove (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-21). Winters, although milder than those further north, were endured using wood stoves until long after the property was connected to electricity.

Water is an important economic commodity that has developed the physical landscape, defined international relations, been a source of struggle, and contributed to overall power relationships and development of the LRGV. We use the oral histories provided by the Norquest family to frame important water related events

and to explore the history of water use and its local significance.

Initially, for domestic water use, Kelly Norquest described the use of a metal windmill placed on the property in 1913; it pumped water out of the ground and into a two story high iron tank that sat on a wooden tower that generated enough water pressure to move water into the home and outside to the feed lots where the animals were. Approximately 75% of the water was consumed by the animals (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-7). The house originally had minimal iron pipe plumbing, which is difficult to put together, and eventually rusted out. With the availability of electricity in the early 1940s, the Norquest family purchased and installed an electric water pump and removed the obsolete windmill shortly after. The tank was not thrown out, but saw use as a cistern to collect rainwater.



Figure 33. CeCelia Nordmeyer pictured in foreground and rainwater tank in background[1939].

An underground cistern replaced an older tank. It was equipped with a pump, filter, and pressure tank to feed water into the house. In the early 1950s, they connected the cistern to a new electric pump that was in use until the 1970s when the Norquest home was connected to city water, which was contracted by Sharyland Water System at the time (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-6). Water pulled out of the well was not clean enough to drink or cook with, so it was used primarily for bathing, washing dishes, clothing, and the home. Odie Norquest recalls that prior to the arrival of city water, they went into town to purchase drinking water from the nearby church or gas station using 5 gallon jugs (Norquest/Schwartz 2011/pg B-1,2).



Figure 34. (left) Fire hydrant on Norquest property dating to 1978.



Figure 35. (right) Outhouse formerly used by Norquest family before indoor plumbing. Photos by Mary F. Noell.

Before the arrival of city water, the family also endured periods of strict bath schedules. During droughts they only bathed on Saturday nights and the same bath water was used by the whole family (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/notes). The family also had an outhouse that was used before they received indoor plumbing. It had moved several times before going out of use and the most recent one still stands on the property. Before the Big House had indoor plumbing, the Norquests made use of outhouses. The out-

house was moved a few times in the course of the Norquests' lives and still remains on the property. One of the latest additions to the Norquests' immediate environment came in the late 1970s and required that the city considered rural lands in their civic planning by installing a fire hydrant on the property.

Resources as a Privilege

With the scarcity of resources that can be common in rural farming life, innovation becomes necessity, whether by salvaging raw materials or by forming community-based garbage pick-up groups. Kelly Norquest remembers front lawn signs labeled “*Union y Dignidad*” that sprang up in the mid-seventies among rural land owners whose refuse was not being serviced by the city. Before joining this cooperative, Kelly admits to the family incinerating trash, throwing edible scraps to the hogs, and using bar ditches along the canals as make-shift landfills. Waste management and recycling efforts were considered more out of necessity than out of environmental concerns (Norquest/Nicholson 2011/pg A-23). Later the city would pick up garbage, each house having 4 metal cans. After that the city implemented the big plastic trash containers used today.

Virginia recalls the presence of screened porches being an integral part of the home architecture in the Valley during the early part of the twentieth century. This allowed for relief from the heat along with open doors and windows set on the southeast and northwestern corners of homes which ventilated the structure. With the introduction of affordable home air-conditioning came a generational shift in behavior. When Virginia was young, children wanted to be outside playing in 100-degree weather because it was a relief from an enclosed setting. Only a generation later, Virginia’s children would rather stay indoors than be outside in that same temperature (Norquest/Pena 2011/pg F-5).

Many things that even adults take for granted today were discussed by family members, reflected on the writings of Carrol A. Norquest, and visible when viewing the family’s photo albums. In the country side, issues with mail delivery were prevalent and although they always had a mailbox on site, Kelly mentioned how over time the change of city route numbers along with zip code changes that came with the growth of the area caused problems for them, such as loss of mail, improper delivery, and having mail returned to sender (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-29).

When Kelly and his siblings were young, their mother made their clothing using cotton flour sacks for material (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/notes). Considering the availability of manufactured and affordable clothing today, some children are picky about the clothes they wear, whereas during harder times children didn’t have a choice. While musical equipment is purchased and repaired at professional stores today, the Norquest family had to improvise and learn to repair their own instruments.

Figure 36. Erik “Rikki” Norquest fixing his 300-year-old bass viol [1952].



Additionally, during World War II the Norquest family members experienced a scarcity of common raw materials consumed today without regard. Gasoline was rationed, steel and iron products were inaccessible due to the great demand brought on by war's efforts. Carrol's eldest son, Kelly, our main informant, recalls his father resourcefully avoiding some of these difficulties.

...during WWII, you couldn't buy anything. They weren't making any equipment... they weren't making any tractors, they weren't making any farm equipment, all the metal was going into the war effort, so my dad started to go to junk yards around here and he would find tools... there was at least one blacksmith in town and he would take those pieces of iron... and he would either have him custom make the tool he needed or fix them up if they were broken... (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-23)

Carrol proved to be similarly practical in a memory relayed by Dixie, who described her father's purchases of WWII army surplus items for the family. Mrs. Setti recalled blankets, canteens, a camping stove, and individual suitcases that were acquired from army surplus distributors.

The Norquest family still has a make-shift forge crafted from an old tractor-wheel rim used to fix tools and do other metalworking on site. The current barn on the Norquest property is also a product of resourcefulness: it was built using materials from the old barn on the property. Remains of the cement foundation from the original barn are still present today.

Figure 37. (left) Forge used by Norquest family made from a tire rim and other recycled materials. Photo by Mary F. Noell.



Figure 38. Top to bottom: New barn [1943], picture of old barn or Rancho Colorado [built 1913, demolished 1941]. By Rolando Silva and Mary F. Noell.

Methods of food preparation and preservation have changed over the course of the Norquests' time in the Valley. There are various reasons why these changes occurred, including technological innovations, economic conditions, and transculturation. After the advent of the ice box, families no longer had to rent refrigeration lockers and could have the convenience of preserving their food in their own home. Early home refrigeration in Edinburg involved the purchase of a large block of ice at the local icehouse on the corner of 12th Avenue and Mahl Street (northwest corner) in Edinburg and placed in the ice-box to keep food cold. Patrick Twist's great grandfather was a farmer on La Blanca Road who worked at the icehouse during winters.

Growing up during the Depression, Kelly recalls an "old kerosene barrel used for cooking." Kerosene kept in the barrel was used for many purposes in the Norquest home, including being mixed with honey or sugar for sore throats. Odie also received lumps of sugar with kerosene prepared by her mother for coughs (Sleeth/Salinas/2011/pg C-16). Many families in the Valley grew aloe vera abundantly on their farms and in their gardens.

Virginia Norquest grew the plant in order to make use of it for its alleviating effects on burns, skin problems, and other ailments. Field discs were also commonly used as a comal-like cooking surface, a technique learned from Mexican migrant employees. Another cooking method that was adopted from laborers included the use of a Poso (a hole dug in the ground to bake food). Today, in more of a playful gesture than from necessity, the family will fill an antique cast iron bathtub with ice to keep drinks cold during family gatherings.



Figure 39.
Cast iron tub used as an ice chest during family functions. Photo by Sandra Hernandez-Salinas.

Not only did the family participate in changes regarding the use of resources, but were intimately involved in the transitions that occurred in the use of space. One example of this is the changing function of the brooder house that was once a chicken coop, but later converted into a living space for maids that worked in the house.



Figure 40. (Left) Modern Brooder house, currently used for storage. (Right) Inside of Brooder house when it was used to house chickens. By Rolando Silva and Mary F. Noell.

On a grander scale, the adaptations the Norquests and Mexican laborers underwent to manage and maintain their resources reflect similar changes in other areas of the LRGV. Before the land was settled, it was brush. After it was cleared, ranchers and farmers used these fields to provide sustenance for their families and to make a living. The result of these activities further altered the landscape. Today, land that was once used to graze cattle

and grow crops by the Norquest family has been incorporated into the local baseball stadium as well as UTPA. Now instead of growing crops, the function of the land is to educate our community and increase its potential for future growth and opportunities. Under the living conditions and developments explained in this chapter, the next one shows how the Norquest, along with their neighbors and the larger LRGV community, experienced education in Edinburg. Those experiences range from language loss and social inequality to social cooperation.



Figure 41. View from Kelly Norquest's backyard in 2012. The UTPA baseball stadium and academic buildings are visible in the distance. Photo by Mary F. Noell.

SEVEN



Education in Edinburg



In the late 19th and early 20th century, a major ideological shift took place in North America. Progressivism was adopted which placed education as one of the nation's top priorities. The progressive social climate extended to the LRGV and in the 1920s, junior colleges became an increasingly popular idea. Locally, campuses increased ten-fold and functioned as training and education spaces for adults (Welch 1987:2,4).

The Edinburg School District, founded by Marshal McIllheny, F. B. Vela, A. J. Sappenfield, C. J. McCurdy, and A. Y. Baker, helped maintain the prosperity and political dominance of the city, which were things the county seat depended on (Welch 1987:5). Through his relation to A.Y. Baker and his impressive credentials in the field of education, H.C. Baker was brought to Edinburg from Waco to serve as the district's first superintendent (Welch 1987:6). It was H.C. Baker's idea to form Edinburg Junior College, and with the help of his colleague R.P. Ward, they managed to convince the board of trustees in 1926 to begin a construction program for the creation of the college. The college initially employed 37 faculty members who taught both high school and college level courses until the school district separated from the college between 1949 and 1952 (Welch 1987:7-8). Students were graded not only on academic evaluations but also on personal qualities of character according to the social expectations of the times (Welch 1987:9). The first registration and entrance examinations took place on September 9, 1927 and approximately 200 students enrolled, each paying \$10 for Edinburg School District residents and \$20 for non-district students (Welch 1987:10). The interests of the Norquest family were represented with an emphasis on studies in music, voice, and instruments with 10 faculty employed as fine arts instructors (Welch 1987:11). Many considered the fine arts emphasis to be a wasteful project of A. Y. Baker's and soon afterward the non-local faculty left the school, shrinking the department. A combination of illegal fund misappropriation and the financial downturn of the late 1920s caused a change in public opinion. The community found that leaders like Baker would commit such actions in the middle of a national crisis, which caused a controversy (Welch 1987:12-13). Due to these scandals and the economic problems in 1930, Baker's superintendent position was petitioned. Baker decided to resign and died one year later, taking with him the reasons why such funds were misappropriated (Welch 1987:13). Teachers' salaries were cut during the Great Depression, but lowered tuition fees and other offered benefits enabled higher attendance rates that ensured the college's survival. Some of the new benefits included bus transportation and free gas and maintenance on cars with two or more passengers (Welch 1987:15).

During wartime in the early 1940s, financial strains escalated and enrollment at EJC, especially for men, shrunk significantly along with other faculty positions (Welsh 1987:19). Dean H. A. Hodges was successful in maintaining a positive image for the campus. He often traveled to recruit faculty and, in doing so, employed seven people with doctoral degrees (Welsh 1987:19). After the war, enrollment increased from approximately 125 to 625 students and continued to grow well into the 1950s. By this time, EJC offered senior level coursework along with night classes, summer classes, and off-campus sites in various communities. The college experienced an enrollment spike of 1,537 students between 1952 and 1953 (Welch 1987:20). During the mid-1950s, Carrol Norquest proposed the expansion of Pan American College on farm land he leased and tilled, which totaled 50 acres. His son Kelly recalls Mr. Scharnhorst, Mr. Van Matre, and Mr. Scheh as some of the men who owned some of the land his father leased. It is because of Carrol's visionary applications and personal capital that

Pan American College changed locations and expanded around the vicinity of the Norquest farm, on land once leased to them and worked by many farmhands (Kelly Norquest 2011). Carrol put in some of his own money to hold the land for construction and even ran for the board of regents, but did not make it. At this time, R. P. Ward learned about the Section 16 of the Texas Public Junior College law, which led him to acquire district funding through local taxation for the school resulting in new elementary schools, and expansion of the college campus (Welch 1987:21). From late 1950 to early 1951, Ward along with Dean Hodge helped implement and draft the General Regional College law that left decisions regarding the campus's expansion, ability to award bachelor degrees, and state funds up to a vote by the county's citizens (Welch 1987:23).

In 1951, Texas legislators passed a bill enabling the institution to grow and serve the LRGV at large. When this expansion occurred, they renamed the institution to Pan American College (Edinburg: A Story of a Town 1977: 66). In September of 1952, PAC offered its first four-year program. During the 1950s, local residents acquired land to construct a new campus for PAC. The college also expanded greatly by the end of 1962 with the completion of the Engineering Building, the Library, the College Center, the Administration and Liberal Arts Buildings. In 1964, due to the work of Valley voters, PAC became a state-supported school. The College further expanded in 1965 with the addition of the Chapel, a Science Building, a new Health and Physical Education Complex, two dormitories, a Fine Arts Center, a Business Administration Building, a home for the president on Sugar Road, and the covered walkways. This second large expansion effort cost \$12 million dollars (Edinburg: A Story of a Town 1977: 67). In 2012, more than 19,000 students attended UTPA--its highest enrollment to date.



Figure 42.
Florence Norquest in her cap and gown after graduating from Edinburg Junior College in 1927.



Figure 43.
Kelly Norquest holding up his high school lettermen jacket. Photo by Sandra Hernandez-Salinas.

When Carrol returned with the second half of his family, he and Florence, then young adults, were ready to study and thrive in a developing world. Two years later, in 1927, Florence graduated as part of the first class to complete coursework at EJC; Carrol did not complete his studies because of his father's death in 1930. He became the head of household, inheriting the 40 acres of land owned by and leased to his father. Carrol's children would grow up in Edinburg's education system, an expanding institution by the time they were adults. All of Kelly's siblings completed a secondary education; some earned degrees upstate, but all of them have post-secondary education. What the Norquest recall of the Edinburg Consolidated School District of their childhood is that segregation existed. It existed, they remembered, as a system that divided students by language. Lectures were given in English only, and Spanish speaking Mexicans or students of different ethnicities with no grasp of English were segregated and taught in classrooms together. Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans were

both acculturated into speaking English. But just as they were coerced into disowning their original language, first-generation Americans in the LRGV found themselves challenging their own oppression. Kelly recalls Ward as a fierce advocate for an integrated school system. Unfortunately, “the laws were such that [Ward] couldn’t” bring about the desired total integration of Anglo, African American, and Mexican American students (Kelly, personal communication, 2012).

Dixie remembers her childhood on the fringe of Hidalgo’s county seat and the education provided to her by ECSD. Her teachers, who were predominantly Anglo-American, encouraged and helped her achieve a teaching degree from North Texas State. Another key player in her education was her father, Carrol. Although he had only one year of higher education, she remembers him as a well-read man, given his large library collection.

Yeah, my father was a, very much, although he only had one year of college, he was very much an educated man. He had a library of books that would be the envy of any college professor. History books, all kinds of things, he read and read. Because you know there are months when the farmers can’t work very much and he did a lot of reading and he really knew a lot about history and philosophy. (Setti/Vallejo 2011/pg D-14)

Dixie does not remember thinking much about “race” growing up, but she told us that if “Mexicans” did not speak English, or had trouble with it, it was noticeable. Dixie also talked about black students and how she never felt tension with them. Desegregation of schools began when she was in seventh grade, and one of her best friends was a black student. She remembers rumors of a hotel in San Antonio that refused to let a black student stay at their, but she could not recall if it was true. Color did not matter to her and it never occurred to her how, because of someone’s “race,” she should not interact with them. She added that students hung out with whoever made them comfortable, and contends race was never an issue for her.

Odie Norquest offered a more nuanced perspective. During her interview, she mentioned that race was not an issue for her family because her parents never taught them of differences in “race” or socioeconomic backgrounds. However, she casually joked about her ethnicity when referring to her fair skin tone, saying “maybe that’s why the whites treated me so nice.” Odie’s statement reinforces the idea that light-complexion was the preferred skin-tone within society at large that extended to families of Mexican origin. Anthropologist Alejandro Lugo’s concept of *colorismo* helps elucidate this idea by postulating that despite poststructural/postcolonial claims of ethnic integration, working-class people of Mexican and Mexican-American origin still find themselves struggling at the hands of a privileged lighter-skinned class (both white Americans and white Mexicans), just as many of their ancestors did during the Spanish conquest. This holds true in Mexico and throughout the U.S.-Mexico borderlands (2008: 52). If no distinction in “race” or class division existed, then her jest tells of color-based sentiment that proliferated throughout the LRGV borderlands. This perspective manifests in one of Odie’s memories about a fellow Spanish-speaking Mexican student who approached her. She code-switched from English to Spanish, only to be reprimanded by her Anglo teacher and principal. Here is what she said:

This guy came and was talking to me in Spanish and I of course, you know being me, I talked in Spanish back to him like, you know. I mean people...if you talk...if you start talking to me in Spanish right now I’ll switch and talk to you in Spanish, but if you’re talking to me in English, I’ll go ahead and talk to you, and this is what happened. And so anyway the bell rang and so the guy left and then I...then this woman approached me. I really didn’t know her and she was a school teacher, but anyway, she came over to me and she said

“You insulted me” and I said

“Well, how did I do that?” you know, I didn’t even know that she was there.

And she said “Yes, you were talking Spanish”.

I didn’t even know, I mean I switched so much that I don’t know when I’m talking

Spanish or English or what.

She said that “Yes” she said and I didn’t understand her and I said “I’m sorry, but you know I was talking to him; I wasn’t directing any questions or answers to you.” Anyway no big deal, I thought. Until I went to my class and there is this principal that comes and knocks at the door and asks for me. We’re standing at the hall, you know, by the door, and he’s getting after me for talking Spanish and insulting this lady. I said “I didn’t insult.

He said “You have to apologize.” I said “I have nothing to apologize for. If anything she needs to apologize to me [laughing] for butting in. I didn’t say butting in, but you know. And then the guy, the principal didn’t know what to say.

He says “Well”, he says “if, if you” “if so and so” and he gave the name of the guy [inaudible]. “If he was going to college you know he would never make it because he doesn’t speak any good English and he’s a football player and they never get in as a football player”. So what does that got to do with me [laughing] and me speaking Spanish? It was just weird. That was one of the many episodes, but that was the one that just kind of stuck with me. (Odie/Schwarz 2011/D-4-5)

Odie’s varied experiences as a light-complected Mexican American and as a Spanish-speaking student shows the complexity of the social relations in the LRGV during the twentieth century. Evidence of this complexity is written about in Carrol’s unpublished manuscript *The Swarming of the Wetbacks*, anecdote # 56 Tattle-tale. His neighbor Ralph employed Mr. Robert Hernandez for over two years, and his son Daniel and daughter Lucy went to the local “American School”. When Ralph asked Daniel about his school days and about learning English, Daniel was hesitant at first, but then opened up and claimed that the teacher “gets herself mad” when the children did not speak English at school. There were children on the playground that would tell on those students that spoke Spanish, and it turned out Daniel was one of those children. (See appendix A).

The encounter of different peoples historically forced into specific roles in society created a panorama of social relations in the LRGV when owners such as the Norquests settled, farmed, and employed Mexican/Mexican American migrant workers or married into a family of Mexican origin. Lugo reminds us that these interactions “whether under colonial New Spain or under postcolonial Mexico, have always been mediated or ruptured by the problem of color” (Lugo 2008: 50). We extend Lugo’s analysis to the South Texas-Mexican borderlands, where Mexican/Mexican-American people of a darker skin tone have endured discrimination since Jose de Escandon’s missions. Lugo’s concept of *colorismo* can provide a general overview of why it has taken so long for American schools in predominantly Mexican communities to accommodate programs that cater toward a bilingual (Spanish-English) education.

One of Kelly’s memories tells of the black segregation enforced by the school system. A black family lived half-a-mile north of the Norquest property. “I remember the first day they got in,” Kelly said. “The bus driver turned around and said, ‘y’all save that [back] seat for them” (Norquest 2012: personal communication). Kelly admitted that, at first, he got a bit upset because the buses were crowded to where students stood up on the bus rides to and from school. Kelly thought the bus driver was giving the black students preferential treatment for letting them sit in the back. He realized later that he witnessed segregation firsthand.

Amid these social happenings, the Norquest continued their contributions to UTPA and the LRGV. In 1952, Kelly played the trumpet during the first concert held for the South Texas Symphony Orchestra. Although Kelly stopped playing actively around 1981, many Norquests are involved in today’s professional Valley Symphony Orchestra (VSO). Kelly described how VAC, a volunteer university- and community-based symphony, is the outcome of a merger between South Texas Symphony Association (STSA) and a music organization called the Symphony Chorrале. Additional youth orchestras were added through the years. According to Kelly, Virginia’s father, Paul Fankhauser, was instrumental (pun intended) in combining the symphony associations together in the 1970s. The vice president of the university at the time denied the proposition for a merger, but when Ricardo Hinojosa was appointed to the UT Board of Regents, the vice president agreed to support the move. This was

the first instance where community members received instruments donated by the college, thus the association between the two formed.



Figure 44. The Norquests were members of the Edinburg High School marching band [1953].

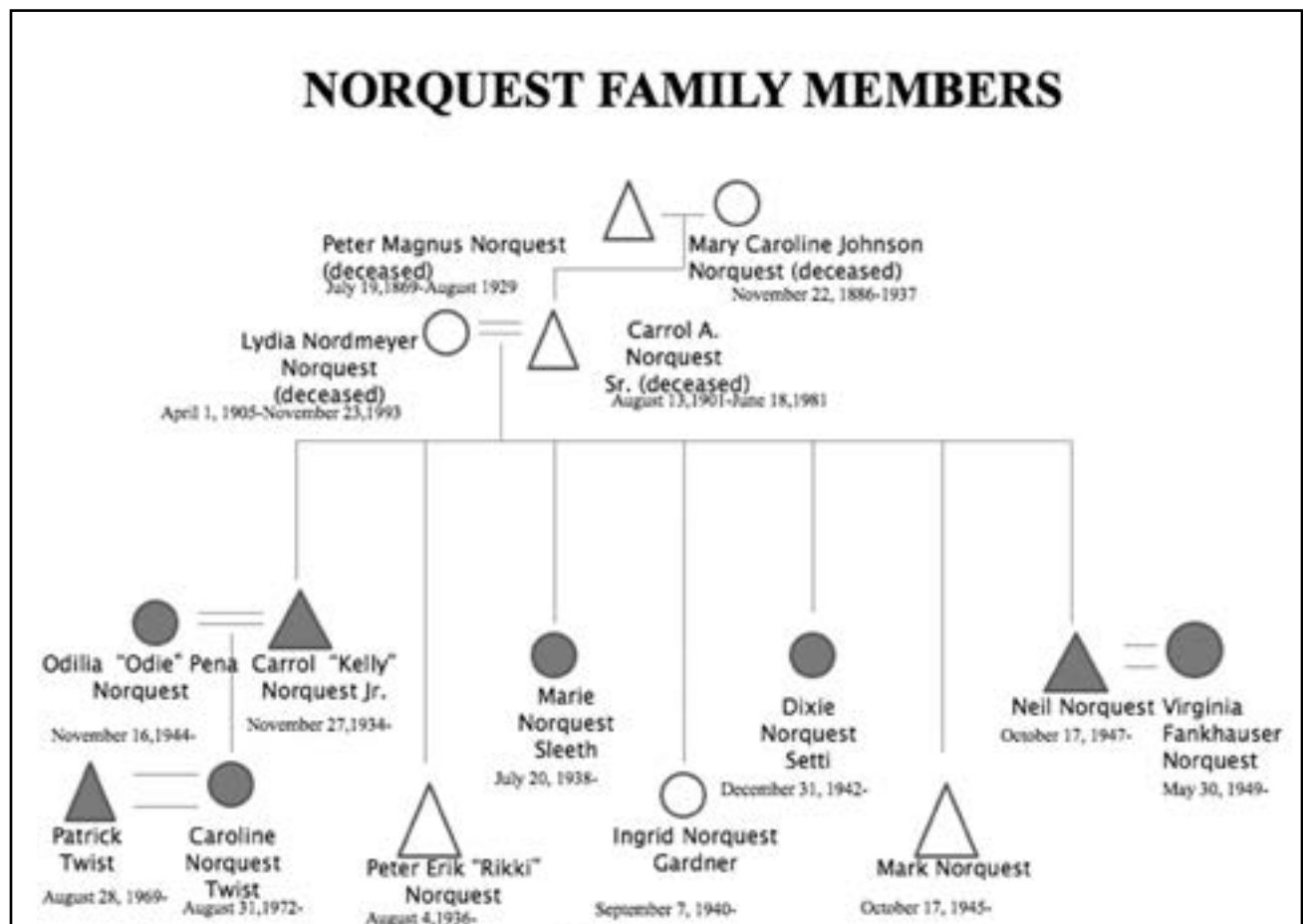
To date, the Norquests support a variety of college and community events. Baseball games held at the stadium in Spring are a must for many of them. Doug Sleeth, Marie’s son, played baseball for UTPA and the family got together to support him from the bleachers. The next chapter further highlights moments and events in the Norquest farmsite from the early years to the present.



Figure 45. Chart of UTPA Alumni Family Members.

EIGHT

The Norquest Family



The oral histories conducted by the Fall 2011 CHAPS Interdisciplinary (4301) class ultimately help us understand culture, ethnicity, class, and gender relations within the human-land interaction that took place on the farmsite. The homestead itself was important to the creation of the Norquest Headquarters, but the laborers that called this place their home were equally important. Carrol and his Lydia provided for both their children and helped the farmhands as best they could.

The following sections recount stories about the Norquest family members and the people that assisted them through the years. All of the audio and video recordings as well as the photos obtained through the oral histories are available at the Border Studies Archive at UTPA.

Meet “Lee-dee-ah”

As time passed after their arrival, Carrol travelled frequently to McAllen and began courting a beautiful young German American woman named Lydia Nordmeyer. Carrol wrote about his marriage proposal to his beloved “Lee”:

I went to McAllen every month or so, when I got lonesome, in my hen-specked, termite-eaten Model T Ford. I went to see a girl. I wasn’t looking for a wife. I was too poor, and I was afraid of girls anyway. Still, she never acted ashamed of my rusty jalopy standing in front of her house. Finally I told her I’d let her come out and cook for me if she’d fill that big old house with kids, but that the Lord would have to fulfill His promises and provide the stuff to cook, because I sure as hell didn’t have enough sense to. She came and He did. (1972:x)



Figure 46. Wedding picture of Carrol and Lydia Norquest [February 28, 1934]. Photos courtesy of the Norquest family.

She became his wife on February 28, 1934, and subsequently gave birth to seven children, all born in the Big House (discussed in chapter 2). Kelly was the first born; Rikki, Marie, Ingrid, Dixie, Mark, and Neil soon followed.



Figure 47. (left) Norquest children in their front yard [circa 1955].

Figure 48. (right) Norquest family lined up in order of age and height: Kelly, Erik "Rikki," Marie, Ingrid, Dixie, Mark and Neil Norquest [circa 1949].



Dixie recalls her mother's heart problems and that their father purchased a town lot in Kerrville and built a one-room cabin for the summers. He visited her on weekends with the younger children and left the older ones to tend to the Big House in his absence (Setti/Vallejo 2011/ pg D-5). Dixie recalled her parents encouraging unity between the family:

They were great parents. They were very strict. They expected a lot from us in terms of work. I can't ever remember any pressure about grades, but they expected us to do what we were supposed to do, in school and out. Of course, religion, we had to go to church... they were just very loving parents. I remember when my oldest brother got polio, right at the end of the school year, and we were quarantined. We had to stay home from school for a period of time, and he got board games for us, and we sat and the family played board games... Every Saturday night, we got out our instruments and played, that was daddy's instigation, you know. Mama of course, she always had health problems, so, you know, we always had to be very careful that she had her rest time during the day, but she was a wonderfully strong, strong woman. They were beautiful parents. (Setti/Vallejo 2011/ pg D-15)



Figure 49. Lydia and Carrol Norquest in their kitchen on their 39th wedding anniversary, in 1973.

A Typical Day in the Norquest Home

As mentioned earlier, all the Norquest children kept busy attending school, studying, helping with farm duties, or practicing on their musical instruments. Marie made it clear that she was not the normal child, being the eldest girl, “I got the privilege of learning how to cook and my sisters didn’t. The chores weren’t divided among gender. I even drove a tractor” (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-12) Chores were divided between the seven children according to age appropriateness. In an informal conversation with Kelly, he remembered having to round up cattle and feed the hogs before going to school. Dixie offered an elaborate memory:

A typical day at our house was that we’d get up about 6 o’clock, and we all had to practice or do chores. If you had an instrument, then you would practice before and after breakfast, and people who didn’t play an instrument were vacuuming the floor or helping mom with the dishes or something... Daddy took us to school because the school bus would come an hour before school; he felt that was time wasted and he was very interested in us not wasting any time, so he would take us to school and that gave us an extra hour to do these things and same thing was true after school. We were supposed to do homework after school, but if we had rehearsals, they would pick us up. Now, the boys in our family did work outside whereas the girls didn’t. They did farm work and farm chores while going to get the cows was about the extent of my farm share. (Setti/Vallejo 2011/pg D-5)

We elaborate further on the division of labor between the Norquest family and the Mexican and Mexican American laborers in the chapter 9.

The Templin Family

Following World War II, Carrol sponsored a German refugee family. The Templins, consisting of a widow and her five children, escaped the pressures brought about by the war and Polish Communism. Carrol constructed a small residence for them around 1949. Carrol assured the Templin’s eldest son, Manfred, work on the farm. The family remained on the property until the early 1970s. In our interview with Marie Sleeth, in which Kelly tagged along, Kelly said this about the Templins:

They were in refugee camps over there. So my father sponsored them and the oldest son was going to work here on the farm, which he did. So, my dad built the little house here for them to live in and lived in that for many years. Until, there were five kids, they all grew up and their daughter, Doris, became a teacher of English in the high school eventually, she was my age. And then a younger one was a mathematics teacher in the school district for many years until he retired. Another one fought in Vietnam and he’s totally disabled from that. Then later on after they moved out, my wife and I fixed it up. We moved in with our two little daughters, and then we built the house next door; well later on we rented it out and so forth, now we are just using it as a guest house. We got a lot of relatives, and they come and visit and all. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-1)

The picture below captures the friendship between the Norquest and Templin boys.



Figure 50. Left to right: Gunther "Addie" Adolph Templin, Neil Norquest, Kurt "Heine" Heinz Templin, Mark Norquest and Gerd Templin [1952].

Vacationing with the Norquests

Carrol's children remember vacationing at historic sites such as the Civil War battle sites of Vicksburg and Shiloh. However, vacations were not annual; they usually occurred after the cotton season. Summer was not a time to relax because this cash crop grew during these months. When Kelly was in the army, the family visited him in Tacoma, Washington. Erik was stationed in Boise, Idaho so the family took a trip there, visiting family along the way. Marie remembers visiting her father's older siblings in Kansas and Nebraska.

We went up there and cut across to go see the boys. He still knew his aunts and uncles and stuff. This was like, thirty years later. And they were still alive. So we got to visit a lot of our relatives. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-9)

When the Norquest siblings were children, the family drove their 1940 Ford sedan to get to their travel destinations. Marie remembers her father inventively modifying it.

Back then the cars had arm rests that weren't on the door. I mean, it's, and you got in through the door up here and the back seat. Daddy would put up ends of padded board across, between those arm rests. That's where the little kids sat and the bigger ones sat on the seat. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-10)

Marie mentioned that her dad Carrol made seats especially for the farmhands so they had a place to sit while going back to the International Bridge at Reynosa, where they returned the legal workers. They returned the undocumented workers to the river's edge at Granjeno. Carrol modified the truck so much that Marie remembers the seats would fold up and out and legs were placed on it so Lydia had room to prepare food during travels. "It was kinda like a chuck wagon, you know, she would fix meals there when we were on the road," she added. "We rarely stopped at a restaurant it was usually a hamburger, if we did stop (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-11).

The suitcases used by Carrol and his siblings on their trips are preserved on the second floor of the Big House, as are many other artifacts related to Norquest lifeways.



Figure 51. Suitcases used by the Norquest family when on vacation, obtained from an Army surplus store. Photo by Sandra Hernandez-Salinas.



Figure 52. Norquest family at Falcon Dam circa 1954.

“Boom, boom, barra, barra, boom, boom”

Entertainment on the Norquest property ultimately blended cultures. Just as the sounds of a neighbor’s night-long bailes are heard throughout the LRGV today, in the early twentieth century, the sound of transculturation by both Anglo and Mexican migrants played through the universal element of music. The musical atmosphere generated by Peter’s fiddle and Carrol’s piano drew various guests for singing and dancing, which built stronger bonds within their budding community. Mexican-American farming families and laborers of Mexican-origin were a direct part of the Norquest gatherings since they resided nearby. In a site already established as a contact zone, both were influenced by each other’s forms of music. This is evident in the mix of Swedish, German, English and Spanish sounds intertwined in the music produced on the Norquest farm site.

The internal desire for a voice is seen in both sets of immigrant cultures and adds an element of humanization. Kelly discussed how his family sang often. On Saturday nights, some of the family’s male ranchhands walked to their camps from town and Kelly would hear them singing songs in the distance. He replicated the sounds of the Mexican bailes’ bass line that he often heard from his second-floor bedroom, “boom, boom, barra, barra, boom, boom.” Kelly shows how, within the context of the American dream-- initiated by his immigrant father--the inclusion and fusion of working-class people is a story yearning more research.

From town we could hear the baileist at night coming from somebody’s back yard or something. We also heard our farmhands singing out loud, after their Saturday festivities. We could hear them off in the distance, they’d be singing somewhere their Spanish songs that they knew and all, that was real neat! REAL NEAT! Then you’d go to bed up stairs and all and you would hear the baile in town going

“boom, boom, barra barra, boom, boom. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-36)

In gatherings, the Norquests listened to local radio stations such as KRGV and KIRV as well as WOAI from San Antonio and even stations broadcast from Mexico. The Ty Cobb Show was a radio program based in Weslaco that was listened to by a large portion of the community. In an informal conversation, Odie relayed her experience of singing alongside her sisters during the show. The Ty Cobb Show often opened its doors to community bands and singers. During birthdays, they attended the local Citrus Theatre or the Aztec Theatre in Edinburg (see chapter 6). Kelly offered an example of cultural fusion when he mentioned other theaters that played Spanish-language movies:

They would only show one movie and that would show for a while, and then later they would change the movie. And then, so that was uh, and in those years there wasn't money to get to go to a movie. We'd get to go on our birthday. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-30)

Patriotic Duty

Along with music, the military has played a constant role in the Norquests' lives. In a country where patriotic duty is at times mandated, the family has continued to participate through the years. With the help of Liana Ryan, Dixie Norquest Setti's daughter, we are able to honor these soldiers for their civic duties.



Figure 53. Chart of Norquest family members in the military.



Figure 54.
 (top left) Doug Sleeth, (top right) Herb Nordmeyer, (bottom left) Bob Hancock accompanied by his wife while receiving an award, (bottom right) Mark Norquest in the US Airforce.



Figure 55.
 (top left) Art Nordmier, (top right) Duane Eby in Navy uniform with wife. (bottom left) Clarence John Norquest, (bottom right) Ralph Norquest. Collages created by Rolando Silva and Mary F. Noell.

A special way the Norquests and Nordmeyers honor their soldiers and country is through their annual 4th of July flag raising ceremony. The family congregates at Norquest Headquarters to conduct this traditional ceremony that begins with a bugle call by Kelly as the family lines up and pays respect to the flag raising. After the flag is raised, the family gathers to sing patriotic tunes. The family members Neil, his son Erik, Dixie, and Patrick play their guitars and sing harmonies of beautiful patriotic songs.



Figure 56.
 Rikki Norquest in uniform and Kelly Norquest seated [1956].

Figure 57.

(left) Flag raising ceremony at the Big House.

**Figure 58.** (right) Various pictures from a Fourth of July event at the Norquest home.

Another important tradition is the incorporation of Carrol's vinaigrette to salads. Once a year, Kelly pours a shot glass filled with the vinaigrette from one of his father's glass jugs into a salad mix. The more than 60-year glass jugs originally contained wine from their vineyard, but have aged since and turned to vinegar. This has been tradition for decades. We will see in the next chapter how the Norquests and the Mexican workers interacted, and how those instances allowed both migrant groups to transcend differences and the social climate that dominated American culture.



Figure 59. Norquest family in their living room. Dixie, Ingrid, Rikki, Mark, Carrol, Neil on Lydia's lap, Marie, and Kelly Norquest. [1948]

NINE



The Farmhands + The Norquests



Migrant Workers in Perspective

The material evidence of immigrant settlements in the LRGV, like those once found on the Norquest farm, is under-explored. Farm worker settlements not only tell us of the living conditions of a marginalized group and their material culture, but they also provide profound insight into social relations. For those who prefer a semiotic approach, built landscapes can read as “text” that express ideologically salient values and norms of a given epoch. In this vein, H. B. Armstrong writes that, “places/landscapes are physical representations of public history awaiting interpretation” (2002:206). The proximity of the farmhands’ camps to the fields and the Norquest home, which lies in between what was once their 80 acres of land, for example, suggests a functional approach to facilitating the supply chain of crops. Similarly, their structural placement of the outhouses to the home itself can “read” as indicative of social and economic disparities between employee and employer. Hegemonic representations of built environments may not be universally recognized (and much less agreed upon) and are contingent on an individual’s location within the socio-cultural matrix (age, gender, race, etc.).

Nevertheless, the point stands that land was sold, purchased, developed, and changed through processes of social construction that designate specific spaces as desirable or undesirable. This is not to suggest such undesirability was also felt by the workers themselves or that the Norquest played along with such dichotic categorizations. The following section will introduce the human-land interactions that evolved after the Norquest family migrated to the Valley, and the various social, economic, and cultural changes that occurred. Before discussing these changes, it is appropriate to present a brief review of the migrants’ history which is critical in our attempt to understand their culture in the LRGV borderlands.

Exploring Mexican Migrants: Preserving the History

Anti-Mexican sentiment has proliferated the U.S.-Mexican borderlands since the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848. Despite such oppressive policy, in response to politico-economic situations, migrants crossed the border to work as farmhands, in railroads, in factories and in other types of hard labor. As previously mentioned, they were often dismayed to find the wages given to them were lower than promised. They also faced threats of being turned over to immigration officers. To support their families, they worked for substandard wages in substandard and, in many cases, inhumane working conditions. *Rio Grande Wetbacks* gives us a glimpse into the experiences of workers. In his book, he assigned pseudonyms for the safety and protection of his workers. Many of these men have since passed. During the extended research period, as seen later in this chapter, we located an individual with historical ties to the Norquest farm.

In Chapters 5 and 7, titled “Bandidos on Both Sides” and “Citizens and Migrants,” respectively, Carrol explains the various relationships that existed between the farmers and the farmhands. While some workers pre-occupied themselves with obtaining naturalization through the assistance of their employers, others did not, but still found employment new ways of living. He tells of Mexicans who were skilled at irrigation, shoe-making,

engineering, and making dairy products, and mentioned how they adapted to farm work as well as gives some examples of how migrants adopted an American lifestyle.

In Chapter 6, Carrol writes in respect to the male laborers who were able to “graduate from nothing to something,” as they would encounter la chota or people who thought less of them from then on

They were walking as men should walk – upright – glancing to neither the left nor the right in fear. They walked past the customs, liquor tax collector, and immigration. They showed the new papers with their pictures on them and looked all of those uniformed Americans in the eye. (Norquest 1972)

Today, the Norquest women continue to refer to the workers as “wetbacks,” while the males and younger family members refer to them as “workers” and “helping hands.” Because Carrol was intent on capturing the stories of his farmhands, it seems that he had some respect for them which likely trickled down to his sons who, based on their oral testimonies, came to appreciate the Mexican migrant culture. *Rio Grande Wetbacks* can be examined as a literary contribution or as a series of ethnographic essays that shed light on ethnicity, class, gender, labor, among other topics. He writes:

As has been true everywhere else, it is not the wealthy who will finally settle the Valley. It is the poor, who furnish the sweat and muscle and kids whose descendant will be its inhabitants. The big shot will disappear into anonymity- leave or peter out. The poor will inherit its space. (Norquest 1972:xiii)



Figure 60. Group picture of workers with Rikki Norquest and Addie Templin [1955].

The workers on the Norquest farmsite were more than laborers. They not only provided labor, but an assortment of activities and services, such as lending Lydia a hand with births. Many became their friends and “part of the family”. They helped each other when needed and provided protection as well. When Kelly Norquest contracted Polio in May 1951, his parents built a cot designed specifically for his rehabilitation. He was placed in the living room of the Big House where many of the farmhands would visit and talk about work and daily activities, as well as wish him a speedy recovery. Since Kelly worked in the fields with the farmhands up until

he finished college, he made many friends and created bonds with the workers. They cared for and respected each other.

The Norquest oral histories along with Carrol's memoir help recreate the relationship between the Norquests and the farmhands in this chapter. Anecdotes from *The Swarming of the Wetbacks* also provide insight regarding everyday interactions between them.

Generally, there was variation in the personality of the farmhands, who were not all Mexican or Mexican American – and the farm owners, who were not all Anglo. In *Rio Grande Wetbacks*, Carrol discussed how some immigrant laborers were viewed as hard-working, trustworthy and, subsequently, considered part of the family, while others fell out of good graces for their thievery. He also speculated whether farmers who treated their workers unfairly got what they deserved when large amounts of crops suddenly went missing. One thing is certain: the social dynamics on the farmsite and in the Norquest home helps us understand life in Edinburg during this time.

What we can infer from the stories in *Rio Grande Wetbacks* and data collected from the family is that this farm site was a contact zone, a place where different traditions clashed and meshed.

Farmhands and the Term Wetback

Valley-born anthropologist Americo Paredes reminds us that, “The simplest forms of verbal folk expression are names; they are also the first level of expression of stereotypes as a result of intergroup relations” (1993: 31). In naming ourselves, we define our identity and distinguish ourselves from others. He makes reference to the names Americans and Mexicans gave each other – and themselves – and how these were indicators of their attitudes. Undocumented Mexican migrants often referred to each other as “mojados” and it was used by both Anglo and Mexican American farmers. Such names were used as descriptions of laborers, referencing the actual process of crossing the Río Grande and “wetting” their backs. Paredes contends that names are invented by considering the outsider's “physical appearance, language diet or customs – the most obvious ingredients in developing ethnic stereotypes” (1993: 31). The use of ethnic descriptors is indicative of what Paredes identifies as a “fully realized image of the stereotype they attribute to the outgroup” (1993: 31) It should also be noted that these terms were also used in a derogatory manner. This is evident in Chapter 2 of *Rio Grande Wetbacks* when Carrol relays the story of Old Leonel. He describes the man as a “practical Mexican-American.” He distinguished between “wetback” (undocumented Mexican laborers who cross el río) from Valley-born Mexican Americans, like Old Leonel (Norquest 1976: 35). Dixie Setti recalls amicable relations between her parents and their workers:

Mama would go to town for their groceries usually on Saturday morning, as well as her own. They would give her lists because they were illegal and they couldn't really go downtown too much. And, uh, well many of them were, and so she'd, get their groceries and stuff and then, they'd come by and he'd pay them and sometimes they'd get a watermelon (laughs) and have a party, you know, a watermelon party in the yard and stuff like that, but those were kind of exciting times...and sometimes, you know, we'd go out after supper and they would make us, give us, fresh tortillas that they'd had just made which were always just delicious. (Setti/Vallejo 2011/pg D-6)

The Norquests employed Mexican laborers during the Bracero Program, which lasted from 1942-1964. The program addressed labor shortages caused by World War II. The contract between the American and Mexican governments allowed U.S. farmers to hire Mexican workers for seasonal agricultural harvests at low wages. However, many of these young Mexican nationals (a majority were 20-30 years old) were deported after providing labor (Zatz 1993:851). Of the millions of Mexican laborers imported to the U.S., none were allotted to the states of Texas or Ohio. Texas was particularly noted for being discriminatory against Mexican immigrants (Scruggs 1963:254). Due to the proximity of Texas to the Mexican border, the growers were not concerned

about Mexico’s ban on braceros in this region because they hired other undocumented workers that crossed the border. There were instances, however, where INS allowed farm owners to hire braceros. Carrol writes about an experience regarding the “legalization” of fifteen of his fieldhands to “braceros”.

We didn’t want just anyone; we wanted our own men, the men we knew and had trained, who knew us, our farms, our working habits. It almost created an impasse, but the officials finally found a loophole in the law, so that we could get the men we wanted. I got my men the first time around, processing and insuring them successfully. (Norquest 1972:132)



Figure 61. Braceros mentioned in *Rio Grande Wetbacks: Mexican Migrant Workers*. (Top Left) pseudo name: Torbio; real name: Florentino Magallan. (Top Right) pseudo name: Miguel; real name: Benito Arredondo [1955 in a broomcorn field].



Figure 62. (Top) Individual pictures of braceros. Jose Magallan the first of three workers pictured [1955 in broomcorn field]. Photos courtesy of the Norquest family.

Carrol then described the reaction of the fifteen men to this naturalization process. Once paperwork was printed and handed to each man, they asked Carlos for an hour to go celebrate in their hometown.

They went trailing single-file back across the bridge. I think they wanted the out-of-this-world satisfaction of coming back across it, into the United States—legally. For upon getting their papers in their hands, they changed in some way: a look in the eye, a straightening of the back, a more mature expression. I felt that they wanted to strut a little up on the square, get a drink or two, show their prized papers to any friend they chanced to meet. They were enjoying themselves, strutting hats cocked, walking tall. They stopped to talk a little, to peer over the rail at the muddy water below. Of all the times they had gone back and forth, this was the first time they had come across from Mexico on the bridge like men. This was the first time in their lives that they had come across that bridge going north to the United States. (Norquest 1972:133)

Dixie Setti recalled, “Yeah, he had a... it was a family that came every year, the same people, an extended family from a little place called Rancho Grande, just on the other side of the border.” A few of the families that still live in Rancho Grande, Mexico, are in the direct lineage of members of the Granjeno, Texas community including the Castanedas, Magallans, and Arredondos, mentioned later in this chapter.

Many wetbacks, especially in later years, became migrant workers in this country, following crops and the seasons north, east, and west. For the most part, they remained anonymous transients, and much has been written about the abuses against them and their suffering. In the Valley many workers returned again and again, year after year, to the same employers. The groups changed with the years, but in many cases we knew whole families--brothers, sisters, husbands and wives, uncles and cousins. We visited their homes in Mexico and met fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers. We saw their children grow up; some of them were born on our farms, and, U.S.-born, were U.S. citizens. (Norquest 1972:7).

Dixie added how her father always made an effort to help at least one or two of the workers obtain legal working status. “... Those people...became wealthy because they had skills, you know, he taught them the skills of farming and they went back to Mexico, and you know, made it and would come back in their fancy pick-ups to visit.”

Pick-up trucks, it seems, were coveted by these workers. These vehicles served as a central theme in some of Carrol’s stories. In the story “The New Car Owner,” Norquest points to the likely desire many workers must have felt for vehicle ownership:

It is hard to imagine the hunger of a man in his prime to sit behind a wheel. A man who has watched others, even young boys, drive up and down the roads, a man middle-aged and getting older who has always been denied that feeling of being in control of the power and speed of a vehicle; a man used to riding on a donkey with his wife and kids trailing on foot, or loading the family into a big-wheeled oxcart to go cross-country for a Sunday visit- Simon Lemus was such a man. (Norquest 1972: 59)

More Farmhand Stories

Lemus worked for a neighboring farmer; he was a hard working man and one day he asked his boss, John Grady, if he could keep some of the rent he owed the man. Lemus wanted the money to pay for a truck. Grady granted the request and Lemus bought himself – and for his family – a used blue truck. Carrol thought the man paid too much for the truck, but Lemus was content with his purchase. He was right to be wary about Lemus’ purchase; a week after the farmhand purchased the pick-up, its battery died. This however did not stop the

man's sense of revelry. He borrowed one of his boss' trucks – without permission – and along with his son Oskar and three other companions spent a night at the local cantina. On the way home, they collided head on with another pick-up; Lemus died but his son survived. Norquest writes that when Lemus' wife, Pilar, was told of the tragedy she calmly accepted the news.

This attitude might be an example of fatalistic attitudes common in oppressed and exploited groups, which includes Mexican laborers. Carrol describes it in Chapter 4 of his book as a resignation to God's will: "Si Quiere Dios," (If God wishes). This attitude, he writes, not only settles all arguments, but also helps explain – or not – situations that Mexicans cannot control. It is also an attitude of resignation Americans like Norquest could not truly understand. As Americans, he contends, we have been taught to fight oppression that each man and each woman can and should be in charge of their own destiny (Norquest 1972: 76).

This resignation was one of many cultural characteristics captured in Carrol's book. He acknowledges that the Mexican culture, the tradition his "wetback" farmhands came from, was that of a conquered people. They were the result of intermixing cultures – that of the Spanish conquistadores and indigenous populations. North Americans, he writes, were from everywhere. "Their primary purpose was to establish homes, their secondary one to be free to think. They were from many climates, many regions, many languages and many social ideas. Nothing was dominant; *they* pushed the native inhabitants to one side" (Norquest 1972: 33). Still, Carrol acknowledges this statement as "too brief to develop the effects of the characteristics on these two people." In *Fragmented Lives, Assembled Parts*, Lugo's groundbreaking ethnography, he writes that Mexican masses are also influenced by American empire, and we see that in the stories of farmhands as they experienced life in a booming LRGV, as they travelled back and forth carrying their influences (from both sides) with them (2007).

Another characteristic of Catholic/Mexican fatalism encouraged machismo and female subordination in the Mexican family. It was perplexing to Carrol how the workers placed faith solely in God's unknown hands and how Mexican women willingly overlooked their husband's infidelities. The explanation given was that, "El hombre es libre" – the man is free (to do as he so pleases). He thought, at first, that the saying was a joke. Experience ultimately taught him it was and that they "perfectly serious about it; their women and children understood it" (1972: 62). He notes that although there were various ways to read into the belief that "el hombre es libre," it was mainly used to imply a man's right to "carous all night" (1972: 65) Carrol believed that this stemmed from not affording the high marriage fees imposed by Mexican churches. This gave Mexican men freedom to leave whenever they pleased. Where Mexican and Mexican American men could free themselves of any responsibility, women had a more difficult time leaving because they mainly took care of their children.

Women

When it came to the daily household routines, all the Norquest children were treated equally, but this equality was not always shared by the Mexican/Mexican-American family. A look at the wives of the migrant laborers points to a gender division. *Rio Grande Wetbacks* documents farmhands who crossed to Texas, migrated for the season and returned with an expecting wife. Carrol writes about Andres, who had not returned from Mexico because of a toughening Border Patrol presence; "Five years later Andres drove into my yard in a saggy-rear-end car full of kids. His Felecita, fatter and smiling, jumped out and almost hugged me" (1976: 89).

Despite their chores and domestic duties in the house and around the farm, women like the Norquest sisters had the privilege of being the farm-owner's daughter. Although Marie ironed, cooked and cleaned the house, she also drove tractors, managed a group of cotton-pickers and as a high school senior, played in the first-ever Valley Orchestra, started by her father. This is a huge step from where Felecita stood. Other women, like Josefa, raised their children and saw them enlist in war before they could be drafted; many never saw their boys again. Though she knew she would probably never see her son again, Josefa felt compelled to encourage her American sons to join the military to prove their citizenship.

Another instance showing the privileges the Anglo women had was a story told by Mrs. Virginia Norquest. According to Virginia, when Neil arrived to pick her up to go to the prom, he arrived for her in a worker truck – a station wagon with a missing rear window. Although these conditions could be considered a bit embarrassing, that was not the case for them. She added that the story later became a cherished family memory:

Sugar Road and Chapin Road were still dirt-gravel roads and I remember him taking me on a date, which is kind of our family joke, because we were going to, ah, prom. And I had this pretty long white dress, and he came to pick me up for the date in the field car... And so the result of that was driving down a long dirt road with no rear window; all the dust just piled... I came up to get into the car in a white dress and he took out this old towel and starts beating off, you know off the seat and there was dirt flying everywhere, and I was like ok. But I went anyway, we went anyway. It worked out. (Norquest/Pena 2011/pg F-4)

There were instances where the farmhand wives, daughters, and other female family members did not work on the farmsite, but worked in packing sheds, factories, and sometimes even neighboring farms. This was certainly the case for Virginia Mata, daughter and wife of farmhands who worked on the Norquest farm. In our first interview, she explained her occupational experiences:

Virginia began working at the age of fifteen in a factory in Hidalgo. She worked in a poultry farm where her job was to pluck feathers from slaughtered chickens. She claimed that her Japanese “patron” was harsh in reprimanding the workers if he found feathers on the poultry (Virginia Mata, personal communication 2012). She also worked as a farmhand on farm sites in McAllen, Edinburg, and San Juan.

She remembers her cousins Florentino and Perfecto Magallan among others, and how, growing up, she spent the weekends over in Rancho Grande, Mexico with them. “Mi tío Alberto era papa de ellos, y ellos se crearon todos juntos,” (Virginia Mata, personal communication 2012). Virginia and her siblings were U.S. citizens, but often crossed the Rio Grande with her father, Enrique Castaneda, and her uncle Jose on a *lancha*, or a makeshift boat. Virginia remembers crossing as early as 7 years old, but due to her fear of the water, she would scream loudly and was sometimes told by her family to cross over the bridge while the others crossed using the *lancha*.

Mrs. Mata remembered her family friends Mr. Villareal and Mr. Olivarez providing contractual work for her and her family. Mr. Villareal and Mr. Olivarez gained access to contract work and then would swing by and pick workers up from Granjeno in their pickup trucks. There was even one season where she accompanied her husband Rogelio to Michigan and picked cucumbers for three months. After their trip to up north, Mrs. Mata decided to stay home with the children and Rogelio began work as a custodian at UTPA; he remained there until his retirement over 20 years later.

Mrs. Mata was able to identify Mr. Jose Magallan as one of the men photographed by the Norquest siblings. She has close ties to the Magallan men since they are her first cousins on her father’s side (Her uncle Alberto Magallan was the father of the Magallan brothers that were photographed in the bracero photos (Figures 61 and 62). Unfortunatley, not all the Magallan members were identified or photographed. As we conducted follow up interviews and did more research, we were able to match some faces with the names.



Figure 63.
Virginia Mata in her home. March 2012.
Photo by Sandra Hernandez-Salinas

After learning about labor contracts, we were inspired to investigate further and uncover the contract labor process. Maria Rita Ochoa gave us insight into these contracting agencies' procedures. Mrs. Ochoa and her husband worked at the Dickie's factory in McAllen, Texas. Mrs. Ochoa worked in the assembly line in the clothing department while her husband served as foreman for the labor contracting agency on the factory's property. Mrs. Ochoa remembers assisting her husband by providing the bookkeeping services for the small company. Local farmowners that were in need of assistance on their farms went to the factory and sign a contract for the employment of laborers. The farmowners requested a certain number of workers on specific dates to do agricultural work. Once workers were provided and the fields were tilled, the workers and the farmowner reported back to the factory. It is then that the farmowner paid the contract agency for the labor from which the factory paid the workers. Mrs. Ochoa remembers small baskets with numbers on them that the workers brought to them. The number on the basket reflected the amount of work the laborer did for the day.

When asked if there was any discrimination between the farmowners and the workers, Mrs. Ochoa quickly replied "No, era una cosa muy bonita. La vida de aller era bien bonita" (No, it was a beautiful thing. Life back then was very beautiful). She claimed that yesteryears were beautiful because everyone was kind and generous with each other. Everyone wanted to help each other and saw this work as opportunity to better the lives of their families (Rita Ochoa, personal communication 2012).



Figure 64.
Maria Rita Ochoa in her home. March 2012.
Photo by Sandra Hernandez-Salinas

Not all women followed the prescribed gender norms. Doña Luisa of las puertas nuevas – the new gates was a thirty-year-old single mother. She was famous for always helping those in need. One group of people who received a lot of help from Luisa were local male laborers. Although small in stature, she was a stern taskmaster. The men whom she aided helped her with tasks around her home. Her home was the only place where Carrol saw a man grinding *masa*. He wrote that although a man “doesn’t have the slapping, marching cadence that a woman evokes from the two stones,” the job always got done “under Dona Luisa’s persistent rule” (1976: 65).

I don’t know what happened to gentle-speaking Dona Luisa. Wherever she is, I’ll bet those kids are taking care of her. I’ll bet she is still concerned with other people’s troubles. The Lord surely must have a place reserved especially for Dona Luisa. (1972:65)

One woman who ‘Carlos’, as Carrol was called by his workers, did not hold in high regard was his tractor driver’s sister, Rachel. Raul was the tractor driver’s name, and he is mentioned often throughout the book; it becomes apparent to the reader that he and his wife Clementina were held in high regard by the Norquest family. Rachel, however, was another matter because she was a prostitute. She worked in the red-light district in Reynosa, Mexico. This did not seem to bother one Norquest farmhand by the name of Pablo. Pablo and Rachel wished to marry so Raul asked Mr. Norquest for a loan on behalf of his future brother-in-law. He assured Norquest that the loan would be repaid. In the end, Carrol granted the loan and Rachel became Pablo’s bride.

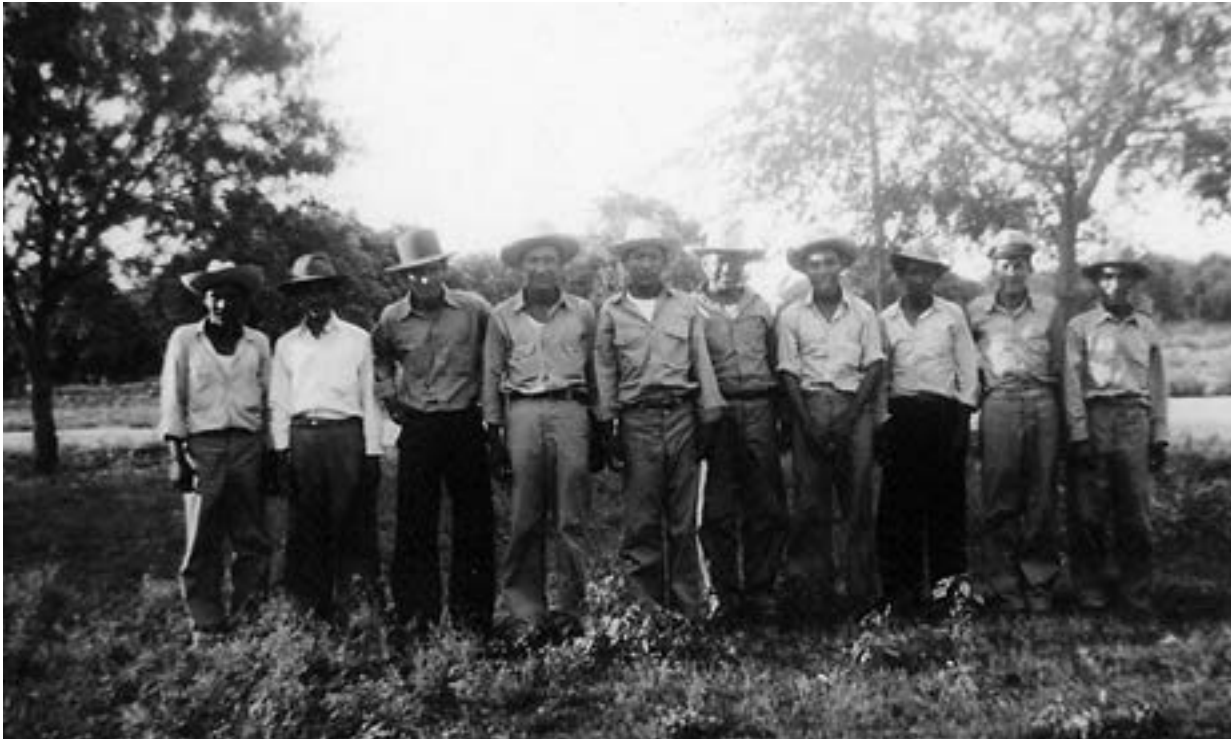
As we looked over the family photos for evidence of immigrant women workers, we came across an interesting picture. This is a picture of the farmhands dressed in their best dress clothing in 1948. After roughly ten views, we figured out what was different in this picture from the others. This picture had farmhand women posing who appear much shorter than the men in the middle of about 25 men. When we asked Kelly about this in a follow up interview, he simply stated that in those times, people just did not take pictures of women--they were usually out of sight (Kelly Norquest, Personal communication 2012).

Figure 65. Group picture of Norquest farm hands, including women that accompanied them [1948].



The interviews with Virginia Mata gave us much insight into the farmhand’s perspective. She gave us intimate details of her daily life as a daughter, wife, and family member to the farmhands that worked on the Norquest farm. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Mrs. Virginia Mata is not only the daughter of one of the men that worked on the Norquest property, but also the wife to one. Her father, Enrique Castañeda, helped till the land in the mid-1900s. As previously mentioned, the farmhand families consistently brought younger generations to work at the farm sites. The Castanedas were no exception. Once Mr. Rogelio Mata married Mr. Castaneda’s daughter, Virginia, he began working on the Norquest farm. Mrs. Mata identified him in the following picture as the man fourth from the left.

Figure 66. Farmhands posing together. Rogelio Mata is fourth from left. August 1948.



“No gottee workee?”

The introduction of *Rio Grande Wetbacks* begins with a conversation between Carrol and a man that came to his farm looking for work. The following story sheds light on the frequency in which this happened:

The shadow stepped out, carrying a dirty straw hat, and bowed slightly.

“Buenos dias, senior.”

“Buenos dias,” I returned noncommittally.

He advanced, glanced up and down the road. Then, “No tienes trabajo, senior.”

It might have been “No tienes chamba?” or “No gottee workee?”—depending on where in Mexico he came from. (Norquest 1972:1)

There were cases of migrants who settled in the U.S. with intentions of eventually owning their own farm. However, starting a farming business was not easy. Necessities included suitable drinking water on the land which required good drilling equipment and soils needed to be suitable for growing crops (processes mentioned in chapter 3). Even if the land could yield a good amount, there was always the risk of floods ruining the crop before harvest. Farms that saw any kind of success yielded a few tons in corn or potatoes or a couple thousand pounds of pinto beans. Carrol’s story of “Felipe and Manuel,” two Tejanos, is a case in point. Both men wanted to farm and they were able to grow and harvest large amounts of potatoes, however halfway through their harvest, the price of the potato fell which forced them to give their potatoes away instead of letting them spoil. They also discovered that some of their unused crops were stolen and taken across the border to be sold.

In the case of young Enrique and Chono, this abuse of power became a reality. Told from the perspective of their employer, we learn they missed work so they could go vote. When the employer found out what they were doing, he had no plans of reprimanding or disciplining them, but discovered that the two of them were essentially registered by a recruiter to vote and given money to vote for the Democratic party which previously was the conservative party of the time. This meant that, depending what year this happened, the young men could have been voting for a party that did not work toward their best interests.

Unfortunately, there were times when employers mistreated Mexican and Mexican American workers. If being cheated by low pay was not bad enough, there is the case of a farmer named Mr. Richards who was known for recruiting migrant workers and making them feel at home. However, after estimating the time it would take for the workers to finish their work, he called the Border Patrol ahead of time to pick them up and deport them without pay. Richards took advantage of the fact that the Border Patrol had no obligation to make him pay the workers. He once again tried to recruit them saying he needed their help and promised to pay them. Despite how desperately they needed work, they refused. Richards then he found different men and exploited them in the same manner. Some time after these events, an accident with a blade severed his ankle (crippling him permanently); that may have been considered poetic justice by his former unpaid employees.

In the fall, when Mr. Richards was shredding his cotton stalks, a blade of the shredder flew off and mangled his foot and ankle. He was permanently crippled. Bob said, "He deserved it for cheating those poor wetbacks. There's no telling how many other wetbacks he did the same thing to". (Norquest 1972:103)

Local communities who welcomed migrant workers into their restaurants and markets did not like the Border Patrol's objective and would find ways to curb their power. This is true in the case of Gordon's which was a local cafe along the border. During World War II, as coffee prices skyrocketed, Gordon's cafe was popular due to its reputation for keeping their coffee price at five cents a cup. Over time, the Border Patrol figured out this was a great place to come and pick up possible "illegal" Mexicans and deport them which left the business on the verge of ruins until Mr. Gordon came upon a solution. He hung up a sign displaying "COFFEE 5 CENTS... PATROLMEN 10 CENTS" and allegedly never had an issue with Border Patrol agents again.

La Chota, one of the Mexican American colloquial terms for Border Patrol, was a constant intimidating factor for working Mexicans and Mexican Americans. The Norquests and surrounding families' farms were subject to many Border Patrol raids and some of these incursions are recorded in *Rio Grande Wetbacks*, as well as in *The Swarming of the Wetbacks*. In Kelly's interview, he displays the cautiousness of his father regarding "illegal" workers:

Immediately to the south there was a long, rectangular ten acres that was brush.... They stayed in that lot. My dad got tarps for them and they built tents out there in the middle of the woods so that they wouldn't be found... They would come right up to the door whenever they needed something or wanted something, my mother always fed them too especially if they hadn't eaten when they were...illegal and they would arrive here in the morning and she'd cook pancakes and eggs for them. (Norquest/Salinas 2011/ pg C-25)

An interesting story presented in *Rio Grande Wetbacks* is named "La Chota Has a Baby." Carrol depicts his neighbor's experience with a young border patrol agent that had recently become a father. This agent hired a woman he thought was "Mexican-American" to assist his wife with the upbringing of his child. One afternoon, the agent decided to cheat the system and take a day off from patrolling. Mr. Harrow, the border patrol agent, felt he needed to be near his family, but needed "something to put on his record for the day," and decided to arrest his neighbors innocent farmhand. Jose was simply working on irrigating the grove and Mr. Harrow booked him after some coercive questioning where Jose "confessed" that he was undocumented.

Once Carrol's neighbor, Bruce, found out about this incident, he was extremely upset and went to the police station to protect his farmhand friend. After speaking with Officer Harrow, Bruce informed him that Jose was the husband to the undocumented worker that was caring for his baby. This certainly was a definite shock to Mr. Harrow, changing his outlook on immigrant workers:

Mr. Harrow never bothered Jose again, nor did he tip off a fellow patrolman who

took his place. Jose and Lupe were good workers—and Mr. Harrow became a good border patrolman. (1972:126)

In Carrol's vignette, #136 I Won't sit with those wetbacks of *The Swarming of the Wetbacks*, he wrote about his neighboring farmowner Mr. Rawlins and his wife Sylvia and how she and her neighbors had an understanding to protect each other and their farmhands from the Border Patrol. If one saw "la chota" cruising along their way, they immediately telephoned each other to be on the lookout and placed their farmhands on high alert. This telephone chain prevented many unnecessary "voluntary deportations". As Sylvia received a phone call warning her about the Border Patrol heading her way, she and the farmhand woman that was with her headed straight over to the fields to warn the farmhands, but were too late. Eloise told her daughters to get in the backseat of Sylvia's Model A car to hide while she sat in the front seat. When Eloise was asked if she was going to go with the rest of the farmhands that were being arrested, she claimed she "was not going to sit in the paddy wagon by those wetbacks". Eloise was undocumented herself but she refused to acknowledge it and showed discrimination towards the other farmhands that were "wet". (Norquest unpublished manuscript, *The Swarming of the Wetbacks*. See Appendix C).

Both Maria Rita and Virginia Mata claimed that the Border Patrol was not as active as it is today. In his manuscript, Carrol provides a story titled "Lemonade Parties" that reflects the early relationships between the border patrol, farmowners, and farmhands. In the beginning decades of the BP, there were various contracts set up between the border patrol, the farmowner, and the farmhands. "Lemonade Parties" is an example of such contracts. The border patrol agent and the farmowner began to converse and realized that they were part of the same military branch. Once this rapport was established, the farmowner Arnold was told that he could keep his cotton picking crew for the rest of the week, but on Friday at noon he would have to pick up the undocumented workers and take them back to Mexico. Arnold ran this by his workers and they agreed. So on Friday afternoon, "la chota", Arnold, and the farmhands all sat around after work and drank lemonade together before traveling back to Mexico. (Norquest unpublished manuscript *The Swarming of the Wetbacks*. See Appendix D).

Evidence of the lack of Border Patrol enforcement is clear in anecdote #04 Captain Henderson XVIII. Captain Henderson had worked as a Border Patrol agent for over fifteen years in the LRGV. When he encountered the case of Frank (farmowner) and Felix (farmworker), he discovered that new border patrol agents had abused their power with Felix and sided with Frank and Felix by "looking the other way" as he let them escape punishment and the law. (Norquest unpublished manuscript *The Swarming of the Wetbacks*. See Appendix E). There was a change in the enforcement of the Border Patrol in the '40s, '50s, and '60s when Border Patrol agents from the northern states were transferred to the LRGV. This rise in border patrol agents established a new "border" and both farmowners and farmhands were victims to the abuse of power executed by Border Patrol agents. Many farmowners went as far as protecting their families and farmhands with shotguns from agents.

Cultural Fusion

As Paredes notes, a border culture resides within two spectrums: culture conflict and cultural exchange (1993: 23). Through music, education, and entertainment, two cultures meshed, in the process easing racial and class tensions. The following section illustrates how crucial these elements were during a period of intense anti-Mexican sentiment.

The education system indirectly played a role in explaining the class, "racial" and linguistic division of areas in the LRGV, such as those found in Edinburg. Despite obvious yet transparent cultural conflict, there were moments of cultural accommodation through forms of entertainment, food, and general gatherings between the Norquests and the farmhands. The Norquest family and their migrant laborers often cooperated when faced with situations that threatened both of their livelihoods, such as the freezes, droughts, and floods documented in Chapter 2. The daily interactions between the Norquests and Mexican working families at the farm serve as a microcosm of the cultural and socio-political transformations that took place in the Valley in the first half of the twentieth century.

Food plays an important role in a community's survival. It can also play an important role in transparent

structures within a community's social sphere. Gathering for meals is an action that allows people – strangers and familiars – to come together and overcome class barriers that may exist in a farming workspace. Specifically, in the Mexican and Mexican American tradition, food is perceived as a peace-offering between participating parties. This helped the landowner and working-class build rapport and *confianza* (trust) with each other. Anthropologist and border scholar Carlos G. Velez-Ibañez defines *confianza* as the moment an act representative of trust occurs. It also reinforces and expands the multiplicity of a transborder identity of which the Norquest farmhands epitomized as they interacted in both the United States and Mexico. This construct transcends class, political borders, and regional divisions and also conflicts with ideas of citizenship identity being based on a single cultural reference (Velez-Ibanez 2010:176). *Confianza* unified an otherwise divided community of employers and workers. Moments of *confianza* between the Norquests and their farmhands proved to be long-term and stable. To this day, Neil and Kelly receive visits from their former workers.

Kelly remembers nights when he and his brother would go out to their bright red barn, locally known as Rancho Colorado, to watch the farmhands cook with wood fires, even though kerosene was made available to them. Here he reminisces of a staple border food often shared with them:

They'd live here in the barn [legal workers], and we had kerosene stoves for them to cook on, but they would cook with wood right out here, my brother and I would always go out there and they would offer us tortillas that they were making. They'd make tortillas right, just right out here you know. They'd give us tortillas... so that was all quite a time in those days. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg A-30-31)

Another example of how food integrated Mexican traditions into the Norquest customs borrows Marie Sleeth's experience with cooking spices. During her interview, Marie displayed her traveling suitcase that contained cooking utensils and small containers filled with her favorite spices. Her preferred spice is her "Mex-Mix".

It's the standard herbs that the Mexicans use: cumin and, and coriander and, of course, black pepper and Mexican oregano. And I, I mix up and I toast all the seeds and then I blend them in a coffee grinder and I come out with what I call Mex-Mix. Now, then... last night see I made soup. I made taco soup. I love to cook Mexican. Taco soup. Tortilla soup that's what it was and so when it comes to putting the spices in here goes two table spoons of my Mex-Mix in and I got all my Mexican spices in there and this one instead of having to measure each one of them. And so anyway that's my Mex-Mix. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-17)

Marie's Mex-Mix is good examples of what Paredes writes about when explaining clashing and meshing (fusing) cultures along the border.

Despite the anti-Mexican atmosphere prevalent throughout the US in the 20th century, we see in certain places of the LRGV, like on the Norquest farm, two otherwise different groups of people coming together in order to laugh and love as they labored on the farm. The experiences recounted in this chapter, through Carrol's writings and the CHAPS data, capture the nuances found within the social matrix of the Norquest farmsite. Although some can interpret the social goings-on in the Norquest farm as grower-Border Patrol collusion to control labor mobility, there was much more sociability happening on the Norquest farm than labor-exploiting processes, as we have seen in this report.

TEN

Conclusion and Research Insights

In the early 1900s, the Lower Rio Grande Valley was still largely a ranching area with rapidly growing commercial agriculture. The Norquests, enticed by the prospect of a “magical” fertile land in the 1920s, were part of a large-scale migration that drew farmers here from across the Midwestern U.S. The economy of post-revolutionary Mexico was in shambles, forcing a northward migration of displaced and unemployed people whom the Midwestern migrants converged with along with the Texas-Mexican ranchers already settled in the area. The brushland was cleared to give rise to developments such as canals, roads, and the large-scale agriculture that came to symbolize the LRGV. There were pockets of exception – such as the Norquest farmsite – where Anglo farm owners tilled land alongside Mexican farmhands. These merging disparate groups possessed world-views that collided throughout centuries and decades of interactions with each other and with the land. This human-land interaction during Edinburg’s development, at times, resulted in the fusion of cultural traditions still fostered by many borderland families like the Norquest and those of the authors. The development created an economic and social structure still seen in our university community and the LRGV today. The connections between people in this region have a long history, and is best described in the following statement from Kelly:

Here in the valley, it’s not *if* people are related but *how*. Especially here in Edinburg...you can see who is related to who ‘cause we are all related either through blood or through marriage or through church. (Sleeth/Salinas 2011/pg C-37)

People attach “expressive, connotative and phatic signs of their collective identity” to space and actively engage it to change its meaning by physically altering it (Krase and Shortell 2010: 1). Space also engages us as we interpret and internalize its meaning through our cultural frames of reference. When considered in the LRGV context, this analysis helps make sense of the transformation of this region from a borderless region with native inhabitants to a predominantly Texas-Mexican ranching community, to one dominated by Anglo agricultural estates. The Norquest family and the other social actors on the farmsite contributed to this transformation.

We put the last 100 years in context by analyzing the 8,000 year history of human occupation in the LRGV border region. Through our analysis of oral histories and data collected from primary and secondary sources, we explored the natural and cultural history of the LRGV and Edinburg during the twentieth century, as well as during pre-Columbian times. The geologic environment remained static for at least 15,000 years until The Norquests and farmhands reworked the soils of the property in the name of agribusiness, which altered the land and helped shape Valley society.

Cultural traditions are often expressed ephemerally, and the cultural history associated with changing physical landscapes can be easily overlooked. This research intends to preserve the rich cultural traditions as observed through a dynamic physical landscape once tilled by the Norquest and Mexican laborers in the South Texas-Mexican borderlands. But we must always remember, as indicated by our multidisciplinary research, that succession of human-land interaction occurs through time beginning with band-level societies and continues into the present with modern nation-states. As Kelly aptly observed “Historians haven’t focused on this area really; it’s all going underneath concrete and asphalt. History is being lost everywhere so [we are] trying to get

snap shots with this CHAPS program. Snapshots everywhere [we] can as the growth continues and we lose everything” (Twist/Norquest/Garcia 2011/pg H-2-3).

As the dialogue between our culture and physical landscape carries on, it is important to establish a historical trajectory to gain a more profound understanding of our communities and the various sociocultural dimensions found within them.



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Appendix List



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Appendix A



The Swarming of the Wetbacks by Carrol Norquest

#56 Tattletale VIII

Robert Hernandez had been working for Ralph two years. His little family lived in a small tenant house across the barnyard from Ralph's house.

Robert was intelligent and was, in his way, ambitious for his two children Daniel and little Lucy. He could have had a better job, that is, Ralph did not have steady work for him, but Ralph took an interest in them, other than what work he could get out of Robert.

When Robert first came there his name was Roberto, his wife was Margarita, the children were Daniel and Lucinda. Now they were Robert, Margaret or Maggie, Daniel and Lucy.

The school bus route went by the yard. They wanted the children to go to school - American school. School census was rather loose then. It didn't make much difference to anyone if country kids went to school or not- or if they had proper records on them or not. There were no graded country roads then- just trails. So Mrs. Ralph got the kids enrolled in school- Daniel first and the next year little Lucy. They were regular in getting on that by that came by the front of the house most mornings- a very regular time. The parents were very serious about this thing.

It was a spring- like Saturday morning. Daniel was tagging Ralph around the barnyard. Ralph was fixing the fence. He had to replace two broken posts, tighten and staple up some of the barbed wires that were hanging loose. Daniel was watching. He had been silent. Ralph was naturally gregarious, and this silence of his little companion bothered him.

He had finished tamping the post solid with a length of small pipe, so he thought to change the atmosphere around them. He leaned on his piece of pipe to give his entire attention to Daniel- have a little fun with him and maybe learn something. He rested.

“Dan, How do you like to go to school by now?”

“Muy bueno, Don Raphael,” Dan replied- not to enthusiastically.

“Are you learning anything there?”

“Si.”

“What are you learning in school, Daniel?”

“Muchas cosas- many things” murmured Daniel non-committedly.
“Are you learning any English?”
“Si, Don Rafael, are you not going to stretch that wire?” he asked in Spanish.
“Yes, I’m going to stretch it - tighten it up, - but Dan, do you talk English in school?”
“Si,” - picking a piece of gravel and throwing it at the mailbox on the road.
“All the time?”
“Si,”
“Then why don’t you talk English to me?”

There was silence. Dan was looking for some more gravel of the right size to throw at the mailbox.
“Do you talk English to the teacher?”
“Si. Como no. Sure.” Silly questions
“What if you don’t talk English to the teacher?”
“She gets herself mad, the teacher.”

Ralph finished pounding a staple into the bone-hard mesquite post, then asked Dan,
“Dan, but you talk Spanish on the playground, don’t you?”
“Not at all - not to the other Mexican kids either?”
“Why don’t you with the other Mexican kids?”
“She gets herself mad, the teacher.”
“How can she get mad? She can’t hear you away out there on the playground.”
“No-- some kids, mean ones - cabroncitos - tell her about it - tell on the kids who talk the Spanish on the playground. Son cabroncitos.”

“Why don’t you talk English to me, Dan?”
“I am---I can’t talk the English good.”
“There’s no one around here to hear you.”
“I have shame to talk the English.”

There was another broken wire. Ralph stopped to pull the ends together and splice them. He wanted to probe the matter more so he asked,

“Don’t the kids who get told on - don’t they fight the kids who tell? - don’t they gang up on them- punish them for telling the teacher?”
“No,” answered Daniel, “They have fear of those who tell - maybe those do tell something worse.”
“Are you afraid of them that tell on you- you’re kind of a big boy.”
“No I’m not afraid of those who tell on me.”

This was all getting kind of complicated for Ralph. He was wondering if he was understanding Dan’s hesitant speech, or for that matter, was Dan understanding him?

“Well--Why Dan? -- tell me why are you not afraid of those who tell on you for talking Spanish on the playground? They’re big, no? Bigger than you?”

Dan squirmed - kicked a piece of gravel lying there- then another piece.
“Why, Dan?”

“Because I --- Because I am one of those who tell the teacher.”

Dan was stunned! Embarrassed by what he had said. He kicked a clod of dirt hard. It exploded into dust! He ran to the house.



Appendix B



DATE	AMOUNT	GRANTOR	GRANTEE
	<i>Porción 69 - Double Porción</i>	Spanish Crown	Juan Jose Ynojosa
	<i>Porción 70</i>	Spanish Crown	Jose Antonio Velasco
	<i>Porción 71</i>	Spanish Crown	Narciso Cavazos
	<i>Porción 72</i>	Spanish Crown	Jose Maria Balli
November 24, 1889	\$10.00	Manuel O. Olivera	Donaciana Ochoa
October 5, 1901	\$50.00 in pesos	Maria Antonia Ochoa	Florentino Ochoa & Brothers
August 1, 1903	\$1,2000 on or before August 1, 1906	W. S. Daugherty	Nasario Ochoa
Septermber 1, 1913	\$1.00	Ray E. Jackson	N. W. Brown
February 26, 1925	5 payments of \$900.00	N. W. Brown	P. M. Norquest
December 17, 1926	\$10.00 and \$1,800 by the said Carrol Norquest Sr payable to N.W. Brown; executed by P. M. Norquest	P. M. Norquest	Carrol Norquest
December 17, 1951	\$4,000	David E. and Luciana Dennett	Carrol and Lydia Norquest

THE NORQUEST FAMILY: A PORCIÓN OF EDINBURG

March 10, 1952	\$8,000	Julia E. and Grace Bratten, Ruben and Gertrude Bratten, Tolmie and Ruth Forsberg, and Emil and Judith E. Aden	Carrol and Lydia Norquest
April 28, 1952	Quit Claim Deed	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	Hidalgo County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1
December 8, 1955	\$10.00	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	Edinburg Consolidated School District
January 11, 1956	\$10.00	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	Edinburg Consolidated School District
April 24, 1958	\$10.00	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	The Rio Grande Association for the Mentally Retarded
June 15, 1959	\$10.00	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	Ubie Matheney, Jr., H.R. Test and W.F. Guelker (Trustees, First American Lutheran Church)
September 9, 1959	\$10.00	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	The Rio Grande Assoc. for the Mentally Retarded
November 10, 1960	\$10.00	Carrol Norquest	Fermin Jesus Martinez
November 30, 1960	\$10,000	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	Carrol Norquest, Jr.
September 12, 1966	\$20,412	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	Asa V. Bland, Trustee, Rio Grande Independant Habilitation District
December 9, 1969	\$7,000	Eliborio Flores, Gary Ahlam, and Carrol Norquest	Ernest R. Johnson
Januar 6, 1970	\$10.00	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	NORCO, Inc.
February 14, 1970	\$10.00	Carrol and Lydia Norquest	NORCO, Inc.
April 28, 1970	\$7,000	Eliborio Flores, Gary Ahlam, and Carrol Norquest Jr.	Ernest Johnson, Trustee, First American Lutheran Church of Edinburg



Appendix C



The Swarming of the Wetbacks by Carrol Norquest

#136 I Won't Sit With Those Wetbacks (Urban Wetback Women) XXII

Augustin worked for my neighbor, Steve Rawlins. He lived with his woman, Eloisa, in a three-roomed house on Steve's land. They had lived there nine years and worked for Steve as overseer and sometimes tractor driver.

Augustin and Eloise were "Wet"- never made a move to legalize their residence here, nor their marriage. They had never been picked up by La Chota. Eloise dressed neatly and kind of modish, and with her aire of superiority, had never been picked up. They had two girls and a boy - dressed them neatly and sent them to school.

Eloise helped in the Patrona's house some, but was terrified of the electric appliances, sweeper, irons, and preferred to work in the fields hoeing or picking cotton. She was short, stubby and active. Augustin was merely short.

One noon during cotton- picking season, after they had eaten dinner and the other hands had gone to the field, Sylvia (Mrs. Rawlins) got a telephone call from an excited neighbor woman. "The border patrol just passed here heading for your cotton on Phillips place."

"Heavens! My goodness! All our pickers are over there: Thanks, I've got to run."

The neighbors had a warning agreement, a system worked out. "You warn us when La Chota is prowling and we'll warn you."

Steve and his nephew, Dicky, were over there with the crew, weighing. Sylvia grabbed her little girl, ran to their Model A and tore off down the road. She was too late to warn. The Patrol was there and had gone into actin. It was hot, early afternoon. The crew was still lounging in the shade of the wagons, but some hands were disappearing into the orange-grove to the north.

Three Peterson kids, neighbors, were high tailing down the field road for home, screaming louder at every step- terrified. Most of the forty hands were caught right there, but some had dived into the extra tall cotton of that year. La Chota caught enough for a load anyway.

Augustin was up in the wagon emptying his wife's cotton-picking sack that he hadn't emptied before dinner.

He promptly bored his way into the damp cotton, pulled the sack after him, and didn't tell anyone. The sun was boiling down.

Eloise told her girls to climb into la patrona's Model A back seat and scoot down on the floor - to hide. She climbed into the front seat with Sylvia, who asked her, "Aren't you going with the rest?"

"No, I'm not going to sit in the paddy wagon by those wetbacks:"

Sylvia couldn't leave. Her car was boxed in, so she and Eloisa and the girls just waited until the patrol's paddy wagon left.

Augustin heard them leave, raised his head out of the cotton - saw only Steve through the wagon slats and called in a puffing voice, "Have they left, la chota?"

"Yes, they've gone", said Steve startled to see Augustin come up out of the picked cotton. He was soaked with sweat. It was terribly hot and damp under that freshly picked cotton.

Eloise climbed out of the Model A like the lady she was, gathered her two little daughters, and got a drink of water at the water keg.

Sylvia laughed and laughed at Eloise's "I'm not going to sit with those wetbacks." She'd become Americanized somewhat- none of it legal.

Steve didn't leave so Sylvia stayed. the pickers from the trees came back. Those in the cotton field crawled out and came timidly back to the wagons. The Peterson kids came back when they thought it was safe- they didn't want to be hauled off to Mexico even if they were terribly sunburned.

These twelve or fifteen went ahead picking. By the end of the week the crew had all drifted back.

Wetback Eloisa still thought the wetbacks were untouchables and didn't see the incongruity- assumed that she was different, which made her different.

Later Eloise got a job in town with a Mexican-American businessman's wife. Nice house, nice street, clean people. She was through with farmers, but still 'wet', still unmarried- raised her family and kept her little Augustin clean. She had nice kids- not wet- Americans. She was honest in not classing herself a wetback. She didn't feel like one, so she wasn't.



Appendix D



The Swarming of the Wetbacks by Carrol Norquest

#137 Lemonade Parties

II

It was Saturday morning and the gin office was slowly emptying as each farmer picked up his weekly settlement and left. Cotton picking was about over, but with all the government rules of business, it took a while for the office clerks to make a settlement with each farmer.

I was waiting my turn- sitting comfortably in that form-fitting metal desk chair. I had been idly half-listening to a couple of younger farmers exchange their views on things. There was an irreverent burst of laughter. My attention jelled. Arnold was telling about an experience he and his dad had with la-chota when they were farming up on the river a few years earlier, when things were real lively.

World War II was over- the Korea war was on. Cotton allotments were off again. Arnold and his dad had (with the encouragement of a heavy spring rain) planted all of their available land to cotton. The crop was wonderful- pickers from across the river were drifting in - everything was fine until la chota hit one Tuesday afternoon.

Arnold learned of the raid before la chota got away with his crew. The officer in charge looked familiar and Arnold caught the officer studying him several times. Then recognition was mutual. They'd been in the same Air Force outfit in the big war- not buddies, but in the same outfit, so they - exchanged news and pleasantries. The people watched and waited. "What was up? Son amigos! Que curioso - How strange." They came back to the business at hand.

"So you're the patrol force now?" Arnold said, "how long?"

"Almost a year now."

"Where?"

"In this area. Between here and McAllen."

"And now you're going to tame my crew?"

"Yes. It seems as if that's the way it's stacked-----."

He looked out over the field for a while. "Say,----How long would it take them to finish this field?"

"They would finish it this week if it wouldn't rain."

“Say about Friday?”

“Yes, by Friday noon----maybe.”

“I tell you what I’ll do. I’ll leave them and let them finish if you’ll have them paid off and bunched here at four o’clock next Friday.”

Arnold studied the matter - turned to the waiting crew and explained the deal to them.

“Can you do this as says la chota, if el señor will you permit to continue with the picking today?”

“Seguro que si - surely we will.” Everybody was happy. The patrolman left. Went searching for another cargo of wetbacks. He had one haul - a full load for Friday cinched.

Friday afternoon the people were all cleaned up - paid off and assembled when the patrolman’s buddy came with the paddy wagons and help. An old ponderosa lemon tree stood in the yard loaded with very mature fruit. Arnold stirred up a couple buckets of lemonade for everybody. A social affair! El patron- the people- la chota. Everything pleasant.

On Monday most of the people were back. Nice visit home. Tuesday la chota was back. La chota looked them over (a different field) then told Arnold, “You have these people ready to go next Friday afternoon and I’ll not bother them now.”

“I’ll do that,” promised Arnold. It became a regular weekly lemonade party- every Friday until the picking season ended. Arnold got his cotton picked- the people got a free ride home- Jensen had a bunch of “sure entries” in his book- not loafing on the job!

Arnold reflected a little, then said, “Jensen learned to drink in the Service. The next year Jensen was not here. I heard that his drinking got worse, but that’s another story.”



Appendix E



The Swarming of the Wetbacks by Carrol Norquest

#04 Captain Henderson XVIII

Capt. Henderson had been in the border patrol service all of his mature life. These last fifteen years here on the Mexican border had been tougher than anything he'd ever heard of. He'd made friends. the population was sparse then. He understood why the system of controlling the border traffic would never work. But he was a part of the system and was expected to follow its rules. He had to live here and somehow make the best of it.

This year they had moved a lot of new men in here, newly indoctrinated officers who knew that they were going into a permissive situation and were expected to clean it up, and furthermore believed that they could do this simple job with judgment and firmness. These men were young; their rough corners had not been softened by life, and had little pity or compassion. It had been common knowledge in Frank's area that repeater wetbacks had been robbed of their gains at one concentration point.

"They forced them," Carrol, "to open their billfolds and show the officers how much money they were taking home. This money was thrown into a washtub conveniently placed on the floor. They robbed them thus, in plain sight of anyone who might be watching, just before loading them for Mexico. Returning deportees told these stories about being robbed as they were expelled. Of course they were over here illegally and knew it. They knew that they were without rights so they were defenseless prey to officers who, in turn, believed they should be treated in any manner that would induce them to stay home in Mexico. The pocketbook was the most sensitive place, the most painful part of the body."

Frank considered himself a friend of Capt. Henderson - that the friendship was mutual. Frank was worried about his man Felix. Felix was a valuable employee- his main tractor driver. He had just about finished processing him for legal work in his country when the patrolmen picked him up. He landed in the County jail.

Frank went to see Capt. Henderson at the courthouse. He pleaded with the captain. "Look Cap, I've put quite a bit of money into this man's papers and will complete them in a day or two. I will lose that money as well as a trained man if you take him."

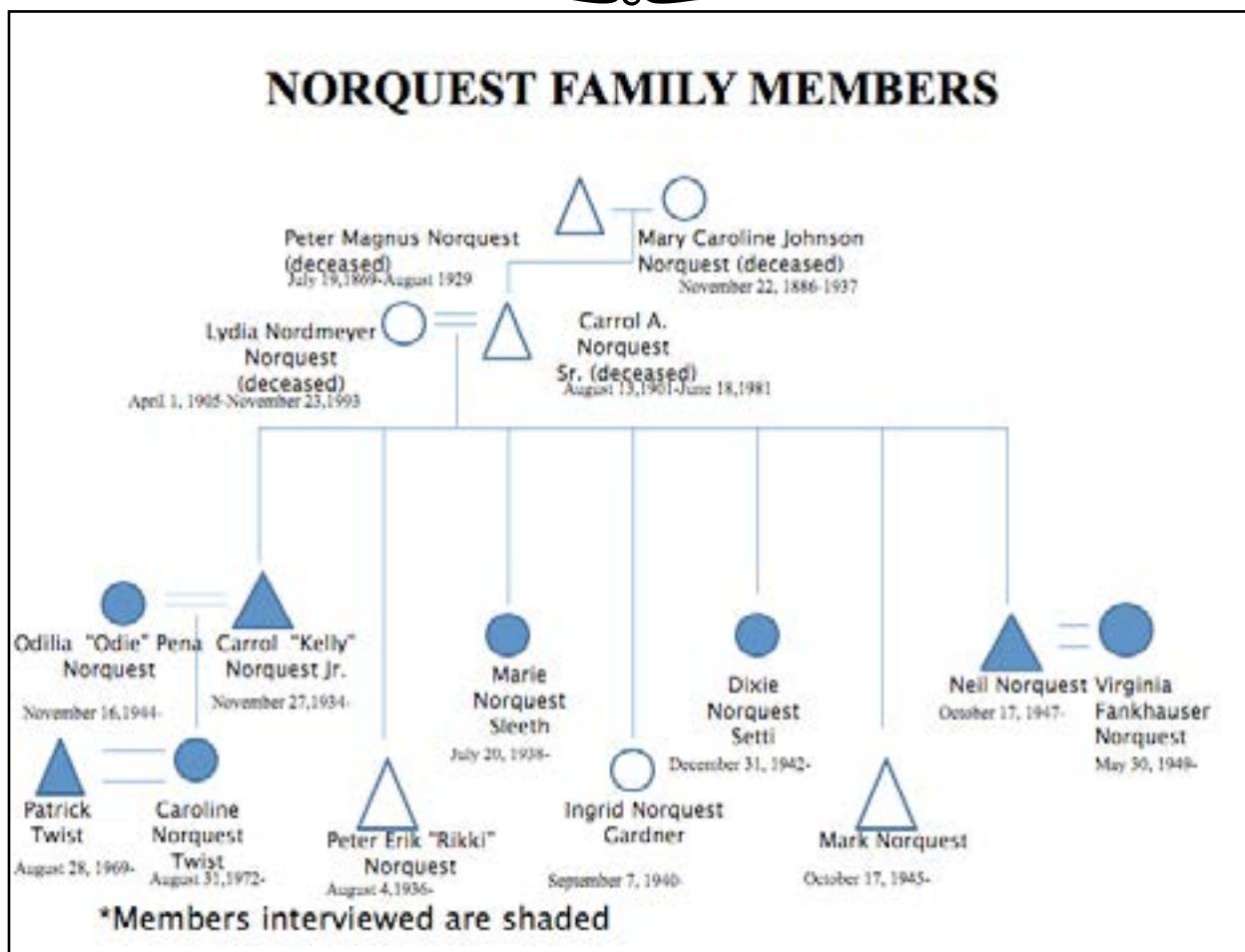
"Well Frank, they have moved these new men in here on us. They have been indoctrinated as caretakers of the U.S. boundaries. It's their duties...but you know, a new broom sweeps clean. They are lynx-eyed. He paused for a while. You wait here," and he went down the hall. He came back with Felix carrying his bundle

of clothes. “Put your bundle there,” and indicated a place by his desk. Leave it there,” ordered the Captain sternly.” “Si,” said Felix, and dropped his bundle.

Then the captain stood there, looked at Frank and pursued an irreverent conversation with him, and then excused himself, “I’m going back in there for some figures.” Then he spoke quietly in English to Frank, “When I’ve gone back in there, you two go out that door, indicating the door to the hallway. And Frank, keep going, understand? Don’t stop. Don’t look back. I have seen you but I did not see you go--understand?”

Frank nodded - motioned with his eyes and chin for Felix to follow him, and went out. Felix left his bundle of clothes at the Captain’s desk.

Appendix F





Appendix G



Oral History Transcriptions Explanation and List

The following transcriptions are of the original interviews conducted by the Fall 2011 CHAPS Interdisciplinary (4301) course. The American Anthropological Association format was used as a guideline for citations throughout the report. Each transcription is numbered individually, so the following list is an index of such interviews. We would like to thank Raul Tomas Zavala Soto for helping with the transcribing of the Mrs. Maria Rita (Rita) Ochoa and Mrs. Virginia Mata interviews.

1. Carrol Norquest (Kelly), Jr.
2. Marie Norquest-Sleeth
3. Dixie Norquest-Setti
4. Neil Norquest
5. Odilia (Odie) Peña-Norquest
6. Virginia Fankhauser-Norquest
7. Patrick Twist
8. Caroline Norquest Twist
9. Maria Rita Ochoa
10. Virginia Mata

This transcription, approved and edited by Carrol Norquest Jr., contains minor orthographical changes from the original transcription done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

Interviewee: Carrol Norquest Jr.

Interviewers: Daniel Nicholson

Date: November 1, 2011

Location: Guest House of Norquest Property

Transcribers: Daniel Nicholson, Peter Rodriguez, Roland Silva

The interviewee was Carrol Norquest, Jr., eldest sibling, the “Patriarch” of the family. The interview crew consisted of Peter Rodriguez (sound), Roland Silva (cameraman), and Daniel Nicholson (primary interviewer). The interview was held at the Norquest property in the small guest house along with a walk of the grounds that focused on the in the area of the guest house, main house, the barn, and the water works on the property.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh my other two sisters had been gone for parts of their lives and then come back and grew up here and then come back. Marie for instance has lived here on the place three different times.

Daniel Nicholson: Umhmm

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So uhh... and then the younger people of course, umm they go back uhh maybe forty years at the most as well as my wife and Neil’s wife...and Patrick only goes back ten years here on this place although his family’s been here for years. But he’s done some really in-depth work here around the homestead itself...uh the house and so forth so uh

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmmmm Mhmmmm

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Eloise I was I was telling her I think we can do kinda like...Marie did...go ahead and ummm...go ahead and work over these questions what we can answer here...and then ...most of the ones they had are gonna...ah pertain to what they may be able to see around outside

Eloise Montemayor: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Take the sound ok?

Eloise Montemayor: Sounds good.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And then what kind of time schedule is everybody on?

[Cues from everyone that no particular rush is in effect]

Daniel Nicholson: Umm ok umm I’m just gonna before we get going here I’m kind of going through these questions looking at--[noise of cameraman bumping into stuff and apologizing] –ynow picking out the ones that probably could be answered in here versus a walk around the site and so

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Ummmm as far as the general water question and the hurricane Beulah and Allen sections, the only one that I have that’s... would be an outside question would be the fourth from the bottom for the hurricane section that’s uh...how extensive was the damage to the buildings that are still standing today? So then that could be just a point, you know, this part was damaged or...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah uh.

Daniel Nicholson: What-have-you, you know...just...a little more visual aide, but the rest of those seem like they’re just...more memory questions than you know..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ---Sure.

Daniel Nicholson: And then ummm same thing with the freezes and droughts and then uhh..probably skip over all the canal stuff and the crop irrigation stuff and save that for outside...as well as the wells. Ummm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok

Daniel Nicholson: The garbage stuff looks like it uh could be done in here, cause...also have an image..there’s this dumping site that you guys had or what-have-you um..outhouses that’d be..guess an outside conversation

thing.. uh..even though there's a lot.. just..more memory things but..you know..I think it would just sound really..like..cool to have all this (announcer impression) Walking the property with Mr. Carrol Norquest Jr. sorta stuff in the, you know Carrol Norquest Jr. (chuckles)

Daniel Nicholson: And then..you know he showed us this wonderful stuff you know..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (still chuckling) Hehe yup

Daniel Nicholson: Uhhh and then uhh

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Well I dunno how wonderful...but it'll be old (laughs) and what I mean hehe...some historians look on that as being the same thing.

Daniel Nicholson: (loud chuckling) Old is interesting.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah (chuckling fading)

Daniel Nicholson: And uh the pre..we save that pre-history stuff right till the end uh because we ...for a lot of our...the pre-history stuff we have..you know some artifacts that you provided the CHAPS class (unintelligible) on this upcoming week so this is--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh ok.

Daniel Nicholson: More of a...more of a kind of a..Where is this kind of stuff? And all these things like that and a lot of the archaeology questions are coming out of this architecture..stuff like that you know uh...so

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Did you...did you bring your map with you?

Daniel Nicholson: [fishing out image to show to Carrol Norquest Jr.] I brought a photograph of the property and...it should suffice.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And...yeah...uhh let's see ooook.

[Daniel Nicholson and Carrol Norquest Jr. gesturing to photo]

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. Here's...here's your house right heeeeeeere

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right

Daniel Nicholson: So we'rehere. So....that's Chapin....there's Sugar...and that's just uh.... little barn

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah and uh...ok.

Daniel Nicholson: So is there...is there a big section that's missing or..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh...well..yeah...bout half of it over here

Daniel Nicholson: ummm little bit...ohhh ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: But uh that..there..there..the only thing over there was uhh..a canal that used to be...which would be over in here [gesturing]

Daniel Nicholson: Ok well..

Carrol Norquest Jr.:...but anyway it'd be..it'd be all approximate.

Daniel Nicholson: Right. It's all...you know..based on how well you can remember these things

Carrol Norquest Jr.: But you can..yeah you can..you can get an idea that..uh...if I have to go out of the area a little bit..[gesturing still ensuing looking at image]

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm. Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh yeah..well..yeah this'll give us a little bigger of a blow-up..

Daniel Nicholson: Right that was what I was kinda shooting for just for the..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah then uh...I can

Daniel Nicholson: property itself and then if anything had been found you know in the fields directly back here. Now umm...just a quick question because I was passing by here and was uh..peeping..but umm..this um...fifty-two acres right here...this...that's in y'all's...that's ya'lls uh...land correct?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: This. All this open land. All this open land. Yeah and it goes clear down here.....here...over

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...here

Daniel Nicholson: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:...another house over here..

Daniel Nicholson: I just...cause I saw a uh..you know fifty-two acres for sale..you know notice

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's...

Daniel Nicholson: ...and I was wondering if that was attached to ya'lls property as well...just..curious

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah of course. We...we farmed..we farmed this (gestures)

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ..too across there and all over the place.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah uh-huh. And then down up here too...this is the Cantu's (blahblahsomethin)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. This is our property. Here's the diving line, and here's the university.

(barely suppressed chortle)

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah...that's a pretty nice...line of demarcation...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: These trees...[gestures]...do not pass. ...we will be angry (laughs)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (laughs)...right.

Daniel Nicholson:but....and yet they try. So...(shrugs)...ok let me get some of this junk out of the way just so...we have a little bit....less clutter.....ok. Ok..so..like I said..we'll just...start..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...is the..camera ready to go? [Sound of cameraman clearing his throat.]

Roland Silva: (coughs) Oh yeah, yeah...it's been ready.

Daniel Nicholson: I'm just gonna grab that sheet...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: [taking sheet] ...so I can just take off the questions I'm gonna ask inside..versus..the outside stuff...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh...yeah! Go ahead...yeah!

Daniel Nicholson:...just so you can

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...so we don't...[looking at his outline/script]

Daniel Nicholson:...also follow along where...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That would be good...so we don't

Daniel Nicholson: Where I'm at...or where my

Carrol Norquest Jr.:...so we don't..

Daniel Nicholson: Brain is going...yeah

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah....If there's some of them that...uh...I can't answer that're..uh..

Daniel Nicholson: Oh! Certainly...

Carrol Norquest Jr.:less relevant...well, why we'll...

Daniel Nicholson:...if there's a..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...?

Daniel Nicholson:...if there's an I don't know... there's an [crew nods in agreement]I don't know. And that's ok too you know. (laughs)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And I'll try to...I'll try to....make..make everything concise without ambling.... [more suppressed laughs]....if at all possible...let's see... I think I'm gonna...get a little drink of water first. I see there's some glasses here...yeah...if anybody wants any water...why, ah..get a glass and get some....before...[sound of faucet use] since I'm gonna talk I need to have my mouth wet. [crew in agreement]

Daniel Nicholson: Oh yes.....I've...[everyone making noise]

Cameraman: I'm...happy to have the camera.

[crew enters into unimportant gossip-cont. Conv. With Daniel Nicholson and Carrol Norquest Jr.]

Daniel Nicholson: Just so we can have one in front of you...see this little tick mark, with the exception of that question [gesturing to outline] and the hurricane sections...umm

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok, the ones that--

Daniel Nicholson: Uh...the ones that I have underlined next to you-those were gonna be...uh...talked about inside.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Inside. Ok.

Daniel Nicholson:...and uh...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The vacant ones will be...

Daniel Nicholson: The vacant ones...well..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: ...that'd be an inside question...we'll do this stuff inside which is..like...um..you know... called

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok.

Daniel Nicholson: Let's see..umm all this stuff we had for garbage is gonna be.....uh..outside.. and some questions..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: This'll be here? [gestures]

Daniel Nicholson: This will be here....aaaand there's our pre-history section..go ahead and do that....

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok...and then we can see how..the rest of this...[ends in laughter]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...shall I..?....shall I just go ahead and follow? Are you gonna ask me...is that part of the

Daniel Nicholson: Uh.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:is part of the..

Daniel Nicholson: I think that's part of the process-

Carrol Norquest Jr.: -part of the oral interview...?

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. Part of the asking stuff.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok. Then I'll then I'll be able to..I'll just have it here with me to uh... so I can

Daniel Nicholson: --Hall monitor..or read ahead or what-have-you if you need.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: You know let's...let's try to keep this...as...natural as possible as an attempt uh...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh yeah

Daniel Nicholson: But...[both laugh]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: [gesturing to crew] Ok you guys.

Daniel Nicholson: And this is being recorded...right now so..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: You guys relax and(laughs) relax and have some fun with it.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh yeah (laughs).

[laughs fade]

Daniel Nicholson: Ok. I don't know if we have to do the Masterpiece Theater Production but...uh [crew chuckles]...this is Carrol "Kelly" Norquest Jr. uh..we're gonna be talking to him about general, errr water questions, droughts, hurricanes, things of that nature as well as...um..are things of an archaeological nature, architecture that was here, artifacts they might've found here, so on and so forth. So...Mr. Norquest, --

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yes?

Daniel Nicholson:--just so we can start off with some general water questions for you umm...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok.

Daniel Nicholson: We're just talking about all this subject about water, but one thing that was never talked about kind of and I thought of was you know...Where did the water...where did you guys retrieve your water before the city required...required services for that?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok, uh. Uhhh. Right now we're talking about the domestic water,-

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --that. Uh...that we use rather..than irrigation. That'll come. Uhhh. Ok the..initially, going back before my time, uh..there was a..uh...a windmill... well I remember the wind-mill...we had a wind-mill that uh...pumped water out of the ground. And umm it pumped it into a tank that was two stories high, which in turn, made water pressure to take it into the house, and to take it out into the feed lots where the cattle were. That time they had horses and they had uh..they had cows, they had hogs, chickens, and so forth.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok. So it was a little larger farming operation than just agriculture, there was also some..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right. Yeah. It was yeah, the uh--

Daniel Nicholson:...animals...[trails off]

Carrol Norquest Jr.:--the umm animals, animals umm.... course this was all agriculture, the whole thing.

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The whole kinda thing but the uh..the domestic animals, the farm animals of course they were the, uh they work. The horses worked, and so forth-but they all needed water, in fact they use uh. I believe, uh..one question you... had to do with a percentage of water-

Daniel Nicholson: --Correct.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:--that was used. I would say at the time uh...at the time probably seventy-five percent of the water went to the animals.

Daniel Nicholson: Hmm. Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And that tank made the pressure...uh...pressure to go into pipes in the ground out to the water tanks.

Daniel Nicholson: And how bout that twenty-five percent..?...Umm....

Carrol Norquest Jr.: -that twenty-five percent...that..umm..

Daniel Nicholson:--how was that distributed...for people use?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. I would say that uh...that went...that went into the house...and umm...uh...through pipes. I don't remember em I do remember the windmill in the...and the uh...tank. It pushed it into the house and then they had...uh it was distributed...not like the plumbing we have now... the plumbing then was all...iron pipes. Hard to put together and so forth. And they rust out so uh...they had the inside [gestures] an around inside the house. It was uh minimal piping. And uh...they did have a bathroom upstairs, at that time, when the house was built. And with a...with a toilet and bathtub...which were later taken out? They were not exactly practical anymore...and so umm...uh...and I'm not sure how the water pressure was. Uh...later-after that..that was used for quite a number of years and uh...at one point we also had a uh...when they you uh...water tank...when the—later when the water well was no longer used and the, the tank pulled down...pulled down from off it's uh...uh off of it's tower...it was uh reconstructed...under the uh...close to the kitchen, where rainwater could go in it from the roof...and.. that...uh I don't know how that was used, whether there was a spigot outside where they'd get water out of it or whether..uh I just don't remember how they distributed it in the house. Later after the um...well-water and the...and the um..rainwater were no longer used, we had umm...uh...built a cistern. And the cistern had an electric pump that pumped water into the house.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:---aaaannd to the cattle. Everywhere...and uh..

Daniel Nicholson: So what was your uh...what was your reaction, as a child, and around what year did you guys finally get electrical pumping here..?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Mhmm. We got electricity sometime around the early 1940's...when the REA...uh came into existence..Rural Electrification Act. Came into existence, they brought umm...water...they brought electricity out into the uh, out into the countryside. At that point, that's when the windmill came down. Uh we put a pump on the well, an electric pump on the well..and uh...uh connected it to the pipes that were inside and put any other new pipes around that were needed.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It had a pressure tank on it that pushed the...forced the water instead of...using height like the old water did it it had a pressure pump to uh put it into the um...into the house, move it around. And later the next uh the next uh, well during that time also, drinking water-the water was hard water that came out, it was kinda salty...it came out of the...but it was good, it was usable in all kinds of ways. Bathing, and uh...bathing and washing dishes and for other uses in the house, as well as the animals drinking it...it uh was no harm to them. And our drinking water, we would haul that in from town five-gallon jugs go to...go to the uh...gas station...get water out of the uh..

Daniel Nicholson: Now when did uh...when did the city start taking over...uh...water services? Are you guys still running on wells or-

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. Yeah after, we had this after the well...we no longer used the well, we were able to

get water in and build a cistern and uh that uh...

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...put the pump...ah put the pump on it, used that for many years, and then the next thing that came was a rural water system. And that came in maybe the umm...late 1960's, early 70's, an maybe the early 70's...uh Sharyland water system...uh they brought water like uh...the REA had with the electricity, they brought it out into the country and uh...so we were on that...on that system for many years up until uh...maybe six, five or six years ago. No! Uh, less than that...maybe five years ago-four or five years ago. The city connected us to their systems, which were now in existence, they'd been along Chapin street and Sugar road uh... for a number of years-the city system, and they finally got around to purchasing the Sharyland...cit...port...the portion of the Sharyland system that was around here. So we then were on city water and they uh... we're now connected to the city.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: System. So that's the um...

Daniel Nicholson: So the process...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So that's the eaCh. That's the evolution of the--

Daniel Nicholson: So umm...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ---water systems here.

Daniel Nicholson: ...ummm...so just for the sake of you know...uh...making the historical...historian people happy uh...do you happen to have a rough...uh chronology of...you know when these water shapes were...umm

Carrol Norquest Jr.: When these water systems...ok...

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. Um...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: well the initial water system with the windmill would have been put in 1913. Like the rest of Edinburg, water ohh...uhm...the...uh water was all over the place. Ok that was 1913 and then uh approximately 1940 the umm... electricity came and it was put on a pump... and then in the late 40's, or early 50's... the cistern was dug and a reservoir for the cattle, which was also used as a swimming pool...uh when we used canal water. Filtered canal water.

Daniel Nicholson: Umm...where was this reservoir located? Umm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It's ahh...it's it's next-

Daniel Nicholson: ...it's probably gone now but (chuckles)...I couldn't find it.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: it's ahhh it's located...ah let's see...there's the barn...it's uh this is the big house uh yeah. It's right here. It's right beside the cistern. The cistern is over here. [gesturing to property photo]

Daniel Nicholson: Ok lemme just...do a little pencil circle, just something I can

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right ahh they're both ah together-

Daniel Nicholson: Thank you.

Daniel Nicholson: And we were on that uh...on the cistern ah...system until uh...probably about 19...I'm gonna say somewhere around 1970. Then we got the Sharyland was uh water system, the rural water system, and we were on that until maybe around 2000 and.....2006 or 2007 maybe. And then we connected with the city water system.

Daniel Nicholson: Hmm ok. Thank you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So that's basically the evolution of it. (chuckles)

Daniel Nicholson: Right...it's just...noo it just--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That'll yeah. Right.

Daniel Nicholson: --yeah it's just those...there were just those...we had just-- those events-- but uh I just know the history people would be---would kill me--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --Yeah. Sure.

Daniel Nicholson: If I didn't have the..you know some sort of dates....

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's...exactly.

Daniel Nicholson: ...at least relative-

Carrol Norquest Jr.:...that's what you would

Daniel Nicholson:..you know..trying to be considerate of other peoples parts of the report. Ok um.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right.

Daniel Nicholson: So I guess that really moves us on to...you know we had two category four hurricane events that happened here...-

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh-huh.

Daniel Nicholson: ...you know Beulah and Allen...you know about twenty years removed from each other so uh...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: ...I guess we'll start with Beulah because that was just...that's Beulah you know? (chuckle)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Well I'll tell ya. Well lemme go back further

Daniel Nicholson: Oh sure!

Carrol Norquest Jr.: 1933. The year...

Daniel Nicholson: Oh! Another one.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:-the year before I was born...uh these are the ones I'm aware of...before that, there probably were some...

Daniel Nicholson: Oh umhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...some too...but 33 was a bad year and uh... that was uh I guess more wind than water...and uh...although there was quite a bit of water, uh...the uh... it... it bothered...it hurt the roof on the...old house...my dad said water came in and so forth...I don't know just what damage it did but it was one here in the Valley that's...one of the major ones...umm...it uh... in connection with that...my uh...apparently there was quite a bit of water too because my...my...uh...my grandfather on my other side-the other side of...my mother's father, was engineer of the uh...for the city of McAllen and put in the first uh... storm drain in McAllen. In...well about 1934. And that's still in existence over there. Uh...my father eh told about...eh uh...told about even getting up uh even when the winds were high to patch the roof. Over there we had a long ladder ...and uh... the population was not so great, so the water didn't uh...didn't run off a cement and concrete and so forth like it does. But it was a uh...it was a uh...it was a uh... problem...ah problem..evi...apparently a lesser problem than the later hurricanes. Uhh going on to Beulah..uhh population growth, that was ahh... in what uh 67..

Daniel Nicholson: ...67.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...67. Uh the water was ahh...there was alotta water. The whole Valley was flooded. Bigger population, water running all over the place, not running, stagnating and so forth. And uh..my brother Neil was.. at home. All the rest of the children were gone by then... but Neil was here and my parents...we were in the big house there at the time and the water just kept rising, and it uh..it got within an inch within coming into...into the main house there... into the big house. All these other buildings were flooded. Uhh...had water. This one right here...had water in it uh...I dunno... bout that deep I guess [gestures]

Daniel Nicholson: Oh wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And uh...

Daniel Nicholson: Did you all have to run away from the events... or--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Nnnooo we didn't..

Daniel Nicholson:--did you guys kind of you know...

Carrol Norquest Jr.:-the young...

Daniel Nicholson: --hold the fort down?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...At the ahh..at the time...at the time..in, in this house...with--the German family that originally living here. There was one son that was still here...he was a teacher and he was also in the National Guard. So he got called out to go elsewhere... eh to help out...meanwhile all his stuff was in here, you know..

Daniel Nicholson: ..floating yeah.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right.

Daniel Nicholson: (chuckles)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: My brother, my mom, and me and my dad were all in the...in the big house it came within one inch-one inch of coming in...and that water stayed...uh...before it all went down... was a month.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow. [cameraman whoas]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It was a, it was a month... there was a drainage system in existence, but it was not...since then they've upgraded it.

Daniel Nicholson: Was it the type that has to run the water down about a mile and a half before it can even drain out? You know uh...there's the...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...yeah it was, [Daniel chuckling] it was the uh...the uh...the drainage system at that time was the...drain ditches that were set up for sub surface drainage....

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ..which ahh which was for... to leech salts out of the ground. And it was not for surface draining. So that was the main...uh...the system was mainly for that. Later after hurricane Beulah, they started developing...umm... with the irrigation districts who owned those systems...the...ditches. They started developing with them, the ability to handle surface drainage...course the growth here has continued on, which umm... and it was even worse by the time we got to hurricane Allen. But uh...the uh...our... tractors were sitting in the water, in the barn...the cars were... housed...the car and pickup were in the barn. Uh kinda...as a garage too. And they had water...our car had water up to the seat in it, but the house was a little higher, so we uh...uh when it got low enough we had a neighbor that uh...we borrowed a tractor from—our's were gas and butane and we couldn't get em started..the tractor's. Borrowed a diesel tractor from uh...one of our neighbor's...and we pulled the cars out, took em to the garage and got em fixed. And we had cattle, cattle out here in the pens, and uh we just had to turn them loose.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...eventually...uh...they...they...no way to lay down, and they went over to the... over to the east side of the place, over here uh... by the...the other house, over there close to it. They found a dry spot. Well it wadn't dry it was...solid

Daniel Nicholson: Less wet.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:--it didn't have water standing on it. And they stayed on that. Uh..for about a month...and they'd...ah...all of the pasture...the uh...the hay...the hay uh...the hay uh... haystacks fell down with the bales of hay, and the hay would come floating through our front yard, following the...the flow of the water.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And uh...the grass...the ten acres over close to where the cattle were stayIng was uh... all...it deteriorated real fast in the water. The African stargrass that was there, on the rest of the pasture, it had long runners and it floated to the top of the water, like that-about a foot, eight inches [gestures], floated to the top and started growing.

Daniel Nicholson: Huh.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So you'd look out there and you'd see it all green as if there was nice pasture out there. The cattle every day the cattle'd wander out there...and eat all that grass--

Daniel Nicholson: --get tricked (laughs).

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --eat all that grass...and go back to...(begins to chuckle) their homemade corral afterwards [crew laughs]. So uh...and over...a month's period of time...it uh...it uh gradually went down. And for awhile we had to park our car...when we got em...they got em going in at the...garage...and I had to go to work. I was working at the Texas employment commission at that time. And uh... for about a week I couldn't get out to go to work. And then this tractor I was mentioning that we pulled the cars out with...we made an arrangement umm. I would...we had a cattle trailer here that we'd...we could take out with it, but ah...my dad...'d go..would go with me on the tractor up to... Business 281...over Business 281 here...and there I would meet a fellow worker that was coming from northwest of here...he would come...uh Bruno Lopez. He'd pick me up. We'd go on into town-I'd work there that day, and then evening we'd uh... reverse the process.

Daniel Nicholson: Hmm

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And uh

Daniel Nicholson: Was Bruno on a tractor as well or...?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No no he had a...he was not flooded...he was not flooded so..

Daniel Nicholson: Oh ok

Carrol Norquest Jr.: He lived out here west of town...he'd come in on Monte Cristo road

Daniel Nicholson: Oh ok. So how far...I guess was the main damage of Beulah in Edinburg-where was the kind of...I guess the line of demarcation between there and you know, and dry land?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok it'd be here...ok. Here we uh...in order to get supplies, uh we had a canoe here-no we borrowed a canoe!...err no we borrowed ...an aluminum rowboat from somewhere. Anyway, we got it [clears throat]. My brother Neil and I, and my dad, my mom would make a grocery list. We'd uh we'd take...uh get the uh...get in the little boat, and...and we'd uh... take it on out south over here to where the tree line is, we'd go back up this way. It was kinda shallow over here but we could get across the fences over that way so we went over there to the east in that tree line over towards the east, crossed the fence over there. The trees weren't that big at that time...cross the fence, then we'd go up uh...1st street... with it. And then uh...then we'd go cross Schunior, and then across Lamar school there...which is now part of the RAHC. The Regional Academic Health Center. Across there over to the umm...across campus to the old science building and I think that's got other uses now...it's uh...the health...umm

Daniel Nicholson: Oh is that the...the umm...Health and Human Services...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson:...the east and west building..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That was one of the older buildings and we'd go through there [Daniel laughs], and we'd go over to the...where the girls dorm was...which is Emilia Hall.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And that's...approximately in there is where we'd...beach the boat. (more laughs) And then we'd had our rubber boots and the water was pretty shallow after that, we'd go on across the highway, go over to the Lutheran church, which was a...church we attend and the pastor lived there, and we'd give him the list. Food. He'd go get the food and bring it back, and we'd put it in the boat and bring it on back out here (more suppressed chuckles).

Daniel Nicholson: How about long of a...how long did that take to get that all done...? You know...[Carrol Norquest Jr. laughs]...it's just seems kind of this, really... ridiculous too...I was thinking of you know...row... in a rowboat you know along Edinburg, you know...it's just this [crew chortles]...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. Yeah well actually is was...actually it uh...we could, we could walk in the water-we mainly had the boat...so we can get the supplies. [Daniel speaks in Unison]

Daniel Nicholson: ...supplies.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: But we could've...we could've walked...well...Sugar road was not paved at all, at that time...and uh...we'd have um...had vehicles-army vehicles going up and down it, rescuing people out there... and they were tearing it up.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So eventually we uh...then eventually uh...that went on for some time. We'd...we'd we'd leave the list with him-we'd come back for that later...we didn't just wait around for him to get it, but we'd come back the next day, maybe walk...walk down there with boots you know...and uh... then eventually when the water was...uh the water was clear over...and then it from there, the water was all clear over University drive and a whole buncha people got flooded south of there.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow. Uh.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And that water flowed...it'd come down the drain ditch, flowed down University drive, into the campus-into this part of Edinburg...and then flow on out this way [gesturing to photo]...and then flow on northwest from here, then north.

Daniel Nicholson: So um....

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...and that...

Daniel Nicholson:--just for a little of university history, uh...you know being that you canoed and hiked through

campus as it was in it's flood point during Beulah, umm...wow...the questions came to my head and I just lost it-

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. Right (chuckles) If we come back to it-go ahead.

Daniel Nicholson: Right. But Um..as far as the campus is concerned, how extensive was the flooding on campus? How many...I guess...roughly how many buildings are still you know...there from...aside from the now

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: ...Human Health and Service buildings...you know how many are original, Beulah-era buildings?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...that science building, the...uh the dormitories, and the uh...uh... the one story buildings. Basically any of the one-story buildings you see around here.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok so that would include the...I think it was the math building at that point. It's now served as Physics

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. Right that one was...

Daniel Nicholson:--and Geology...umm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...and uh...I don't know whether they had any water in em or not, but they, I think at the time...if I...I could be wrong but I'm thinking that they were building the Fine Arts...at that time.

Daniel Nicholson: Hmmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Either building it and it may have had flood waters in it. I don't know right now...uh there were not...not all that many buildings at the time and-

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: -now uh...at the time also you had the east campus which was the old...old Panam. The old buildings over there, where the city hall is and the auditorium...

Daniel Nicholson: Oh.Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: -back over there and um...

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...the uh...the auditorium was housed...housed the music department then. The instruments were down below in the uh...in the uh...uhh...basement...under the...stage?

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And the base vials (unintelligible) were floating up...

Daniel Nicholson:--So the instruments did well in the storm [laughter]...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...yeah...that uh...that uh... that whole area flooded quite a bit...

Daniel Nicholson: Wow ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...so and uh...there was a basement in the old Administration building so uh...

Daniel Nicholson: Um...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...but anyway that uh...eventually we uh...it...as it dried up this way we were able to bring the car down here to our neighbors on Smith street...uh right over here [gesturing], and I'd park it there at night, walk on up home, then walk back there to go pick it up to go to work in the morning. And then eventually it dried out and so forth...and then... I guess... unless you have something else on that going on to that-following up with Allen..

Daniel Nicholson: Umm...actually I have uh...couple...questions...still there uh, sorry-

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh no that's fine.

Daniel Nicholson: Umm...but uh...just curious...I was curious if there were any methods that were employed by local farmers or just local residents of Edinburg to try to get the water away from their land. You know were they trying to to dig little [some word] ditches,...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It was...it was...it was too massive...it was too massive. They do that on...on...on...smaller flooding... it...

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:-localized where they can get off the crops... if you try to, but it was too massive for that. It had to be an effort by everybody and--

Daniel Nicholson:--Everybody and...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: You know on one farm at a time essentially...get water...you know cleared...ok. Yeah it's just...you know because when you...you talk about water-it did come up very high here but you know..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Mhmm.

Daniel Nicholson: ...don't know how nec...how well the warning systems were back then, as far as hurricane notification or if this was just a surprise for you guys or...or what...so if there wasn't

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uhh...

Daniel Nicholson: ...a surprise, if there were, you know, some methods beforehand tried ah...not hit

Carrol Norquest Jr.: well it was...uh with ahh...hurricane in '33-there was not much...

Daniel Nicholson: Right...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...we...we followed it uh...followed it. It was followed clear across the Atlantic, but they...it it...things are better now...but...it's not...not all that much better. Still, it was...it was...a guessing game, but there were still able-- at that time-- to track it. So we watched it on the...listened to the radio, watched it on TV as it came across and then came right on in. Uhh...and uh...the same way with uh...hurricane Allen. They they were able to give each...each hurricane...they were able to give a little more uh...be a little more precise about it. But...uh...it uh...it was still a guessing game.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm. Right...and then there might've been a degree of...what we see a lot of today in the Rio Grand Valley of...hurricanes coming...Ohhh...it's gonna hit San Antonio....

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Mhmm.

Daniel Nicholson: ...or Corpus...or it's gonna hit...you know Mexico...but it's never gonna hit us—and then we get surprised (chuckles).

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah that's the...it's the...it's a denial of—everybody goes into a denial (chuckles).

Daniel Nicholson: So...what's with the denial of Beulah, how about the denial of Allen you know?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And if ahh...if you didn't have a certain amount of denial everything would come to a screeching halt-everybody would run out [Daniel Nicholson chortles] at every...every little uh...every little uh...hit that there was a hurricane coming...so uh there's...a happy medium somewhere. Or an unhappy medium [Daniel laugh] I dunno which... (he laughs).

Daniel Nicholson: Ok. Umm. So...now let's...uh go ahead and--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: --- shift into Allen now. I just had to, just had to wonder if we had the same

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I had uh (unintelligible)...no after uh...

Daniel Nicholson:--phenomena occurred...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...going into Allen though... they...they had to...Bond issue [?] I believe...they started approving the drain ditches...and uh...with the idea of floodwaters.

Daniel Nicholson: Hmmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And uh...that was still in progress at the time Allen came and they were still uh...the uh...growth here was still in progress here also...so when hurricane Allen came, we had a similar situation...and...we had floodwaters here...they didn't last as long...it was not as deep. It...it...water did come into my house next door, about five or six inches-we were flooded there. And that's...damage that we had in there. Uh during Beulah we did -back to Beulah-, we did have damage ...on the roof...water came in. Otherwise...uh buildings there was...there was not...uh...not uh significant damage anywhere...and hurricane Allen...the...uh...in fact the wind was not all that bad, and when it was over we thought it was uh...there had uh...nothing was flooded much. And uh...in fact um...the sun came out, my wife and I, and the kids went over to have coffee with my folks at five o'clock in the evening and that's Sunday evening. And came home, and then the clouds came in, and there was a big feeder band...be... all the way from Alice-into Alice-all the way from Alice [gestures] down here through Donna and a large area of the Valley and it...it started dumping water...bout...7:30 or 8:00...and it just...poured all till midnight. And then water started building up, flowing out of town and everything and about 1 o'clock in the morning-why, it came into my house...here and then uh...we put everything up off the floor that was...

that would...that could get uh...ruined...so forth...as much as we could and uh...then uh. As water...after water came in my house and my wife and I and my daughters, why we...it was paved, the street was paved by then. We walked...walked out there to the uh...pavement, and walked over to the big house, went to the bedrooms upstairs. Went and slept the rest of the night, waited for the rain to finish, came over and assessed the damage the next day. And uh...the water...let's see...yeah. We still had cattle here-but it wasn't as bad. We were...we were able to turn them out, but they had places to go. It wasn't that deep. So the main damage that time was to the uh...to my house...Uh...within a year or two of hurricane Allen, the city started putting in this... flood retention pond across the street, across Sugar road. They got funding. Government funding to...do that. And they put that in; put some pumps there where they could pump the water into it. And that's been used a number of times since. So it's been...uh been very helpful. They're uh...re-doing it now gonna put...put it in where there's gravity flow and uh... they're working on a...a bigger, better..

Daniel Nicholson: Bigger, better, retention system.... [unison/overlap]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...for next time.

Daniel Nicholson: Yes...costs more so it must be better right. (chuckles)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. So uh...so that way we didn't uh...it wasn't...the flooding wasn't as impressive-except in my house (chuckles).

Daniel Nicholson: Right. So...so really although both category four...as far as this property... is concerned... Beulah was the nastier of the two CAT four storms.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Uh...in your living memory, right.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. Ok um...I think. That's...a lot a really good information though...wow...uh...so I guess we can move on to our freezes and droughts and that stuff...ah...so.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Were there any...I guess we'll kind of combine them since they're both,...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...they...

Daniel Nicholson: ...deal with you know...they're kinda the same thing...uhh but do you remember any sort of major freeze, or drought events...that just really stuck out in your head...or your mind today? Uhhh...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah the freeze...the uh...the freezes... I can...I can recall...the ones that've stuck out...stuck in my head...uh there was one in...there was a couple of em...uh...four...forty-nine, I think it was forty-nine and fifty-one...uh...that...damaged the citrus, the crops, everything considerably and it...it was followed... in connection with and followed by the uh...major drought of the 1950's...so those two made a very... quite a hardship on...on farm...uh...agricultural...uh life of people here. Quite a few farmers left. Went elsewhere. They couldn't...could no longer make a living here. And it was a real struggle...through say fifty...say forty-nine through uh...fifty some. About fifty-three I believe. Falcon Dam was completed, and after that there was no...major problem. Uh...uh the freeze of 1962 was also very memorable. It uh...it killed uh...killed...really hurt the citrus industry...really killed...killed it out...and then in the eighties we had two freezes...I'm...not sure of the exact years. Um...I wanna say eighty...eighty-three and eighty-six, or...it may have been eighty-nine, I'm not sure. And those two were very...very hard.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Then...the drought of the 1990's and maybe early 2000's...that...last...it was about a ten-year drought.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh...in fact after hurricane Allen...the years were basically dry...and...with some exceptions...and...we... people were wondering whether the uh...retention pond over here...uh...had been worth while.

Daniel Nicholson: Hm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Even...it's never gonna flood again.

[crew chuckles]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...In fact there was some...there was some talk about filling it in and turning it into commercial property even. But uh...then we got...rains...drought broke and we got rains where they actually used

it.

Daniel Nicholson: So um...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Umm....anyway that's basically the uh...the ones that...

Daniel Nicholson: Was it just the citrus that took a hit? Were there other crops that were around that just really--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No. There were other...uh...depending on the year...and the time of the year...the crops...in each of the freezes...back in the uh...back in the uh forty-nine and fifty-one and the drought uh...all crops would've been hurt then. Vegetables, cotton...and uh...let's see as far as the freeze...most noticeable in the...the one in forty-nine. Fifty-one...uh was the citrus, and any vegetables that were in the fields at that time,--

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:--they were pretty well wiped out. And...and and uh...later on in sixty-two the same situation. In the eighties it was the same situation there...only by then they had sugar cane. Sugar cane would get uh...really hit by it. Besides vegetables, and and citrus, and...and grass of course, the ranchers, and anybody that had pasture...the grass would get frozen too...

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...and uh...the same thing with the droughts. It was the same kind of crops that would--with the exception now--we're getting into the summer crops. Cotton.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Cotton and grain...and uh...so forth. The uh...uh sugar cane...it took a lot of water...so a lotta water would get um...used from the irrigation to keep that going but when uh...during the drought that water would always get uh...rationed...or especially when the...lake was up there. Uh...they'd ration it out. Divide it out among the uh...among people. They...they had a... water rights lawsuit that went on for many years, where they determined all these water rights. Uh in the fifties, the drought in the fifties of course, if it was...if water, there were no dams to hold it and water would uh...uh...if..they just have to pump what was in the river--if there was no water there they didn't pump it.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Nobody had irrigation water then. And uh...the farmers would...get angry and fight with each other almost and to get some water when there was a little...little amount coming down. So it was...not a...not a very happy time.

Daniel Nicholson: Now during uh...periods of intensive drought...were there ever any...uh folks...whether, on this property or locally that...tried to switch, you know what crop they were growing, in response to the heavy drought?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That..that happened.

Daniel Nicholson: You know...is there something that is a little bit nicer and uh...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok. So what kind of...what kind of crops were they trying to uh...grow...or...do you remember?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, they uh...they uh...I just have to answer in a general way, but they...uh...what you're saying happened.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ehh what you're saying happened. And uh...along with that was the growth of the population. So the two worked in conjunction with the crops would...ah for instance. Ahh ...for instance...uh...uh...the citrus industry in forty-nine. It was all over here, around Edinburg, and on east of here (coughs) and Mission and so forth, on, on, to the east. That's where all the citrus crops were. And umm...as they get froze out, frozen out over a period of time, people would...get rid of the...orchards...especially the...people that were up north. They'd have ten acres down here--somebody'd be taking care of it for em...or twenty acres and uh...they'd uh they'd abandon it

Daniel Nicholson: Premium.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...and a...uh farmer would come in that's uh rented or buy it, they'd be planting some other crops. So we see the...see the uh...starting at Brownsville and Harlingen, all you'd see the uh...uh...

the citrus crops disappearing except for spots...and it..it gradually pushed west and...and maybe a little north... pushed out where other irrigated areas were. Uh...where the citrus belt was now, and uh...and then you'd see crops uh...like...uhh Milo grain that would come in. That didn't take a lot of water. Or uh...it could go...work well within drought times and so forth. And...and the crop uh. ..the crops would change over a period of time that way.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It's a little hard right now...in just a few words to uh...

Daniel Nicholson: Right. But it's just...you know

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...to study that. But would be a...it'd be good study for somebody to...

Daniel Nicholson: Right. You know...it's just...you know..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: To get into, yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: For a lot...especially the...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Mhmm.

Daniel Nicholson: For some of the smaller ramp (unintelligible)...smaller farm...smaller farming operations I could imagine..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: ...you know desparate times yknow..gotta try something to...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: ...try to...turn a profit or...you know..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: and the uh...well it...one thing was noticeable here in Edinburg as the citrus industry had to move away from the central valley. Uh... they always had packing sheds and...and uh...uh for vegetables and fruit...all over the valley...and it gradually moved kind of out onto the uh...unpopulated area...and here as far as the citrus, uh...they had had a citrus association here, which was a Co-op.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: From the very beginning and...and uh later by the uh. Later after the...after the freezes were going...they actually had three citrus associations located here in Edinburg. It's back down to...one right now. The others are umm...because the citrus has just gradually declined...and uh that's just uh, just one example. And uh...as far as the...the umm...out in...the Edcough-Elsa area. For instance Edcouch... once had seventeen packing sheds over there.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And Elsa had a big canning...canning plant, and then Monte Alto had another one, which is still going. But those're...others are all gone...They're all gone over there because the...during that time too uh...crops started...farmers started moving to Mexico.

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: From the Valley. Started uh...going into Mexico...and uh...for economic reasons of all kinds...there were a number of...number...that's uh...that'd be a study itself..

Daniel Nicholson: And also screw around a regulation or two, here or there you know.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So uhh...

Daniel Nicholson: People are crafty. (laughs)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah (chuckles). Right...yeah...have to be.

Daniel Nicholson: Well, right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: If you're gonna survive, yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok. Um... I guess we'll move over to... talk about garbage real quick...uhh.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok.

Daniel Nicholson: ...then our pre-history stuff, then we can go and start our little cool walk-around stuff.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okie dokie.

Daniel Nicholson: Soo umm...where did you guys dispose of your garbage at? You know...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Ok...going... uh...going back umm...my first memory of it...now when they...the first uh... forty years or so of the... when the house was here and my parents were here...and all the... and my... dad...I didn't I really don't have much memory of that... but uh...when I was a kid, starting in the 1940's maybe...uh we'd burn as much as we could...had an incinerator...it'd burn as much as we could...and uh...and uh, the question was asked about recycling...and uh...

Daniel Nicholson: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...recycling was done as a part of the--

Daniel Nicholson: See...I was thinking-part of--

Carrol Norquest Jr.:-that was natural.

Daniel Nicholson: -part of necessity, right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Just, looking at--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --especially during the depression. [clear throat]

Daniel Nicholson: Right. Well that's what I was thinking you know...how you know just...whatever broken bits or whatever refuse, -

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: --what-have-you, there's, salvageable material, so it was just more out of a necessity rather than this uh... you know, I guess this...environmental consideration.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. You didn't uh...you'd didn't throw anything away...if you could. Save the tin cans, saved uh...saved uh cloth, saved everything you could. There's some things you couldn't save...

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh! And uh...the uh...garbage...uh...anything edible went out to the hogs. And uh...so... uh...and...other stuff could be burned if it was uh...no longer usable so...there wasn't an awful lot of...and it would depend on how many...how many people were living here...whether it was...just my just my dad and his parents or his sister or whether it was...later him...him and my mother...and his mother, after my grandfather died. When it was all nine of us, living there, and maybe some of the...uh, and some of the uh people that were working here, and didn't live...necessarily on...on our place, but their garbage had to be taken care of too. Again uh...we'd continue on into the forty's and fifties, and sixties, even into the early seventies when uh.. we'd have to uh to—yeah nearly into the mid-seventies. We had to incinerate it- we'd just burn everything we could. And uh...clean it out...the tin cans that didn't burn...and so forth. And then uh...uh also we had a...some barrels. Eventually, we had a, we had a-small trailer that would just...put it in. Until it, until it got full. And then...uh, we had one...one place was along the...canals...they had bar ditches on the side...that...they were always trying to fill em...with stuff...and and...so forth...uh too. Cause they dug, dug, put the canals up high, and then...and they, they just collected water and insects, so. There was...there were a number of years that we had a...[garble].. place where it would be... that would make a good fill...and then uh...and then fill...and then uh...they'd push dirt in on top of it later.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok. So. You guys did some.. kinda fill situations--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --Yeah. Fill situation.

Daniel Nicholson: Now, uh...an um, you're talking about all these wonderful canals, so I'm pretty sure it's on the same...area of the map that's not here...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh.

Daniel Nicholson: Umm...but..-

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...No, actually it...

Daniel Nicholson: --...but were there any areas, uh that you might...if you could remember.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Where we did.

Daniel Nicholson: Just, kind of just...spots and then maybe, just, you know..Ah we did this you know...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...not..

Daniel Nicholson: .maybe for...five years...or I don't know if there

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. No. As far as that-it wasn't.

Daniel Nicholson: was a...ritual to it...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah there was.

Daniel Nicholson: ...buuut....

Carrol Norquest Jr.: There was a ritual.

Daniel Nicholson: Ohh ok.(chuckles)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: But it was here...it was further away... a little further out. You know another mile or so away, but none of it was that...we didn't have any here uh...on our place that was...

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --conducive to this. But they had some deeper ones, that they even the...irrigation company was...uh...saying...Hey!...let people...let people do it so they can just... be able to fill it.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Then, the next thing about the mid-seventies, I started noticing along the... road here and I wondered about it uh...there was a...little signs at people's houses that said, "Union y Dignidad", Union, Union and Dignity. And I wondered what kind of an activist group is this now. We been...uh Brown Berets and--

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --there were all these activists...and and, so forth and...Then I find out there's a garbage truck stopping at each one of those signs. And so I enquired into it—what's going on? "Well we've developed a rural garbage system."

Daniel Nicholson: Oh.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...and uh it was...well, I don't know, I think it was a private...thing, I'm not sure whether it was a Co-op or a private, so I said, "Where do I join?" [crew chuckles] So then, for quite...for a number of years, quite a number of years we had...uh...we had uh...a regular garbage pick-up, and we didn't have to worry about garbage it anymore and uh..and then...uh eventually when we came into the city limits, umm..I forgot just when that was...umm...well, anyway. [crew chuckles] Finally came into the city limits, then we were... then we were on city garbage pick-up...and uh...and uh...been on that ever since. [Carrol Noquest Jr. chuckles]. They'd...initially you'd had to...buy your own cans...can and garbage cans you were allowed...everybody was allowed four cans...if they wanted it...and then uh...several years ago the city came out with the big plastic ones, well they bought em... And they certainly didn't hold four cans worth, you had to have less garbage but...but uh...uh...so...uh...anyway that's kinda the, story of the garbage.

Daniel Nicholson: Umm. Now just...for a little more visual aid stuff...uh...when you guys, when you all burn garbage, uh...were than any...specific...uh... locations, that you guys really...liked to do that at...on the property?...Or did you guys take that you know, out an you know.--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No. We had a.--

Daniel Nicholson: --.kinda like with the fill situation.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...we had it right uh, right there at the...over at the house, you see, you see where I had the...the uh...the cistern and the uh..

Daniel Nicholson: Right, uh...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...in fact you'll see it after a little while. We had, we had an incinerator...

Daniel Nicholson: But... so we're all still in this general area...uh

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah. It's right...right there... and, and uh, we also had...[gesturing]

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm. Ok.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And right next to it we had the barbecue pit, so we could have wood [crew laughs] we could [he laughs], we could have fire there,... use it umm... But you know, thinking about uh...about one thing...firearms...and so forth...there were no...rule or regulations about it back then--there was not...a population yet. But uh...we could...uh...when we're... uh stacking brush, or cutting trees or something, uh, we could stack it on the road, or umm... not on the road...we could stack it wherever we wanted, and go ahead and burn it. And uh, even uh...the...ditches along the side of the road, where the... before it was paved, and even after with the county roads, it's up, like this [gestures], so the water'll go down into the little ditches.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The city would put it down here and the water comes out, and into the drains...but in fact that's why highways were called highways, because they're up. Water drains off of em. And before it...before it was paved uh... we'd uh...weeds'd grow up and alongside...the city now goes around and mows everything. Uh, or people do, we have good mowers now, but they uh...in those days they'd just grow up, and then insects would get in there as...they'd be bad for the crops, especially for cotton-bull weevils, and everything else. So we'd go along the uh...along the roads...alongside of our...fields...uh...with a...diesel fuel sprayer, and we'd... set fire to that..

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...we'd burn, burn it all. Get rid of the ...get rid of the weeds, get rid of a lot of the seeds, get rid of...insects...all...clean it all up. Can't do that anymore. (laughs)

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. Well...and then where was the closest neighbor, at that point?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: That was (chuckles) just the Cantu family, over here.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...bout a mile away or whatever.

Daniel Nicholson: Riiight. So...(laughs)...real danger to people. [crew chuckling]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right. Now it is, exactly...exactly

Daniel Nicholson: It is. It is, now.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:Wouldn't want to. [more laughter]

Daniel Nicholson: ...No. Um...ok...great. More about [joke pronunciation] garbage than I thought we were gonna get, so that's awesome.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Riiiiight...yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Ok, so I guess that'll bring us down to over to our... pre-his...pre-history stuff. Ok. We...we now have some pre-historic artifacts that have been found here.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Umm...have there just been projectile points found here?...or have there been...uh...you know maybe...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right.

Daniel Nicholson: ...you know grinding stones or...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: After a hundred years, after a hundred years...of...of...being inhabited...depending on what your age is. If, if you...grew up with the stuff, you say, "well that's junk"...maybe when you, if you...if you didn't grow up with it—you're looking back a hundred years on it, or fifty years or forty years even...by then it's an artifact...and uh...uh there are plenty of those things around. The uh...projectile points, we've got a number of them. Uh...my father, found most of em, just right here on this [gestures],...--

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. Just...here's a map break.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:---oon, on the map here. Here. Just...just say right [gesturing]. The rest of the forty goes on over to about here...

Daniel Nicholson: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.:...that's where, that's basically where he found em.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow. Just so, just so whenever you're just...working the land...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...and uh, over here...maybe uh, maybe he'd find...uhh...ehh...there weren't very many...but you did! It's something ya have to find by accident...and uh...uhh since most of the uh...Indians were pretty much migratory types they didn't...I don't know of any settlements around here that...I haven't heard of any...

Daniel Nicholson: I wouldn't write home about it.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...although there's indications they were here, you know they've found burials, they've found...get a little further out in uh...ranch country and you find places where they're...regular camping.

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The other thing is—that maybe a lot of that has been with the farm...irrigation farming

that came in...a lot of it probably was just plowed over...if there were any regular camps. But I don't think there were that many in the delta area here. Umm...by that I mean the Lower Valley. He found, I don't know, it was 8 or 9 of them that my mom used to keep in a cigar box over there at the house. I found 1, it wasn't a projectile point, it was scraper. It was a scraper. I found it in the early 60's, by accident. We had been cleaning out a canal by hand, a field canal, in the pasture and it was after rain and I had mounded up some dirt along, my dad had too. He had been helping me and I was walking across the pasture and I saw it right on top the ground, it was a little—you'll be seeing it I guess. And uh...just a little thing about that big, kind of like a triangle. And prettiest, neatest littlest thing it was. I didn't know what it was, but it's a scraper. And I found that, oh, about 100 yards kind of south, east of south of the.

Daniel Nicholson: I'm going to bug each time you keep saying, when I found something, if you could just indicate you know maybe somewhere on the map.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, it would be, it would be probably be a little off the map here. Right over in here. [points to map]

Daniel Nicholson: Okay. Okay, right. So at least the video and this stuff can kind of give us an idea of you know, because we're also trying to kind of play archaeology-blind, too, so.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, Exactly right. And right now all you see is corn out there, but when my daughter, about 15 year, let's see, what I found was about 1962—something like that. And then my daughter Christine—she was about 12 and this was about 15 years ago--and she right in here, found a whelk shell. [points to map] A whelk shell which you'll be seeing and it's not—both of the things, the things that we found—my dad found the projectiles, the rest of us were finding basically tools. The whelk shell was used for other purposes than the projectile and Tom Fort at the museum once looked it up and he told us different kind of things they would use with it. My daughter, she was 12 at the time—there was a crop of milo out here at the time--grain, and they been...and they had just cultivated it and she said daddy, I found a great big snail [chuckles]. So, show me Christine, and she went and got, and well it's not a snail. You could see that it's very old and it's been buried a long time and it's not shiny or anything and then about 2 years ago my son in law, Patrick over here, found a, the hand grinder for a molcajete

Daniel Nicholson: Right, pestle, mano part, yeah.

Carrol Nortquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Bola.

Carrol Nortquest Jr.: What's that?

Daniel Nicholson: The bola.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I guess so, yeah, the mano is with the metate.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, right, I just call them all manos and metates and it's just grinder or grinding surface.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It's easy to get them mixed up but it's small and it's not exactly round-conical, it's little different from the regular ones that one you find at the stores now. It's more worn and it's a denser stone so it's not new. It's different. So I'm hoping they can look at it. That could have, he found it just right here, right under this little tree that's right out there [points to side of house by Chapin St.] and after, this was after they dug a new, a couple of years after they dug a new, a new drain field for the septic tank. Well that's another thing, we've got septic tanks here—remind me when get out there.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, Great.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And it was a part of the sewer system, but anyway he found that and it could date from anytime from Indian times, from the type of stone it was through Spanish or in Mexican or in more recent south Texan or maybe even more recent. Maybe it came in with some of the people that were clearing the brush, or maybe, I don't know. It's more recent and so artifacts could come through. It may or may not, well anyway, as far as other artifacts around, you go into the fields now and you'll see pieces of metal that are falling off of tractors and like with my parents horse-drawn stuff, and just about anything, tools that my dad lost that 50 years ago somewhere, or back when they were farming in the 20's or so forth. They can come to the surface.

Daniel Nicholson: So about how often do you happen to find one of your old dad's tools out there?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The tools, not that much but you find some other little broken piece of equipment. It's not

unusual. And then around the, when my daughter and Patrick got married and they bought a metal detector. So they started checking all around the homestead here, the farmstead all around, finding all kinds of things and pieces of stuff from horse-bridles and stuff just of all kinds of little things. When Patrick had his interview they went around took, took pictures, he showed 'em a whole bunch of that stuff so that's already on tape as well as what's in the house now. So it can, artifacts can be anything from to last year to pre-historic. Where habitations are.

Daniel Nicholson: Has there been any prehistoric or even any historic architecture maybe to the Spanish colonial period, either here or around this area?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Nothing. Nothing that's known.

Daniel Nicholson: Right

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Nothing that's known of that I've heard of.

Daniel Nicholson: Right, yeah, because you never know if there's a story somewhere, you know, oh back in the 20's you know, my granddad, you know, hit a wall face or something and walls just couldn't repair from there so they kind of just took the stones out and it's gone now

Carrol Norquest Jr.: You'd sure find it now but nothing that I'm aware of, that I'm aware of. It's possible that there is but I hope if there is somewhere somebody will remember or that it didn't get destroyed or whatever.

Daniel Nicholson: Precisely. It's just that, on the off chance that there was something just somewhere or even just locally that you had heard of.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I think basically they moved through here. The type of Indians it was that were here, they were migratory types.

Daniel Nicholson: Plus the climate here is just so weird so it would make sense that people would not live here all the time like we choose to.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Anything that was built probably would have deteriorated, would have been of the type of material that was temporary. That's what I think, if I had an opinion.

Daniel Nicholson: Great. Wow. So I guess we're at a juncture where we can get a quick sip of water and all that stuff and head outside and see what else we get into.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: See where we can go.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, so this has been really good so far. Wow.

Carroll Norquest Jr.: Give you enough to chew on for a while. (chuckling)

[break]

Outdoors

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Then clear back over here we have a little house. Actually we got a total of about 60 some acres. There's a little house back over there where my niece Liana Setti lives and that's about 40 years old, no it was built in the 40's and a farmer lived in it there was a friend of ours and eventually we bought that land and then right if you look over here, let's see the tree rows over there, on this other side of the 40, the edge of this 40--we've got another 20 over here, but this edge of that 40 is where an original dirt canal, company dirt canal was.

Daniel Nicholson: Really? Okay. Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: You go down here to the end, just as you get to, no, at the end of these apartments. Okay, you see these apartments here? When you get down to the end of them straight south as far as Schunior street. When I was a kid even, it was an abandoned canal then but it was the original canal here that they irrigated from. The water would seep out and make everything salty and eventually abandon that and they started making cement canals, brick and cement canals. One of which you will find about a half a mile over here, the main canal, and then there's another one that used to be just west of here and it's still, you'll still find remnants of it over there on the west side of the university on Schunior street, on the west side of the university. That's where we got the canal water. This one over here, the dirt one, eventually my dad bought that for a dollar an acre. 2 dollars because the water district would only sell it to some farmer that was contiguous with it. He leveled it and you won't find any signs of it. So all you'll only find is where it's at. So that's some information about the

water systems, yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: With these canal systems you know, just one of the questions I had in here just was about, what was done with abandoned canals? Were they just plowed over, or were they in filled?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: In that case it was, it became farm land, regular farm land.

Daniel Nicholson: And so what about some of the cases of the other canals that had been through here? Or just basically through your lifetime you had the old canal here and then the main one come along here and that basically served everyone's needs.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, and this one to the west here you won't see it because it's underground now. They put in pipes now. It connects to the corner here by the house with the corner where we can have irrigation water back this way. There's one outlet there and it's through pipes same way down there at that corner towards the ballpark at our corner there, there's another outlet coming up from a pipe which used to be an open canal and then out into the middle of the field out here there's one underground that comes in. So those are the major changes that has taken place in the irrigation systems.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, so for your crops today are you guys still flood culture or are you doing a drip system?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It's all flood

Daniel Nicholson: It's all flood? Okay., because I know there's been farmers in the valley, I mean it's very expensive, but you know, you know still trying to see what the land changes even today are with the water systems and irrigation systems that have changed.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Exactly, and that's still developing and that's what this is, and the main canals out here with all the growth, you're seeing them empty most all the time. Most of the time. So anyway, then coming back over here as far as the architecture then this house right here where I live, we built that in 1976. At that time. So we've been living there then.

Daniel Nicholson: How much did it cost to build a home in the 1970's?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: At that time it costs us \$30,000 dollars. 1800 square feet of living area.

Daniel Nicholson: And that's on the old currency when we still had some value.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, at that time and then this one was built approximately 1948, 48. This one has been renovated twice for different purposes. It did not have a bathroom in it. Right here where this BBQ pit is, there is some concrete under there and that was an outdoor shower and then as far as the outhouse.

Daniel Nicholson: Well with that outdoor shower, was this still in the days when you were getting water from the? No, when was this done?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh, no. 49. This was coming from the cistern. It was piped over there from the cistern.

Daniel Nicholson: From the cistern, okay. So you had an electric pump going on and all that stuff?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The pump was back over there in the pressure and that was during then and the water, it had indoor water from that too and of course like all the rest of us we hauled out drinking water from town. This was original outhouse here and here is where it was initially. It was set on the concrete and the holes opened right there and filled in with everything. Filled in with dirt and leaves.

Daniel Nicholson: Did y'all line it originally with concrete? Or did you just have a pit and concrete it over?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, they were all just pits. Later it got moved over there and it's been there ever since. That one never has been filled in yet.

Daniel Nicholson: So how many outhouses were approximate on the property?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: At different times, that I remember besides this one was one other one that got moved from place to place. That was over at the big house.

Daniel Nicholson: How long did it take until these outhouses needed to be moved? How long did it take you guys to fill them up essentially?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It depended on how many people were living at the house. And uh I can't really say, I don't have the memory of how often. This one, we eventually had indoor plumbing. I don't know, this one lasted 15, 10-15 years maybe and also depended on whether people were working, were in town, or whether, how frequently it was used, or how much it was used. I don't know. Maybe 10-15 years they would last. Because

when we had more people living in the big house we probably moved it a couple of times. 6, 5-6 years or so. Something like that. Oh, and then of course there was another one down on that corner. My uncle Eddie lived over there, he was farming with my dad and he built a house and that house was there about 20 years until 25 years maybe and they had an outhouse there too. It's all filled in, I think. It's down there on the corner somewhere as well as the structure you'll find down there on the corner. You're going to find some bricks indicating that there had been a structure. It was a wood house but he had brick, yeah brick foundations and where he parked his car, the garage he made to park the car in. Since one of my uncles owned a brick plant over there in Mission, he got a whole bunch of bricks that he paved, he paved his car port with. The first one he built over there was like a thatched roof, like a jacal, it was thatched. Yeah, he had his; he put his car in that (laughing). That was the end of the 30's.

Daniel Nicholson: When you guys did have a lot field help here, was there a separate outhouse dug for the laborers or where they go kind of just fend for themselves or what was the situation there?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I don't remember too much. I know we had a little house where they lived most of the time down there and they had an outhouse over there. That was back where the pond is now, where the retention pond is.

Daniel Nicholson: Where there any other places, yeah that's gone for sure, but where there any other places on the property were you had laborers living? Maybe some of the more migrant ones that were coming for more, a week of time, you know how ever long they could stay. Where there any temporary quarters set up here on the property?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, my dad had at one time he built a, he had a sort of bunk house on skids that he could move with a tractor, and they'd move it around and it had several bunks in it. You know, a small one, and one time it was down over on that end where Garner street ends back over there and it was over here one time, he moved it around different places.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, over there would make it? I guess around here? Sorry, more map stuff.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It would be back over in here. Back over in there. I remember it being there for awhile. Oh, and we had another little house over south here where they would stay over, you know where the BETA school is? We had a little house that was in the subdivision there, right on the edge of our property there. And I don't know half a dozen guys could stay there and work on that so and then west here there was another house that had originally been a farmhouse with Midwestern owners, and it served many years for a bunk house for the guys. Oh and other things sometimes there was some brush area over here, let's see, say that's 20's acres there. This was farmed and this was brush. Just like this all through here like this, 10 acres along one. They had, they had a... our men had a camp area out here where they had a tent. My dad would get these army surplus tents and they'd make a little tent village out on that brush where they couldn't be seen. Where the la chota, the border patrol, couldn't find them. Also, at that time this was orange trees and they'd take one of the tents and hide it out here and always one of the guys was the cook. One of the guys was the cook and they'd use wooden fires to cook with. My brother and I would like to go out there and eat tortillas with them right out there. And you know, we had indoor plumbing by then and the old outhouse and I think these guys used the old outhouse at that time, in all probability.

Daniel Nicholson: Is there a relative chronological order for the outhouse and developments? From place to place, you know, was this the 1st outhouse when you were a child that you remember?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, no no. This was, the one that I remember was back up here, just short way out of the original house to the south. It got moved several times. Out in the orchard, and that one, then the one here was later. Well my uncle's down here, that was in the 50's, no in the 40's, that was during the 40's I guess, and then this one here came in the 50's. See this one was in the 20's and 30's, 40's and 50's, and then, well 40's at least, and then over here where we are now, in the 50's and 60's. So this is the most recent.

Daniel Nicholson: OK, it's just...Chronology and all these kinds of things, as silly as it seems to get chronology when outhouses were put in.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No. No. I understand that perfectly. You don't need to explain it, I know. I've done enough historical work myself. But yeah, right in here was the, back in here was all the machine area for the

horse-drawn equipment. That's what, when my dad and his father came, that's what they used, horses for farming and there was a silo right down in here somewhere. It was in a bad place it turned out but there was a silo where they made silage for the animals. It got abandoned pretty quickly after my father found it was low and got ruined. The ah...

Daniel Nicholson: Is any of this apart of the original structure that they used to put the horses? I saw the steel work and such but.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, this is all fairly new. In fact my son in law, however what you're looking at is recycled stuff out of the old barn, that's what you're looking at here, except this.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, cool. Okay and when was the barn originally, but these boards here.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, some of the boards and sheet-iron and some of the boards are, I don't know whether they all are but apart of them are. These are new boards over here.

Daniel Nicholson: So my questions from there now would be, when was the barn dismantled and where was it originally?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okay, we'll get to that up there in a little bit, so hold on to that one a little bit.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay. I'll just put it back in my hat for now.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okay, garbage disposal, there was a time when we rented this little house out when some of us weren't living it and there were tons of grass growing up. You found out that for a number of years renters were dumping all their garbage right here, so I was madder than heck when we finally had to kick some of them out and then I was cleaning up the place and we were going to renovate for my wife and I to live in. I came out here and there was a heap of stuff. I gradually got rid of it. It went out with the rural garbage eventually and we were still finding stuff around here but as artifacts now. And now this was hog-pens, right here where these mesquites trees are.

Daniel Nicholson: Up until how long along ago were these hog pens?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: They were here until mid-1950's I guess and then my brother and I got into the calf business, but before that, there's a piece of an old hog trough around here, somewhere, concrete hog troughs that my dad had made, if I can point out one, I know of where there's a piece of one right there though. Anyway, I'll show that you if I find it. Anyway, after that, just yard and so forth, storage and stuff. We had other machinery things out here. I think it became hog pens; well my dad had hogs when he was young though. I remember as a kid seeing all the horse-drawn equipment out in here, we used to get up and play on it. But then the hog pens were right here, they must have been. In my memory, that's where they were. This dirt came out of the pond across the street there and my son in law had one of the dump trucks bring it over here and we're filling in, we're going to fill in the old cistern with it and we've lately filled in the part of swimming pool that was being used as a reservoir for cattle. Now where we're at right now, these were always corrals even with the old, even back in the early days where the cows and horses, it was corrals for them. Later on eventually we, when my brother and I had cattle, and later on my dad and I and my younger brothers and we eventually had quite a few cattle, beef cattle then. Initially they were milk cows, yeah, that didn't, that eventually.

Daniel Nicholson: But then they figured that didn't work out. Just as in the side though, how did the experiment work out? Milk cows don't do really well down here so how was y'all's experience with that?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, well I'll tell you. Well, I'll just tell you what happened. The old barn was right in here where these, part of the driveway is, where the storage houses are and back in those days the ah, you'd grow a lot of stuff for home use. We had chickens, we had milk cows, we had hogs, for your own use as well as your sale but the farmer, the excess they would sell. You could go to town and sell eggs, sell chickens for fryers, sell the hogs for meat. I remember my dad butchering, and my uncles butchering hogs and up until I was in college to be honest, we had our own chickens and ducks and stuff and we'd continue to butcher them right here our selves.

Daniel Nicholson: What changed? Aside from modern convenience and stuff?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: What changed? (laughter) Life. That's it. That's it, part of it and anyway as far as the milk cows, my dad had about a dozen or more milk cows and he would sell milk to the old Golden Jersey creamery here in town and he had 5 gallon cans he'd put it in and take into town. That was even during the depression

and before that, and then with the World War II coming on, they were getting more strict in the food, where they are making sure the food is healthy. Yeah, and anyway my dad one day he's taking them in there and the health department said they're going to start inspecting and then they came out and inspected and you see right here where that door is and the chicken wire? That was open and had a swinging gate and we had stanchions in there for the cows to put their heads in and milk, and the health department, it's on concrete slab, my dad put that in there, but it didn't have all the other health amenities that the health department required so they put him out of business. But that was during World War II, but we kept 2-3 cows here and we continued to milk for our home use. There were 9 of us in the family plus workers around here that could use it too, yeah plenty of hands and if there wasn't hands then the hogs would get some of it. I don't know, I guess I told you earlier that the hogs would get garbage too out of the house. So we did that for quite awhile and then eventually my brother and sisters they started, even in college I was milking everyday and boy your muscles get big like that you know? And then eventually it was just me and my mom, all brother and sisters wanted to work, and it was just easy to get in from town then and the same way with the chickens. I raised chickens when I was a kid, sell the eggs in town over here. I'd sell small fryers; I'd raised fryers. I enjoyed raising chickens. I remember taking it over to Piggly Wiggly and some of the Alamia's Grocery and selling eggs to them and I remember one time Piggly Wiggly taking our, half a dozen fryers over or so and selling it to them—that's where the museum is now, in that building and they went out in the lot behind, it was vacant, so we went right across the alley out to the north there is where the new part of the museum is now. They butchered those chickens right there, cleaned them all up, took them in and put them on the shelves. So, and then, hogs too we would sell them. Anyway, that's what happened with that. The old barn was a Midwestern style barn where the cows could go in where you stored the hay, where you stored seed, where you had a little workshop and the garage for the car and so forth. In fact there's a picture of it in the museum on the wall over there. I don't know if you've seen it or not? A picture of a barn.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh, probably not. There's so much stuff in that museum.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It's in the 20th century exhibit right next to the mock up that they have..

Daniel Nicholson: Was that the telegraph and all that stuff? The Hidalgo pumphouse?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: The telegraph is, yeah, the produce shed, that they had, you go just to the side of it and it's red like a barn. It's barn red and back behind the tractor you'll see a barn. That's the barn that was here if you ever want to go in and see that and the red on that, Tom Fort, we got some wood over here right now that's still got some of the red from the original farm. Tom Fort came out here, you know who he is. He came out here, he took digital pictures of it and then he tried to match that color. So when you see that red over there on the side of that, well that's the color to match to.

Daniel Nicholson: The closest color that he could get it

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And of course here, the corrals that you see some of the old fences still here, right there behind you and so forth. And of course, the trees, they've grown up since then. It was all clear and open back then but during the years like it does out in the ranches here, if you stop using the place and they start growing up. So even though we're in town here, what you're seeing is kind of like what a natural setting it would be either at the ranch or on a farm here in town anyway. The old, that barrel over that was the old kerosene barrel and that was used for cooking, cooking stoves back after. I think they had a wood stove originally in there because there's a chimney in the kitchen.

Daniel Nicholson: Did you all use that to cook? What kind of a...?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, we did. When I was a kid, during the depression, when I was a kid we used that and later got electricity and we got an electric stove. But we did that and that was for our lights too. We didn't have electric lights, we had lamps.

Daniel Nicholson: When did you guys get electricity here?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: About somewhere around 1940.

Daniel Nicholson: How was that? What was your initial reaction?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh, that was help.

Daniel Nicholson: And same question can be applied to indoor plumbing and things like that you know.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Pulled down the old windmill and put an electric pump on it and now you had, ah, now

you could cook, and you had lights, everywhere electric lights. The ah, like you I forgot where I was going with that. (laughter)

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, well I'll bring the question back and maybe, but just your initial reaction to all these great changes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, anyway, all of it, in my lifetime we've gone from things I've been telling you about to the way we're living right now. It's just amazing...

Daniel Nicholson: It's interesting to see the evolution through time.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I'm beginning to look back on that and seeing that, that people don't realize that. We get used to all the modern conveniences and then this was the cow tank of course. This was one that was put in the 60's I guess. When we had the water system, Sharyland water system. The original cow tank was behind the barn right over in here somewhere, and it was round like this, it was just like this. And it was back over there. You see that little concrete thing over there, and this one here? Those were irrigation line, sections of irrigation lines, that my dad, when we had calves, he cut one of those in two and put a concrete bottom on it and those were for calves. And those were for calves, tanks for calves so we could have calves in the little pen by themselves and it's low so they could reach it.

Daniel Nicholson: So, is any of the material for this currently standing? Barn or original?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That was built about 1940 and that is the old barn.

Daniel Nicholson: So this is the barn?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That is the old barn. That's it's newest incarnation. That's it. And during World War II, there was a question about getting materials. You could not get materials! And that's part of all the recycling, and that's that and I showed you a little bit of it over there in that shed. This shed is covered with some of that same material. That little, yeah the build barn was about somewhere about 1940 or shortly thereafter. This little building over here was originally a chicken shed. It's been moved.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh, where was it originally placed?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Approximately somewhere where the dog is. (laughing)

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, I'm glad we got that on film so we could. Poom, Babushka, thank you.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, there's still some tile and cement where there was the floor of it. My dad needed this for a drive area for the tractors and everything, so he moved it over there. That was originally a brooder house for little chicks and it was a nice cozy place for them. You could take care of them where they growing.

Daniel Nicholson: So this was just a utility shed today or what does that serve as?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And, oh well I'll get to that in just a second but immediately south of it, right here, where all of this is, is the hen house. Where the hens were in.

Daniel Nicholson: Is this the original foundation, concrete barrier or?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, this was put in later when we turned this into corrals but it was there, eventually it was taken, stripped of a lot of the wood on the sides but the sheet iron was up there and everything and it was taken and with block and tackle, which Patrick showed 'em the other day, that block and tackle thing that we had, to move it. It was moved, we moved it by hand over to there, you know where I showed you where the door was? And we turned it into a shed that came out this way, that came out this way, just put it there, and that was a shed where the cows could get in and there was water tanks for then. And while we're at it, you see all that sheet iron along there? That's the north side of a working shoot. The south side is gone and we just left it there and then put in that white fence, decorative one basically, and just left it there. The wood strips it you see along there the post, that was to hold the cattle so they, tight and then we had a working shoot. That was not in the early days, that was in the 50's and 60's.

Daniel Nicholson: So this is when you guys started getting more of the cattle operations? Okay.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And back to this shed, he moved it over here and I'm not sure what he used it for initially but after a while when us kids were all little and growing up he had one of the, actually nowadays he kind of called it hands quarters because we didn't have a maid all the time but there was times especially when my mom was having another baby and she needed extra help and one of the men's sisters or wife or daughter of one of the hands would come over here and stay and that's where they would live in that, right close to the house

where they could help out, help my mom out. So that was used that way for a number of years when she no longer needed that kind of help and she had us instead to do all the maid work, the kids. We all learned how to do all that but anyway then my brother used it for a, we used it for storage shed then, then my brother made it into a radio shack. He was a hand radio operator and he used that there for quite awhile and then it became a storage shed and then later when I got married, why we took all the stuff out. During hurricane Beulah it was that deep in water and a lot of stuff in there got ruined, cleaned it out and then my wife and I used it for storage shed and later when my, we had a mobile home just to the west of it there and then later my sister Marie moved here when they got out of the Navy, when they retired from the Navy in 1976 and they renovated it even further in the inside. They put bunks in there and that was their sons bedroom. The boys lived in there for several years until they moved into town and then after that why we've used it for storage and for other purposes through the years. What you're looking behind you there, that's a cattle trough. We've got another one back over to the south. The water came from the old swimming pool over here and it was a storage after, yeah, after we no longer used it for a swimming pool and even when we did we had a pipe running by gravity over to this to keep it full and then one over to the south. And then this here was to help shield the cattle from the north wind that came through here and they could..

Daniel Nicholson: Huddle up and not be miserable.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Right, now over here where that brush is, that was the more recent machine area for the tractor, for the tractors and various other machines that they used rather than back over there where the horse-drawn ones had been.

Daniel Nicholson: Alright, so where we left off, right before we started back up, you had an "oh" moment. Do you happen to remember what that was?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, I was, but first these things are left over pipes that we've used for different purposes. We made our own concrete here. The ah, the ah, plumbing system when it was metal pipes all over, you didn't fix it like you do PVC now. You do it the hard way, you cut the section where there's a break and especially if its underground it's hard, you cut the section out it's broken, then you get a coupler here to do it, then you thread the pipe and you work it on hard. But my dad, the way he would do it, he wouldn't cut the pipe, he'd dig a hole around it, drain the water out, scoop it out of the hole, then he'd get some inner tube, wrap it around then tie it with wire, then he'd get concrete, mixed concrete, which he'd dig and then he put around that and let it sit around for a day or two and that was the patch. Okay, then, what I was gonna say about the barn—I mentioned the red, the red of the barn, uh, the red color of the barn, it was about the same color as that that little one there [pointing at shed]--

Daniel Nicholson: Okay

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --that little shed there and uh... Anyway, the uh, all of the-all of the Mexicans everywhere around referred to this as Rancho Colorado. The red...because of the red barn so everybody knew it as Rancho Colorado. My dad, uh, all of the people had, all of the farmers around, all of the Mexicans they all had nicknames...kind of odd nicknames of all kinds ya know and uh...uh...usually referring to some unhappy incident in that person's life that everybody else wanted to remember or something like that, but anyway they always had trouble--[break into laughter due to cut in by interviewer]

Daniel Nicholson: Well, at least you guys have a red barn that was remembered rather than some other thing.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, that was right, that was uh...that was uh, I remember one nickname La Rabia one of these farmers that would always grrr blow up ya know then there's another one Calabazitas because he'd grown a whole bunch of pumpkins at one time or something. Anyway, and uh, the men themselves, one guy was named Tronko and another one, I dunno, there was another farmer Coyote and...

Daniel Nicholson: [Sarcastically] I wonder what he did [group laughter]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I don't know what he did, but uh, but and all of the men had—not all of them, but there were a lot of them had their nicknames and uh, but my dad wasn't a nickname, they couldn't say 'Norquest' very well, so they referred to him as 'Norteño' Carlos Norteño. So, he was known everywhere by that name and even in recent years I find people that still remember and use that name with him.

Daniel Nicholson: Um...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And the barn was located right here [gesturing]. Just right, right in there.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, uh, now, we've talked about a couple of buildings that have been moved around and things like that. Are there any other structures that have been moved over time or that you have not talked about so far or are there any structures that were built temporarily and then taken down? Uh, just..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, okay...

Daniel Nicholson: ...trying to get trying to get, you know, just a complete picture of, you know, just what the buildings were kind of-how they were growing themselves and moving around

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okay, the original when my grandfather came down, there was the barn, there was the old house-- the big house--here and then right, right in here somewhere, I'm not sure exactly where, was uh, say somewhere...uh...right just over the yard maybe a little to the northwest [gesturing] of that of this little house there was a smokehouse where they could smoke the meat and I never remember them doing that in my memory; I remember when it was all on the ground in a pile and we used it eventually. We used a wood stove in the house to heat the house until...Hurricane Beulah. After that, my mom hooked up to the electricity. So, the wood from that all ended up heating the house. Uh, north of here my grandfather--part of the original farm was the 40 acres north of us across the street—there was a broom corn shed over there. I don't have any pictures of it that I know of and uh, but I know there was a wooden broom corn shed over there and that may have had a sheet iron roof; some of this sheet iron might be from that, too, and it uh, it, I dunno when it disappeared, when they tore it down or used it or anything. It was probably recycled into--

Daniel Nicholson: Into [indiscernible]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --some other use, yeah. That one was gone, uh, there was another house that I've mentioned—it wasn't on land that we owned, but it was on our farm—we farmed 80 acres here that belonged to a man by the name of Chandler who lived in Kansas City. He owned a nursery up there and my dad tried to buy it from him many times and he never would sell—he was hoping for oil someday and, uh, he uh, anyway, he never would sell, but there was a house, a small, one story house there. That's gone now, of course, but we used that for many years that was just part of our farm and then of course my uncle's that was down there, that one is gone, uhm, I don't remember any other structures--

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, everything else we've talked about--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It's possible, but the outhouse is gone (laugh)

Daniel Nicholson: Well, yeah, the outhouses, right, but it's, you know, we touched on the outhouses and their moving and the barn

Carrol Norquest Jr.: But it's all gone, yeah, and then the structures, the uh, all that's left of any of the corrals are the remnants..these little walls around here and the fences and some of the tanks like this one and another one back to the south of here.

Daniel Nicholson: And, uh, just going back to Beulah real quick, and Allen and uh also the storm of '33, you know, it's not really in your memory whatsoever [chuckle], but the damage from Beulah and Allen, uh, you know, to the main house, was there anything really significant that happened to it, I mean as far as the water almost came up to it, but was there just significant damage caused by Beulah on any of the buildings?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, not significant, uh uh, well, we had to put on the new roof—the shingles were old—in both cases, '33 and there's Beulah, the shingles were old with the result that rain got seeped in got in and we had water coming in...

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, what insurance companies call “wind driven rain” so they don't give you hurricane insurance (laugh)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, yeah, right, that's exactly and uh, but the uh, anyway Patrick has been going over a number of those things with them. Oh another structure that came down was the windmill and the tower that, the tower that it pumped the water into.

Daniel Nicholson: So, where was the windmill and the tower? You mentioned [mumble]...approximately.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okay..I think uh, yeah, I think Patrick, uh, had, he and Carolyn had some pictures with the other group that Patrick was talking to, so you may be able to see some of them...

Daniel Nicholson: At some point, yeah.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And we've got a lot of pictures we need to organize for our family, but to, to make it all real quick Carolyn and Patrick found the ones that they could find real quick though. The windmill was approximately I would say right here [gesturing], just right in this area—the windmill and the well. It's still there—it's all covered over. The water tower was just right, right over in here and when my dad took that down—the water tower was a heavy structure of wood. The windmill was all metal and that's all gone, but the structure was wood and it had a sheet iron...round sheet iron...heavy duty sheet iron tank. And when he took that down, the tank went right over here in this corner and then the water came off of the roof here into the tank so that's where we used the fresh rain water.

Daniel Nicholson: Now, uh, modifications to the house over time, uh, I'm pretty sure, you know, this concrete wasn't always laid out here as well as this brick work, so, uh, I guess when did some of this stuff start being incorporated into the house, you know, with some of these little changes, little beautification things?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, the big uh, the big change came around 1940—I'm maybe off a year or two one way or the other, but uh, that's when this was put on there, this wasn't a porch. It was originally a back porch—this was the backside of the house. The front was over on the other side and uh, and it was similar structure here; this was kind of a back porch and it was I think it was even screened in and this was not here. What we're talking about is now outside visible. The inside was different, Patrick took 'em all through that. I think he took them over some of this, too, but this, when more prosperous times came, then that was put in, that porch. It was just restructured is basically what it was. It was restructured in the 1940s and they, he had a red concrete porch for that. Later, uh, about 20 years ago, we had to restructure it; they were getting termites and other stuff in it, so we made it as close as we could like it had been, but instead of having colored concrete, we used tile like that, but after we quit using the pump, the pump was over there right on top of the well and after we quit using that then my dad put a sidewalk out here, took it on out to the road. This, this what you're looking at had to be replaced about 15 years ago that section, but the other is what he laid.

Daniel Nicholson: So, so, all this section--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, they made the concrete by hand and that's when he put in this would have been in the '50s.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay, cool.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And that's when they built the made the uh--

Daniel Nicholson: Reservoir?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Reservoir there. That was all dug out by hand. That and the cistern.

Daniel Nicholson: Uh, who dug out--okay, so, on that matter, who dug out the cisterns and the wells and all these things and the ditches, you know, was it all labor that you guys brought on and everybody, uh...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It was all different. I believe, uh, yesterday I told you about, I told you about when they were making subsurface draining--

Daniel Nicholson: Yes...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --the tile that they laid in the six to eight foot trenches and that this was work that my dad had for the guys that off-season when they'd have work and it was the same way with this with this swimming pool here and the cistern. [pointing]That's the cistern right over there and they dug it all by hand and all the dirt to low places around here to put it. Now, we are filling it back in with dirt, but that was they dug it out with shovels by hand, you know.

Daniel Nicholson: So a combination of just local labor and family power?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, right. Now the windmill and that well over there that dates from 1913. I have no idea how or what they did with that.

Daniel Nicholson: Uh, and just on the idea—on the subject of labor, you know who's digging, we know the Bracero Program was brought in and there was Bracero labor here, so, what were the Braceros up to when they were floatin' around in this, you know, were they more looking at doing ditch construction sort of things or

irrigation works or farming, or--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: They were doing the farm work. They were doing the farm work. The other, this what we're talking about, this make work was done basically by illegal...illegals that were coming. Wetbacks...mo-jados they called themselves and uh the ones that and they lived around here and they did that. I mentioned to you that my dad had grown broom corn at least one year, maybe more, when he had work where he could hold the guys over. There were about eight of them and those were Braceros so that's what they were doing. Otherwise, they were skilled workers—tractor drivers, irrigators—irrigators may sound like just labor, but that's a skilled...somebody who can make water run uphill is a valuable person. It's a skill--it really is. It really is. So, that's what the Braceros were, at least for my dad. Others, it was just regular labor, but he was he managed to somehow get around the rules with them and they were--you're supposed to take first come, first serve and I don't know how he did that, but he got he managed to get 7 or 8 of his own hands.

Daniel Nicholson: (laughing) Included in that...

Carrol Norquest: Yeah. Hey, you know, you talk about reading the book. Did the book that you've read have uh, my dad's book, did it have a picture of him there with that was on the dust cover?

Daniel Nicholson: No, not in the portion I read; I read an excerpt

Eloise Montemayor: I didn't see any photo on there.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: There was a—it—The dust cover. If any of them have the dust cover, you're going to see a picture of him with his Stetson hat on and so forth. There were 7 Braceros or either 8. Well, I don't know—it was an odd number. There was either 9 or 7—I don't remember which and they were at, uh, Customs they were, where they were processing them down at Reynosa. They were taking two pictures at a time—two guys stand side by side like this and they take a pictures and they got to the final one and there was just one and so the Customs people said, "Hey, why don't you get in there?", so he got in there, took the picture. That's the picture that's on the dust cover of that book you may—

Daniel Nicholson: Oh, I'll have to find that--that's hilarious.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --there may be some at the—

Daniel Nicholson: At the library.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --see if there's any with the dust cover over there, yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Right, wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (laughing) So, that's the story of that. But, uh, now ya..well let's see...

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. Let's uh--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Originally, yeah, this [gestures] was a dressing area of course when we had the swimming pool now it's a—this was put in after—this section here was put in after, uh...after Hurricane Beulah. This little porch here and originally, there was a bay window that came out from what is now the bedroom. Originally, it was a, uh, dining room, but later it became my parents' bedroom and there was a bay window if ya know what that is—sticks out like [gestures] that so that's what was there. This tile that we're sitting on, this is, uh, this is what they lined the canals with.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: This is canal liner and, uh, I don't know where you'd find any if they're making it anywhere or not, but my dad used to tile—

Daniel Nicholson: Here [Jokingly. Both laugh]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --and the, uh, the step there underneath that is original marble slab out of the old courthouse—

Daniel Nicholson: Oh, wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: At that time, they were, when they tore it down, they were getting rid of, uh, getting rid of, uh, whatever they could, selling it and when my dad brought that, he said, "That'll make a good back step for the porch" so he put that on there and then in the '50s tiled uh, tiled this with, uh, with the canal.

Daniel Nicholson: Were these from a defunct canal somewhere or had 'em on hand?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, uh-uh. Since my uncle owned the brick plant, why he probably got them fresh (chuckles). Now the, uh, this, this, this isn't for disabled people, this is for my younger brothers when they were

riding their bicycle around here—they can go up and down, up and down here. And uh, you see, I was talking about outdoor, uh, the plumbing and electricity.

Daniel Nicholson: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: There's uh, there's some electricity inside, but most of that—then over here you'll see... you'll see the outdoor plumbing here. They just, they just didn't have that in the house. This, uh, there's other places around where you got it and it's either pushed under the house or, uh, it's, uh, or it's on the outside and, uh, the reason—the reason for that, this is, this house is built different than they do—this is where the original front porch was which they took down because it was on the west side of the house and they were renovating it. But, uh, this, the walls, you'll go in there and they didn't have sheet rock to do it quickly or anything, they had the, uh, each one of these walls on the inside, even the inside walls, are double board—studs with double boards, one on each side and it's hard as iron, that board. You can't drive a nail through it. You can't pull a nail out and you have to use a drill and hope it didn't (doesn't) break, but that's, uh, that's the way it is.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So, anyway, the easiest thing has been to put electricity and everything on the outside without tearing it down. But we're standing on top of the cistern right now. The other night, Patrick pulled that back and (laughing) pulled that back. Yeah, my dad made it out of concrete so the kids wouldn't be fooling with it.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah [group laughter]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It's 8 feet deep and when he was show—he was showing it the other evening, right, he pulled it back, he said, then he s-finally saw people getting off the si-off the side. This, uh, this right here, this slab right here was the uh, uh sand filter. We didn't ha—we didn't... Later on, we got water in through a pipeline when we put in the irrigation pipeline over there, we could bring it in here and uh, put it in there. There was a—there was a what's left of a screen to filter out stuff... yeah. Anyway, before that, before they had pipelines directly close to the house, we had to get the water from that corner [pointing] down there through dirt canals clear up into the orchard where they could irrigate it and then, then a little canal coming over here... over here to, uh, the water would come over here and flow into this, there is a hole here—round hole here. Well, you can see this—see that round—anyway, there's a round hole. There was a sump pump in that that would pump the water up and into this filter area and then it would flow into the cistern. Uh, that worked for a while, but it wuddn't (wasn't) long and it got silted up, so we had to use other means, and uh. As far as use for in the house, my uncle Bob Hancock was head of the Health Department here back then in the '30s and 40's on into the '60s when he retired. Anyway, he got uh, they showed my dad how to treat the water ourselves. He gave us some equipment that we could test it, see whether it was—we didn't drink it, but for household use and we put chlorine in it so often. We'd test it periodically and see what uh, whether it needed any and uh, then we'd... I remember as a kid taking a, well I was older then... high school/college group, get the water in there, let it settle for a while and whatever silt needed to settle out so it'd be clear and then uh, take a long plank in there and stir it around so ya'd stir... and then, uh, that little pipe there that's where the water came up for the pump. Oh, yeah, where that water heater is, that's where that was our little pump area after we moved it from over there [gesturing] and it would go in there in the pipe and the to the pump and the pressure tank and, uh, that pipe is still in there. The tree [pointing] that was planted by my father in 1929. It was a uh, uh, he—his dad—his father died in San Antonio after surgery and uh, 1929 and coming back through Falfurrias, he stopped and and and, dug up I think it was three oaks—three little oaks and that's the one that survived. And right now, Ed Caprell who's the forester here in Edinburg, he's been out to measure it. He's declared that that's the biggest [laughing while speaking] biggest oak in the in town. So, anyway...

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, I've passed by here countless times 'cause I used to live just up the road and so, I just always looked at this tree, you know, so it's kinda neat to get the story behind it.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Get the story behind, right. 'Course the swing now that—Neil put that up there a number of years ago, uh, we've got pictures of this when I was a kid. The oak wouldn't very big, but now it'll hold a swing way up there and his kids and my kids there we all had between Neil, Dixie, and I, we had seven kids and they--

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --they used that swing and now Patrick—it was wearing out, the wood and everything—and Patrick, uh, re-uh,...redid it and for my grandkids. For the grandkids. So, now they're swinging in it. But this old swing he just recently fixed it up. The wood has been replaced in that severa-that came from Kansas with my grandfather--

Daniel Nicholson: Oh wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --it was, it was old then, so it dates back to maybe the 1800s.

Daniel Nicholson: (chuckling) Wow...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And it's been...You'll also see I talked about seeing a picture of the uh barn in the museum. You'll see that.

Daniel Nicholson: I'm surprised Tom hasn't tried to talk you into donating this to the museum yet and uh..

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, right? (whilst laughing)

Peter Rodriguez: (laughing)

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, well there's a lot of stuff around here that-that could be (laughs)

Daniel Nicholson: That could be (laughs). But it's your stuff, so they can't have it yet

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, and you may see those a bunch of those pictures with, I think they took pictures of it with Patrick and even after he took them into the house. Do you know if, uh, if any more of the class is gonna if any other with Russ maybe with his [indiscernible word] whether they're gonna come out here or anything like this or you all? Or is this the only...?

Daniel Nicholson: I think this is the--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: It may be the time--

Daniel Nicholson: I think it's the only time that we actually come out

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, I'd been hoping--

Daniel Nicholson: --and talk to you guys.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --that they could maybe all come and do this, but if they're getting it on camera from different ones of us.

Daniel Nicholson: It should be enough to...to...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Be enough to, yeah...but seeing-seeing it firsthand, you go into the house and it's like my brother says Patrick and Caroline that it's like living in a museum. [group laughter] And fortunately, I told you about the University coming after us with eminent domain for condemnation [Daniel Nicholson groans] and so forth and uh we were trying to sell some of the land to...we're getting older...my sisters and brothers are retired and they they—anyway, and I thought about, uh, we thought about renovating it with some money that we got which we haven't been able to sell yet. Maybe we will some—but anyway, fortunately, in a way, Patrick and with the help of Jared, Liana's fiancé, with uh my other son-in-law that lives here Modesto, uh, they've, they've done a bunch in work in there along with Odie and the rest of us. He spent a couple of summers fixing it up, but when he had to do it with basically without money. So what he's done is is taken just cleaned up things and just left it like it is. We didn't modernize it. They thought about putting in a central air conditioning...stuff like that, but now you walk in and what you see is what it was originally like when it was renovated in the '40s... changes that were made then. But if you get to see Patrick's interview, you're gonna see a lot more detail about that that's why I asked him to, to do that.

Daniel Nicholson: Well if you guys abandon this place--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: [To Eloise Montemayor] That's the one that you missed (chuckling)

Eloise Montemayor: Yeah--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's when Kathryn...(laughs)

Eloise Montemayor: --that's the one I missed, but I got to see the video footage

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Got to see-did you?

Eloise Montemayor: Mhm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: You got to see it. Okay. Am I telling them correctly, then?

Eloise Montemayor: Yes [Daniel and Peter chuckle]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Okay. I haven't seen it myself, so...

Eloise Montemayor: Yes, he talks about...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: My daughter was getting pretty tired. You know, she'd had this procedure--

Eloise Montemayor: [quietly] Sorry....

Carrol Norquest Jr.: [cough cough] And she's going for an interview to see about her biopsy tomorrow, but anyway...anyway, she was getting pretty tired that night and she's calling me over at the house, "Daddy, what am I gonna do? Patrick's still in there talking with them. They've been all over the house. They've been all over out here and they..." and uh, anyway, I said, "Have patience. Have patience." I had a nice pot of-it was chilly and I had a nice pot of navy bean soup and cornbread for 'em when they were done so they came over and debriefed on it.

Eloise Montemayor: That's nice.

Daniel Nicholson: That's very nice.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So anyway....

Daniel Nicholson: Um, just a question here, just going back 'cause we've-'cause basically where we're at right now we're just getting all this great extraneous information which I do not mind whatsoever. Keep talking. But uhm, one question I just wanted to ask because I just it's kinda a screwball question that I thought of [indiscernible due to Norquest beginning]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Go ahead, go ahead. The screwball questions are great they you'd be surprised where they lead.

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm, did you, you know, in all your years spent, you know, in farming and all this and talking to other farmers and stuff, were there any, you know, wacky or just weird attempts at irriga-or ways to try to irrigate their crops or, you know, get water to houses or anything like that that was just kind of weird and didn't work? You know, just...'cause you know like--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, not--

Daniel Nicholson: --I just think of, I just think of, you know, the time period where you have all these, "Oh look, here's the cure-all like method and it's new and no one's ever done it before" fly by night thing...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Well one thing, one thing was this this filter that didn't work, but other than that, my dad was pretty conservative things he put things in here he thought were gonna work

Daniel Nicholson: Well, I was more wonderin' about others--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh, and then, but here's, along with your question, though. My dad, uh.....he said, he said one time and he's told me the times he did fail when he first came down here trying to plant on salty soil. He had no idea what that is it looked like good black dirt of Kansas. Nothing came up. There's things like that that he tried that were not wacky that were--

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --that were uh, uh, standard, really, but due to the weather, or due to something out of his control didn't work. But he said one time after he quit farming, he said, uh, "Kelly," the you know, he says, "I've come-I have seen young farmers come to the Valley through the years and get rich doing things I've learned the hard way never to do again". [pause] So, uh,[pause] I don't know that's how wacky works out--

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, well, typically wacky doesn't work out

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And conservative does and wacky doesn't [indiscernible due to interjecting interviewer]

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, right, just if there were any just, you know, fly by night operations that came through said, "Well, use, you know, this method" and then it just completely failed for somebody--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah...(chuckle)....yeah

Daniel Nicholson: --you know, just anything like that just kind of oddball moments of Valley farming history.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (chuckling) Yeah, so that that basic-that basically would kind of cover your question, I think.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah it does.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: But in my uh, in my estimation, he didn't, well, I'll tell ya one wacky thing that did save

him to a certain extent during the droughts. During the drought, and uh, 1950s, the river there the uh there was no the dam wasn't there yet. Well, we went up and watched it under construction for several years. He would take us up there periodically, but it was—there was no water there, yet, and uh, they were fighting, farmers were fighting each other for the water that was in the...Anyway, came time to plant cotton in the spring and the ground was, uh, not moist enough to plant. I don't know that it was bone dry, but it was not—anyway, it must have had a little moisture in it that he could hope for a rain or irrigation afterwards. But the cow tank, he took some took cottonseed and he took some gunnysacks, put it in those gunnysacks, then he put it into the cow trough, water trough to soak overnight. Then he put it in the planters the next day and it was already wet and starting to go through into the germ part of it and so forth and uh he went ahead and planted that. As far as I know that was successful.

Daniel Nicholson: Huh.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I could mention another time that was interesting that no one had ever seen done before. And, uh, this was in would have been in the... '50s...yeah Fift—the Korean War was going on and cotton went sky high. Down here where the BETA school is, he planted, he planted that all to, uh, roasting ears. You know, corn for, for, for produce, to go to the grocery stores. Not for cattle. Anyway, for roasting ears and uh, he planted that and then he saw that the price of cotton was going up, so, corn was getting up like this [gestures to give an idea on average height] and it was just—that had to be planted earlier maybe January or so for it to get a spring crop on it. And so what he did, he went in a planted a crop of cotton next to the rows of corn and the way he did that since he knew, he knew uh horse, how to...horse cultivating and horse farming. He, uh, found somebody around here that had a horse that, uh, still knew how to pull equipment and he found a planter that could go behind that horse and then uh, of course, all of his, several of his guys from the little small farmers right over here Rancho Grande by Reynosa, He got them; they knew how to do it. They went in and planted that whole 60 acres of cotton right beside the corn. And then, when the corn got up, he harvested the crop of corn and then over here where Lowe—no, not Lowe's...Jackson...Jackson and University

Daniel Nicholson or Peter: Are you talking about McCoy's?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, I'm thinking. No, that's that's McColl Road, but go back to Jackson Road where Luby's is.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh, Jackson, oh, right, right, right, right in there.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, right caddy corner from that where the Post Office is and all that. That was a dairy farm.

Daniel Nicholson: Huh. Okay.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So, he knew the dair—I've forgotten what he was named, but he, this dairyman, he uh always put up silage so my dad talked to him about it and they, uh, my dad got a crew of the men over here. Called 'em all over from there that he said, "Hey, I got something to do" and he bought a bunch of machetes and uh, the guy had a truck. Actually, he had an old bus that was cut up—school bus that was cut open that he used for haul feed around and hay and stuff. And he took that out there and all the guys were in there with the machetes going down harvesting that corn, cutting that corn out, and then it left uh a nice crop of cotton. So he went ahead and raised the cotton and had a good crop of cotton out there. So, that's that was kind of a wacky thing and never heard of anybody else--

Daniel Nicholson: Two crops in—those two crops in one place, yeah, that's kind of weird.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, that, but that, uh, it looked kinda funny, but it it--

Daniel Nicholson: It worked! [laughter]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, and he had the knowledge from his horse days, uh, that this could be done this way and the whole idea of getting it done.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So, tractors would never have worked. [pause] So that's, uh, anyway...

Daniel Nicholson: So, you running out of steam?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No.

Daniel Nicholson: I mean, I mean as it is--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: I probably, yeah--

Daniel Nicholson: --I mean, we've--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: We've covered a lot you find unless you find something on there...

Daniel Nicholson: I-I-I've been kinda flippin' through page here every once in a while while we're talking going, "Okay, I can't see anything really significant or anything that wasn't at least partially answered here and then later answered," you know...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh, if there are any other questions you might have that [indiscernible due to interruption by interviewer]

Daniel Nicholson: Right, but um, but I guess right here we could probably just leave you alone ["crew" laughter]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That would be [more laughing from group] one of my therapy for my shoulder for an hour and a half of whatever [Carrol laugh]

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, may have a little nap beforehand or something--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (laughing) Yeah, get a little--

Daniel Nicholson: Uhm...but, uhm, if there is something that comes up that's just that just strikes us as interesting as we're transcribing the interview or anything like that, you know--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Mhm.

Daniel Nicholson: --would you be willing to talk to us sometime again? If, you know, if we have time, if you have time that whole thing, you know? Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Anytime, yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: Or at least, or if not-if not us, you know, somebody else that [indiscernible]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, somebody else--

Daniel Nicholson: Okay. You know, just--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --or uh, even if it's just a simple thing; a question over the phone be, "Oh, my, here comes a group". One thing out here over the years, the route...I don't know how many times we've had to change... change addresses. We never have moved. [Team laughter] Every time they start losing our mail because of-and then when they finally quit changing the last time they changed address, then the next thing was to change the zip code. That caused problems. (laugh) So, I know of, in my time at least four times. Started out as Route 2, Route 4, Route 9, then they put it on the street numbering, then they changed, then they changed the zip code (laughing).

Daniel Nicholson: That's great.

Roland Silva: Need a map to your own property, it's the only way you won't get lost.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Now Patrick's starting to try to grow some-he wante-he'd like to make a garden in there. One time after we quit using it, I had a garden in there. I hauled in stuff like that; pots and--

Daniel Nicholson: What did you-what did you grow?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh, I did a whole bunch of things. I don't know. I had some okra, I had tomatoes, I had, uh, beans, I had—I don't remember.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, but that's a great spot, too, with all the shade--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh, and we did have uh, we did have grapes back there. You see that structure there with the pipes? When I was young, my dad covered over the patio area with grapevines, you know, made a nice awning 'til the root rot killed 'em, but before it did, my dad and I started making wine with those. I did that for quite a while. That was a nice hobby. Then I got some kids coming along and I didn't have time although my older daughters helped me make a bunch of peach wine one time.

Daniel Nicholson: Oooh, that's interesting.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (laughing) Yeah. [pause] Yeah, this is, just for years up until just very recently, we were out in the country, growth never came this way.

Daniel Nicholson: Wh-Around what year would you say you'd had a kind of just the wake up moment of, "Oh wow, the city is upon us"?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: When I got my first tax bill [group laughter]. Suddenly my tax jumped tremendously

(laughing)

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah (laughing)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: (laughing) Otherwise, everything else came gradually.

Daniel Nicholson: Okay (laugh)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Two of the nicest things though were the, uh, was the, was the uh, well, no, it came before we were in the city. The county paved in Chapin Road and the Sharyland brought the water out. Those were two memorable things along with electricity, but those were before the city. But the city, there really wasn't any change [indiscernible, but breaks into laughter due to interviewer's attempt at being funny]

Daniel Nicholson: Except for just more people and buildings and taxes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, but see, we didn't change here. It was all still country.

Daniel Nicholson: Right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: No, no nothing across the street. We could look a mile on north or more.

Daniel Nicholson: Only, I've, I mean just in the last, uh, 10-15 years over in the Lower Va—or lower Lower Rio Grande Valley, you know, the La Feria-Harlingen area. There's some areas there where, you know, you just you know ten years ago standing out and just you could do anything you wanted to no matter how, you know, crude or lewd.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah.

Daniel Nicholson: And now it's just there's houses. It's just everywhere; it's insane and that's in just ten years.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Exactly. Yeah, you're in a whole different world and that's with, I guess, I dunno, we're still surrounded by the old farm and we still feel like we're out here and when you look around we, uh, it what you've been walking over is like it is out in the country. We don't have any, uh, concrete pads for the, for the cars or anything 'cause that just wouldn't done at that time and they haven't gone in. You know, things like that and the, and the brush growing up around here that like it does other places. So, and 'course my daughter and son-in-law and other people they enjoy having all the birds because of that and everything so, uh. So, we don't feel it so much. I guess another thing about the popul-population growth is that you see now we have we have a monitored alarm systems, we have fences. This white fence out here was to keep people from coming in and stealing. We started getting thefts. That wasn't because of the city, but because of the general population--

Daniel Nicholson: 'Cause people, right.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --growth here in the Valley and, uh, this little house, even after I put, I don't know how many times that was burglarized until...it hasn't been for a while, but until they tried to break in even after I put a, uh, an alarm system in. But the thing that finally helped us out, we got we had dogs, we had and then eventually after some number of thefts, why we put in that that barbed wire fence around our places across the south and we thought and they were they'd be coming from town. That kind of stopped them, but it still would happen--They'd walk in off the streets. And the finally, the finally, finally the thing that finally would made noticeable difference was this white fence that we put around here and that, uh, after that, there was a notable decline in it. It was a visual and psychological barrier added to everything else; dogs and fences and that's why this little fence is around here and so forth.

Daniel Nicholson: Such ferocious dogs, too. She just looks vicious. [laughter here and there]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: That's my, that's my daughter's dog, the one that's off in graduate school and you know who got stuck with her [group laughter]. She didn't wanna--

Peter Rodriguez: She knows we're talking about her.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --take her to Iowa and have her freeze over there. She did take a big furry cat that she had, she and her husband, but uh. The other house over there, Neil's, that was partly built on some of the old corrals and partly on open field, but he, uh, they built that in 1986. And, uh, ya notice it's raised up higher than the rest of them and that's because the city, uh, by then, uh, we were in the city and they, uh, that was a requirement at that time. Now, where we got the dirt for it since this is all a low place, they had put in a sewer line up Sugar Road from the north clear up to here and they put all the dirt off to the side along Sugar Road there with all our property. Well, people were wanting to buy it and, uh, and uh do something, my dad he said, "Hey, don't ever let any dirt go off of the property, we're too low around here." So, what Neil did, he had the contractors

come and come and, uh, build him a little hill there and then, uh, he put the house on top of it. And now he met the city code. The, uh, interesting thing about some of these Wetbacks, Braceros, or even the Secos, the ones who would drive to work with us, uh, from Rancho Grande. They, uh, they've stayed in touch. We used to visit in their homes over there. We'd go over there, we know 'em well—even out on the Rancho where they lived. And they'd come here, they'd, uh, when we were going on vacations, some of them would stay in the house—our house in case, you know, people didn't lock things up there, but they stayed in touch and even after my dad had his stroke and all and I'd see 'em. They'd come to me, come to see me at the, uh, when they had their papers and stuff. Uh, and many years they'd come by that they were wanting to get papers and my mom would go to her diary and she could verify when they'd been here and so forth. And they'd come looking for work, I'd help them out the way I could at the Texas Employment Commission. And, uh, Neil would even have them come over for legal help...legal help from him. And the most recent time, I, about three or four years ago, 'bout three years ago, I think, I had Benito Arredondo show up at my house. Him and his daughter and he was 80, he was in his 80s then. And he had been one of the guys who had been contracted as a Bracero and he, uh, he wanted some papers. Mexico was finally settling some of the debt that it owed them of money that had been taken out and kept...the Mexican government and they were gonna settle it so he was gonna prove he had some money coming. And another one, Frederico, I forget his last name, he showed up a few days—about a week or two later and I gave him letters and so forth had caught up on things and he, anyway, back to Benito. I'm talking with him and visiting with him about it and he his story is in that book. And I don't know, do you remember reading about the one who had tetanus that was in the hospital in Mexico.

Daniel Nicholson: Mmm...yeah. Sorry! (chuckles)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: He was in, he was in, I'm sure it's in the book--

Daniel Nicholson: Probably is, but...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --but, anyway, anyway, he, uh, he was irrigating, he was irrigating down south where the BETA school is and he'd water had gotten into his boot and it had rubbed raw and he ended up with tetanus and he was feeling sick and I went down—my dad took me down to take over his job doing the irrigating while he took him down to the bus station to go home to the doctor. And he, uhm, he didn't wanna see the doctors here only trusted the ones in Mexico so he went on over there. And, uh, find out he had tetanus, uh, their runner, Domingo Magallan, who had been born in Mercedes, he was the one who could go back and forth with messages; they didn't have cell phones. Anyway, he'd bring the message and, uh, he said, "Carlos, they want to they want to see you over there or ask if you could get some money. We're out of medicine, they're treating him in the hospital, but they..." So my dad went over to the hospital, hunted him up and hunted him and, uh, found he's on a bed a cot there and two of his relatives are there holding him down, strapped down and everything 'cause he's out of his mind so seemingly. And he, uh, he uh, my dad said, "Well, what do ya need?" "Okay, we need the medicine, but we need to go to the pharmacy to get it". So, my dad gave 'em the money, they went down to the pharmacy and got the medicine they needed and came back with it and they, uh, injected him or whatever and my dad talked to him he said, told him, "Benito, your job's still here when you get done. I'll be holding it for you; don't worry about that" so then he left. Well, several months later, why Benito showed up he's all well and everything. Went back to work—he was a tractor driver he's one that was out cutting the broom corn, anyway. So, here he's showing up at my door. I'd seen some of his brothers since then, but I'd never seen him and, uhm, and then I think later I made the letter, got it, found the information, made the letter for him and he came back a week or so later with his daughter and his wife this time. So then I asked him, "Benito, you remember back when you were in the, in the uh hospital over there with tetanus?" "Yeah. Oh yeah". And my dad had written that in the book and his daughter says, "Well, I've read the book," she says, "but what..." I said the story of him is in there, unless like I could be wrong and it's somewhere else, but I think that's where it is. But she had read it and she had no idea that was her dad—he'd never talked about it. And my dad, before he died, he'd said, "You know I've often wondered whether Benito ever understood me or whether he was really out of it." So I asked him. At first, he was apologizing to his daughter and wife that he had never talked about this, but the daughter's remembered that that "That's you, dad" and, uh, she remembered the story and, "Why didn't you ever tell us?" Well, it was old stuff. Anyway, I said, "My dad always wondered whether you ever heard

him make sure that you..” He says, “Oh yeah,” he says, “I heard him”. [pause] So, last year I see his obituary in the paper. Something’s living I think in McAllen with his daughter or something, anyway, so, uh, got a lot of stories like that. My dad’s written many more stories about those folks. He’s, he’s got, I think twice as many that are unpublished.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And, uh, there’s a young lady from uh, from uh, University of Texas. She grew up in Elsa that’s working on a book pertaining to those times and she interviewed me several times and I let her go ahead and read all of those stories ‘cause she had his book and George Gause had told her where to find me and, uh, and so, uh, he uh, she looked me up, so I left them over at the museum when she was here at Christmas one time. She had several interviews with me on specific stuff. Anyway, she read all through them, and was using that as background for it [chuckle]. Interesting thing is that his-her younger brother is in the same office with Neil and that’s where Aaron Pena has his offices there where I’ve mentioned that his son is in your class and her brother is there so I talked with him one time how she’s coming along with her book and so forth, but... Oh, the uh, I started to say that when Neil was doing his house, building his house over here it was cold night when they laid the foundation so one of the cars stayed out all night with the, with the lights on it. They were making sure it was not freezing or it was not-they kept water on it and so forth, but uh, it turned out that foundation company was with some of those guys from over there they worked for us here. Been working right here and that was in the ‘80s. And then, uh, in my house, we found that either the paper hanger or one of the painters was from one of those people from over there, so, like I saying before these connections that, uh....

Daniel Nicholson: Keep croppin’ up.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: ...that we found. Yeah. [laughter]

Daniel Nicholson: That’s incredible.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Oh, but my brother and I we used to go when they out in the orchard there where they had the tent or even out in the brush we would go out there when they were cooking. They always had tortillas for us that they had handmade tortillas. I know many a time when somebody showed up, even people that my dad couldn’t hire, my mom, they’d travel at night and then you’d see ‘em they’d find the barn and be hiding out in the barn or something and come out ask my dad if he had any work which if he did, he put ‘em to work, if he didn’t he’d say, “No”, but, uh, and then they’d, but and he’d find out they were hungry and my mom would fix up breakfast for ‘em. Give ‘er whatever we’d been eating, pancakes or whatever, eggs and she’d go ahead and feed ‘em and so forth. Many a time that happened.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So, there were some of, there was one time, couple of times I remember there was some of the guys stayed up in the what we called the “Hay [indiscernible]” up there--

Daniel Nicholson: Kind of a loft area?

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --level up there. Yeah (laughs). So, anyway.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So, anyway, my dad also, see he did this writing after he’d had a stroke at the age of 62 and had to quit the farming and I took over. And he was laid up, he could hardly talk, it was on his right side. After that, it was a pain to talk with him, but he started writing stories about the farm here, about the children when we all grew up. He must have written about 100 of them which told what’s going on out here if you ever, if they ever get over here I’d like to see ‘em go over there. You’ll find out a lot about the farming in those years from that as well as from the wetback stories and, uh, anyway, uh. The, uh...trying to think where I was going with that. I got distracted. Anyway, he wrote, oh yeah, then he had the stroke in ‘62, 1962 and he was about 62 and uh, he always liked to write. He’d write letters to the people to settle squabbles. He’d write letters to the editor once in a while and so forth. He had a good way of writing. So, he took up writing these stories about the family and the farm and when he’d thought he’d run out of stories. I suggested to him this was in the getting into the mid-’60s several years after his stroke. He taught himself how to type again and, uh, and uh, write and everything he got all that started practicing. He wrote ‘em at night. He’d wake up, sleep a lot in the day and then work on ‘em at night. Gave him something to do. It was-it was really good therapy for him besides we

got a TV then dur—we never had a TV and my brother that was in the Air Force bought one of ‘em old black and white. And between that writing and Johnny Carson at night, it got him laughing. He started making a lot of progress and wrote those stories and when he ran out of them I suggested to him I said, “Hey, dad, the day of the wetbacks is over here. There’s a lot of interesting things happened here as well as all over, around here with them. Some of those stories oughta be written up and, uh, why don’t you try that?” He said, “Hey, good idea” so he started writing up them. Personal incidents that happened here and then he, uh, when he ran out of stories or he needed more stimulation he’d find other farmers around here and get some of their personal stories so he would, uh, then he started writing them up. And then, I think it was Harry Quinn that he, he was later a professor at the University in journalism and then he was at the Dail--Edinburg Review at that time. He encouraged my dad as well as the library-head of the library, oh, I’ve forgotten his name. Anyway, uh, they encouraged him to see about getting it published. So, he started sending ‘em off in the late ‘60s after Hurricane Beulah he starts sending ‘em off and getting rejection slips all over. Then, what he called the vanity press, that’s where you publish at your expense why they tried these, “No, if it didn’t stand on its own, I’m not going to. Must not be worth reading.” [group laughter] So, anyway, the University of New Mexico well they came back and say, “Hey, this looks good” so he started working with them on it. Harry Rittenhouse, I believe was his name, was the publisher and editor out there and he started back and forth and then they started editing it. Oh, he got aggravated with the editors all the time. “They wanna change this. They wanna change that. They wanna...” And especially what aggravated him the most when the when he was using the border Spanish. Lengua de la frontera, you know.

Daniel Nicholson: Mhm.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: And he’d he’d use the terms we used here and they’d wanna change it. Fideo they wanted to change to spaghetti. [Team laugh] There’s a story about that in there where they...anyway and that’s one example. He’d argue with ‘em-sometimes he’d win and sometimes they would. Finally, at the age of 70, it was published. They only used about a third of the of ‘em ‘cause they wanted to keep the book short enough for popular consumption and not just scholarly. So that’s what-I think at that time it was four dollars and fifty cents or ninety cents or something like that. So, anyway, that’s how that...how that happened [laughter].

Daniel Nicholson: Wow, uh, so just so we get you on camera and video and audio here, are there any tentative plans to maybe take your dad’s stuff and try to, you know, put it out, you know, publish it maybe for more scholarly work or...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Uh, we have, we have and a number of people have been tried that over the years. He did first to try to get some of the others published. Now that it’s long out of print, uh, we’ve tried not we, but different people. Not just family—others. I don’t know whether you are familiar with Dr. uh, Alonso that’s a historian at the University of Tex—I mean at Texas A&M. Armando Alonso.

Daniel Nicholson: Oh yeah, I’ve read some of his books. Oh yeah, wow.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, he’s he’s tried. Then there was a fellow at North Texas that was a tried. Then there’s other people, other relatives or other people. Now, this cousin of mine that was here Herb Nordmeyer that was here this year here this last weekend for the little family reunion for his part of the family and he’s talking about it again, so, uh, so basically he’s got the printed book and then he’s got a whole second book that would make up new stories, and then a whole other one about the family which all three of ‘em pertain to--

Daniel Nicholson: This...

Carrol Norquest Jr.: --to the farming and his stories go back into the ‘20s on into the early ‘60s--

Daniel Nicholson: I mean that is...I mean, just from the little bit of the stuff that I’ve read from the book and just from what you’ve told us and so on and so forth and there is just so much material, there’s just--

Carrol Norquest Jr.: There is and you’d be surprised how many people have read that book and then they’ve had an interview with me or they’d stimul—I don’t know, you know Rob Johnson?

Daniel Nicholson: Yes.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: He was one of the first ones in his book on Burroughs that he wrote. I interviewed with him several times along with one of his graduate students when we were talking about the wetback era and so forth and also the methods of farming and this young lady I mentioned just now [cough]. Little bit ago, Chris-

tine Salinas is her name...Christina Salinas and uhm, there had been others, too—those are the major ones that I have and then there are others who have used it and quoted it. Joe Chance has in his in some of his books and other-other people have-I've seen it cited a number of times in people I don't even know that have used that as part of their source...source material.

Daniel Nicholson: Well, it's good it's being used [chuckle].

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So, uh, and I guess what's strange we're...the reason we're talking now, in a way, is because, uh, we happen to have been here still on this same spot for a long period of time through several generations where other Midwesterners or people coming from Mexico either way. They've started farming and they've either all left the farms like most of my relatives have and like we have basically. Uh, they left the farms and the farms got sold. Uh, and a...

Daniel Nicholson: And you grow UT-Pan American (chuckle)

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, turned it into asphalt and concrete. And then you got the scattered people like with this young man, uh, Geoffrey Schwarz here, for instance, his family is off of their farms and now they're scattered all over the u—they don't have a central place to go back to. And or Neil's wife, been here for, their family's been back there same way with them they're farmers all over the place there's no central place to tie them to and uh...and the uh...Patrick, even. His great grandparents came here, but this is the place he's tied to now, it's not [indiscernible]. Yeah. And right now, I've been talkin' to Russ about finding other people that are that can be and I was talking to one of the younger generation of people that are farming right now our corn crop over here. They've been farming with us a number of years—the Lunas and they've still got their original places and everything and a lot of people, even more than I do that are still here in the Valley and I'm thinking about trying to see if there isn't a way of getting them and maybe Ruben Cantu who's farming part of our what used to be our other land over there, uh, I don't know too-how far they go back. I know his parents' land is right there on Jackson Road, the original one where they were, uh, how far they go back there, I don't know, but that's uh, that's another possibility. I'm thinking of the Fikes out here east of town that came maybe back in the '20s or '30s maybe in the '30s and they've gone down three or four generations and they still have their original farm.

Daniel Nicholson: Wow. So that's, you know...and just...in a fairly small geographic area there are 4 or 5 families that possibly have homesteads still. That's awesome.

Carrol Norquest Jr.: So there may be, yeah, I've introduced Russ to uh, Ruben right now and we'll see where we go with that and as like he and I said as this develops, we can probably find some others as we go along. And then, uh, and then I've heard the President would like to have a history of the university. And, uh, I read that in something [indiscernible] so then what you're gathering around here is gonna be the good basis for that the we farmed that and, uh, my dad was instrumental for the reason it's where it is. 'Cause we were farming a bunch of that land and when they wanted to make it into a four-year college and some other town wanted to move it away, move it away, move-lure 'em elsewhere and they uh the citizens of Edinburg decided they wanted to see if they couldn't keep it here. So they started to have a fund raiser to try to get a I dunno Chamber of Commerce, whatever, and then my dad had the idea about where. They were started to on the corner there of University and Sugar, northwest corner, the farmer there had sold 10 acres to a junk yard. They were starting to put in a junk yard there and my dad didn't like that there "there goes the neighborhood", ya know? So, he went down to J.C. Looney who was the chairman of the Board of Regents and he was my dad's attorney and he said, "Hey, I got an idea here; I'm farming all this land out here," he said, "I think that would be a good place if you could pull down a map and they looked it over" and he liked the idea right away 'cause he was instrumental with him. He said, "Do you think you could tie up some of that land so we 'til we can find money, talk to the owners?" So, he talked to a number of the owners and he even took some money out of his own pocket to make a...to give them some earnest money so they would tie it up. So, eventually they got enough money and bought what was it 100 acres...150 which they've expanded on now, so, that's how that came about. In fact, going through my mom's and dad's stuff in the house here, last year, doing our own family archives, I found one of the checks that he used for earnest money, I think it was to Mrs. Seheh 'cause they owned one of the ten acres needed that and I found some letters he wrote to Mr. Van Matree that owned another portion of it. So, anyway [laughing] that's... lead all kind of ways you never thought.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah. That's okay...that's okay.

Roland Silva: Glad we still have battery.

Daniel Nicholson: Yeah, glad we're still running to catch it all.

Eloise Montemayor: Thank you so much for your time

[General thanks from rest of team]

Carrol Norquest Jr.: Yeah, we might find something else before you get in the car [group laughter], but then I'll—that happened with Odie the other night after everybody had left why “oo oo oo” why there were three of 'em stayed here and I wondered she was taking a long time I walked out and she was talking to the three of 'em and, and uh, so we, uh--

[End of Transmission]

This transcription was approved and edited by Odilia Peña. It contains minor orthographical changes in comparison to the original transcription that was done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

The proceeding is the transcription of an interview conducted with Mrs. Odilia (**Odie**) Norquest. Odilia Peña married Carrol Norquest, Jr. over forty years ago and together they have lived in the Edinburg region for most of their lives. Mrs. Norquest's family has a long history in the Rio Grande Valley. Her genealogy can be traced back over two-hundred years in the Valley and in Northern Mexico. As a lifelong Valley resident Mrs. Norquest provided us with valuable insights as to how the region has progressed and changed over the years. Our interview helps to contextualize the impact the Norquest family has made in the Edinburg region over the past four decades and provides a unique perspective on the rich Norquest family history. The interview was conducted by **Lupita** Olivarez, **Samuel** Victoriano, **Michelle** Martinez, and **Geoffrey** Schwarz.

[**Odie** Norquest, **Michelle**, and **Sam** walking to interview area]

Odie: There's the outhouse

Michelle: Oh my God! We should take a picture of that.

Michelle: So how long has that outhouse been on your property?

Odie: Ever since this house was built. That house was built in the forties...forty-eight.

Michelle: Oh wow.

Odie: My husband said it's been here since nineteen forty-eight. So it's been here ever since.

Odie: We always rented this little house. Actually there was a time we lived here. When my husband and I got married, we lived in a mobile home. I was brought up to believe, even though I loved my mother-in-law to death, that if you were going to get married, you didn't live with your in-laws. You always lived elsewhere. I told my husband I don't mind if I live under a tree. That wasn't the right thing to say. But it was funny so we got a mobile home and we had it parked back behind the big house.

Michelle: Over there on the corner.

Odie: We had it over there. We lived there for about five years in the mobile home. We had two little kids and the stairs were real high so it was time to move. My mother-in-law owned this house. She was ready to tear it down. I was just here with the kids and I said "No, let's not tear it down, lets fixed it up". My bother-in-law was into construction so we went ahead and started fixing it up in seventy-three. They had done repairs through the years but the last real major repair. This is where the bathroom, the shower here. This part used to be on the outside, not part of the main house.

Michelle: Really?

Odie: Yes. This back area was a screened in porch.

Michelle: Oh!

Odie: And can you believe all this family that lived here? Yes, in this tiny little area I don't know how they did it but they did. His dad actually sponsored a German family during the war, No, after the war. There was a lot of you know displaced people and they sponsored a German family and they still live in the area.

Michelle: Oh, do they?

Odie: Yes. They still live here. As a matter of fact, we still call this house the Templin house because that was their family name. Doris Templin, was their daughter that grew up here, and she married a man by the last name of Cook. She was a school teacher at Edinburg High School.

Michelle: Really!

Odie: Yes. All the brothers were educators. They've been here for a long time. Their grandson came by one day. He was just wanted to walk and see everything. He says he remembers when he was little coming to see his grandmother. He was quite interested and wanted to know more about the house and see the "old place". It was really interesting when my husband and I got married because there was no drinking water. We had a cistern

that we had to depend on. When we went into town, we'd take the five gallon jugs and get water either, from the church or from the gas station or from where ever!

Michelle: Really!

Odie: For drinking water.

Michelle: Wow!

Odie: So the water that we used from the cistern, and it's over there at the big house, was to, wash and that kind of stuff. And of course there was no sewer line. It was all septic tanks, and no paved roads! All dirt roads! We lived here on the corner, and we'd go a mile just passed the University, to the church in slippery muddy road.

Michelle: Yes.

Odie: And that was all dirt roads, so when it rained, forget it, there we were trying to make our way.

Michelle: [laughs] that's why a lot of people use pick-ups back in the day isn't it? [Laughs]

Odie: Yes, oh yes. I remember. Oh here they're coming.

[Geoffrey and Lupita arrive]

Odie: My brother-in-law had a pick-up so that's what we used for transportation but it was during Beulah.

Michelle: It's tough?

Odie: Yes, it was hard. You think we have it hard now?

Michelle: Exactly!

[Recorder was stopped at this point after the rest of the team arrived and restarted after everyone was situated in their places].

Odie: Dr. Hamme was the local doctor, Ralf Hamme, the son, was the one I knew. The father was also a doctor. He was the one that delivered him with his nurse. They would come and due home deliveries. So I don't know if all of them were delivered here or if it was just him but I know he was.

Lupita: So it was in that house on the corner?

Odie: Yes. That house is almost a hundred years old. It was built in 1913 and from what Patrick will probably tell you is...that it was one of these Sears Roebuck kits. So we didn't know that until he started taking off wall-paper. He started doing some construction work there. That was quite interesting for even us because we had no idea.

Lupita: That it was a model home?

Odie: It was a model home.

Michelle: The mail order catalog?

Odie: Yes, that's exactly right. And you know, one of the things about the house was that I went into the internet and I found one very similar, and it says, how many thousands of nails were needed. You know, so many pieces of lumber, and they were all numbered including hinges. Every single thing. It just had it on there. I thought that was so interesting.

[Michelle laughs]

Odie: I think I...

Michelle: Kind of like a child's toy now with instructions and everything.

Odie: Yes, exactly! Absolutely! It was really neat. I enjoyed that but yeah that's...that's pretty much it.

Lupita: It's very interesting that the house has stood

Odie: Yes, yes it'll be a hundred...

Geoffrey: Now we have terrible homes

Odie: Do you know that we can't even nail nails through there. We have to drill first and then hammer it because it is just so hard. I called it petrified wood.

[Laughs]

Lupita: [to Geoffrey] well, you want to get started?

Geoffrey: Oh, yeah.

Lupita: Did you get a chance to read all the questions?

Odie: I did. Some I cannot answer. Some probably I wouldn't be able to because either it wasn't something that I was interested in or didn't know about it.

[Geoffrey hands a copy of the questions to **Odie**]

Odie: Oh! I told my husband, I said, I'm going to take mine. He said, no, he said you're not going to follow those questions.

[laughs]

Odie: Are you just going to go down the line?

Lupita: Yeah, you want to go down the line? You want to start with the very first question? Okay... How has your relationship between Hispanics and Whites changed in the Valley and how has your personal outlook changed?

Odie: Well, I never saw any difference. My parents were the type that they never told us there was such a thing as black and whites and colored or rich or poor. I thought I was just as rich as the next person or just as poor. We never really talked about it. But what I think, that maybe, people realized, more of it was the social economic. They may had looked at that more than I did and then of course there was always the English language barrier. They maybe, kind of looked at things, people, different, but we never did it. We just never were really associated with a...

Geoffrey: It seems natural.

Odie: Yes. I went to school, elementary school and junior high in Monte Alto. That's where. My little friends were Anglo friends. I didn't have but one Hispanic friends. All my teachers were from Iowa and from out of state. They were all Anglo. I remember one teacher. She was a Spanish teacher and her name was Ms. Gomez. A beautiful, beautiful Hispanic woman. I she wasn't my teacher, so I must have been in elementary school and I just thought she was the most gorgeous woman I have ever seen. But that was the only Hispanic teacher that I knew about. So I never had any real problems.

Geoffrey: That seems so strange in the Valley, that no Hispanics...

Odie: Now, that was back probably in the early fifties? Yeah, early fifties.

Geoffrey: My professor had mentioned to me that you were actually born in Mexico.

Odie: I am. I have dual citizenship.

Geoffrey: Yeah

Odie: Yes, yes. There was a time when you could go to the Consulate and get all your paperwork, and apply for dual citizenship and so I did. My brother-in-law asked my sister, "Why is she doing that?" and my sister said, "Because she can."

[Michelle laughs]

Geoffrey: Have you ever taken advantage of this dual citizenship?

Odie: As a matter of fact I did before all of this stuff went on with a...with Mexico and violence and stuff. I did go before I had my dual citizenship. We used to do a lot of traveling into Mexico because I worked for people in Mexico. I had two different jobs. One of them was a restaurant equipment company and one of the owners was from Monterrey. The other one was a doctor. He was also from Monterrey. So I went with my friends to get the permit to go into Mexico. They had change what the requirements so I didn't have the right documentation. I said to the lady in conversation with a friend, that I was born in Mexico, and the lady that was actually doing the paperwork, said "well if you were born in Mexico you don't need any type of permit. Once a Mexican always a Mexican. It's kind of what the Catholics say, once a Catholic always a Catholic. [laughs]

Odie: And so I said, "I didn't know that" and then I thought, "I'm going to be the only one that doesn't have any documentation. What will happen to me I'll be left behind? So anyway it didn't work out that I got my permit that day, but we did. We just decided that we would go and get all of our papers and so we went to Roma? and Miguel Aleman? Apparently my daddy didn't register me when he was supposed to, So I had to get a certification showing that my parents were married at the time they had me so that they could go ahead a grant me my paperwork for that.

Michelle: And when did your family come over here from Mexico?

Odie: In 1947. My daddy was raised in Kennedy County. The story goes that his father, his grandfather, no, no. Let's see...my grandfather back in a...in 1913 during the revolution was kicked out of Mexico. He was a judge and wealthy rancher that was kicked out of Mexico during the Carrancistas and the revolution, all that stuff.

They had run out of money. My grandfather had given them all the money that he had, all of the cattle. They had taken him for everything. So when they went asking for more money or more goods he said “I don’t have anything” so they took him to the cemetery to be killed. One of the soldiers spoke for him and said “No you know he’s a good man. If he says he doesn’t have anything more to give you, he doesn’t have anything more to give you” so the soldier that were trying to get more money from him said “well, we’ll leave didn’t know where in the heck they were going, the just took off and just kept going”[laughs].

So they wound up in Karnes City. Actually it was good for the farmer. The rancher didn’t know how to rope. He didn’t know anything about horses and animals. The rancher had the ranch, but he really didn’t know how to ranch. My grandfather didn’t have a ranch but did know how to ranch, so he taught him how to work his ranch. My dad was born in 1913 so he was two months old and he lived there till he was twenty-one. His mother is buried over there. When his dad left, to go back to Mexico, after his wife died, my dad married my mom. And then of course that’s how we came back to the Valley because there was family that lived here already. They were familiar with the Valley and all this kind of life. He had allergies, asthma and stuff and they said “go to the Valley its better over there”

Geoffrey: Yeah, the Valley has really good air that’s nice and clean.

Odie: Yes, for bad coughs and stuff.

Lupita: Do you still visit family in Mexico?

Odie: No. No. When I was kind of semi-retired from my job, I did go visit Miguel Aleman, and Ciudad Mier but now with the, with all the, you know...

Lupita: Violence?

Odie: We haven’t been over there. No. Not at all.

Geoffrey: You mentioned that you had, you worked in Mexico with a business. Do you own businesses there?

Odie: No. No. Actually I worked for two different companies. One of them was a restaurant equipment company and had their office here in McAllen. They used to come and visit all the time. Whenever they wanted us to go see something in Monterrey, we’d go to the empresa over there and see stuff.

Geoffrey: How was that? I’m assuming that businesses from Mexico were mostly males. Was it different for you being a woman in that business world?

Odie: Well I...you know it never really occurred to me but no, not really. It didn’t bother me in the least but you’re right. All of the employees were...see, we used to have about ten or twenty salesmen and I was the only woman. So, it didn’t bother me. I sometimes feel I can work with men better than I can with women. [laughing] Because, and this is not true, but this is the way I always thought that women are more sensitive about so many different things and men I think can handle criticism better. So anyway, but it’s not true because I know of some men that are very sensitive. [laughing] Yes so it’s not true but that was my mentality. I used to think that since men are men and their tough and this and that, you can be tough with them and with women you have to treat them with kind gloves and everything because their more sensitive. That’s not necessarily true. [laughing]

Michelle: Going back to the Hispanic and White changes, did you ever see any of...did they speak about how you couldn’t speak Spanish in elementary in school? Did you ever come into contact with that?

Odie: Yes. Every single day. No, not in elementary school; but in high school, nor in junior high. I graduated from Edcouch Elsa. I went to school here for two years and then I went to finish in Edcouch Elsa. I always tell this story about this friend of mine that came to visit during lunch and so there was a school teacher from New York. She was not in high school. The schools were together, junior high and high school. This guy came on campus and was talking to me in Spanish and I of course, being me, I talked in Spanish back to him. I mean if you start talking to me in Spanish right now I’ll switch and talk to you in Spanish but if you’re talking to me in English, I’ll go ahead and talk to you in Spanish and this is what happened. When the bell rang and the guy left, I was heading to my next class, this woman (teacher) approached me. I really didn’t know her but she was a school teacher. She came over to me and she said “you insulted me” and I said well “how did I do that” I didn’t even know that she was there. And she said “yes, you were talking Spanish.” I didn’t even know, I mean I switched so much that I don’t know when I’m talking Spanish or English or what. She said she didn’t understand me and I said “I’m sorry I was talking to him. I wasn’t directing any questions or answers to you.”

Anyway no big deal, so I thought, until I went to my class. There is this principal that comes and knocks at the door and asks for me. We're standing at the hall by the door and he's getting after me for talking Spanish and insulting this lady. I said "I didn't". I said "I didn't insult her." He said "you have to apologize." I said "I have nothing to apologize for. If anything she needs to apologize to me" [laughing]. And then the principal, didn't know what to say. He says "well if and so and he gave the name of the guy", (I still remember his name) "If he is going to college he would never make it because he doesn't speak good English and he's a football player. He will never get in as a football player alone". So what does that have to do with me [laughing] and me speaking Spanish? It was just weird. That was one of the many episodes but that was the one that just kind of stuck with me.

Geoffrey: How did you pick up Spanish so well? Are you Hispanic?

Odie: I was born in Mexico. I'm Hispanic.

Geoffrey: Oh. O.K.

Odie: My parents are...yeah. My dad had like a second grade education. My mom was a school teacher in Mexico but did not speak any English. My English, I learned I guess from my teachers in elementary school and then I had older sisters that they all spoke. So we would speak English but then when we got home we would speak Spanish. That's just the way it was.

Geoffrey: So Spanish was your first language?

Odie: My...yeah. I always thought Spanish was my first language but several years later I was working the sale yard and a lady asked me "how do you think in English or Spanish?" And I had never heard that! And I said "well, I think in English". You know, if I'm trying to say something in Spanish or trying to read something, I have to concentrate on what I'm doing, but for the most part, I guess now it's in English more than anything.

Lupita: You mentioned you were from Monte Alto? When your parent's moved from Mexico they moved to Monte Alto that's where you grew up?

Odie: Yeah.

Lupita: And then you went to school in Elsa?

Odie: I went to school in Monte Alto. It was an independent school district so, we could go, since there was just a junior high, we could go to Edcouch Elsa or Edinburg and we all opted to go to Edinburg. But then, when my younger sister, she had asthma and was pretty sickly, my dad decided it would be better if I joined her cause my other older sisters had already graduated from high school, so then I switched over.

Lupita: Is that where you meet your husband in Edcouch Elsa?

Odie: No, actually I met my husband in church [laughing].

Geoffrey: That's a good place [laughing].

Odie: Yes we've been Lutherans all of our lives. I moved in with my sister in Pharr after high school. She was already coming to church here. We knew the family because we used to always have church gatherings and stuff, but we went to church in Elsa. We would go to church here in Edinburg. So one day we just sat there and started visiting at a function. I think it was like a pot luck or something. So we started visiting. He was the choir director. I always like to say I ran away with a choir director. We had a nice wedding [laughing]. It sounds more exciting to say otherwise.

Geoffrey: That seems like a good segue to the fifth question? How has courtship changed?

Odie: Well, actually, we didn't date very much. It's such a small little town and you would make friends at school and stuff like that but if you had a boyfriend you wouldn't invite him to come to your house and pick you up for a date. You would meet him at the drug store, you would meet at the park or something like that. Delta Lake was a big courtship place but never, never at home. And since I was living with my sister it was easier for me. I remember our first date when my husband invited me to go see a movie which I had already seen but of course I wasn't going to tell him that [laughing]. So he did come and pick me up at the house but then I was already, what twenty-six, twenty-seven years old.

Geoffrey: Oh, wow.

Odie: Yeah.

Michelle: Had you dated before?

Odie: Yes. Just like my doctor says she only had three boyfriends and she married the third.

Lupita: And you dated for how long before he proposed?

Odie: Ten months. About ten months. I dated a young Hispanic young man actually for like five, six years and then just from one day to the other we just split up and that's when I moved to my sisters because I didn't want him following me around [laughing].

Lupita: And you have been married for how long?

Odie: It'll be forty-one years in December 30th in a couple months.

Geoffrey: Congratulations

Odie: Yes. You know, people used to ask me, they don't anymore "so who were you married to before?" They didn't think that a person could be married for so long for the **Same** person, or that a I guess a Hispanic and a white could be married that there had to have been another marriage somewhere [laughing]. I never thought about that. I know his parent did. My older sister was married to a white, so you know I just kind of fit in. It was easier. I know there's a lot of Hispanic women that would say "I would never marry a white." The parent would just not allow it. But that wasn't our case. Like we say, we were never brought up to differentiate from races or color or anything.

Michelle: Oh really?

Odie: Yes. But that was, that was us. We were never brought up to differentiate from race or color or...

Lupita: Did you encounter any kind of issues with those people outside the family?

Michelle: Any racism or anything?

Odie: No, and my husband always reassured his dad. He would say "You know dad, we are so close to the university and there is all kind of races there. They intermarry because that is where they see each other. They are more options now. He would says intermarriages are not a big deal anymore like they used to be. In his family nobody had married anybody outside of their own race.

Lupita: Do you have children? [**Odie** nods yes] How many children do you have?

Odie: I have 3 daughters.

Lupita: only three daughters?

Odie: Caroline lives here. My other daughter lives in McAllen. The youngest, she and her husband are at the university of Iowa working on their Ph.D.s.

Geoffrey: PhD's, really? In what field

Odie: English Literature

Geoffrey: Oh really?

Odie: Yes, She said she just turn in the prospectus so...

GeoffreyREY: That's so exiting

Lupita: And they were all born here in Edinburg?

Odie: Yes, everybody. It's amazing. My first daughter, I think, I paid the doctor about \$75 dollars for the delivery; my second daughter, \$150 dollars and my third daughter about \$300 dollars

Lupita: And these were delivered in hospitals or...

Odie: Yes, they were all delivered in hospitals ...yeah and then you know...

Michelle: And was in the old hospital that is now in Freddy Gonzalez....was on Freddy Gonzalez, the one that's not here anymore?

Odie: Mhm, not the Grand View Hospital. That was long vacated, but yea, I was amazed, I worked for OB-GYN's and their deliveries were like \$3,500 just for the doctor, plus the hospital. It has changed so much

(**Michelle** laughing)

Geoffrey: Um, so how exactly were you and your husband involved in the farming history?

Odie: I wasn't involved in farming. I was scared of the cattle actually (girl giggle) but when I married Kelly, they had orchard, sour citrus or something here; and they had cattle until they were in the city limits. When they sold all the cattle, they decided that they were going to uproot all of the citrus trees and use it for farm land so that's what they started to do.

Michelle: And what area was that...it was that here in Edinburg?

Odie: Yes. All of this area. We got like 60 acres. We built our house in 76. And this one, like I said, has been here since 48 and that one since 13 and so the rest of the land he farmed. That is what he said. He has a degree in agriculture, so he did all the farming here and he used to rent land so that he could farm. He used to farm all the way up to Beta school and at one point they owned part of the land where the school is. And then with the taxes and everything started piling up they had to start selling some of the land. He farmed for quite a while until he just decided he could not farm anymore he was getting older. He couldn't do it the way is used to be when he was younger.

Geoffrey: Farming is really rough on your skin.

Odie: Yes. And he has had a lot of skin cancers too.

Geoffrey: Yea, my grandpa he always had like a lot of cancer because he was a farmer as well.

Geoffrey: So I know earlier maybe a couple of decades back when the laws regarding of an immigration a little more lax...

Odie: Yes

Geoffrey: I know it was maybe easier to employ someone who was undocumented. How exactly did that relationship worked between the farm and the workers?

Odie: Well, Kelly's dad did have people from Mexico come and work the land. They have cotton and stuff, but that was way before my time. I know he's told stories about how they used to go pickup truck loads of people from Granjeno, just across the border and come over here. One of the ladies used to help with the children. They had quite a few kids. They had seven kids, help with the family and the men would go help his dad do the farming. But I don't know that much about what really transpired before that, just the stories I hear from him.

Geoffrey: yeah, I actually read that he would take a truck along a canal and kind of bunch them in there. I read it randomly on a book I found on Google.

[Michelle laughing]

Odie: yeah, my father-in-law wrote the Rio Grande Wetbacks. After he had had a stroke, he sat down and wrote stories.

Geoffrey: that was your father?

Odie: That was my father-in-law.

Geoffrey: Oh, OK.

Lupita: Did he know, cause I read the book, it was a very good book. So your father in law is now deceased.

Odie: Yes, since '81

Lupita: before that, well if you know, before he deceased...he talks about it in the book, did he always keep a relationship with them until he died

Odie: You mean like the neighbors?

Lupita: the one's he talks about in his book, the ones they used to come across because in the book it seems like they were just like family...

Odie: Well a lot of them would come. Even after Kelly and I got married, a lot of them would come and stop in. They would be in town, and they would stop to see the family at the Rancho Colorado. They had a big red barn, so they used to call it Rancho Colorado, it was kind of a trademark, and yeah, they would come and visit, and even now. Not too long ago, there was a family that came to our house and introduced themselves and, of course, Kelly knows all of them and he remembers them. I really don't know any of them or didn't know any of them but just from what I've heard them telling stories about those people. They still come and visit whenever they're in town.

[long pause]

Geoffrey: so, you don't travel to Mexico anymore... how often would you cross in your...

Odie: Ask me when I was single!

Geoffrey: You would go?

Odie: I used to drive my car to Reynosa with my friends and sometimes we would go through some little town...what is it? Is it Rio Bravo or something?

Geoffrey: yeah

Odie: We'd go to Matamoros

Geoffrey: Oh you'd take the expressway from Matamoros to Reynosa?

Odie: from Reynosa to Matamoros

Geoffrey: oh wow

Odie: yes, we used to do that to go drinking. What else do you do in Matamoros. There wasn't too many places of entertainment in our small community.

[Michelle laughing]

Geoffrey: I did that in my younger days as well.

Michelle: yeah!

Odie: I don't drink anymore... but, yes we did. We used to go a lot. And of course, we used to go visit family when I was younger with my parents. We always used to go visit her relatives. Mom's relatives all lived in Mexico in la frontera, but still, we'd cross the border and go visit her on a regular basis, but then as I got older and was able to drive, I'd go do it on my own, but then I got married.

Geoffrey: and do you think there was more crossing back and forth back then?

Odie: Oh, I think so. I mean there's not as many people. The population wasn't as great, but I think as far as crossing, you wouldn't see the rows and rows and rows of cars, that you do now. Yes, people still risk going, like, my former boss, he's deceased now, his wife, all their family is from Monterrey, she says she still goes. She takes the bus now because it's too dangerous to drive. She used to get a driver to come pick her up and take her, but now she says she takes the bus, but she's got to see her parents.

Geoffrey: yeah, my mom is basically in the **Same** situation, she just takes the bus now.

[long pause]

Sam: I'm sorry, you said you used to go to Mexico back and forth and you would go with your friends over there, so I imagine you danced a lot to Mexican music...

Odie: You know what, I never learned to dance.

Geoffrey: What?!

Odie: Never. My mom was an excellent dancer, but my dad wasn't. Now when I would go to weddings with my mother's family I would dance with my uncles at the weddings, but that was all the dancing I knew, I never learned to dance, isn't that weird? And I wanted so bad. After we got married I said "Kelly let's take a dancing lesson". He doesn't dance either so...

Geoffrey: They're offering lessons at the pan-am recreation center

[Michelle laughing]

Odie: Now, Patrick is a good dancer and so is my youngest daughter. They love swing dancing and stuff like that.

Geoffrey: so when you travelled back and forth from Reynosa, this was a strictly drinking endeavor?

Odie: Yes, yes... to all the places there. That's where most people went to have a good time.

Michelle: but back then it was safe...

Odie: Yes, Oh yeah...

Geoffrey: did you go to like, **Sam**'s?

Odie: yes, La Cucaracha. I don't remember all the places, but if you mention them, I'm sure I was there.

Geoffrey: that's weird that we went to the **Same** places.

Sam: what was the kind of music that you used to listen to?

Odie: kind of music?

Sam: the kind of music that was in style in your era

Odie: the Spanish?

Sam: the Spanish or English, which was the favorite or...

Odie: as I was growing up? When I was little, my parents always listened to music, Spanish music, and I remember a lot of the corridos that they used to listen to. Then as I got older, I liked all the pop music, whatever was popular back then, and I would just memorize them. Don't ask me to memorize my history book because I couldn't.

Michelle: but you sure could memorize a song...

Odie: Yes. I liked that. But I can't say that in my teenage years, I did much of listening to Spanish music. I did when I was little because my parents did. As I got older I listened to what I wanted I wanted to listen to.

Geoffrey: so you're no longer a fan of corridos?

Odie: I still like them, when I hear them, I think they're quite interesting, and I'll tell my husband "Oh, we used to listen to those when we were kids" and that kind of thing, brings back a lot of memories of my parents. Thanks for asking.

Lupita: as you got older what types of music did you listen to? Country? Pop?

Odie: Country, a little bit of Country, but mostly Pop. You didn't have these, what do they call them, the rappers? You didn't have any of that. You had Frank Sinatra, you had...what was that girl's name? Loretta Lynn.

Geoffrey: Were you around here for the Vietnam War?

Odie: I was in High school

Geoffrey: Oh really? Did you witness like all of the men disappear from the Valley? Did that happen?

Odie: No, there were a lot of people that disappeared, I mean, that left but I wasn't really involved with that, because like I said we lived in this tiny little town where everybody knew everybody. It's a small community and we were all practically related, so we were all there. But um, there wasn't that many right where I lived, but on the West side there was some school kids my age that did go to Vietnam and some died in Vietnam. Ricky Crossland, was one of my classmates. There's a street named after him.

Michelle: the walkout in Edcouch... did you have anything... did you hear about that?

Odie: No, I did hear about that at the time. I know some people that were in the walkout, but I couldn't understand it. What are they walking out for? I wasn't involved, but I did hear about it.

Geoffrey: What were they walking out for, by the way?

Odie: Well, the way I understood it, they walked out because they felt that they weren't having any representation. It was a lot of Hispanics that felt that the school was not representing them the way they should be represented. When I had my class reunion, twenty years later, that was the only class reunion that we had, I graduated in 63, so it must have been '83, and I went to it. The first thing, my counselor came up to me and said "and do you remember how we were so discriminated?" When? I never felt discriminated. I never did. Like I said, all of my friends were mostly White friends. We didn't have any Blacks. They probably would've been my best friends. But there just weren't any.

Geoffrey: Did Black people ever come to the Valley?

Odie: Who?

Geoffrey: Black people like African-Americans.

Odie: No. There again, when I was young, there was Rio Farms, I don't know if your familiar with Rio Farms. Rio Farms was like experimental operation. They did a lot of agriculture and stuff. One year, they must have had an abundance of crops and they needed people. So they brought a bunch of Black families into the community. They build this little corrugated homes and I figured it must've been awfully hot. I felt for these people because I just thought, "gosh, they live in"... I mean, we were hot and we had frame houses, can you imagine this corrugated little building? And it was like a little, I called it "a little concentration camp", because it was just all these little buildings... and then I would meet them at the grocery store. They used to shop at the **Same** place we would go. I would see all these tiny little kids, and they were just the cutest things. I'd look at the parents and I'd look at them and nobody looked like anybody, they all looked the **Same**, and I would worry. I must have been like 8 or nine years old or maybe even younger. I would wonder how in the world the parents could tell them apart. I couldn't, but I was such a stupid kid. I was just concerned for the little ones. I couldn't figure them out. I knew who my parents were, and I'm sure they knew their parents too. It's like people with blue eyes; I never thought that people with blue eyes could see? It's like they're blue...they can see?

Geoffrey: They can see?

Odie: I thought there's no way they could see, they're blue... but you know my grandmother had blue eyes, but then I didn't know her. She died when my dad was twelve years old. (inaudible)

Michelle: you were speaking about shopping. Did you ever feel segregation in the communities, because I

know in Weslaco, you could only shop, if you were Hispanic, you could shop only on a certain day

Odie: When did that happen? I didn't know that?

Michelle: I think that was in the 30's or 40's

Odie: Oh no. That would have been way before my time. But that's probably true I don't know

Geoffrey: one question that I wanted to know more about was the relationship of the Norquests to other prominent families in the Valley?

Odie: I don't know so much about prominent families. I know that since the Norquests were musicians, when they got this house, they used to have dances there. His grandfather was a fiddler, so once they heard his grandfather was going to have music, everybody would come. We found this out from a lady that we interviewed because of the house, Mrs. Weaver. She said everybody came, it was word of mouth, would come and dance and have a good time. My husband's grandfather would fiddle and my husband's father would play the piano. They would just enjoy themselves because of the music.

Geoffrey: More specifically, like the Closner's, or the Shary's or the McAllen's, is there any kind of interaction that you're aware of?

Odie: No, my father-in-law probably knew them, and Kelly probably knows some stories. I would not know about that. I'm sure he knows. They weren't friends to speak of, it was more business related.

Michelle: Those were earlier families that had already been established.

Odie: Yes, exactly.

Geoffrey: So, what do you Norquests do nowadays?

Odie: What do we do? We walk to eat.

[laughing]

Odie: Well, let's see. I can tell you what our day is like... We get up, we walk to What-A-Burger.

Michelle: Really?!

Geoffrey: Which What-A-Burger?

Odie: The one on University. We walk over there and we walk back and, well before that, we go over to the church and check church mail and check whatever goes on in church, and then we have errands to run and grocery store, this and that. It's kind of our typical morning. Then we come home, I'm always watching TV. He reads all the time. But I watch TV.

Geoffrey: so I take it you two are retired?

Odie: Yes, yes. I still work. I've had this little job for many years, and it's only half a day. Most recently I've been working for a doctor's office; just because I want mad money for my grandkids.

Michelle: how many grandchildren do you have?

Odie: two. A girl and a boy.

Geoffrey: that's nice; you finally have a male offspring in the family

[coughing]

Lupita: How old are your grandchildren?

Odie: The oldest is three going on twenty; she'll have her fourth birthday February 4th. And the little one will be two in December.

Geoffrey: Before you and your husband retired, what did you dedicate yourself to, what was your career?

Odie: I was an administrator for a five doctor practice. The doctor that started the practice died of pancreatic cancer a week before my mom.

Geoffrey: Oh, okay, the boss that you mentioned earlier... and your husband

Odie: He worked for the Texas Employment Commission for 33 years. The day before they changed the name to Texas Workforce, he retired.

Geoffrey: so he missed out on the Texas Workforce excitement?

Odie: He was glad he did. So many things changed after that.

Geoffrey: so was there maybe an event that really flooded his office where everyone was all of a sudden unemployed?

Odie: Unemployed? I don't know. I'm sure that during the freeze and that kind of things would have impacted

unemployment. The veterans after they came back from the war. He was one of the veterans' counselor for several years and that had impacted his work as well.

Michelle: have you ever found any artifacts around the property?

Odie: I haven't. I wish I did. But I haven't. I think Patrick has found some stuff, some tools mainly and things like that. But they've probably been there from the time when they were farming and stuff like that

Geoffrey: So I guess, question 20. Based on your experience here in the Valley, what do you think, I mean because you know we are very economically underserved, what do you think, based on your life in the Valley, that people should know to grow as a community.

Odie: I think a lot of it. You have to be informed on what's going on in your community. You have to know the people that you voted into office and how they are helping your community. Also, I think you volunteer. There's so much to learn through volunteering, I belong to several different organizations that I volunteer for because I want to be informed, and how do you get informed if you don't get involved?

Geoffrey: so is there like a particular cause or issue that you really support strongly?

Odie: I support all of them strongly. Yes. I'm the secretary for the Rainbow Room. Laura Bush inaugurated all the Rainbow Rooms in the State of Texas. She came to our inauguration back in 93. The date may not be right.

Geoffrey: Oh, so you've been there for a long time.

Odie: And it's in conjunction with Child Protective Services, we provide a lot of support for the CPS counselors who go in into homes whenever there's a report of child abuse or neglect. They have to go in, step in and remove that child. They go into the Rainbow Room and they fit that child with clothing, books, book satchels, or whatever they need to get them back into a regular routine. As a matter of fact we're going to have a 5k run on Saturday; the rehabilitation center is doing it for us. It's to help support the Rainbow Room. So there's that, and the Porciones Society. I've been the treasurer for that since it started back in 83. They've never changed officers, they've never changed the treasurer, they've always changed officers, but I've always been the treasurer. And then the other one of course is church. I'm involved in church in different areas, I'm the financial secretary for the church.

Geoffrey: so the Porciones society, what do they do?

Odie: basically, they can help you research, tell you how to research your family roots, how to get started.

Geoffrey: specifically Edinburg?

Odie: Anywhere. I guess the first thing is to do like we're doing, oral history. You go talk to your dad, your mother, your grandmother, your great grandmother, whoever relatives, aunts, uncles that know your history, who knows your family and go back as far as you can. Once you do that, you start putting the pieces together. So where do I go from here? I think the internet has a lot of that stuff. Some of it is good and some of its not. You really have to do the research yourself. We used to go to Mier, Ciudad Mier, where all books are there and do the research the research from there.

Geoffrey: They have like a really old church, like a historical church.

Odie: Yes, Yes, that is where we used to go. That is where I am originally from.

Geoffrey: From, Mier, that city was evacuated recently.

Odie: Yes

Geoffrey: For the kind of drug lords.

Odie: Yes

Geoffrey: Yeah, my uncle actually took values, some supplies over there, 600 pounds of like foods and stuff. So presumably you have researched your family history?

Odie: No. Actually, I haven't. My husband has. My husband has written 5 journals on the Peña family dating back to 1600

Geoffrey: And this is your family?

Odie: My, yeah my dad's side.

Geoffrey: The 1600 though, and they are all originally from this area?

Odie: Pretty much. They come actually from Spain. If you go back that far enough, that is where they originated, but most of them are from this area.

Geoffrey: Really, anything interesting we've hear of them? Historical figures that we might of heard of?

Odie: Yeah, as a matter of fact he was just telling me the other day, that I was related to Alonso De Leon?

Geoffrey: Ponce?

Michelle: Ponce De Leon?

Odie: Somebody like that. (It was Alonzo de Leon. He was the leader of the expedition into Texas in the Late 1600's that founded the French settlement of La Salle.)

Geoffrey: That was exciting. So you're famous.

[laughing]

Odie: Its interesting because he will says, "Do you know Tish Hinojosa?", yes, well my wife is related to Tish, 3rd 4th 6th 7th generation, but since he's got all the geneollogy, he makes it sound like we are first cousins.

[laughter] It's interesting to hear talk about it.

Geoffrey: That's like his hobby, genealogy.

Odie: Yes, his mother had done genealogy, did it for her side of the family, the Nordmeyer Family. I don't know if anyone ever did it for, the Norquest side of the family. When his dad was dying, he felt he needed to do something to keep him busy. And he started doing my genealogy. We would go visit my dad and my mom, and he would start asking questions. My dad he used to tell us about las porciones and this and that. And my mom would say, I don't know where I came from. It's like I was raised from the ground. She didn't have any clue about her family history. So he started researching her roots and that is how he it got interesting in doing it.

Geoffrey: In doing research from the Norquest, um, we found that they have porciones 69, 71 and 70 here in Edinburg, so that's pretty interesting.

Odie: Yeah, I don't know. I guess maybe the way the porciones would run. But he was showing me some abstracts? Or something, that showed where it stops in Edinburg and that was quite interesting. He always wondered where, or why. Apparently there was some, business dealings going on at the time, about buying these portions so it was never part of the porcion, it just stops. I thought that was quite interesting. I worked for an attorney and, her dad used to be an attorney and we found abstracts and deeds form 1890's that are hand written.

Geoffrey: Yeah...

Odie: Did you see that?

Geoffrey: Yesterday, we saw Chris, ah, I couldn't read that. I thought I was on to something, or what.

Odie: Yes

Michelle: They are very beautiful

Odie: They are, yes

Michelle: And where did your mother and father meet? How did they meet?

Odie: Where did they meet? They met at their hometown. It was in Arcabus.

You know about the arcabus?

Michelle: No

Odie: The military men lost their arcabus there. The town didn't have a name so everyone used to say, you know, where we lost the arcabus. So that's how they started calling it Arcabus.

Geoffrey: Sorry, I have no idea of what is arcabus

Odie: Oh, oh, I am sorry. It's a gun. A rifle, it's a big thing. Yes, So they always talked about where they found it. My mom always said that she was going to marry my dad, because they were not related and everybody in small towns always intermarry because that is all there was. Well, years later my husband had to find, out that they are related. Distant relatives but they are still related.

Sam: So your parents are both Hispanics?

Odie: Yes, Son puros mexicanos, todos. Todos somos puros mexicanos.

Michelle: Did you feel any difference, since I don't mean to say, but your very faired skinned, and compared to other Mexicans, did you see any differences in treatment?

Odie: No. I never did, maybe that's why the whites treated me so nice. [laughing] I never thought of it that way until now that you mentioned it, I never did. But it interesting that you mentioned that because I have friends, very close friends that, half of their family is light complected the other half is dark complected. This friend of mine, mi comadre, Say they would go up north to pick cotton, they used to travel to Michigan a lot, that when they stop on the way to eat, half of their family could go into the restaurant, but the other half couldn't.

Michelle: Um, they had to stay in the truck or something.

Odie: What? Let's see, we never traveled outside of the valley, particularly so we never experienced anything like that.

Lupita: You said that when you were younger you migrated with your family.

Odie: No, not really. We did a little bit, but not as a regular thing. If we were going to pick cotton, we'd pick cotton here or we would help my uncle that had farmland. It wasn't my uncle. It was my cousin's father, no father-in-law. They had a farm and he'd call us and asked us to help het with the crop that need harvesting. So we would go in a week or weekend and helped out.

Lupita: And help out.

Odie: Yes.

Lupita: But never out of the state.

Odie: No! Oh no! We were all girls, we were seven girls. [laughing]

Geoffrey: Seven girls?

Odie: Seven girls.

Lupita: No brothers?

Odie: No! My mother always used to say, "they will come later". [laughter]

Geoffrey: Yeah those seven girls

Odie: "No mas siete, ni un macho", my mother would say. No she says they will come later.

Lupita: Wow all sisters! You've got all your sisters? There all here in Edinburg?

Odie: No! I have a sister that retired from school district in Dallas. And one sister lives in Mercedes, McAllen, Pharr, I and Monte Alto. My oldest sister Sarah in Monte Alto.

Sam: Does your husband speak both English and Spanish?

Odie: He learned it from the Mexican people that used to come and work here.

Geoffrey: Any Sweden?

Odie: Yes.

Sam: And so he speaks with your dad that is how he got a lot of information.

Odie: Yes! Yes, he used to, well my dad spoke English but not all that well. He could probably speak it better than read. It's funny because he used to work at RioFarms. He says that uh, whenever he'd answer the phone when nobody would be there, he would say "hello", and they would start rattling English and then he would say, "no si no mas el arranque tengo bueno". [everyone laughing] Just a hello that is all he could say. He couldn't really communicate. As he got older he could say words, speak a little better but not fluent.

Geoffrey: What was the life like growing up with seven sisters in the valley? Half of the town of Monte Alto.

Odie: Well it was really nice, because I got to wear my older sister's clothing. But my older sister, not the oldest, two sisters above me, was a seamstress, and she used to sew from the time she was twelve years old. And, she would look at a catalog, and we'd tell her hey we wanted this, dress. And she would get the material and do it exactly.

Geoffrey: Really

Odie: Exactly!

Geoffrey: that must have been pretty convenient.

Odie: Yes it was. My mom was also a seamstress. My mom would stay up late at night whenever we had costumes for school, or needed a new dresses because we were going to be at the Ty Cob Show. You all didn't know about the Ty Cob Show...

Lupita: What is the Ty Cob Show?

Odie: It was a like a talent show. I think our school had been invited to sing. I must had been in the fourth grade or something. So we all had to have our new dresses.

Geoffrey: And did you have to perform at the Ty Cob Show?

Odie: Of course!

Geoffrey: You did?

Odie: Yes

Geoffrey: What was the gig? What was your talent?

Odie: I had no talent. No. It was just a group, we did a group song. Somebody invited us. We would go, maybe a teacher, which had been invited to go sing at the Ty Cob Show. But there was a gal by the name of Irma Garza, and then there was a gal Sue Garza, she had a dress shop, a wedding, what do you call it? wedding shop?

Michelle: A bridal shop

Odie: Bridal shop, in McAllen that also used to perform. I think it was mostly singing.

Geoffrey: How well did your parents acculturate to the US? In other words, did you study a lot of Mexican foods? Are they trying to fit into American society?

Odie: No, we didn't eat the mole and stuff like that. No, see my parents were here from la frontera, and they were meat eaters. Chicken and meat, but never, that other stuff. My mom had an ulcer so she baked everything. So we all ate whatever she ate, just baked food.

Geoffrey: Baked food that was the bright idea.

Odie: Baked food, but we never ate mole. My sisters usually would cook on Sunday. We always had a Sunday dinner and a lot of the times we would invite our pastor to come over and eat with us. Meat loafs. I remember, my sister used to make French fries and she would make little tiny cubes, that was the thing with the meat loaf back then, I guess. You know, this is the way we ate and then a vegetable.

Geoffrey: So

Odie: But I remember that after school, my mother always had big pot of beans and fresh flour tortillas. We would eat that for our snack, when we got home from school. That was a given. She always had two cups of beans in one of these jarros. [laughing]

Geoffrey: Can't go wrong with that. So meals in your household were like a family in the community, that you invited your pastors and stuff.

Odie: We used to just plan it on Sunday. We were so many it was kind of hard, but we always managed to invite the pastor over. He would come alone or he would come along with his family. Yes, my mom used to make corn tortillas by hand with the matate. She would get the corn, and then she would boil it or whatever she needed to do. Then she would cook it and then she would put the cal. (lime) She would do everything. Then she would get the metate and would grind the cooked corn. She had the molinito.

Lupita: Any of you continue it, the tradition?

Odie: No I just have her metate out there, but I don't do that. [laughing]

Lupita: Are there traditions that you and your family have or had that you?

Odie: No. Actually, we never did have traditions per say. With Kelly's family for Christmas Eve, they always ate oyster stew, that was their Swedish tradition and his mom always made the coffee cakes that was the German

tradition. When we got married, we continued that tradition. Before we go to church, I fix the **Same** recipe that she had. Cook the oyster stew: oysters, the celery, onions, salt and pepper and butter, in a big pot of milk. It's delicious! And then when we got married, we started to include the tamales. [coughing] So now we eat oyster stew, tamales and coffee cakes. She always had the table all fixed up, nice. I used to do that too, until church got to be harder and harder to plan a meal around, because we have choir rehearsals and have to prepared for the choir service and all. It makes it difficult. [coughing]

Geoffrey: So you've been involved with the church your entire life?

Odie: Yes I have.

Geoffrey: How is the church changed from when you were ten?

Odie: It's gotten better, Yes! When I was little, sermons were so boring because I didn't understand them. It's strange that you mention that, because when I was little, seven years old, we had this minister that was our pastor that was a missionary, several years later, he transferred to the church here. When I heard him preach, I thought wow! He's grown so much! [laughing] His sermons were great!

Geoffrey: And in terms of the congregation, has that increased, decrease and build character?

Odie: Yes, very much so. We now have a female pastor, which we didn't have before. When I was young and going to church, the ministers would say, we don't do the sign of the cross. We don't do anything that looks catholic. We don't want people to think that we still have catholic traditions. But now, this pastor believes in doing the sign of the cross. Believes in first communion for 18 month babies; those that sit and kneel and stretch their hands to receive the Sacraments. So we do a lot of the traditional that we had gotten away from. We never had bells during the words of institution. But we do all of that now. And everybody accepts it now. I think because of that, we had so many intermarriages. As far as traditions, they accept that better then before. A lot of them are Hispanic and are from the catholic community.

Geoffrey: You know that seems kind of strange, that your parents, were your parents with you?

Odie: No! My mom was catholic and my dad was Pentecostal.

Geoffrey: Really!

Odie: Yes!

Geoffrey: Was he early adopted of being Pentecostal?

Odie: His father is a Pentecostal preacher.

Geoffrey: Ok, I mean, I mean, I know. There are some Pentecostals in Mexico, but you know, it's mostly Catholics.

Odie: Yes!

Geoffrey: How did your father come to accept Pentecost? Your grandpa?

Odie: Well, don't know. See he died long before I was born and before my dad was ever married. Yes, he was a Pentecostal preacher and when we moved into the United States. I always said that it was the Catholics, the nuns didn't like u. We were too many and too rowdy. So, the missionaries would come and pick us up. We used to have Sunday School in the school auditorium. The missionaries were trying to reach everyone. They would go from home to home, house to house. We always said that mom just wanted to get rid of all of us so she could get rest, whomever came first, we would go. The Lutheran missionaries had this van and they would take us in this van to Sunday School. And that's how we became Lutheran. We never went to any church prior to....

Geoffrey: So the church came to here.

Odie: Yes, the church came to us.

Geoffrey: So your mom wanted to get you out of the house, so how was the living arrangement, what were, did you have a big house or a small house? To accommodate so many people.

Odie: Well, initially we just had a house probably not much bigger than this one.

Geoffrey: With nine people

Odie: Yes! With nine people.

Geoffrey: Wow!

Odie: I remember, my parents had a bed. They brought their mattress from Mexico. I think my mom had made that mattress. Yes! so either they had a bed, I don't know, I don't remember. We would sleep on the floor, we would sleep on the kitchen floor; we would sleep wherever there was room, yes. And then as we got older, and we were able to work, my dad extended the living quarters. He built another room and then kept extending the house until we had enough room for everybody. Then my sisters started marring off, so then we had more rooms. Sometimes we had two twin beds so we would sleep two to a bedroom.

Geoffrey: So that was a relief, once your sisters started getting married.

Lupita: So as far as the plumbing, everything was outside?

Odie: Yes! That's right. All the plumbing was outside. Electricity. we didn't have electricity.

Geoffrey: No?

Odie: No!

Geoffrey: So how old were you when the light came in?

Odie: I don't remember

Lupita: How did you cook with brazas?

Odie: No, actually my mother never liked that, to have brazas, because we were so many kids to have an open fire. We used kerosene lamps. I remember that when we were sick with coughs, she would give us a little lump of sugar with kerosene and ask us to take it.

Geoffrey: Kerosene?

Odie: Yes! To take it to make us feel better.

Geoffrey: That was it? Did it work?

Odie: [laughing] that's all we had. Yes! Yes! We all liked it. because of the sugar, I'm sure. [laughing] We did a lot of herbal medicine. When my mom didn't know what to do, she would call her, call? There was no calling! She would write her dad and say one of the kids is sick and I don't know what to do. My mom lost a daughter to dysentery. She was the second from the oldest child. So she was real scared when we'd get sick. She didn't know what to do, because she was brand new here in America. She would write to her dad, my granddad. It would take forever to get a letter back and forth. So he would tell her what to do once she would get his response.

Geoffrey: In Mexico, she would write in Mexico?

Odie: Yes! She would write.

Geoffrey: How did the mail travel?

Odie: Slow [laughing].

Geoffrey: What was the conveyance?

Odie: Basically, if someone was going to Mexico, because people used to travel to Mexico all the time. They would go get supplies on regular bases and visit relatives across the border.

Geoffrey: So it was something like a messenger.

Odie: That's what happened when my grandfather died, my uncle was up there, and he came and told my mom that my grandpa was very sick. Her dad was very, very sick and she needed to go up there. So then at night we packed and went. Of course he had already died. They didn't tell her that until we got there. So that's how a lot of times people coming and going would communicate.

Geoffrey: Did you ever, like you mentioned both sugar and kerosene, did you ever see a curandera?

Odie: No.

Geoffrey: No?

Odie: No, I think my mom had enough remedies [laughing]

Lupita: Do you still have those remedies? Do you use them today?

Odie: No, I don't I know my sister sometimes does. I will call my sister and ask her what do or what to use. She loves to do the susto, (prayers and remedies).

Lupita: Oh yes.

Odie: She knows how to do that. She, like the egg and all that stuff...I remember, my mom, used to cook all

kinds of teas for us. Like manzanilla, she'd grow the stuff. We had it there like a regular plant. So whenever you get sick from the stomach or something she always had manzanilla, and other herbs.

Michelle: Or an aloe-vera plant.

Odie: Yes, that kind of stuff. It was always, there, just part of the garden.

Michelle: Has any of your family ever been or have they used midwives? Were midwives used a lot back then?

Odie: No, but my grandmother was a midwife. My grandmother lived with us back in 1953. And she was a midwife for the people there in Monte Alto. She delivered a lot of babies, but she always made sure that, because I worry about these people from Matamoros and Brownsville with all these things about needing passports and having the proper documentation and that they couldn't get them because they didn't have the proper documentation, she gave them some type of paper to take to the courthouse and make sure they got the archives or whatever.

Geoffrey: What was the mortality rate like back then?

Odie: Oh no! She delivered all of her daughter's babies mostly in Mexico. The only one that didn't get delivered by her was me. because my mom was out of town. I wasn't supposed to be born until a later date. So she thought that she would have time to make her trip and back, not here, but in Mexico. Where was she? Oh at Las Aldamas, she was visiting someone at Las Aldamas and that's where I was born.

Geoffrey: Where is that?

Odie: Mexico, somewhere.

Geoffrey: Do you know the state?

Odie: Nuevo Leon.

Lupita: So were you born at home?

Odie: I don't know I suspect I was. But I don't know?

Sam: After Mr. Norquest passed on, was the land distributed among the children he left behind?

Odie: Yes, pretty much. After he passed, it went all to my mother-in-law. Then when she died that's when the land got distributed. They used to have stock. The kids would buy shares. Basically it was to support them. Their income was so small, Social security. They were farmers so their social security was really small. So in order for them to a lively hood, they sold stock to their kids. So that's how... depending on the number of shares. They formed a corporation. After it was dissolved, when she passed, that's when everyone got their shares. My mother-in-law gave stock to all of my children, except the youngest. She was not born yet when my father-in-law died. They were doing that before they dissolved their corporation. So, everybody has a little piece of the land. Some very small, some little portions.

Sam: So you still meet somewhere? A family reunion or something? The Norquest family?

Odie: Not so much the Norquest family. They were much older. My father-in-law was born in 1901 and my mother in law was born in 1905. The Norquest didn't really have much family here. The Nordmeyer's came from Illinois and they had a lot of family here. They were a large families. They are always having family reunions. We used to have them regularly. But now this Saturday some of their relatives are coming to have a mini Nordmeyer family reunion. So were going to get together with them.

Geoffrey: As a family? So there's not really any young Norquests?

Odie: Yes, there's some young Norquests like my daughter. My daughter is going to be 30 in February. But she's in Illinois, no Iowa, she's in Iowa. Yes and Caroline and of course our grandchildren, but they're Vazquez.

Geoffrey: They're Vazquez?

Odie: Yes. Christine kept her single, maiden name.

Geoffrey: What about your family? Do you have a large extended family as well?

Odie: Yes. I have so many first cousins that I don't even know. I'm serious.

Geoffrey: Your mother also had a large family?

Odie: There was like 12, 13, and if that wasn't enough they adopted one, on my mother's side of the family. Yes and pretty much I think everybody. I think she only has one sister left. No two sisters left. I think that's it.

Geoffrey: Is your mom still alive?

Odie: My mom died in, it's going to be three years.

Geoffrey: Oh so it's recent? How old was she?

Odie: Ninety-five. Yes, in 2008 when she died.

Lupita: And her sisters are in Mexico?

Odie: I'm sorry?

Lupita: Her sisters are in Mexico, the ones who are still living?

Odie: One is in Mexico, and the other lives in Weslaco.

Lupita: Oh so you still see one of them?

Odie: Yes. I see her. Actually my mom is buried at Highland Memorial Park in Weslaco. So both my parents are buried there. We go to the cemetery on birthdays, Christmas, all Saints day and special occasions. We just drive to the cemetery and afterwards we go see our aunt.

Geoffrey: So do you get along well with your side of the family? Do you guys meet a lot? Communicate?

Odie: Oh yes. We get along fine. We just we never see them. Everybody's got their own jobs and family. But we get together. As soon as my aunt knows we are coming, she wants to go get cabrito. She'll wants to fix a big feast and she is already in her 80's. We don't let her know we are coming she'll just be rushing to get things done for us. So what we do, we just won't tell her. We just drop in.

Michelle: Surprise?

Odie: Yes. Sorry, we were over at the cemetery so we just stop in for a minute. It says here, how did you dispose of garbage and sewage?

Geoffrey: I think we made these questions thinking that we were going to get like...we didn't know who exactly we were going to interview.

Odie: Well I'd tell you when we got married we didn't have any garbage.

Geoffrey: So what did you do with the garbage?

Odie: What we did, we collected the garbage, then we had these barrels, and we would put the garbage in the barrels and then when they were full, we would take it to the city dump or the county dump or whatever.

Geoffrey: I used to live in the country and I would see a lot of people just burning it, I guess.

Odie: They have a incinerator, that pit over there and that's where we used to do burn a lot of paper and stuff. But we didn't really burn cans and bottles and things like that. They did use it for barbequing and also for burning...incinerator.

Geoffrey: And what about your sewage? You mentioned you have a septic tank...did that ever get overflow, get stuffed up? Because once a septic tank is...

Odie: Yes, there's companies that come and clean them.

Geoffrey: I guess this wasn't so long ago.

Sam: You mentioned you used to get your water from pumps or something before, way back?

Odie: I'm not sure how it worked with the cistern. But I know that we didn't used to drink from it. Now where I lived before I got married, there were neighbors that had pumps and they had some really good water. We used to go get water from them. There was a time, I don't know if there was a shortage of water, or what, but I remember the water being salty. So everybody was drilling wells and pumping their own water.

Michelle: Do remember the date, the time, the year?

Odie: It must have been in the 50s. I know Pharr still has awful water unless it's changed. My sister lives there.

Geoffrey: did you ever go to the river? To fish or swim?

Odie: The river?

Geoffrey: The river.

Sam: Padre Island? Or the river?

Geoffrey: I'm taking about the river.

Michelle: Or maybe even Delta Lake?

Odie: No. We used to go to Delta Lake for the picnics. They used to have huge Easter picnics and everybody from all over would come. But there was that accident with amoebas when a young girl from Edinburg died because she contracted the amoebas while. They closed it down to the public. It's hasn't been the **Same** since.

They have tried to restore it. But it's never really has.

Geoffrey: I guess when you were a kid the biggest city in the valley was...McAllen, or Brownsville? Were these...places you would go to? You would never hang out in the big city of McAllen?

Odie: Where would we go? We would go to Elsa to buy groceries. But as I got older, was working I'd go to McAllen and do all my shopping there. I used to go to Weslaco and shop because I worked there. Before I got married, and I used to do my shopping there. We had a little grocery store in Monte Alto, my parents used to get their groceries there.

Geoffrey: And that sounds like Elsa and Monte Alto they used to I guess have more people or more economic activity and they've since kind of stagnated, what was that attributed to?

Odie: I don't really know, but I suspect that the big cities took over. Then they had more big stores taken over the little ones. I know there were family owned grocery stores and businesses that started dying down when the bigger companies came

Geoffrey: like H.E.B.

Odie: H.E.B., Piggily Wiggly

Michelle: Piggily Wiggly. I was just going to say if that was one of the first...

Geoffrey: Did that change life in the Valley with the advent of the H.E.B.?

Odie: Yeah. Bigger, bigger business. And yet I'm surprised that some have still survived. But some of the grocery stores did close down.

Geoffrey: Because I'm thinking of towns like Santa Rosa, like there used to be a movie theater and now it's just like...

Odie: I remember in Monte Alto we used to walk to school. Talk about walking to school a mile. I was six years old and I was walking to school, about a mile. There were theaters on the side of the street where I used to go and we could only see the pictures on the outside. My parents wouldn't let us even look at movie theaters.

Geoffrey: Do you remember the first movie you saw in the theater?

Odie: I probably saw. What is that guy called? What is it...Billy Graham or the other one?

Geoffrey: Oh it was a religious film?

Odie: Yes. It was.

Sam: Was it here at the Citrus in Edinburg?

Odie: Yes.

Geoffrey: The Power of Positive Thinking, is that it?

Odie: Yes. Who is it...Vincent Peal. Norman Vincent Peal.

Geoffrey: He had like a huge church in New York.

Odie: Yes. They were giving the life story of him and how he got married and how he started his church. Somehow I wound up going to that, for my first movie. And I remember Doris Day. A movie...If a man answers, you are suppose to hang up if a man answers. (I may have my movies mixed up)

Geoffrey: So your parents completely, they weren't in the idea of movie theaters?

Odie: No. That was my father's Pentecostal background. No. We could not go to the movie theaters.

Geoffrey: Was it just theaters or was it films?

Odie: Films. Any films. We could watch T.V. The neighbor had T.V. so, we could go and watch it, but not to go into a theater. I was already in high school when I watched my first movie.

Geoffrey: Really your first movie?

Odie: Yes. I think I was already out of high school when I went to the theater here at the Citrus.

Geoffrey: Did you develop a love for movies afterwards?

Odie: No I think I always liked movies because I watched them on T.V. I wasn't too much into soaps but I did watch a few.

Geoffrey: So your dad went passing his entire life and just was did not like movies at all?

Odie: I'm sorry?

Geoffrey: Did he ever get into movies? Your father? In real life? Or did he?

Odie: No, my mom, my dad, never watched movies. They never when to a theater. My older sister never went

to a theater. She was Pentecostal. She was brought up Pentecostal. Her cousin was Pentecostal. So they used to hang around and went to church together.

Geoffrey: So for entertainment what did your parents do?

Odie: They didn't do anything. They worked. There wasn't any time for entertainment.

Yes. Everybody worked. Everybody had jobs. Either cleaned house, you cooked, you did that kind of stuff.

Lupita: They didn't gather relatives and play music or anything?

Odie: Not my parents. No. My parents weren't into music. Not like the Norquest's. No.

Sam: Was Edinburg's towns square very popular back in the 50s, 60s?

Odie: I'm sure it was. I just wasn't around.

Sam: Oh ok.

Geoffrey: Seems like a pretty long drive from Edcouch from, Monte Alto, to Reynosa. How did you get your first car?

Odie: I had a 1966 car. And that was my car. I think I was 20, 21 years old. I was already out of high school and so, I used to go to Mercedes because I worked in Weslaco and I had friends from Mercedes. So I used to go to Mercedes, pick my friends up and then we would take off.

Geoffrey: Did you pay for your own car?

Odie: Yeah.

Geoffrey: Really?

Odie: \$2,700. Tax and everything, brand new car.

Sam: What kind of car was that?

Odie: I don't remember. It was one of these big ol' sedans. My dad didn't want me to get a little car because he would say, "No, you're going to go kill yourself and you need a big car to protect you." So I had this big ol' "granny" car. Yes.

Geoffrey: So what job did you have that got you that car? Still medical administration?

Odie: I was working for, as a matter of fact, do you all know Thurman Eye? He's a, Doctor Thurman back in 68 I think. He had an optician in his office and they were looking for someone to help in the new office. He was going to move that office into another. The new laws didn't allow him to have an optician ophthalmologist in the **Same** office. So they moved and then I applied and I got the job. So I worked there for about two and a half years before I got married. And before that I worked in a pharmacy.

Geoffrey: So you've always been somehow in the medical field?

Odie: Yes. I don't know why. I never thought I wanted to be anything like a nurse and yet I always worked in doctor's offices. Yes. I worked for a doctor Stewart, which is now my boss' uncle. He was a surgeon here in Edinburg.

Geoffrey: So I take it you never went for medical treatment in Mexico?

Odie: Oh no. We never did. No, my parents didn't believe in that. We saw Dr. Dewitt. He was the local doctor in Elsa. That's who we used to go see. Then there was a doctor Diver that came in later. He was across the street from highway 107 and 88 something like that. Do you know those people?

Sam: No. I know the area, 88 and 107.

Odie: and that's where we used to go.

Geoffrey: did they do house calls?

Odie: No. No that was probably earlier on.

Geoffrey: there's actually still a doctor in Mission that still does house calls.

Odie: is that right? That nice, I like the idea.

Geoffrey: you guys have any other questions?

Lupita: well I was going to ask about, when you were growing up in Monte Alto did your parents own the property where you grew up? Is it still there, and you still have the house?

Odie: Yes, No, actually we just sold it after mom died. She left it to us. Nobody wanted it, not even my sister that lives there. We had always said that whenever we sold the house or if my oldest sister wanted it she could have it. So basically what we did is was turned around and give her the proceeds from the sale of the house.

Geoffrey: did you live like in a neighborhood? Or was it rural?

Odie: Yes. It's a neighborhood.

This transcription, approved and edited by Marie Sleeth and Carrol Norquest Jr., contains minor orthographical changes from the original transcription done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

This interview was done with Carrol Norquest, Jr. (Kelly) and Marie Sleeth, the eldest son and daughter of the Norquest family. The group doing the interview included Sandra Salinas, Amanda de la Fuente, Eduardo Robles, and Miguel Gutierrez of Group G in the class *Discovering the RGV*. This interview segment was conducted as an indoor interview with Marie Sleeth at first, and then later moved onto a tour with Carrol Norquest, Jr. of the family's property on Sugar and Chapin Rd. in Edinburg, Texas. Themes that were focused on throughout the interview were archaeological, biological and geological matters of the property, but there were oral histories, and historical matters of the family brought to life in this wonderful interview.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I know Marie has, and I know my daughter Caroline [Twist] over in the big house she and her husband have been (wind) and then my wife has been contacted. So, anyways. [Pause] Well we'll uh, we'll just go on, go on over there.

Amanda De La Fuente: [distantly heard] It's kind of windy.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: She can tell you whatever she wants

Miguel Gutierrez: (laughter) Thank you sir.

Sandra Salinas: (laughter) Sounds great, that's what we're here for.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea well, originally when they was talking about this she said, no I don't remember much when I was a kid. Or when I was- and no I don't remember much back in those days. And uh I said well, after a few little questions and uh, you might start remembering more then you want.

Sandra Salinas: (giggles)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So anyways after she's thought about it for about three or four months, why I- when she came down for a visit I said "Do you- would you like to do it?" She says, "Yea, I'll do it!"

Sandra Salinas: Great!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So, everybody gets just a little bit nervous you know, what in the world, what in the world, do I know? Or what in the world- uh of uh- of importance would I remember? "I wouldn't know what to say," they say. So.

Sandra Salinas: It's funny how things like this bring up such memories right?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea. This little house right here, just while we are kind of waiting for her, just to- for information -of course this was a farm. This house here was originally put in for ah- After World War II for a uh- German family, a refugee family to come and live. And they uh, they were here, uh- let's see that was right after the- after World War II, in the late 40's and uh, my father sponsored this family. They were refugees all over Europe you know, and they were ethnic Germans, they had been driven out of Poland by the communists and-

Sandra Salinas: (sympathetic) Oh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and they were in refugee camps over there. So anyway this family, the Templin family uh, my father sponsored them and the oldest son was going to work here on the- on the farm, which he did. So my dad built the little house here for them to live in and then uh they lived in that ah for many, ah- many years. Until, there were five kids, they all grew up and uh- the oldest one became a teacher of English in the high school eventually, she was my age. And then the younger one was a mathematics tea- one of the others was a mathematics teacher ah- in the school district for many years until he retired, then ah another one ah fought in Vietnam and he's totally disabled from that. And uh, so forth anyway they had a history. So- Anyway. Then later on after they moved out, why my wife and I, re- uh re- uh, [pause] fixed it -fixed it up again, we moved in with our two little daughters. (Laughter) and then we built the house next door; well later on we rented it out and so forth, now we are just using it as a guest house, we got a lot of relatives and they come and visit and all. Let me go see if she's ready- [long pause]

Marie Sleeth: [distant laughter]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: This is- this is Marie.

Sandra Salinas: Pleasure to meet you. Pleasure, My name is Sandra; this is Amanda de la Fuente, Miguel Gutierrez, Eduardo Robles, and Eloise -Eloise I forgot your last name.

Eduardo Robles: Hi, pleasure.

Marie Sleeth: Eloise

Eloise Montemayor: Montemayor.

Sandra Salinas: Montemayor! There we go! (Laughter)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Russ was out here about an hour ago I guess, I gave him a bunch of arrowheads that we've collected here. And he's taking them over there so you guys will be looking at that.

Sandra Salinas: Oh that's great! That's great, maybe we can help identify them for you!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [Faintly heard] she's got some...she had some of the other relics [walking indoors]

Sandra Salinas: Ohhh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: so she's... now.

Marie Sleeth: These are Aunt Virginia's bowls.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh they're Virginia's bowls. Oh ok I was wondering.

Marie Sleeth: That [inaudible] belongs here though.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Very good, well, I'll just, I'll just leave them with you Marie.

Marie Sleeth: Ok, do you want to- I got a bunch of chairs. The uhm-

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Nice to meet you all.

Group: You to, sir.

Sandra Salinas: They are going to set up the uhm, the camera.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [in background] Marie...

Marie Sleeth: Oh a camera! O my goodness, I didn't put on-! What Kelly?-

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [faintly heard] if you need anything give me a call.

Marie Sleeth: Ok. That's my chair over there and it needs to be turned so that I can see you all.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. Ok so we will be sitting in this area?

Marie Sleeth: Yea, I was thinking that. I don't- I don't- want to be sitting on one of these chairs...

Sandra Salinas: That's great, that's great we can do that. Uhm, in the meantime while they are setting up the uh, tripod what we'll go ahead and do is just go ahead and fill out some consent forms that we need to fill out...

Marie Sleeth: Ok.

Sandra Salinas: ...for um the course. Let me just um. [Pause]

Marie Sleeth: [In background] turn that chair around. Is that your first one?

Sandra Salinas: Yes!

Marie Sleeth: So this is practice!

Sandra Salinas: No, we're just the best group! (Laughter) We joke with the others all the time! (Laughter) Ok and Miguel I gave you your paper, right?

Miguel Gutierrez: Uh, yeah; it's right here.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. Eddie, you got yours. Mandy did I give you yours?

Mandy de la Fuente: Yes.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. I also printed out a copy of the questions,.

Marie Sleeth: Oh ok.

Sandra Salinas: Um if we don't get to all of them that's fine. We just wanted to let you know more or less what we will be asking.

Marie Sleeth: I promise not to talk too much (light laughter). I'd like to turn this chair.

Sandra Salinas: Oh no. No we like talking!

Marie Sleeth: [speaking to Miguel] See, put it to where its back is to the window.

Miguel Gutierrez: Oh ok.

Marie Sleeth: that way, see why I am asking you to do it! It's heavy. (Laughter)

Miguel Gutierrez: (laughter) Like this?

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, or just push it back a little bit, that way we can, there and that way we can utilize the couch, and there's my glasses, and those chairs can be brought up.

[background chatter as everybody settles down]

Sandra Salinas: Uhm so- can you show me real quick. He's going to take care of that and Mandy and I will be interviewing and writing notes. Ok. Let's see here, these are the two...

Amanda De La Fuente: How old were you when that family came into this house?

Marie Sleeth: I was ah probably...probably nine , ten years old.

Amanda De La Fuente: And did they have children also around your age?

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, um, actually yeah I guess they did but I thought I was older than that when they came. Maybe, maybe, I don't have the dates right in my head about when they came. So anyway they had three boys and three little boys, and they had ah Doris; she was 'bout 16. She graduated from high school and ah went to Pan-Am, became a teacher, and I think that she recently retired from teaching [Sandra Salinas: Wow.] here in Edinburg at that high school level I believe. And um...Manfred, he was older than that; he was 'bout, 20, or 21 but he didn't – when he came – he stayed here but then he got a job and went an' got his [chuckling] own place to live in (laughing) and I don't blame him. And I think that, basically, Doris did that too so it was just the three boys. [Pauses, pointing at camera] Is that thing running?

Eduardo Robles: [playful tone] Yes it is.

Marie Sleeth: Oh Glory (laughs)!

Sandra Salinas: We just gotta...let's get these consent forms taken care of and, um, ok, so this is our CHAPS it's - we're with the CHAPS program, um it's Community Histo – History Archeology Project with Schools that's what this CHAPS course is under, is considered to be under, and this is just a consent form that we need to, procedures we need to follow (laughs). If you want to look over that you're more than welcome to and we also, I brought two. One is going to be your copy and then one will be our copy to turn in to Dr. Skowronek, and um it has the information as far as who to contact in case you have any questions. Um once we finish here we will be taking all the information down to the campus and we will get – make a copy, and make a copy of the transcription. Once we have a transcription done, completed, I'm sorry, we'll send you a copy so that way you can look over it in case we make any mistakes um and, and, [Marie Sleeth: (Chuckling) Yeah.] and this way, also, in case you want to add any more information you're more than welcome to so we can try to be as precise in our documentation as possible. So, if you want to –

Marie Sleeth: [Looking at Miguel Gutierrez] Everybody's got a tape recorder going.

Sandra Salinas: (Laughing) Well we have, we wanna make sure we get all the information [Marie Sleeth: All of it.] in case something, one of them goes off we got backup (laughs some more).

Marie Sleeth: That's fine, that's fine I don't care; I just didn't know I was gonna be so important.

Sandra Salinas: Well yes you are (laughs). Here's the consent form if you would like to just read over that really quickly and sign for me at the back of the um...page and everything.

Miguel Gutierrez: [looking around] this is a nice, cozy home.

Sandra Salinas: (smiling) yes it is.

Marie Sleeth: What?

Miguel Gutierrez: I like that this is a nice, cozy home.

Marie Sleeth: [nods head] it's got two...two bedrooms ...I sign everywhere? Or –

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, It's going to be right in here [points to paper, then converses with [Marie Sleeth: interviewer section] ...right here, printed name and signature and then if you would please allow us your address so we can send you the transcription and we can get that going.

Marie Sleeth: This house has been rented it just isn't being rented right now, but it rented ever since [emphasizing] THEY LEFT here to, a Pan-Am student or two, you know they go... [voice trails off] Now my signature. I feel like I'm stuttering this morning.

Sandra Salinas: If I start stuttering I'm sorry I'm a little nervous myself so... (Laughs)

[background chatter]

Marie Sleeth: And the date today is the –

Sandra Salinas: The 21st, October 21st.

Marie Sleeth: I am just constantly amazed at how fast time is going.

Sandra Salinas: [Nodding head] Yeah. Almost a new year.

Marie Sleeth: [skims through paper] Want my e-mail address?

Eloise Montemayor: You can move it closer to her if you want.

Marie Sleeth: Ok. I so n' so so n' so, do I have to fill all that in too?

Sandra Salinas: Sorry?

Marie Sleeth: All this? Or not?

Sandra Salinas: No that's fine just the signature right there.

Marie Sleeth: Right ok...It's duplicating what I just wrote down.

Sandra Salinas: Exactly. Don't worry about that, I'll take care of that.

Marie Sleeth: Ok.

Sandra Salinas: And then, this should be the CHAPS one lemme just make sure I don't, I'm not missing anything [shuffles papers] ok and then the school one, the school [clears throat] consent form is this one. And this is basically the same thing, however, we just need to have that done this is interviewer and interviewee. You don't have to fill this information out, um just the interviewee signature and we'll put the address later [Marie Sleeth mumbles something] that's fine [Sandra Salinas clears throat]. I'm sorry [inaudible] waiting one minute. Just wanna make sure we don't skip anything. Lemme just double-check on these...ok and this is just basically saying that, um, the same thing that you're allowing us to [points to paper] yep right here [Marie Sleeth writes something] I shoulda put X's on those I'm sorry (chuckles).

Marie Sleeth: I've never been an [emphasizing] INTERVIEWEE before.

Sandra Salinas: (Laughs) It's always fun because um a lot of wonderful memories come out when you start... [Voice trails off]

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, did we decide it's the 21st today?

Sandra Salinas: [nodding head] the 21st yes ma 'am.

Marie Sleeth: Ok. It's Friday isn't it?

Sandra Salinas: Yes [Marie Sleeth chuckles].T.G. –

Marie Sleeth: When you're retired, time, I – I don't even wear a watch anymore.

Sandra Salinas: (Sighs) The luxury (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: Ok

Sandra Salinas: Alright, wonderful, thank you so much lemme give you yours [hands paper to Marie Sleeth] your consent form, your copies, and like I said in case you have any questions these are the people that you would need to contact and um we will also have copies of your, of the transcription for you. So I'm just going, where do you want me to put these? You want me to put these down here? [Marie Sleeth points to table] Ok great thank you, and this is for you, for you to keep [hands pamphlet to Marie Sleeth], that's just a little bit more about the CHAPS program.

Marie Sleeth: I would love to be down here and taking this with you, this course, I love history [Sandra Salinas: Oh really?] Yeah, things like that, when I first, Kelly first started talking about it, my question was: Can I take the course too? [Sandra Salinas chuckles] Cuz it just sounds so interesting! People that, you know, are interested in history are, I think they're special people (chuckles) Ok what do we need to know?

Sandra Salinas: Alright well let's go ahead and get started, [turns to Mandy De La Fuente] can you hear her ok? Can you hear her ok? It's on right? Alright everything should be on and ready to go. Ok [Marie Sleeth: My mouth is already dry.] (laughs) Oh ah like I said this is, these are just basically, basic guidelines, for us to kinda go by, we can just have a conversation, just go and if we don't get to all of these that's fine don't worry about it we're ok we just wanna know as much as we can ok? So let's go and get started with the first question. How do you remember the land before it was tilled? What types of plants and animals were on this land that you can recall?

Marie Sleeth: Well first of all I don't remember it not being tilled, because it was already, I came along in 1938,

and the family had been here since 1921 – 22 somewhere in there. So, by the time I came along it was pretty much established. But it was just this, the 40 acres here. Now then I, the other, there's 10 acres right over there [points out the window behind the house]. And daddy bought that, he bought the whole 20 acres back to where the, you know, the housing development [Sandra Salinas: Ok] the housing project and he sold half of it to the city to build that so. I think, I think this particular land was already tilled, now the third peach, piece, which is adjacent to the other side over there, that has been in, I don't think it's ever been tilled. It's still in its kinda raw state. Maybe there's somebody doing something with it now but not that I know of. What kinda animals were there? We had coyotes [Sandra Salinas: Wow] running around and ah roadrunners they're gone the coyotes they lived over by the [chuckling] railroad tracks somewhere, we used to hear them howling at night, after, I mean, this was like, 20 years ago, you can still hear 'em, cuz that's when I left here in '95, so but you can still hear them at night howling off in the distance. Um, I remember, the great big, fat, red ants [Sandra Salinas: Ugh, those hurt.] (laughs) Yes, they were huge! And it just seemed like they had trails going all over the place. Horny toads, or horned toads, whatever, were plentiful and those are, they, you just don't ever see those anymore, but they would be out and about. We um didn't own it but we played a lot in the brush, where the holding pond is now? [Sandra Salinas: Oh ok yeah.] We had, we called it Sherwood Forest [Sandra Salinas laughs] and that was natural. And so, a lotta stuff I guess I saw was out, out there, and a variety of snakes. I never saw a rattlesnake though. Doodlebugs! Where have the doodlebugs gone? Do you know what a doodlebug is? [Sandra Salinas: No, actually I was about to ask what a doodlebug is.] A doodlebug is a, is a bug, little animal, little tiny animal, and he ah buries himself, in the sand, in the dirt. As he does it he flips it out like this and he ends up with a little, round volcano-type thing and he's down in the middle of that, he's buried in the sand he flipped all his (laughing) his, there'd be these pot marks all over, you know, where the doodlebugs were. And if you could get down there very carefully you can catch one of them you know [giggles playfully]. So.

Sandra Salinas: We'll have to keep an eye out for those (laughs).

Marie Sleeth: [High-pitched voice] Red-winged blackbirds! We used to have lots of Red-winged blackbirds, and I understand they got blown off by Beulah, the hurricane Beulah or somethin'. But you just don't see 'em anymore now you see 'em around in the hill country side but not down here. There used to be plenty of them. Let's see what else.

Sandra Salinas: Did you have any domesticated animals?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, yes.

Sandra Salinas: Like which, what type of animals did you guys have?

Marie Sleeth: Well, we had chickens for food and eggs. And we had pigs for food and more pigs (laughs). We, they weren't necessarily raised to sell, but I'm sure that daddy did sell 'em but every year they'd butcher a pig out on, there was an old barn over there [points] Ah, I'm sure Kelly or somebody can show you where all that is but you know, they had the thing with the hook, where'd they hook the pig on and roll it up and then skin it and all that and the same thing with the um a young, a teenage beef, same thing, you know they'd it wasn't veal that they were getting but it was just one, a cow or something that wasn't very old, you know. So, versus a steer or whatever... [mumbles in very low voice] We had those and we had Guinea hens, we had um, bandies, I had a pair of bandies, chickens and...Ralph and Alice (chuckles). I had forgotten about that. Ralph was very [emphasizing] feisty! Liked to [emphasizing] ATTACK little kids (chuckles). [Sandra Salinas: Awwww...] (Miguel Gutierrez laughs).

Sandra Salinas: (Laughing) Who needed a guard dog?

Marie Sleeth: But they were just pets, you know, we didn't do anything with them. They...um, I named them Ralph and Alice after the Burrfords, Ralph Burrford was my band director. (Sandra Salinas laughs) Anyway, let's see what else did we have? Uh, rabbits, I remember having rabbits, cuz Mark, Mark got his finger caught in the wire in the cage and mamma found him and he was just giggling away and he thought that the rabbit was licking his finger and it was chewing on it! It chewed off the end of his finger! Yeah, so (Sandra Salinas laughs) anyway and other animals, I'm trying to think I just can't...cows we had, you know, cows, cows. We had a horse for a while then I outgrew it, I outgrew [inaudible] the horse or I went away, daddy returned him he, he kept him, the horse, in the pasture so that I could ride the horse and, um, he borrowed the horse, he borrowed it

so for food and water and taking care of the horse well I got to ride. I raised calves when I was growing up, six of 'em I think in all. Daddy would take me to the sale yard and he'd buy me a calf and I would raise it 'till it got big and then back to the sale yard it went. It's that money, I saved all that money, and that's what I used my first year of college my calf money, as I call it. [Sandra Salinas: Wise, I should've raised some calves then (laughs)] But I, I would take 'em out along the road it was Johnson grass all over down the road and these calves, they'd eat. You'd put a rope around their neck and they'd follow you anywhere, you know, so I'd go stake it out down by the road with a bucket of water every morning before I went to school. In the evening, I'd go get it and it would've eaten all the grass in the area where it was.

Sandra Salinas: And where there many families around that...? [Marie Sleeth shakes head] so you could just leave your animals out there and...wow. Nice.

Marie Sleeth: I'm trying to think of what, well our closest neighbor was my uncle and aunt, they lived a quarter of a mile right over there [points] right by where the ball park is, [inaudible] they had an acre there and a house, it's gone now. But there was, we had the Sterlins they lived, everybody lived, way, way, my best friend lived about a mile and a half north on Monte Cristo road so on Saturdays I'd walk down there and see her and she'd walk down and spend the day, you know, stuff like that. But everybody was pretty, pretty far away, now the Pauls lived the next, after Kelly's house, the next, there's two little houses there and there were two Paul families that lived there and across from them were the Esquivels. Carlos Esquivel was a big football player, the star of the Edinburg Bobcats. And uh there was, oh the, Heffners, Heffners lived...oh somewhere [pointing] right over there I can't remember exactly, I mean, everything's changed so much but they, they lived there and she was a twirler and she taught me to twirl a baton [Sandra Salinas: It's fun] yeah and uh...I'm trying to think... There just weren't that many people that lived around. Everybody, you know, a farmhouse here and a farmhouse there. But these over here weren't farming they were closer to town. So.

Sandra Salinas: What type of plants or vegetation was around?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, lots of mesquite. (Chuckling) A lotta mesquite trees, [Sandra Salinas: mesquite] shrub, I don't, I – It was just mesquite. Well, there was weesatch [lower tone] I guess you're supposed to call it weesatche? [Sandra Salinas: (laughing) tomato tomato.] Yeh, and they always were so pretty when they bloomed. What other kind of plants? Mesquite, mesquite, and more mesquite! [Raises voice] PIGWEEDS! [Sandra Salinas: Pigweeds] Yeah when the cows got in the pigweeds then their milk didn't taste good at all (chuckles). [Sandra Salinas laughs] It wasn't very...eh, along the fence lines, I don't know what it was, but we called it Bill's Hair, 'cause it was silky, blond, kinda like the corn silk, you know, in a corncob? It was kinda like that and Bill was my cousin [Sandra Salinas laughs] (laughs) So that's why we called it Bill's hair 'cause he had blond hair. Oh golly what else might there have been? Ah, I don't recall any ebony out here but I do know that ebony is made in the Valley but I don't remember any ebony. Hmm, what other kinds of trees would there have been besides mesquite?

Sandra Salinas: Any flowers? Any pretty flowers that maybe you, your family has planted? Or um, trees? Any kind of vegetation?

Marie Sleeth: Oh stuff that we had planted? Well, uh there's Athol, there's one Athol tree right out there that um Grandpa Norquest, he was gonna put a fence along there, and he got these, you know, fence posts somewhere, and planted them and they all grew into great big trees! [Sandra Salinas laughs] Athol trees, Salt Cedar, is what they're called. But then here again I don't know if they're native in this area but that he planted them (chuckles) in the process of building a fence. Um, but...My parents never were decorative people. You know, they didn't have pretty vases, and statuettes and stuff sitting around in the living room, they just weren't that kind of people so consequently, um well, we did have a yard and daddy kept it mowed [voice lowers, hard to understand] he didn't plant anything. I attempted to plant Zinnias and things and they never grew. I have tried a half dozen times to plant Bluebonnets and they've never come up [Sandra Salinas chuckles] [Miguel Gutierrez chuckles] [laughing] So anyway...

Sandra: What kinda crops did your family plant?

Marie: Well daddy was primarily a cotton farmer so everything was under, in cotton and when he did lease, er, he owned land around, not just here but in various spots, and he farmed oh several hundred acres in the area but

summer time was um was cotton everything was in cotton and daddy would hire the, the [emphasizing tone] ILLEGAL ALIENS! I hate to call ‘em that, they’re wetbacks, that’s what they are, and if you look up the word “wetback” in the dictionary you will say, see, exactly what a wetback is and it’s this area, the Lower Rio Grande Valley river or Rio Grande, they’d swim across and then of course were called wetbacks but that’s what they were I – I mean, I’m not being derogatory, it’s a specific thing [Sandra Salinas: uhum and were...] you know just like refrigerators, chair, you know, [Sandra Salinas laughs] and it meant something and it wasn’t derogatory and daddy, did you read daddy’s book?

Sandra: Yes, yes we’ve um, that’s one of our um readings that req – not a required reading, but a suggested reading a suggested reading and [Marie Sleeth: Well, good.] And um did these workers live on the premises or did you guys have like a certain house built?

Marie: No we didn’t have a house built, they lived in camps. [Sandra Salinas: Camps, ok] See, they were, they were here for a specific reason and then they went back, they were true migrants. They would come for the work and then go home. So none of them, we never, we never established any permanent place. There was a canal west of here and they camped along the banks of the canal.

Sandra: (Laughing) I was about to ask where more or less the camps were set up, so they were along the canal [Marie: Yeah] West, you said right?

Marie: Yeah, west of here, it was a quarter of a mile? Quarter of a mile west of here. So that’s where they, they lived um and they’d bring their families over, you know, and the little kids would run around but it was all over there. I ran a cotton-picking crew of 40 men.

Sandra: Wow, that’s a large crew!

Marie: [nodding head] And uh my sister ran one and I think one of my brothers did and then what daddy would do is go around and collect the full trailers of cotton and haul ‘em off to the gin and bring us an empty one (chuckles) [Sandra Salinas laughs] You’re doing a great job here’s another one! Keep ‘er going!] Yeah we would kinda compete to see who could, I, on [proudly] MY crew I had Felix he could pick a bail of cotton a day [Sandra Salinas: wow] A bail was 1500 pounds and daddy paid ‘em by the pound. I mean, he was quite... [low voice, cannot hear] ...about the work they did. So we would go out there and with our scale, our tripod and scale and, you know, I’d have a book to keep tally and when they’d get their sack full we’d come in and we’d weigh it and then I’d mark it down in the book how many then at the end we would saddle up, they’d call it settling up [chuckles] and daddy and whomever the crew leader was me or my sister or whoever, would sit with him in a, we had, in fact we still have it, one of those two-sider swings, you know, a bench and a bench goes like this, and we’d sit in there, daddy and I on one side, and the picker across from me and daddy would handle a box of cash, and he would ask me how much you know, ‘cause I had to figure up how much he owed, he owed ‘em and so there were times when I had to settle a dispute, or daddy had to, because I would get in arguments with ‘em [imitating dad] no! You didn’t pick that much! [chuckles] [back to Marie] But yeah, anyway, I was responsible for that, it was forty men.

Sandra: That’s a, that’s quite a large crew, that’s a great job.

Marie: Yeh, and that, that, [pointing] mine was over there across from where Pan-Am is right now. That’s the field, we always picked there, on Sugar Road and...crops we were talking about crops, that’s cotton. Daddy raised winter vegetables in the winter time, tomatoes, corn, carrots, I remember primarily carrots and corn, no, carrots and tomatoes.

Sandra: And you had mentioned earlier that you really wouldn’t, I’m sorry, that your father really wouldn’t sell the vegetables that you all grew but um? Did he, when he did sell them where did he go to sell the vegetables?

Marie: It was, actually, he would sell the vegetables [Sandra Salinas: he would sell them, ok] yeah, he would sell them I remember one time he had green beans and he brought home a big sack and that’s all we had to eat for supper! (chuckles) Green beans... This is it or you don’t eat! (laughs) Anyway there would be a crew that would come and pick ‘em for the packing sheds. They would send out a crew and it was all hand-picked, you know, none of this machine, machinery stuff and the cotton was hand-picked, I’m assuming y’all realize that, hand-picked. And the packing sheds would send out crews to pick it and harvest it.

Sandra Salinas: So you would sell vegetables on a regular basis or was it more just when you guys had leftovers,

besides the crops that you needed to sustain?

Marie Sleeth: No we never did, like, have a stand and sell vegetables, we always sold it to the packing sheds yeah, rather than – and of course we'd eat 'em too, you know, so maybe that's why I'm such a phobic about fresh vegetables [Sandra Salinas laughs] I don't like canned vegetables, only fresh ones.

Sandra Salinas: Is there a big difference in the taste, that you remember, between the canned vegetables and the fresh vegetables?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, big difference. I, to this day, buy fresh green beans and fix 'em. Fresh corn. I don't buy canned vegetables.

Sandra Salinas: And at home do you grow these vegetables? [Marie Sleeth: Where I live?] Do you have like your little garden?

Marie Sleeth: I would like to, and I have in the past but where I am right now I can't have a garden because I live with my son and his family. I've been living there for two years. The last time I had a garden it was, I had all kinds of things in it. Corn, squash, lots of tomatoes, popping peppers, what I, what I kinda did was a pico de gallo garden (chuckles) [Sandra Salinas laughs] I had onions and garlic and, oh, but the cilantro never did last very long. It's a plant that matures very, very quickly and then just goes to seed and then...so...yeah, my pico de gallo vegetable garden. I just made some last night, as a matter of fact. I love it [Sandra Salinas: it's delicious] Yes.

Sandra Salinas: I guess we can go ahead and go on into the archeology section as far as structures that were built that were, around, original structures and then we can go through them as time has changed, structures that have been taken down or like this house that was created for certain [Marie Sleeth: Does an outhouse count?] Yes! Actually I was about to ask about that (laughs) Yes, [Marie Sleeth: Oh, I remember it well.] what property do you guys remember that you had outhouses? Where on the property were they located?

Marie Sleeth: Oh there was one just south there of the back door of the big house, there was just one there and then a later one was built and it's that tin shed that's right out here...[inaudible] [Sandra Salinas: Oh that's what, ok] ...used. Um, that's the only outhouse that I know of. Might be interesting to get a [words cut off] to see what might be down there (laughs) Never knew what us kids were gonna throw in there! I remember in the hou – at home when I was very small and there was a fireplace on the north side of the house and it isn't there anymore. But, you know, houses...this is a pier and beam house, you know, it's not, it doesn't have a slab and for some reason there was a, an opening, just a tiny opening, between two of the pieces of floor, flooring and I remember that I had a bunch of pennies and I dropped all of my pennies down here under this log. [Sandra Salinas laughs] (laughing) I guess they're still under the house! [Sandra Salinas: could be right!] Anyway, the big house was there, it is in an altered state from when it was originally built. It faced Sugar Road and had a front, a porch, little railing you know on, in, it faced Sugar Road. Now I can remember that house being remodeled, so, I, but I was little, I can remember standing on the porch, that railing, and, you know, that railing was up to here on me and I was looking over the top of it so I had to have been just a little bitty kid. And then the stairs inside were turned the opposite direction, daddy turned the stairway around, it was over here and he turned it and put it over here so that was changed and then some of the rooms were changed and so on. But then, the big house. Then we had the barn, and evidently it was a red barn. I remember the barn. I remember the pigs hanging there because they were being slaughtered. I remember...hay. Not necessarily big bails but I remember we had a haystack, we had several haystacks. [Sandra Salinas: Was it fun to play in?] (chuckles) yeah, yeah and when it'd rain and rain and rain and the inside would get all wet and it didn't dry up and then it started to stink [chuckles] Rotting hay, you know, inside anyway [Sandra Salinas: that's a scent you won't forget right? (laughs)] But that was the food for the cows. We had a big lot over there where the cattle were, that was fenced. And this area back over here was pasture, it wasn't tilled I mean it was cleared. But, it wasn't tilled, it was pastureland. And then to the south of the house all along there was orchard. Navel oranges. That was so nice go up there and get an orange anytime you want to. We had lots of big, ugly black birds around. And, uh, I would take my daddy's .22 out and shoot 'em, while they were flying.

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) Wow! That's some skill!

Marie Sleeth: And, and, I, over the years, I thought "that just can't be right!" Here I was just 13, 14 years old,

how could I shoot a black bird [chuckling] while it was flying? And then daddy would say something like, “You ‘member when u used to shoot black birds outta the air?” he’d say (laughs) So I knew I wasn’t, so, anyway and, I, um, as my brothers turned 13 they got a .22. I had two older brothers, daddy bought them each a .22 for their birthday so, naturally, when I turned 13, I thought I was gonna get one, oh, I’m a girl. I could out-shoot the boys but I’m a girl, so I didn’t get one. That’s why I didn’t get to go to A&M. ‘Cause I was a girl.

Amanda De La Fuente: Was it too far? ‘Cause they didn’t want you to go, too far from home?

Marie Sleeth: No, I was a girl. It was strictly boys then, [Amanda De La Fuente: That would go] So yeah, I was gonna be, I was an agriculture major in college for two years. But I couldn’t pass chemistry so I had to give that up. So I went back to music. [Sandra Salinas: Music!] Yes, we’re a musical family.

Sandra Salinas: And what kind of music, um, did the family play? Do you remember playing when you were younger? How did the music change through time?

Marie Sleeth: Well, we always played classical stuff, or hymns, or something of that nature, we didn’t do this boo-biddi-boo-biddi-boo stuff [Sandra Salinas laughs] none of that. But, we, um, primarily stringed instruments. Um, daddy decided he wanted his own string orchestra (chuckles) But he would really be proud at what, what has turned out, from him wanting his string orchestra. There were [could not understand clearly-Angrie?] played the piano. Now Rick, my brother Rick, he is two years older than me, never did learn a string instrument. But all the rest of us did, I played string base. And that’s how I got my scholarships to college, playing string base. [Sandra Salinas to Miguel Gutierrez: Do you have your allergy medicine? Wanna take that allergy pill?] [Miguel: Uh, I’m fine, it’s not, it’s not bad.] [Sandra: Are you sure? Back to Marie Sleeth: I’m sorry] So, that’s ok, so but, as, as we grew up and got married and had kids all of our kids played instruments too so now they’re all, you know, in their 20’s, 30’s, and 40’s but when we get together it’s quite a huge little orchestra. So...I started piano lessons when I was in the 1st grade and I went on to major in pipe organ in college. OK! I’ve been rambling! I don’t even know if that was on subject! [Sandra Salinas (laughing): That’s ok! No, no, no that’s great, we love to learn, we love to learn about traditions, and just, um, how people were able to grow up. You know, it’s funny ‘cause they, they had, they joke around how kids can’t go outside anymore ‘cause they don’t have internet outside (laughing) or, you know] Yeah! They’re so afraid that, the parents, I mean somebody’s gonna, um, rob them of their kid! You know, haul the kid off, there’s so many stories like that.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, and bef – and the past, as you’re mentioning, I mean, you could leave your, your, cattle outside and you were fine.

Marie Sleeth: We never locked the house except when we went on vacation. Otherwise, it was open all the time.

Sandra Salinas: Man, to be in those days right? (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: We’d go on vacation and daddy, he’d make a big, to do about it getting the key and there it’s all locked up now we can go. [Sandra Salinas and Miguel Gutierrez laugh]

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) And just the one key.

Marie Sleeth: (laughing) Yeh, the one key. Now I dunno if the back door was locked or not! But I know the front one ... (chuckles) But I’m sure it was.

Sandra Salinas: And where would you guys go for vacation? Do you remember?

Marie Sleeth: Well, we would take long trips. My daddy was a historical bug like Kelly [Sandra Salinas: Like us! (laughs)] And, we went to, um, a bunch of the battle grounds of the Civil War. We went to Vicksburg and Gettysburg, and Shiloh. Shiloh I remember was the most peaceful place and the deadliest battle of the Civil War was there. And Vicksburg, we went to Vicksburg. We wouldn’t take these vacations every year [Sandra Salinas: Ok.] because summer time was for working. That’s when the main cash crops would come in. But we would go after cotton season. And we, um, went one time to see my, this was in the late 50’s, um, Kelly was in Tacoma, Washington, in the army and Rick was in Boise, Idaho in the air force, and so we took a trip. And, um, visited relatives along the way. Daddy’s family is all from Kansas and Nebraska. So, we went up there and cut across to go see the boys. But, um, a lotta relatives, he still knew ‘em, you know, he was still young at the time, you know he wasn’t, he was born in [19] ‘01 but he moved down here in his early 20’s when his parents came down, he came here. So he still knew his aunts and uncles and stuff. This was like, thirty years later. And they

were still alive. So we got to visit a lot of our relatives. Now what was the question? [Sandra Salinas laughs] Oh! Oh, vacations. Um, we, um, I was trying to think, no, we didn't take many vacations, it was always history um, [mumbles something in a very low voice] Anyway.

Sandra Salinas: Well, um, let's, let's come back this way to, um, so we spoke about the outhouses but what about the trash? How did that get taken care of? [Marie Sleeth: We burned it, we burned it.] Burned it? And was there a certain designated area that you burned the trash? [Marie Sleeth: The incinerator] Incinerator. And where was the incinerator located?

Marie Sleeth: It was, um, just off the southwest corner of the house. The kitchen was right there. [inaudible] And there's a cistern there that daddy built. And before that it was a well, we had a well. And the well was salty water, so we couldn't drink it. But we could do everything else in it. And it was located, oh, maybe 50, less than 50 feet, 25 feet east of the front door of the house. And I remember momma took a picture of Bill and me. And I was sitting on the house and he was standing, on the pump house, and he was standing there. And I remember arguing with my mother that I was taller than him! (chuckles) See here's proof! See the picture! (laughs) Look! He's this tall! I'm this tall! (laughs) 'But Marie...', you know, she never could, I was just being silly you know, I didn't know the difference. But, I was trying to convince her. So... [Sandra Salinas: That's always fun. (Laughs)] The barn was, um, over there. The barn, was, yeah, just right...

Sandra Salinas: Maybe if, if you, um, would like to show us around later...

Marie Sleeth: Yeah! Well that would be kinda fun, fine, yeah. Kelly had indicated you probably wanted, didn't wanna do that. He was I think [Sandra Salinas: Oh, that's always fun for us.] he was wanting to do the tour but you can still do the tour with him [Sandra Salinas: Exactly!] that's fine. 'Cause he, remember, he's four years older than me. So he remembers a lot more. But the barn was right over there and I can show you where, and then that was eventually torn down, and, um, that tin structure was built. That was the barn [Sandra Salinas: Oh ok.] and machine shop and all that sorta stuff. Tractors were kept in there, and daddy's tools, and then we had a, stuff was stored up above, on the other side of it. The pigs were on one side of the barn and they... anyway, yeah I can show it to you if you wanna see it. [Sandra Salinas laughs]

Sandra Salinas: And what type of tools, um, besides the tractors, did you guys have on the premises?

Marie Sleeth: Well, um, besides tractors, we had tractors. Three or four of 'em. The tools for, um, I don't remember them, you know, the, I'm sure they had the mules and the plows and stuff when this land was first tilled, 'cause that's all they had back then. Chapin Road was made by my grandfather. [Sandra Salinas: Really?] It only went so far and, uh, he cleared it and everything all the way down here.

Sandra Salinas: Great, great, I actually live on Chapin Road so thank you! (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: Well, it was only to the house here that he cleared it, did it, then it was a dirt road and, um, muddy, a lot of muddy. It kinda had ditches on the side. But then finally, um, somebody started maintaining it, the county probably, and they, first, they gravel, it was gravel they used first I believe, and then eventually caliche. They used caliche there. And, um, yeh, I can remember when it got paved it wasn't that long ago.

Sandra Salinas: It really wasn't that long ago. (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: And they just, they didn't do anything, they just laid down the asphalt. It has stood up, all these years, you know, for just that, I guess it had a good gravel and caliche base underneath it so that... because I, I, they don't repair it. Or maybe the asphalt back then is better than it is now, or something, you know, 'cause you get pot holes all the time.

Sandra Salinas: And what type of, um, transportation, vehicles did you guys have?

Marie Sleeth: We had a... I'm trying to remember the first one it wasn't a Model T, but it was something of that nature. You know, it was a, an old car at the time. Like, during World War II everything was so scarce you couldn't buy new cars or anything but uh... Daddy, see there were seven of us kids, I don't know if you knew that or not. And daddy would, um... back then the cars had arm rests that weren't on the door. I mean, it's, you got in through the door up here and the back seat. Daddy would put up, it was a padded board across, between those arm rests. That's where the little kids sat and the bigger ones sat on the seat. And then we eventually got a, after the war, daddy was going to get a new car, but momma asked for a Hammond organ; she got the ... [something too low to hear] instead of the car. But we did get a pick-up. We got a pick-up and then eventually,

and daddy here he's, he was very inventive and he would do things, and I'm still like that. I would do things with stuff you would never expect it to be done with. He would re-purpose things, in other words. In the, um, he decided with a pick-up that he needed, um, some places for the wetbacks to sit. So he installed these seats along the sides. So then, we quite often went places in that pick-up. And daddy put a, on one of the trips that we took, he put a, he made a cover, for it. See, all these things back then, were, I mean, you made what you needed. You couldn't go buy a pick-up cover, you know, you can now. But it was high, and, he put a, um, made a big trunk, big box, that fit on the back bumper, and it was attached, to the, to the car. To the pick-up, and that was where all our clothes went. We each had an army suitcase. Do you remember the little, metal army suitcases? [Sandra Salinas laughs] And you couldn't take it unless it would fit in that suitcase. [Sandra Salinas (laughing): Roll it up really tight right!] Yeah! And a doll wouldn't fit. So, um anyway, then two drawers on top that had lids that you would open and that's where the, um, hang-up clothes or the, you know, their clothes, or clothes that needed to stay nice. You know, church clothes, and so on, were in those two drawers, and then seven suitcases. And then, he, he fixed it so it would open up, it closed up like this, and it would open...and he had legs, he'd put it down and that was the table, and that's where momma would um, it was kinda like a chuck wagon you know, she would fix meals there when we were on the road. We rarely stopped at a restaurant it was usually a hamburger, if we did stop, and, um, so that was our, then us, us kids would all sit in the back and there was always a blanket or something on the floor board, that uh, you know, if the kids were little they could sleep. Or one of 'em would be up in front with mommy and daddy and he took the window out, you know, so that we could [Sandra Salinas: cross] cross back and forth. (chuckles) So that was, I guess, our first camper, (laughs) or the second one! (laughs) The second one was a cotton trailer. And I think it was a four-wheeler, too. A four-wheeled cotton trailer that we pulled behind the pick-up and, it had, um, here again, the same suitcase kind of arrangement, in fact [mumbles] but we slept inside, and it, it had low sides, they were only like four feet. Or the plywood is four feet, right, four-by-eight, so it was only four feet and then he made a lid to go on it. Now this is the first camping trailer, ever, ever, and the lid went on it. Then at night, when we camped, he would raise that and prop it up and had, um, lona cloth, [Sandra Salinas: Oh, ok] do you know what, do you know what lonas are?

Sandra Salinas: It's...well I'm thinking, what I'm thinking is, it's very, kinda thin, but no? Oh, then it's not the right one. I don't know (laughs).

Marie Sleeth: No, this is a canvas. [Sandra Salinas: Oh, canvas.] It's canvas and fairly waterproof. [Sandra Salinas: Lona cloth] Mmmhumm. And he, in fact it may have been lonas, that he used, you know, to hook up there so that we had the privacy, you know, and we would sleep inside there. Yeah, lonas, um, were used in irrigating fields. What does lona mean in English? You don't know what it is? It's a Spanish word. None of you know what...I think it means "dam". Because they would block off the, they would, um, before they irrigated and where they planted their crops and everything, they would have dirt canals, they would build that go through the plow and make a canal and they would, um, have it in, O' three or four, across the land, and then they would get a, what they call, a head of water, and irrigate and it would come down the canal and be piped in or somehow, I don't remember how the water got from the canal. But then it would flow down these, these, uh, things and there would be crops on either side of 'em. And, so they would dig holes so that the, you know, make holes in the banks, of the little canals so that they would flood, flood the, the land and water the tomatoes, or orchard, or whatever it is, then when that part was done then they would put a lona down and cover up, they'd use dirt as a base but they put the canvas across and it would block the water so that it would go to another section and then down that canal. So it was a, you know, a systematic thing, but they'd use lonas to control the water and where it went. I don't know if that makes sense or not [Sandra Salinas: Absolutely, absolutely.] But that's the way we irrigated, now they have the great, big sprinklers and so on. I don't know if they still do flood irrigation here?

Sandra Salinas: Yes they do, some places do. And the canal, is it the canal where the, um, wetbacks lived? [Marie Sleeth: I think it was from this canal over there.] The one on this side.

Marie Sleeth: Yeah its, um, it's a half mile down there. How could we get the water to the land? I don't remember. Y'all gonna have to excuse me. [Sandra Salinas: That's fine] I have to go in there for a minute I, you know, [Sandra Salinas: The modern outhouse? (laughs)] The modern outhouse, yeah. (chuckles) Yeh, you don't need to move that, I'll work my way around it.

[mumbling amongst Amanda De La Fuente, Sandra Salinas, and Miguel Gutierrez while Marie Sleeth uses the restroom]

Marie Sleeth: This was the little house, and that was the big house. (chuckles) Oh by the way this has become known as the Norquest quarters. [Sandra Salinas: Norquest quarters? (laughs)] The homestead here, yeah. That's because Neil has his house over there and Kelly has his house right over there, and there was a period of about three years where Scottie and I lived in a, a fifth wheel over here, we had sold our house, 'cause we were getting ready to retire from school, uh, teaching, both of us were teachers, we were getting ready to retire and so we had a chance to sell the house which was in town, you know, the big two, three-bedroom, four-bedroom, whatever it was and we bought a fifth wheel and brought it out here and lived down here for three years and that's always kinda fun. So there were a bunch of us here, [inaudible] and then Dixie was living with momma in the big house. Yeah, she moved in with her. Um, I was just thinking, you know, inside the house, I did a lot of the cooking, and we used a kerosene stove. That had a little canal along, to let the kerosene go into the flames, and it would light the flames, and it was open, open, open canal it wasn't a pipe that took the kerosene it was a, you could see it flowing along there. (chuckles) And I think about that and what a fire hazard that was! And my mother let me cook on that stove?! It was, it's frightening now, when you think about it! I would, uh, fix whole meals, I was ten, eleven years, twelve years old then daddy and momma would go to town and they'd do the grocery shopping, with everybody home, so then I would I usually fix the chicken. [Sandra Salinas: Chicken.] A chicken dinner with mashed potatoes. [Sandra Salinas: Mmmmmmm.] So that when they got home dinner was ready.

Sandra Salinas: And what kind of gender roles, um, were given to each member of the, um, of the family? As far as, um, what kind of roles did the women have to do, and the men have to do? And then, what did, in these roles were your sister, it was, Dixie was your sister, right? [Marie Sleeth: Dixie's my sister.] Were the chores split between you guys, um, both of you? Or?...

Marie Sleeth: Um, ok, well there were, I've got another sister too so there were three of us. There were two boys, three girls, and two boys. And Kelly and Ricky basically helped daddy. They drove the tractors and, um, did the planting and stuff. And so they were always helping, helping daddy. I...well, yeah, I got the privilege of learning how to cook and my sisters, sisters didn't. And they are very poor cooks. There's my cooking tools I travel with. (chuckles) [Sandra Salinas chuckles] Right over there! I've got all my knives and my whisks, and my things, it's 'cause, 'cause I love to cook. [Sandra Salinas: we've got to get a shot of that in a little bit] (chuckles) traveling...and I do, I keep it packed all the time. So when I'm gonna go somewhere, I just put, that's part of my luggage that I carry.

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) Does it fit in the army suitcase?

Marie Sleeth: Well, yeah, no! (laughs)

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) It's got its own suitcase!

Marie Sleeth: (chuckles) So...anyway what was I, what was I talking about? You asked about the...[Sandra Salinas: the roles] The roles in the family, yeah. Um, we all took turns inside the house doing stuff. The chores were, um, not divided according to gender. The roles in the family were never, the boys didn't do one thing and the girls, I even drove a tractor. If I was needed I was out driving a tractor too. So it was whoever was around to do the job that needed to be done, so it was never...But my sisters ended up more dainty than I ever was. I was out busy hauling calves up and down the road and they were in the house playing with dolls. You know (laughs) And, um, I remember, um every, every evening somebody was responsible for cleaning up the kitchen. And, uh, I just hated it. I, to this day, hate cleaning up kitchens. So I made a deal with my mother that I would do all the family ironing if I didn't have to clean the kitchen. [Sandra Salinas laughs] And I just really enjoyed the ironing, daddy had bought her, 'cause there were seven kids, and back then everything had to be ironed, they didn't have blue jeans, they had khakis. They wore khakis all the time. And, um, shirts needed to be ironed, starched, depressed, too, so daddy bought one of these kind of a commercial irons, with the roller on it, and you'd stick in the button, and you'd push...[Sandra Salinas: Uh huh, uh huh] press the foot and it comes up and irons the whole sleeve at the same time, you know things like that. So I would, um, I could do seventeen shirts in an hour with that thing.

Sandra Salinas: I wonder if those are still around...(laughs)

Marie Sleeth: I think they have 'em at the dry cleaning places don't they?

Sandra Salinas: I needa go get me one of those (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: They were just great so... That thing isn't running is it? [Eduardo Robles: Yes, it is.] Oh, 'cause I don't see a red light. [Eduardo Robles: It's running, it's running.] (laughs) I thought that maybe it had gone off [makes screeching noise as if to imitate camera failing] [Sandra Salinas laughs] So I did the ironing but I also got to listen to all those shows on the radio. Like the Lone Ranger, Green Hornet, they were always on when I was doing the ironing. So it was, you know, kinda fun. Um, the two little boys, um, I'm sure they had chores of some sort. But they were little, they weren't, we're, the, we're spaced every two years. There were two years between each one of us, except between Dixie and Mark, there were three years. So the little boys, you know, they, they got, they got dressed up like dolls. [Sandra Salinas laughs] They had neat clothes and stuff. They were Ingrid and Dixie's entertainment, those two little boys. And they'd dress 'em up and make 'em so pretty. (chuckles) [Sandra Salinas laughs] (laughing) Anyway, and, um, but I'm sure they'd, well Mark and Neil, after, um, they... In 1962 daddy had a stroke and so, he could not do, you know, run the farm. He was only 60 years old, 61 years old. And so it fell on the two, teenage, my two little brothers, who were teenagers then, to do all the tracting and everything like that, and by that time Kelly had, had come home from the army and he lived with them and took care of 'em until mom and daddy [chuckles] and he had a job working for the, it was called the T.E.C. at the time. I think it was T.E.C. The Texas Employment Commission. He had, he had a good job there. And then Ingrid and Dixie went off and went to college and never came back. Dixie eventually did but Ingrid's still in Colorado. Ricky stayed in Boise, Idaho. Mark, now was in Colorado Springs. Then there's the four of us that live in Texas. [Sandra Salinas: 'cause it's better in Texas. (Laughs)] Oh yes! Oh, oh I hear those people cuss Texas, "Texas is full of allergies!" "Texas is full of this! Full of that!" "The worst drivers are in Texas! I don't wanna go over there!" (laughs) Shoot, the only accident I've ever had I had in Colorado, and that's 'cause somebody hit me! (chuckles) But gender roles... I don't know exactly what Dixie ever did, she was sickly! [Sandra Salinas laughs] Dixie was "sickly" [emphasizing sickly]! So I don't think she ever had any responsibilities. She used to when she was little get, great, huge boils! But anyway, Momma kinda babied her. Ingrid, would a, upon occasion, would run a cotton-picking crew for a couple-a years, I had one all the time.

Sandra Salinas: Were there any interesting items that your-yourself or maybe some of the other, um, Norquest members have, have found on the property? Um, I know that, um, Mr. Norquest had mentioned earlier about some arro...um, projectile points [Marie Sleeth: Arrowheads] yeh, arrowheads.

Marie Sleeth: Well, he was out in the fields a lot, I never found anything of any consequence...that I can remember. Kelly was digging in the soil [Sandra Salinas laughs] irrigating, or tracting, or hoeing, or somethin' back then everything was done by hand. [Sandra Salinas: It sure was.] No, I never found anything. No treasures.

Sandra Salinas: And how did the Norquest family manage to acquire so much land in the region? Um, how much did, if, if you don't mind us asking, how much did it cost back then?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, it was cheap. Land was cheap. Um, daddy would...being a cash crop, as you would say it, for cotton and it came in once a year, and then the livelihood basically depended on, on that, it, uh, he, some years, he would, um, not make very much money than other years. I remember the year that he, we had more than the salary, or, I mean, money that the, excuse me, that the president of the United States made! [Sandra Salinas: Wow!] So it was, you know, and it was during times like that that daddy would then, he would buy some more land, or he would, uh, buy a new tractor or a new...something, you know, that he needed and....So it was times of plenty and times of famine like I said. Green beans were for supper, if you, (chuckles) didn't eat 'em you didn't eat anything! (laughs) So, anyway, that's how he would do it, he, he bought, he bought, um, the land, uh he had that whole sixty acres where that Southwest Texas High School is, and the Lutheran Church. We owned all that land at one time. And then we owned the land across the road. And...some, um, where I used to go to do my waiting was across from Pan-Am, and he owned that. And that was like where those...no...no, I thought it was south, uh, north of Schunior. 'Cause I can remember him hauling, the cotton gin was in town but it was on Schunior. Where Schunior met the railroad tracks. That's where the cotton gin was. And I can remember him, I was running the crew here and he would come get my trailer and go over to Schunior, go down

Sugar, Schunior, and then take it on over, So I don't know. It has to be where those apartments and everything are. They're along Schunior. And, um, then he, I don't know whether anybody's told you or not, daddy was a planner. He was always thinking ahead. In fact, daddy got the first orchestra going in the Valley here in Edinburg and I played my Senior year in the first orchestra and there were about twelve of us. And, um, anyway, daddy, that whole 60 acres or, however big that is, where Pan-American sits right now. Daddy used to farm that land. And he also, with his own money, purchased an option to buy. He never did exercise the option to buy it. But he was holding it so nobody else could get it. Until Pan-Am was ready to build there. And then finally they did! So that's where, that one, I think it was 60 acres...

Sandra Salinas: And were there any other structures around, um, around here, around the premises that, besides, that were either, shifted or moved or torn down so that Pan-Am can be built, [Marie Sleeth: No.] or the following [Marie Sleeth: No.] It was mainly these, these structures that are here and the rest were just fields.

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, they were kinda like outlying (chuckles) acreages, you know, but everything was done by hand.

Sandra Salinas: And I had a question, the, um, the camps of the wetbacks, was that part of you all's land as well or was that like comm-communal land? Where the camps were...

Marie Sleeth: It was, uh, right away water, right away, um, because the...daddy didn't own it, no.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. So it might've been communal land?

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, it was public. [Sandra Salinas: public.] Because it was right, the right of way, water rights and all that they have to have right of ways to put in canals, drainage ditches...[inaudible] and that's what it was it was the right of way.

Sandra Salinas: So we had, um, pastures, fields, they were being, um, where agriculture area and then we have the orchards there the canal was back here coming this way, right?

Marie Sleeth: I don't remember, you'll have to ask Kelly.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, and then you had your, uh, the, um, Norquest quarters (laughs) the quarters! And then down that way was the canal. Did I get that correct? [Marie Sleeth: Mmm Hmm] Ok, the camps and the canal... ok, just wanted to verify that I had that, um, correct.

Marie Sleeth: Daddy would, um, after we got that pick-up with the seat, seats, that would go down and to Penitas I believe it was, pick up the guys on Monday morning (laughs) [Sandra Salinas: Penitas] Because, they'd go home on weekends and then [Sandra Salinas: Oh ok!] on, um, Saturday afternoon he would take 'em all back again, I mean he made runs, you know, a lot of 'em had their own transportation. I don't know what kind it was but he didn't, um, he didn't haul because he had lots of men working for him. You know, if Ingrid had a crew of forty and I had one, that's eighty right there! But they would, I don't know where they, a lot of 'em weren't down on the, at the canal, they were, who knows where they were at night. They may have had friends somewhere that they stayed with or whatever. But, um, you'll learn about a lot of that in that book. Yeah, you all need to go read that book before you interview anybody else. [Sandra Salinas: Oh yes, yes.] Because it is quite, quite informative. And they're just little short stories, it's not a, you know, a book book. It's two, a page or two for each little story about particular people, land, or an incident. Yeah...I think you need to read, you can read it tonight! I mean, you know it doesn't take long to read it. [Sandra Salinas: Um] But it gives a lot of pertinent information. I think daddy changed the names (chuckles) for the protection! But when daddy wrote the book, uh, he insisted, it was the University of New Mexico press that printed it and edited it and he, they weren't edited, and he says "No, you will print it as I wrote it." Because if you start messin' with things and terminology that he uses and trying to find a different word it changes the meaning of the whole thing! So, and he, daddy's first language was Swedish. His parents were born in Sweden. But he was born here. His second language was English. His third language was Spanish. So he uses a lot of colloquialism Spanish in the stories because that's the way it happened, you know. And he, you know, has a lot of things in quotes because that's what they would say. I think you'll enjoy it. When daddy had his stroke, he, um, his first stroke he was he kinda lost his hearing. And, um, he would um, of course, talk in English. But then as he had a series of strokes and one, after one of 'em all he would talk was Spanish. He didn't know English! So the nurses, eh he had to have round the clock care. The nurses would talk to him in Spanish. (chuckles) But then after the big major one it was Swedish. He

went all the way back to his root language. Which we found very interesting.

Sandra Salinas: Where you guys able to communicate with him? [Marie Sleeth: In Spanish?] In Swedish?

Marie Sleeth: No. [Sandra Salinas laughs] We, no.

Amanda De La Fuente: What about in Spanish?

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, yeah, we could, we all knew Spanish. We don't SPEAK Spanish. I am by no means, bilingual. Never would I ever even hint that I was but I know a lot of Spanish.

Amanda De La Fuente: How were you able to communicate with your crew while you were out there? [Marie Sleeth: In Spanish.] You would just have certain words that... [Marie Sleeth: Yeah.]

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, Kelly's fluent in Spanish... but I'm not. I can read it. I do a pretty good job of reading Spanish. 'Cause it, a lot of it's so similar to English. It was just pronounced differently.

Amanda De La Fuente: Would your other family, um, the ones who were from Kansas, would they come visit your father down here?

Marie Sleeth: Um, they, a couple times, we would get some company from Kansas or Nebraska. They would come down and stay. We've got pictures of a, um, family members from up there down here.

Amanda De La Fuente: You have pictures in here?

Marie Sleeth: Um, I don't, Kelly has them all. You do know who I'm talking about when I say Kelly?

Sandra Salinas: Yes, um, this might be a touchy subject but we just wanted to ask. When a family member would pass away, um, how were the arrangements for the burials, um, the burials, formulated? Did the family have certain funeral traditions? Or, um...

Marie Sleeth: No, I um, I wasn't around when my Swedish grandparents died. And I wasn't around when my German grandfather died. See, my mother's, my mother's German and her grandparents were born in Germany. But daddy's parents were, he was first generation. But, um, I wasn't around when the grandparents died. So I don't know what activities took, um, went on in the house. You know, because I've, I've heard of, um, laying him out on the dining room table, you know, and various things like that. What was the expression? 'He lay a corpse on the dining room table.' That's what my mother-in-law would say. 'He lay a corpse!' That was a phrase! In other words, he was laid out there, they didn't take him to a funeral home. In fact, in the northern states what do you suppose they do when the ground was too hard to dig a hole? The body's in the [cannot understand] shed until the ground... [Sandra Salinas: Until it was easier to... dig down] And the bodies would freeze. I mean, you know, all winter long it's cold! Ice and stuff! You know, I was, we were doing some genealo-geneology work in West Virginia, where my husband and I worked and that's one thing that they did. Put 'em out on the wood shed!

Sandra Salinas: You would need to wrap them VERY NEATLY 'cause if not... (laughs) Ah, the stor-the history of those, of those burials are... pretty interesting! Very fascinating! (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: But I don't know whether, you know, I don't know what the procedures were. Kelly may know. 'Cause I think I was a baby when my grandmother, Swedish grandmother Norquest died. I remember my grandmother Nordmeyer dying but she, that was over in McAllen. [inaudible] And we did, just, um... nobody's ever died out here!

Sandra Salinas: Maybe we should live out here all the time! (laughs) And this is why it's better in Texas! (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: My mother died in a hospital my daddy died in a nursing, no he was in the hospital too. So it was just, you know, automatic, that was in the 80's! Momma died in 1993. She was 88 years old. But they just take them to a funeral home. No special ritual. That's interesting, I, you'll have to ask Kelly maybe he can remember. We do have a cousin that would've remembered but he died a couple of years ago. Dwayne, he got interviewed though, at length, by my nephew who is a historian only he's stuck in Colorado. He, no, no other history counts but Colorado history. [Sandra Salinas laughs] He's the expert! You know, he's pretty knowledgeable; he's got his Masters in History, he's a History Researcher. [Sandra Salinas: Nice, nice. Lots to do with the archives then (laughs)] But, um, Dwayne was over one time was, uh, a couple of years, or a year or so before he died. And, um, Rick interviewed him for several hours like this. And Dwayne could tell you where everything was in the house before they changed it. [Sandra Salinas: Wow.] 'Cause he was older.

Sandra Salinas: Are there any family members buried on the property? Well, you guys have a designated

cemetery or burial...?

Marie Sleeth: Well, um, over on Ware Road is where my parents are and that's where, um, my grandparents are. But, um, I don't know where Kelly's gonna be buried I don't know where anybody's, I know what's gonna happen to me. I already have my urn! (chuckles) [Sandra: Nice.] I get to be placed in my lovely Wedgewood urn in the National Cemetery in Arlington, Texas. It's Dallas, Fort Worth National Memorial Cemetery and my husband is cremated [inaudible] we put him there. I carried him around a while. About ten years. (laughs) And finally I decided, he was, I was living back there at the time. He needed a resting place. And he was buried with, I mean, put in with full military honors; it was all white.

Sandra Salinas: Awww, that's wonderful...well, I'm sorry for your loss but that's, it's wonderful that he got, he had, such honor.

Marie Sleeth: I get to do that, I mean, I get to be put there too! (chuckles) So, anyway...I don't know about any of my other siblings' plans. [Sandra Salinas chuckles]

Sandra Salinas: And, um, that's pretty much everything we've got. Did you guys want to get started on the grounds? Would we be able to, um, take a tour with you?

Marie Sleeth: Well, I tell you what, I'm gonna call Kelly and see if he will do it.

Sandra Salinas: That's fine.

Marie Sleeth: I'll go with you [Sandra Salinas chuckles] because two heads are always better than one.

Sandra Salinas: You know there's going to be a designated group that's, um, we were all assigned a certain Norquest family member and, um, we were all also assigned certain themes as far as, um, we were more archeology, structures, and biology, animals, plants, things like that and so, um, a tour would be good for us because of the arch[aeology]...

Marie Sleeth: Yes, to get it into perspective. [Sandra Salinas: Mmhum.] Yeah, I told Kelly that I was gonna-

Sandra Salinas: I'm not sure, um, [Marie Sleeth: Oh, my battery is dead] if Mr. Norquest is going to be, um, interviewed under...

Marie Sleeth: The battery's dead let me go plug it in.

Miguel Gutierrez: Do you want me to move, to put [video and audio cut off for a few minutes]

Sandra Salinas: You wanna have it going. [speaking in background to someone]

Marie Sleeth: [Inaudible] His wife was born in ugh....I don't remember the name of the town, but across the border. And that is where her family is and so he's gone down, you know, to weddings and funerals and stuff with her family a lot. And he just became interested in the genealogy of the areas and the history of the various areas in Northern Mexico, so he is the one to really talk to. (giggling). So I'm glad he can come. I was afraid that he wasn't gonna be. Oh here he is. [looking to the front door].

Sandra Salinas: I had a question, [Marie Sleeth: Yeh.] while we were waiting for him I was going to ask, are there any kind of remedies or folk remedies that your parents have passed down to you? Anything using the plants or anything...that....

Marie Sleeth: Mmm-mmm...No. [shaking her head no right away]. No my parents were Yankees (giggling).

Sandra Salinas: Well maybe they might have had something from their Swedish roots or...

Marie Sleeth: [shaking her head no] No. I, I, I (laughing) this sounds terrible, but I do remember taking cough medicine that was made out of honey [Sandra Salinas: Honey] and kerosene. (laughing harder).

Sandra Salinas: Oh, wow. (giggling)

Marie Sleeth: Yea, do you remember that Kelly? [Screaming to Mr. Kelly Norquest standing outside the screen door]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: You said honey and what?

Marie Sleeth: Kerosene.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, I remember sugar and Kerosene.

Marie Sleeth: Sugar and Kerosene.

Sandra Salinas: Sugar and kerosene.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well I've talked, I've talked to my wife Odie and her mother gave her the same thing

when she was young.

Marie Sleeth: [surprised] Really?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

[Everyone was rustling around here while getting ready to go outside for the tour]

Sandra Salinas: [asking Mrs. Sleeth] Can I leave this here?

Marie Sleeth: Yes.

[conversation between Eduardo Robles, Sandra Salinas, Miguel Gutierrez, and Marie Sleeth]

Sandra Salinas:[um] Eddie can you just get a, can you [um] a, just get that real quick[turns to Marie Sleeth], just a quick glance? That's really neat [pointing at Marie Sleeth's food travel kit]

Marie Sleeth:[oh] well let me get that out of the way, [Amanda de La Fuente (to Carrol Norquest, Jr. Jr.): She has the cooking supplies, a portable, her transportation cooking supplies.] so can see my cooking (chuckles) stuff [light laughter]

Sandra Salinas: cooking, travel cooking, utensils

Eduardo "Eddie" Robles: Would you mind letting us know what you have in there? [pointing the camera to the Marie Sleeth's travel cooking briefcase]

Marie Sleeth: [oh] well I got a knife sharper, and some staples, I have some sea salt, and some kosher salt, and some [um] ground coarse [um] ground black pepper [um] and then I got what I call my [emphasizing] Mex-Mix

Sandra Salinas: wonderful (chuckles)

Miguel Gutierrez: Mex-Mix?

Marie Sleeth: It's the standard herbs that the Mexicans use [um][um]cumin and, and coriander and of course black pepper and [um] Mexican oregano. And I, I mix up and I [um] toast all the seeds and then I [um] blend them in a coffee grinder and I come out with what I call Mex-Mix. Now then last night see I made soup. I made taco soup. I love to cook Mexican. Taco soup. Tortilla soup that's what it was and so when it comes to putting the spices in here goes two table spoons of my Mex-Mix in and I got all my Mexican spices in there and this one instead of having to measure each one of them. And so anyway that's my Mex-Mix [light laughter]

Miguel Gutierrez: that sounds really good

Sandra Salinas: Great, well let's start our little...[background chatter]

[Conversation between Mandy De La Fuente and Carrol Norquest, Jr.]

Mandy De La Fuente: We're hoping as you give us a tour outside, if you could hold this close to you?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, ok.

Mandy De La Fuente: It's a recorder; [inaudible] we're making sure that we get the best quality.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Right, okay.

Marie Sleeth: [talking to others of the group in the background] Let me get this out of the way.

Mandy De La Fuente: [Talking to Carrol] She has her cooking supplies. A portable, her transportation cooking supplies.

Carrol Norquest: Oh, okay

Marie De La Fuente: [talking about the spices and cooking utensils in her travel kit in the background] I have Sea salt, kosher salt, coarse ground black pepper and ...[cannot hear the rest]

Mandy De La Fuente: [Talking to Carrol] You are the oldest correct?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And she is the third.

Mandy De La Fuente: She's three years younger?

Carrol Norquest: She's the third one, yeah, and my sister Dixie that's supposed to , she lives west of us here, she's the fifth one and my brother is the seventh, [Mandy de La Fuente: Oh ok.] and we were all born right here in the old house. [Mandy De La Fuente: Yeh, she actually mentioned...] All of us...yeah. (laughing)

Mandy De La Fuente: Amazing. And there is a two year separation between all of the children, like about two years [inaudible]...

Carrol Norquest: About two years. Uhuh. There is one in there where it was three years, otherwise it's two years. Two years apart, yeah. Where are you from?

Mandy De La Fuente: I'm from Weslaco.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh you're from Weslaco. Oh. Okay.

Mandy De La Fuente: Yes, I was born there.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh you were, okay. Very good. What are you studying in at the university?

Mandy De La Fuente: I'm studying Sociology.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Sociology. Okay.

Mandy De La Fuente: I am interested in history. I am definitely interested in the history of people.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Is that how you got into this class that you're...?

Mandy De La Fuente: Yea. Well sociology, since it covers a lot of different topics.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeh.

[everyone gathering up to walk out the door]

Sandra Salinas: I'm going to try to draw this at the same time. Hope you don't mind. I will try drawing the premises.

Marie De La Fuente: [telling Carrol] I guess you've met all of these, Kelly. You met 'em?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea. Not individually so much, but as a group yes. (giggling)

Marie Sleeth: Good.

Sandra Salinas: Well, I am Sandra, oh I'm sorry, I'm Sandra Salinas, this is Miguel, [Miguel Gutierrez: Miguel.] [Carrol : Miguel] we've got Amanda, [Carrol : Amanda] Eloise, [Carrol : Eloise] and Edward...[Carrol : Edward.] Eduardo [Carrol : Eduardo, Edward]. [Everyone shakes hands with Carrol when he repeats their names]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay, very good... [Sandra Salinas: And I love your dog] well I'm Kelly.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yes, well actually, actually that's my daughter's dog. Christine, she and her husband Ross, Ross Salinas, they're in, at the University of Iowa right now studying their Ph. Ds and getting a Ph. D in English, so that's her dog, so she left it with me to take care of while she is over there. (laughing) so anyway. Okay, well you wanna, you wanna see something around here and uhh?

Sandra Salinas: Well we were [Carrol : See what...] just interested in the structures around the premises. What might have been here in the past? What has, is no longer around? The older structures? The newer structures?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay

Sandra Salinas: Um, we are more interested in the archaeology and the biology factors of the premises.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: We we'll uh, earlier I was telling you about this house. I don't know whether you want anything on that, pertaining to that, but this uh, this house I told you that this was originally built in the late 1940s for a refugee family from Germany. And the oldest son was working here on the farm and they raised, and the lady raised her family here until, oh they lived in it, part of their family 'till ohh about 1970, bout 1970, so they were here about twenty, twenty-five years or thirty. Then it was renovated some. My wife and I lived here and my daughters, and uh, then later on we used it as a rent house and relatives and students that primarily were going to college that rented it and then more recently, the last few years we have been using it as a guest house for relatives and other friends that might come visiting. So uh, I'll tell ya, right here [pointing to a spot under the barbeque pit that was in the southwestern part of the little white with green house] when it was first, it's been renovated somewhat, now it has indoor plumbing and bathroom and it's been ... the porch has been enclosed to be more comfortable, has air conditioning now, right here under where this barbeque pit is, there's a slab of concrete, and that was the original shower outside. [Sandra Salinas: Oh, ok] So, they had an outside shower. Now if you look overthere [facing and pointing a few feet southwest] you see that structure, right overthere, that, see that iron structure, that's an outhouse. And that's the kind of toilet facilities we had back in those days. So that's what they had. It's been outta use since it was renovated with a bathroom put into the, inside of the house here. So Russ [Dr. Skowronek] tells me that outhouses like that are a terrific source of archaeological treasures at times, people tend to throw stuff in 'em, and it gets covered up in there and you never know what you're gonna find, especially if it's been in use for years and years, so uh, anyway that's what he's told me about it. [sound cuts out for a few seconds here].

Sandra Salinas: Did you ever throw anything interesting in there? (giggling)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: (giggling) Well I'll tell ya, I didn't, but I'll tell you one time my brother Erik , my cousin

Jim Nordmeyer lived down there on the other side of the farm, his family my Uncle Eddie, they had five children, they lived on the other side of the farm and they farmed with my father, and like us, they had an outhouse there and my brother and my cousin Jim were about uh, I don't know, five or six years old, and my mother had given my brother and me each a little gold ring. There was a special deal one time and she gave us each a little gold ring, and my brother Erik, took his ring off and held it over the hole and my cousin Jim said, said I dare you, and so he opened his fingers and in it went. Of course, needless to say my mother was not happy about it. (everyone laughing) So down on that end of the place, if you ever do any archaeological digging, you may find a tiny little gold ring. So.. (laughing). So anyway, now, over here on the other side of our fifty acres, sixty acres we have, there's another house, if any of you go down that way, the next house over is sort of a brick-stucco house. That one has been here since, uh, I guess the early 1940s probably, about the time of the end of the depression, and it's ah, there was a farmer friend of ours that lived there and we own it now, and we've owned it for many years, along with the land around it and uh, my niece Liana Setti, I don't know whether any of you know her, she uh, she lives there. She and her, she is getting married very shortly, so she and her fiancé live there, so, you can take a look at it when you go down there, so that's part of the farm too. The uh, where we're standing right now, originally when my father moved here, my grandfather, my grandparents came here, and my father, where we're standing right now, this was where all of their horse drawn equipment was here. This was a kind of machine, machine area and uh, to kept the machinery, they had horses and uh, horses and mules and that's what they farmed with. So all of that equipment was out here. That's all gone now. When World War II came, why they needed, they needed lots of iron for the war effort and all of that went into the, into the war effort. For, to make bombs, and equipment, and everything like that. By that time we didn't need the horse drawn equipment anymore, because my father had a tractor. Tractors and the equipment he couldn't use from the horses and transfer it to the use of a tractor, why he turned it in for the war effort to defeat, to defeat Germany and Japan. And, Ok, let's just walk around a little bit, oh this house right here, my house [brown brick house on Chapin road] that was built in 1976, that was built in 1976. At that time we had an orange grove out here, [Sandra Salinas: Orange Grove?] Uhuh...we had an orange grove out there and a freeze uh, later on a freeze killed it out. I don't know, I don't remember when the freeze was that killed it out, but anyway, then we put it into pasture. So anyway, my wife and I lived in this house for a while [pointing to the small white with green trim home] and we built that one in 1976 and uh, that's where we still live. So anyway, let's uh...[stops talking]

Sandra Salinas: What other crops did you guys have on the premises that were also killed by the, or might have been killed by the freeze? Or any of the other types of natural disasters like Hurricane Beulah and...?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, Hurricane Beulah, ok Hurricane Beulah for instance killed out all of our Buffel Grass. This, all of this, all of this was underwater [pointing to the grass on the property all around him]. The whole farm was underwater. And it came into this house, water was in this house, and it didn't come into the big house. It just lacked a little bit. But all of that killed out all the Buffel Grass we had in the pasture. And the cows, we turned, we had about maybe thirty cows, thirty cattle, and we turned them out in the pasture so they can find a dry place during that time. And uh, it took about a month for the water to go down around here, but the cows found a dry place over on the other side, and we had another kind of grass, called African Star Grass that we had planted and it didn't get killed. It has long runners, like Bermuda Grass has short runners, but it has long runners. All of the runners that are about ah six to eight feet long that floated to the top of the water and started growing. So every day the cows would leave their, they would leave their, high place over there and walk out into the water and they would graze on the grass that was growing on top.

Marie Sleeth: Isn't that something?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: An answer to that question... [Mandy De La Fuente: They were walking on water. (joking)] Yea. (laughing) We have had other crops here tomatoes that would freeze at times. The grass of course always would freeze if the cows were here. When the cows were here, the grass would freeze sometimes. What was your question now pertaining to the crops?

Sandra Salinas: Any other kind of crops besides the tomatoes and the oranges?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That we grew here....Yeah. We had, we had toma...we ...it's kind of a list we had, we had carrots, we grew carrots, we grew tomatoes, we grew/had oranges, we had grapefruits, we had cotton, we

had sorghum, milo, we had milo, we grew corn, like it's out on the field now for uh, for eating, for roasting ears. One time my father even, when I was a kid, even had grew a crop of popcorn. There was one or two years that we grew a big crop of broom corn over here, that's what they used to make brooms with. It was right on this piece of land, right over here to our south. And ah there were other times. Those were the main crops that we dealt with, although there were others once in a while that my father would grow, or that we would, but those are the main things that have been growing here. Now that we are in town, about the only thing that we can grow is milo, we can't, they can't spray cotton here in town, and any crops with food on them the people in town, when it gets ripe, when they all come out and they start gathering it. That is sometimes referred to as fingerplight. They would go out and pick it. So those are the basic crops we've grown through the years. We've had black eyed peas, I remember, we had black eyed peas on here too. And we've had hay, we've had hay that we've grown, and are still cut, that we still have on the east eight acres that we have over there. Otherwise, we had cattle, we had cattle over the years, we had hogs. Right here, you see on the other side of the car, that area where those mesquites are [pointing to northwestern area of the property], that was the hog pen. That was our hog pen for many years when my dad was young and then uh, uh, when my brother and I grew up we had hogs, grew quite a few hogs here until my brother left home and then I did, and uh, and we had chickens, we always had chickens, we had and we had milk cows here that we'd, we also had milk cows that we would milk for the family, for our own home use and ah. Chickens, ducks, guineas, no turkeys, but uh, anyway, we had all those things so... Anyway, why don't we just kinda walk this way and[walking towards the big house]

Sandra Salinas: [asking crew member] Did you get the outhouse?

Eduardo Robles: Mmm Hmm

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Right now, of course with the drought, everything is, everything is all dry, so you see how that looks. There is a Chile-piquin, we got them, they grow all over the place. (everyone saying mmmm and giggling) At least, well they grow all over the place at least when there is plenty of water. Oh and then some of these dead ones, those are Granjenos, we, those are good to eat. [pointing to fence] And you see the remains of the fences, that was for the cows. Those fences here, yeh, those were for cattle, and there you see part of it here, this was the gate right there. Right over there you see, you can see the remainder [accidentally bumped into crew member] Oh excuse me, a remainder of the fence over there [silence due to walking towards the big house] This uh, this originally was all uh, this was always the main corral. Right in here, you see there is the cow tank and we had a cow tank over in the other, in several other places at different times, but there is a cow tank that was in here, and when my father came, they kept the horses and they kept the cows and like I say the hogs, they were back here. And they even butchered hogs here when I was a kid and I don't remember the cows, though we always, the calves that we were gonna butcher, we always, they had the slaughter house here in town, later on they had the slaughter houses, so then we'd take them over there and have meat for the family. Before they had home freezers, they had a locker plant here in town where you could rent a locker that was in a cold storage place. And people would do that and then they would keep their food in it. They had food in that locker and they would go get it whenever they needed meat, well they'd go get meat out. So...

Sandra Salinas: When they were butchering the hogs on yawls' premises, when you guys were...at that time, where would you guys put the excess remains of the [Carrol : Well...] hogs and how/where would you spray it off to?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well, that I don't know. I don't remember, uhm... I don't remember how they disposed of them, I do know that the hog head went into the hole in the ground, in a "poso" and got cooked that way, but I don't know about the rest of it, but they uh, I just don't know the answer on that one right now.

Sandra Salinas: That's fine.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The uh, and you can see fences over there, a fence over there too, the remains of a fence. And this, over here, you see this uh, this sheet iron along there, that was our working shoot. That was a, you see it's got posts and wood across that way, the cows would go into that working shoot and we could give them medicine or work with them or load them, there was a loading, a loading shoot right here where that angle goes, where we could load them on to trailers or take them off. So anyway, that's where we worked the cattle, and the shoot would keep them in line, keep them in order. And uh. Oh you see that little uh, that little concrete thing

over there? That was a water trough for calves. There is another one right over there. Those were so calves could drink, they couldn't drink out of the large one over here, so that was for the calves that were no longer getting milk from their mothers.

Marie Sleeth: [talking to Carrol Norquest] Uh, Carrol, what is this thing over here.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, that tank?

Marie Sleeth: Yeh. No. That thing.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: What? That a...

Marie Sleeth: The barrel [Carrol Norquest: oh, that barrel over there barrel?]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That was originally used for Kerosene. You heard us talk about Kerosene a while ago with honey or with sugar. Kerosene was used for a lot of things, we didn't have electricity here, so we had Kerosene lamps. Electricity didn't come into the country in those days, so we had Kerosene lamps, the Kerosene was kept in that, it was also used for medicine, it was used for other [Marie Sleeth: cooking] yea, for the cooking stove and so forth. Later on when we got electricity and then we didn't need it for Kerosene anymore, eventually we used it for diesel. Diesel fuel, and for many years used it for diesel fuel so... I think, I'm not sure whether that came down with my grandfather or not, but anyway, it's been here many, many since, years, many many years anyway since I was a kid and I'm seventy-six so... it's been here at least that long.

Marie Sleeth: [telling Carrol Norquest] They were asking about the old barn.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Ok, the old barn, the old barn was right here where these, where these buildings were. That was the original barn. [pointing to what is now the tool shed.] and it, is torn down, if you wanna see a good picture of it, go to the museum, and they've got a picture of it up on the wall. The whole thing. The whole barn, and that's a good picture that you can see of it, it's uh... Well it's got my name on it, on the picture anyway. You can see what it looked like, but, after they got rid of the horses and we didn't have to, and could no longer sell milk in town, we had to keep it for our own use, then we didn't need the old barn to store hay in anymore, that much, or to keep the animals in as much, so, and we were getting tractors to use, so my dad and my uncle Ed that was farming with him, they tore it down and they recycled it into that shed right there. That machine shed so they can park tractors in it, and use it in a different way now. So that was done, ohhh, in about 19, somewhere around 1940. So that, that building itself has been there a long time. And it was used primarily for the tractors and the machines and the cars were parked in there. So uh... anyway, let's see...

Sandra Salinas: What is that concrete slab? Was that part of the barn or?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: No. That was part of the corrals. [Sandra Salinas: the corrals] Mmhhh. That was part of the corral. My dad had, and you see there, there is a little one over there, there is a little wall over there in the front of the house, he did that at one time. Put those in, made it around the parking area and the yard. He made it all around it, and then that was part of the corral, and then the fences were on top of it. The fences to keep the cows were on top of it. That door right there, that little area [pointing to small door on east side of the shed] we still kept some cows, several cows for our own milking, and I remember, even in college, I did a lot of milking for the family, we had there, of course there were nine of us here and uh, that's where the cows would go in to be milked. Right there there's a place with concrete floor there where they were milked, and got their food while they were being milked. They behaved better when they were eating food and you're milking them, than when they didn't have food. And they were always anxious to go in and get the food because it was always good food. And they, so you would open the g- open the door and they would go in and get their heads in the stanchion and then they'd go in and get to chomping on the good food, you know, and then we were ready to milk. You're working, when you're milking like that, you work up good muscles on your arms. Big ones. [showing off his arms in a humorous manner] (laughing). [after a few seconds of thinking] Now, there was a gate here to go into the corral, with ah whatever equipment we needed, so..., that's long gone now. These sheds of course are current; they've only been here about ten-fifteen years. This is my daughter's shed. My daughter lives here, Caroline [Caroline Twist]. Now you see over here, there's another water tank for the cows. That was another one. We had water coming into it from that structure over there. That, my father built that, you see, you see the wall over there the one that is higher and you see a couple of chairs in it, that, we/he built that as a swimming pool in the 1950s and we also used it as a source of water supply for the cows. So there's pipes, now

there's pipes going out from that, two cow tanks like this that uh with a float in them so that they can stay full all the time. So, they're no longer in use. The uh...and here is the other side of the barn, as you notice, there are no tractors in there anymore, people store stuff in there and that's my son-in-law's car, uh pickup and then their car goes in there and he parks them that way. When I was a kid, this lower one is where we parked the pickup, where that red tub is. That red, you see that red tub there, that's a cast iron tub and it was originally was up in the top of that, up in the top of the old house when they built it back in 1913. And eventually we took it out and got a more modern one but uh... anyway, it's still here. It's good for, good for putting a bunch of ice in and putting a tarp over the top and uh...and your beer cans, beer and beer and cokes and all that stuff in it [Sandra Salinas: nice celebrations, like the wedding?] yeah, like a celebration (laughing) right. Right. The ah, this little house here, that's, has an interesting history. About where we are standing is where it originally was. And it was a... it was a house for little chickens.

Marie Sleeth: Brooder house.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Brooder house. Yeh. It was a brooder house and uh, it was here and the little slab it was on is still under us right here, but it got moved over there later and it was used for quite a few different uses over the years. Uh, my dad fixed it up to where, when we had seven of the kids here, seven of us here, why my mother needed help, so we hired a lot of a lot of people at times during harvest season and all. The one of, one of the ladies ...several, several of them at different times, basically they would help my mother out, ironing and cleaning and stuff like that, and they'd stay in there. Uh, on a part time basis, or full time, depending, they had their own little place to stay, and later on it uh, when we were no longer doing that much farming, and the kids were grown, we didn't need it for a purpose of a maid to stay there, why then we, then we used it for storage, then my brother Erik used it as a radio shack, we called it the shack now cause he used it, he used it, he wasn't even out of high school, he was into short wave radio and learning to fly and all that, so that was his ah, that was his place where he had his equipment, and then later on when he left home to join the Air Force, it uh, it was used as storage and eventually, and then uh ...when I got married, my wife and I, we lived right here, you see, uh the concrete strips there, they weren't there, but we had a mobile home, so we used it as a storage, and then later Marie, when she and her husband retired from the NAVY, and brought the kids home to raise them here, they lived in that same mobile home, and that was the bunkhouse for their two sons. They had some bunk beds in there, so they, and we put a little air conditioner in it by then, by then we had air conditioners, so they put a little air conditioner in there. Then later when you moved back out here the second time, [Marie Sleeth: Yeh] her husband Scottie [referring to Marie Sleeth and her husband Scottie Sleeth] used it as an office. [Marie Sleeth: Right.] Yeah. He used it as an office [Marie Sleeth: He had a computer and everything in it]. And right now it's used as a storage, a storage place again. So, but originally, it was a place to nurse the little chickens along. So that was it. Now for the big hens, with the eggs, [Sandra Salinas: Wanna get closer to him?] over here where Marie is, right, between here and the uh, here and the little wall, we had the big hen house, for the hens, to be in and lay their eggs and uh, I raised eggs when I was a kid and sold them in town. And, I sold little ah pullets, oh no, not pullets but little pullets, little roosters both, little chickens and fryers. I'd raise them, take them into town and sell them to the grocery store and they'd butcher them right there, at where the museum is, it was HEB, no, HEB for a while and before that, it was Piggly-Wiggly. I'd take half a dozen little chickens over there, chickens that were grown, and they'd take them out across the alley to the North and they'd kill them and skin them up and uh take all the feathers off and [Sandra Salinas: That's poultry] put them on the, put them on the shelves in the grocery store there and I'd have a bucket of eggs for them and so...so that's the ways things were back then and then we'd of course my dad, before that, even like I said, he'd take the milk to town to the creameries and sell it. So that's where the chicken house was, and later it became a corral in that area.

Marie Sleeth: Where were the haystacks?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The haystacks were down, about where that ah where that driveway of my brother's. [Marie Sleeth: On over there?] Yeah, that was in later years, that was in later years during the seventies and sixties, 1960s and 1970s. And, maybe even in to the eighties. Probably possibly in to the eighties, nah, in to the seventies. Cause we got, we sold all the cattle in 1981. So yeah, and where this drive is, later when we had about thirty or forty head of cattle, that was, those were some, that was another corral, back where all those big

trees are, and where this drive is, we would drive in there, and we'd put feed, we'd put feed along where you see the tree row is, that was where the feeder was. We'd put feed in that and my daughter Caroline remembers that when she was a little kid. And where these trees over here, that's where we had the machine, machine lot for the uh...uh for the tractor, for the, all for our disks and silage choppers, and we kept some of the tractors there too so uh, that was the machine lot, [Marie Sleeth: Aren't there still some pieces of machinery in there?] which is, no longer is. Yeah, there's still machinery in there, some of the old tractor machinery that's still in there, yeah (chuckling). Unfortunately, the nature trail has been caved in a little bit, by nature, and I haven't had a chance to clean it out so there's not gonna be a chance, to walk through there, unless you wanna get thorns all over you, so anyway...

Sandra Salinas: How much of uh, how much of the tools did you guys purchase um around here, or did you guys get any of the tools or any, any kind of necessities in Mexico?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uhh...[paused to think] we did buy things in Mexico, but I'm not thinking that any of it was machinery or anything, other than uh. My dad, my dad did, during WWII, you couldn't buy anything. I mean, they didn't make any equipment. They weren't making any...excuse me...they weren't making any tractors, they weren't making any farm equipment or anything, all the metal was going into the war effort, so my dad started going to the junkyards around here, and he would find old tools and either, there was a, there were black, blacks, at least one blacksmith in town, and he'd take those pieces of iron over there, and he would either have him custom make the tools that he needed or fix them up if they were broken, or whatever, so that's what we did during the 1940s, after that, in the fifties, he was able to purchase new tractors and uh, and equipment but, he still when he wanted something custom, custom- made, he'd go to the junkyards and find, find the materials that he needed, take them over to the blacksmith, and he'd, he'd make it. In those years, I don't recall that there was anything of that nature coming over here from Mexico, if anything, it was going the other way. Because of their economy, they'd come over here and buy used equipment a lot and there were a number of dealers around here, ah during more recent years, and by recent I mean after the Korean war and after the wars that we had, that there was, made a full time business of selling stuff into Mexico. They'd get it from all over the mid-west and bring it down here and uh, sell it. [Sandra Salinas: And they're still exporting it] Yes, it was more of an export. Yes.

Marie Sleeth: [inaudible] busses, pulling busses, ah you know, school busses all the way down, heading to Mexico, you know, so there's still a lot of...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Now in more recent years of course when they had the steel industry and iron industries in Monterrey and other places where they have iron over down there, where they have foundries, anyway, more recently they've brought a lot of ah, by recently I mean the last twenty-five, thirty years, they've brought a lot of scrap metal and iron over here to the junkyards, if you've been to the museum and see that cracked bell over there, that came in a load from Mexico, [Sandra Salinas: yes] so that's been the more recent exchange of metals. So uh, anyway, good question (chuckling) [Sandra Salinas laughing] the uh, let's see, the old house of course, [asking Marie Sleeth], did you tell them about the house? Now they're hoping to, they're planning on getting together with Caroline, my daughter [Marie Sleeth: Ok, that's the only way you're gonna get in there.] and Patrick, and he'll, he'll tell you. Yeah, she's off at a doctor's appointment this morning, and so they're not even here right now.

Sandra Salinas: May we go through the outside? And you [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.] can maybe show us [Carrol Norquest: Yeah.] the little canal of the kerosene that you were telling us about [asking Marie Sleeth].

Marie Sleeth: Oh, that was, that's not there anymore. [Sandra Salinas: where it would have been?] Oh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: You're talking about the gas that was in the house?

Marie Sleeth: No, I was talking about the kerosene, cooking on a kerosene stove [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, cooking on the] that had a little canal that sent the kerosene to the flames and it was open. [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.] Very dangerous in my opinion.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well, kerosene did not burn like gasoline, so it was ah [Marie Sleeth: Safer] looking at, yeh, it was much safer though, of course before that, I guess they had a wood stove, but I that was, because they had chimneys in there, but that was before my time, cause it was kerosene that we used. Yeah. Now they

did have uh, right here there was a gas ah [Mandy de la Fuente: (to other interviewer) Do you wanna get the audio?] there was a gas tank, I guess, it was a acetylene gas I'm talking about, they had a carbide gas and they had the tank in here and there was a pipe into the house and they had gas fixtures originally, that was before my grandfather and my father came down here because I don't think they ever used the gas, eventually my father pulled the tank out of the ground, it was, the tank held some kind of powder and they'd put water in it and then when it did that, it produced gas that would go through a pipe into the house and they had gas lighting in there. I understand that was top of the line stuff at that time, but then later on, they didn't use it especially when we got into the Depression, and there was no money or anything. That was long gone before I ever was born. The uh, that tank was right here, and between here and the house, let's see, right over here, right about in here, we had the windmill. This is where the windmill, where they got water out of the ground, and just to the south of it, right out in there, right in, out in there, they had a tower, a water, with a water barrel at the top and that made pressure into the house with the water. So that they could flow water into the house. And, then between the, then just north of where this little house is now, at one time there was a uh, uh a smoke house, where they could smoke meat, [black? Meat] before the days of before the days of refrigerators and so forth, and I guess they could also dry meat in it. But that was, that's long gone.

Marie Sleeth: Right over there was the rain ...uh [inaudible] or whatever.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, okay. This tank, okay, this tank, that they uh, I was telling you this tank that they put the water in from the windmill, when my dad tore it down, he didn't get, he got rid of the, all of the metal from the windmill but the tank, he took it down and he put it right on the corner here, where that rosebush is, it's got flowers on it, he put it right in there and then he fixed it so that water from the roof would go into it so we had rain water, which was not good water for ah, it was soft water, the water from here was a little salty, from the ground, it was a little salty, so that was soft water and we could use it indoors, and I don't know whether we used it for drinking, bathing and washing dishes and washing the clothes probably and so forth, so then but later when we got the rural water system, why that went out. And uh, so in the 1960s, seventies, early seventies, we got in the rural water system so...we had water and electricity out here now at that point. The uh, you see where this window is, right up here, that's where they had the bathroom with that tub, that I showed you earlier, that's where they had the tub, and they had the bathroom up there, they had a toilet, and I guess a lavatory and so forth. And then you see the little, there's kind of a little hole up there in the, uh, in the roof? That's where the pipe went up, from the bathroom, up above the uh, up above the roof line, you know, a vent. It was a vent. And then it came down the wall. Right down here, into the, right down here into the ground and then it went underground over to a septic tank that is, as far as I know, is still there, right under that, right by that [Marie Sleeth: that pole?] that pole over there, yeah. As far as I know, that's still there. Maybe some future archaeologists will find it! (laughing)

Marie Sleeth: I know there's another septic tank right over there [pointing south]. Where was the, was that main septic tank for the house? [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Which one?] The one over here [pointing north now] [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.] for the whole house? [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.] Ok.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That was for the whole house, but it never got used much because they had to take, they didn't have running really good water anymore or anything, so it was taken out. It never efficient and the line never worked very well. So, and especially during the 1930s, no money to fix anything, right out there in those trees we had the outhouse. You would just come out the kitchen door and go out into the outhouse there. And of course those holes got filled up and at times and then we'd dig another hole and moved the outhouse. At the time, that was all citrus where those trees are, that was citrus at that time and for many years those trees are growing up basically where the birds left seeds, so they grew up after a big freeze, why they grew up through those, through those trees, and we left and the cows, we turned that into a corral, and the cows were in there and we just let the trees grow. So that's where they came from. But...

Sandra Salinas: And where would you guys, I'm sorry, where would the Norquest family, I need to stop saying you guys, where would the Norquest family wash their clothing before the water, before like that water tank?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh, in my remembrance, it was uh, I don't remember in the thirties before, I don't remember how they did it before we had indoor water, when we got electricity here and he tore the windmill down, my

dad put an electric pump right here, and then he put pipes into the house. And my mother got a washing machine and it was used right there on that back porch. There she did her washing, right there. And then we had clothes lines outside that we...it was easy to take them out and put them on clotheslines. That was a... [Sandra Salinas: Where were the clotheslines...?] job. [Sandra Salinas: ...located.]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: What's that?

Sandra Salinas: Where were the clotheslines located?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, come here, and I'll show you [walking towards porch] the uh, oh and hanging them out in the hot weather like that, us kids hated it. That was...ok, here [Sandra Salinas: (laughing) I grew up with it too so I know what you mean!] Here's one of the, that's one of the posts that the clothesline was on, and it went directly out south towards that uh, towards that tree. I don't remember how far, but it was enough to put our clothes on. Then the outhouses were basically located primarily just south of where that tree that is there. When the citrus was in here, why some of our, some of them, some of the uh, wetbacks that were working for us, wetback was not a bad word in those days, now 'n days it is, but it was *mojados* they called themselves, and they called themselves [inaudible] depending on whether they were legal or not, they called themselves either *mojados* or *los secos*. So that was the term. Anyway, uh, anyway, sometimes they'd camp in the trees there. We had a house that they stayed in most of the time down there, but when there was a big bunch of them sometimes they'd live here in the barn, and we had kerosene stoves for them, but they'd cook with wood right out here, and my brother and I would always go out there and the guys would offer us tortillas that they were making. They were making tortillas right, just right out here you know. And they'd give us tortillas; we always liked that. We were just little kids like that, you know. And, so that was all quite a, quite a time in those days (chuckling).

Sandra Salinas: And how far down was the house that the, that the wetbacks lived in?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh, it's a quarter of a mile that way, well no actually we usually kept the people that were legal in the house, either the *braceros* or those that were legal in other ways, and then the, the wetbacks they would stay where they couldn't be found. That's one thing, they hid in the trees here. But across, there was ten acres, this, where you see this holding pond here, it was, there was a straight ten acres west of that that we farmed. Immediately to the south was a long rectangular ten acres that was brush, just like we're looking at right over here, and they stayed in that a lot. My dad got tarps for them from the uh... they built tents out there, they built tents out there, and would get in the middle of it so they couldn't be found. And that was the same way here, they had tents in this orange grove and it was grown up and they uh, that was back in the forties, 1940s, and early fifties, and uh, no air conditioning or anything. The guys, they were right here at the house; my, they'd come right up to the door whenever they needed something or wanted something. My mother, my mother always fed them too especially if they hadn't eaten when they came. When they were, when they were, illegal and they'd come by here, they'd get, arrive in the morning, you know, and she'd cook pancakes and eggs for them and so forth and they...

Marie Sleeth: Haha. He's remembering all kinds...see he's four years older than me so (giggling) [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeh, so that was...] he remembers things. Yeh, I don't remember them camping here; they always camped down there.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, well this is one reason that Russ wanted a different [Sandra Salinas: exactly, that's what, we're all gonna be...] uh different views from, about a 13 year difference here, and I find that Dixie and Neil remember things that you and I don't, so uh, anyway, then eventually he built this. We, uh, it was a dual purpose. We used it for a swimming pool and then we'd used it for uh, for uh, a storage tank for cattle. And I showed you the little tank over there that the pipe went to, well there's another little tank right over there that another pipe went to for the cows. Can you see it? [background mumbling] It's in between a couple of trees. Yeh, it's kinda low there. [inaudible] Oh yeah, we're filling it in now, it's no longer in use for anything. My son-in-law and daughter wanna make a garden there, so we're filling it in right now. In the old, after, after uh, well the washer, the washer was right in here. [Marie Sleeth: right in there] The uh, this is the cistern, right here, it's about eight feet deep. We're gonna fill it in too; it's no longer used because we are on city water and it's... we're gonna fill it in so it'll be safe and all. But, but up here, you see this structure here, we had a grapevine growing on that and back when I was young, my dad and I would make wine. We would make wine with those grapes.

And I find, I still got some upstairs that's still aging (chuckling). But, anyway, we had, then they eventually died of root drop; we haven't grown anymore. Now, this 'ole tree, this is the largest, the largest oak in Edinburg. The city forester measured it and everything. My dad planted that in 1929. When he was coming from San Antonio where his father had died in the hospital, and he was coming and bringing him back home and he stopped at Falfurrias and dug up one of those little oak trees and brought it and planted it there in 1929. So it's just been, it took many years for it to really start growing, but look at it now (laughing). Oh, and for the cistern, we had a, we had a pump right here, a pump went down in there and pulled the water up and it took it into the house. And like I say, now we got city water; we were on Sharyland Coop water system for a long time.

Marie Sleeth: This is the barbeque pit.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And this is the barbeque pit that he built back about 1950 I guess.

Marie Sleeth: And was there another incinerator before this one?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, this one's been reconstructed. The other one had too much fire in it over a long period of time and finally deteriorated and uh...

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, they had asked me where we disposed of our garbage and stuff.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well, that's another story. [Marie Sleeth: okay] Well, what we would do... [Sandra Salinas: that's ok, that's why, that's why we're asking everybody, we're trying to get (inaudible)] Yes, well no, no, that's a legitimate question because it wasn't easy in those days. Oh, here comes my daughter. That's my wife in the car, though. [welcoming words back and forth] Hi Caroline. [Caroline (daughter): Hi, I'm gonna see if I can get into the house] if you wanna join us, when... [Caroline: okay] Okay, the, anyway, this is where disposed of all the stuff that would burn, whatever would burn. What wouldn't burn, cans and so forth, there was no place to take it. So my dad had a trailer out there that we'd throw it in, and then where other places were where we were farming, where they had a barbed pit along the road or something, no along the canals, we would put it in there. [Sandra Salinas: Oh ok.] That would, they would really be on you now for that. But there wasn't...

Marie Sleeth: Come on over and meet them! [talking to Caroline Twist in background]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: But that was about the only way there was. [Marie Sleeth: (to Caroline) I think you're gonna be letting them tour the house.] But first we'd, we'd burn as much of it as we could and then bottles and cans. Okay, let me ah introduce you all, this is... [Caroline: (responding to something Marie Sleeth told her) Ok.] [Marie Sleeth: It was mine.]...this is Caroline here, [Sandra Salinas: Pleasure] this is my, our oldest daughter. Caroline, she's married to Patrick Twist. He's a teacher and he's not here today, [Caroline: But, he's working] and then this is my wife Odie. Odie, she's a, she's a Peña; she's been, her family's been here longer than mine, 300 years so, and Caroline's too. So, anyway... somebody's gonna be interviewing Odie. Oh, there is a message for you and it's got another guy, somebody else's name, probably one of the rest of the team. And Caroline, somebody else is making arrangements to meet with, you with them. So, if I step on your... [Sandra Salinas: We were divided (inaudible)]

Caroline Twist: Daddy, I was gonna call you in anyways, for ours. [background chatter]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh yeh, okay. I might get called then, maybe that's why they were leaving me for last, but uh, but uh... [background chatter]

Marie Sleeth: ...somebody call Kelly, because he's four years older and can remember a whole lot more than me.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well let's walk on around this way to the back

Sandra Salinas: [talking to Marie Sleeth] But you did the cooking, see, (laughing) he won't remember that, just the good, the goodness [Mandy de la Fuente: that he ate].

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh Caroline, you've got a plastic bag in your yard.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, it's been floating around for a couple of days.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Whoa, excuse me. [Miguel Gutierrez: I'm sorry, I'm sorry.] Excuse me. Okay the uh, this side was not, and her husband may tell ya'll about that too, I think he's gonna tell you all, whoever is doing it with him, probably more about the inside. But, oh there goes a butterfly. The uh, there were no, very few trees here at all when they uh moved here and the house itself was built in 1913 when my grandfather traded it in 1925, so that's when they moved here. And there were no trees to speak of and this was a dirt road to the

west of us, and there was nothing over that way, except the field and there was porch on this side that went the whole length of the, the whole length of the house, and that was supposed to be a place where you can go out and relax, but instead in the evening, you got this hot sun blasting in, so it was, it was very hot. It was not built for South Texas. It was the kind of a house that they built in the Midwest. And they used it, the company that built it, they used it for a showplace for Midwesterners they were bringing down here, to show, to try to sell them land. And, so anyway, my dad, after the depression, when he got a little money, he and my uncle took that porch off right there and they made, and they turned it around inside, the uh, the stairway that was in there, they turned it around and then they, what they basically did was make it face the east. So what you see out there is not the front porch. And then on the back, this was the backside then, so then, and you see, when they built the house, they didn't have indoor plumbing or wiring, so you see a bunch of the plumbing and wiring on the outside here that's been put in later because the wood in that, it's hard as, hard as iron. You can't hardly drive a nail into it. And it's very well built, structured. So, anyway, that's a, and then this little window is where he made a brand new, at that time, 1940, built a new, a bathroom downstairs and a little half bath upstairs. So, for the family of nine, why (chuckling) and taking baths was something else too. I remember we'd take... Marie, do you remember when we took baths in our, in a uh, in a, in a tub, a wash tub? (chuckling) [Marie Sleeth: No.] In the kitchen? They'd heat the water and put the, yes, the [Marie Sleeth: I, it seems like [inaudible] back in here] the indoor plumbing wasn't going. Yes, that was when I was a, maybe that was before, you were a baby probably. [Marie Sleeth: Yes.] Yes, especially in the cold weather they would, my mom would put the bath tub, uh [Sandra Salinas: boil the water and then toss 'em in, right?] Yeh, put the, heat up the water and then toss, yeh and then they'd toss in the kids (laughs).

Marie Sleeth: Tell them about the swing.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, the swing. Yeh. This swing came down from, from Nebraska with them. And we think, that would have been in '25 and it was old then. So we think it went back to Nebraska earlier even. So it's a good 100 years old or more already. So when we were little we swang in that. And now my son-in-law has fixed it again for our, for the grandkids to swing in and fixed it up again. But, it's, it's worn out I don't know how many, how many sets of wood that's in there over the years that have, eventually gone, but the structure, all the iron and everything that's, that's the original thing that came down from up north with them.

Sandra Salinas: Any other structures that are no longer visible, or that were torn down that you remember?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well the old, I did mention the old smokehouse that... I'm not, I'm not thinking of anymore. Although, you go around, you're going to find, there were temporary structures at times maybe. But that's basically, basically it. Basically it. Well, in my interview I may remember some others.

Sandra Salinas: That's fine. That's fine. We're just the first group [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeh.] So, we just wanted to...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeh, well that's the thing about a short interview or only one; [inaudible], there's no way you can remember everything, [Sandra Salinas: Get everything at once] or there's no way then of correcting your mistakes later. Sometimes you remember things a little wrong; we may remember some things, you may find some discrepancies [inaudible], but that's the way we remember it. [Sandra Salinas: Exactly and that's what we want to know. We want to know the way you remember it.] Two sides to the same coin. Yeh.

Marie Sleeth: I was telling them about the lonas. They didn't know what lonas were [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh the lona, ok] and the irrigation and stuff. And uh how did we get the water to the property?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay, right now we get part of the water right here, [pointing northwest] there's a little standpipe right by the corner over there, and the water comes in through that for this corner of the place [the northwestern corner of Sugar and Chapin Rd.] There's another one like that down at that corner [southwestern corner] and that one irrigates eight or ten acres on this side of the property. The rest of the water all comes from this main canal east of us. If you go east of us, you're gonna see a canal that you, that you go over, a little hump in the road that's right close to, before you get to the railroad, it's close to [Marie Sleeth: We used to swim in that canal] Yeah, we used to swim in that. It's close to Esquisita and the [Marie Sleeth: Azteca.] Azteca, and yeh [Marie Sleeth: and the packing shed] yeh and the Chicharrones factory and; it's right there so. And that's where we get the water for all the rest of the it. Yeah.

Marie Sleeth: Well that's what I was thinking, but I didn't, I didn't know how it got over here. [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yes.] How does come from the canal? Is there another?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: There used to be, well it was all open canals originally, but it is now, it's all under pipe, pipes underground now. And that's a different problem in itself. The canals had to be kept clean cause they were dirt, and uh, they were dirt and the pipes were, saved water, it was, ah didn't evaporate and everything. And they, it's much better. Pipes have a way of breaking at times or, and then they have to stop all irrigating, go in and fix them, and you get delayed that way. Uh, one other structure that I haven't mentioned now that you think about it, it is no longer visible to see anything, but east of my house, about a hundred yards or so, used to be the irrigation canal, which was a dirt canal. And it's a dirt, the one I'm telling you about is the one that replaced it another quarter of a mile east. And this one, this one was a dirt canal, if you look, go east of my house oh a hundred, a hundred fifty yards, you look south and you're gonna see some apartments over there with the trees around them, that's The Lantana Apartments, and that's where that irrigation canal went, right there. Later it was making the ground salty all around it so they cut it out and put in that new one that I told you about earlier, this concrete line, and uh, and they went in and my dad bought it from the irrigation company. The only way they would sell it would be to somebody that owns the land right next to it so he got that for a dollar an acre for two acres. And then he leveled it and fixed it up for farming.

Marie Sleeth: To mentioned the salty water; the land is very salty, this used to be an [inaudible] or whatever and daddy put in leach, [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: yeh, it would...] that's something I think they would be interested in.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, I was telling Russ about that this very morning, we were talking about that very thing. He was asking where the salt came from on the land. The salt came from the river water. It came out of the deserts where, the deserts of Mexico and Texas and New Mexico and all where they'd get a lot of rain and the water would go in and make a flood, and so forth anyway, it would be carrying minerals of all kinds. And when you irrigated, the water would go down into the soil and the minerals would stay in the soil; the water would be used by the plants. So over a period of time, especially near the dirt canals, it would start getting salty out from those canals, the land, and you couldn't grow anything there, so in the 1950s, maybe the late 40s, the Soil Conservation Service gave a lot of help for that around here, and these drainage canals that we have now, you know where the flood waters go, those were not for that purpose. They were initially, it was all farming all over, everything here, and it was initially put in to drain the subsoil so that the fresh water could leech those minerals out of the soil into that drain ditch and it would go on down to the gulf. And uh, underneath, the way to leech it, the Soil Conservation Service provided monies that the farmers could put in drain tiles, about that far into the ground, that would open, that would end up in those drain ditches. And when they'd irrigate or when they got rain, which was even better, it would leech those minerals out into that canal, into that drain ditch, and you'd take a little cup of water out of that and it was bitter. It was worse than the ocean. And it, anyway, it was, over a few years, why they, the salts got leached out and the soils sweetened up again. Now when it became urbanized here, and you get houses and everything everywhere, you get surface drainage problems. And the only place to drain is into those ditches, into those ditches, which now they need bigger ditches all the time because there is more and more pavement, more and more concrete and everything. So the irrigation companies always owned those ditches, and now they've gotta a, county, county, I guess, drainage district to where they are gradually, gradually expanding those, right where the irrigation companies had them, those ditches. So that's basically what happened there. So, anyway, I don't, I don't know how long ya'll wanna go?

Sandra Salinas: Just as much as we can get and cause our battery is almost out, but I need to ask a few [inaudible], Mrs. Sleeth a few questions.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, okay, did you need to get anything about me in there as far as whose, do you have to....

Sandra Salinas: Uhm. No actually right now we are just, we're just focusing on the structures itself, and the biology and the plants and animals um and the structures of the..

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, no, no, what I mean, what I mean is my name, who I am, the guy that's talking, did you need that on there?

Sandra Salinas: Uhm, no, uhm, we have another, oh, I'm sorry [Eduardo Robles: Oh, we can just...Eloise

Montemayor: yeh, go ahead and get it] oh okay. Well...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, just for this particular tape maybe, yeah.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, that's fine. You take over.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well I'm Carrol Norquest, Jr., and um, I'm seventy-six years old. I was born here in Edinburg, right here at the place, the place we're talking about. Um, so that should give a little validity to who you've been listening to. [chuckles] Okay. Okay, you guys got any other

Interviewer: Um...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: thoughts? Oh, wait a minute we've got one other structure over here I didn't mention which is my brother's house, south of us, south of us. Well if we walk over that way, we can go ahead and walk up that way. [Talking to Marie Sleeth] I missed another structure and that was I'm just gonna walk them on over that way to Neil's house.

Marie Sleeth: To what?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: To Neil's house.

Marie Sleeth: Oh!

[Carrol Norquest walking towards the brown brick home on southern end of the Norquest Quarters with Miguel Gutierrez, Amanda De La Fuente and Eduardo Robles, while Sandra Salinas and Marie Sleeth stayed behind to have a separate short interview]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I think I've given you all the dates on the various structures that we've talked about. And this is my brother's house, and he, uh, he's supposed to be interviewed also, and he built this, this house was built about 1986 I believe, is when it was built and it's part of the farm land and so forth. Where we're standing is uh...where we're standing from here to the, uh, to the street and over here to this little shed over here, this was all corrals at one time also for cows for the cows to come in. So we had quite a few corrals around here. And that's where he built his house, so...

Eduardo Robles: So this is one of the newer structures?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah. That's probably the newest one. That's the most recent one. The old house is 1925. Then the little Templin house the guest house that was about 1949. And then my house was about 1976 and then this one about 1986.

Eduardo Robles: Now let me ask you, how do ya'll get mail here? Like how does this house...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Its uh, it was always rural route.

Eduardo Robles: Uh-huh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: But we get regular mail delivery. We got a...and Neil has a mailbox right up there.

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and uh, we've got another one back over there for the rest of us, where we get all of our mail. They just put it all together. It's the same system we've had ever since the very beginning, it's the same... it was always had a rural route. Now it's in the city, but they still have the same routes in the city, so...no ch- Aggravation has been changing, as the area grew, the aggravation has been the having of changing frequently. As the - as people move here, well, we were originally Route 2, later we were Route 4, and then we were Route 9 and now we've got a city address, a street address, so and that could be aggravating. You lose mail and you wouldn't get it delivered properly and then of course adding the zip codes later, why that, that's changed a couple of times too. One time when they changed it, there was a whole week we didn't get mail. [laughter] [Miguel Gutierrez and Eduardo Robles: Oh wow!] Not only that, they were sending it back unknown. So anyway but that's another matter. Of course folks that had lived in town that had street addresses those didn't change ever. So they didn't have the problem that we had in the country. Other people, other farmers and people living in the country have had the same problem I'm telling you about.

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah with the growth of the area.

Amanda De La Fuente: What was in the, in the city of Edinburg? When you guys - you guys were out here in the rural area, what was actually in there? What would you go visit or what was the...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I'm sorry?

Amanda de la Fuente: Like the main actual city for Edinburg. You guys are out in the rural with your farmland.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Amanda de la Fuente: When you would go into town, were there like movies or?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh!

Amanda de la Fuente: Or what was the entertainment?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh. Yeah there were movies, there were movies.. My earliest remembrance is of the Citrus Theatre

Amanda De La Fuente: Oh yes!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: my earliest – that was in the early forties or late thirties (movie theaters) I guess, The Citrus Theatre. They had quite a number of Spanish language movies. There must have been three or four in town through those years. The Citrus and later The Aztec or maybe initially The Aztec Theatre were English movies. It wasn't like they have it now where they have a whole bunch of 'em. You could only show one movie and that went on for a while, and then they'd get another movie, so um... And that was when in those years there wasn't money to get to go to a movie. You couldn't. We'd get to go on our birthday. [laughs]

Sandra: It was a special trip.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, get to go, that was a treat, go to a movie on our birthday. And uh, later on of course, the same way with other people, so there just weren't, weren't that man. But uh, I just, they just had a talk at the museum recently by an expert on the Spanish movies during that whole era. And I think, I was tallying up, I think there were either three or four Spanish movie theatres here at the time. They're all gone now. They're just, they're just aren't any. It's not like it was in those days. And uh, a lot of the workers; they had Braceros, they had wetbacks, they had local people that were Mexicans that lived over here for different reasons, besides our, our Mexican Americans.

Sandra: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So those folks would flock in on the weekends and go to the movies and the saloons and whatever else. Uh, and I know that because my dad more than once had to go get some of the guys out of, out of the jail. [laughs] They'd have a good time but they uh, what, from our perspective now, there probably wasn't that much what we'd call entertainment. No T.V. We did have a radio.

Amanda De La Fuente: Yeah, your sister was telling us about ironing and hearing the stories.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And no T.V.'s, and you'd get to go to a movie once in a while but people found all kinds of things to do. We had ball games. We had quite a few local ball teams in the valley, even semi-pro, and, and of course the school activities of all kinds. There were things to go to for that. And uh, out on the farm where you're away from everybody, why you, you had your own ball games, you had your other activities. Like my sister said, we'd go swim in the canal! [laughs] The canal down there. And uh, everybody had quite a few kids in those days, two or, so there were kids all around. So we'd find things to do, you know, get in trouble, whatever you know. [laughs] But you didn't... it's a different world; it's a different world in those days. Some ways harsher and some ways better, really. Then listening, watching T.V. while people were telling stories, they'd sit out in the cool air. 'Cause it was cool outside, it wasn't inside, and with the breeze and uh, and uh, so that - basically that, what I'm thinking of now is basically what we did back then. And when you had a bunch of brothers and sisters, you always had something to do. And we'd, we'd roam all over the country too. Like I said there was brushy, we'd play out in the brush out there. And uh, we even had a camping spot, we built a little place, a little shack out there where we'd stay as kids.

Sandra: Oh really?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Course I told you about the wetbacks staying there, some they'd use that shack. When they weren't using it, why we'd go camp in it.

[both he and the group laugh]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And so forth.

Amanda de la Fuente: Sounds like an adventure. There was so much, so much to see here...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Amanda de la Fuente: [inaudible] Is there anything else you want to mention about, about...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I think I'll let uh... basically I'll let Neil tell about this.

Sandra: He's home.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: He knows – he'd know more about that. In more recent years, the uh, of something of interest in more recent years; I told you about the floods from Hurricane Beulah.

Interviewer: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: They put in this – right across the street there you see the flood water holding detention area. They put that in in about nineteen - early 1980s, after, after Hurricane... what was it? Hurricane Allen. I had water in my house at Hurricane Allen, over there. And they put this in afterwards so that they could put water from this area of town into that. Get it out of peoples' houses and then they put a big drainage line, a 72 inch that comes out past the university and, and over here now. They're deepening it now so they can get water to go in there by gravity and make it even better so. So, but this unfortunately, this homestead area has put in a uh, put in a little lower area than some places so we tend to get water sometimes here. So... now we've got the garbage truck coming by to pick up our stuff! [group laughter] We don't have to go bury it somewhere! Oh there was a while that, uh, before we were in the city they uh, they had a rural garbage collection. And that happened - that came about in the seventies I guess it was. And I was uh, I didn't know they were gonna have it and then I suddenly see along the street here signs that says "union y dignedad" and I wondered "what kind of group is that?" And uh, they'd been having a lot of activist activities and.... Well I found out that that was, uh, that was the name of the garbage pickup. With... with - together [inaudible] we can make dignity and ok it's a co-op and everybody or whatever. I didn't know if it was a coop, but anyway. So then they had a certain fee for it so for many years that was our garbage pickup.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And that uh, 'till the city took us in. We uh, the city annexed us in, uh, I think the late, the late seventies, late nineteen seventies we got annexed into the city then, started paying city taxes, and that included garbage pick-up. [brief pause while everyone walks back to the main house] I'm tryin' to see what you can see out there. Anyway we have lots of birds. My son-in-law, my son-in-law saw a squirrel, a squirrel over there in my brother's yard yesterday evening. That's something we never had out here before; regular squirrel. Not the little brown squirrels but the regular one with the big bushy tail [inaudible]. My brother he's out of town so he doesn't even know he's got a squirrel. And those kind of things have been changing too.

Eduardo Robles: How about fires.? Have you had any fires on the property?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Eduardo Robles: Any of the buildings burn down?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: No, we've been fortunate that way. The biggest fire came close to my house

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: one time we had pasture there.

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That was in, uh, probably the late seventy - no early eighties maybe. Uh, a pasture. Then we got the Lantana Apartments over there, uh, the city housing project. We were always having problems with those kids over there they'd throw junk into the pasture and one time they set the pasture on fire and it was all dry so it burned all the way across clear up here, just south of my house. It killed some of my trees that were in the yard even. And uh, but the fire, fire, fire department got out here and put it out. And then that same very evening I had to get somebody, a neighbor of ours over here with a tractor and a disc, to disc all around the edges so it didn't, so if, if it flared up on the inside it would not catch hold on the other grass, or spread to my house or to these other houses. So that was - I wasn't here at the time. My wife and two daughters – the older two daughters were at the house when it happened, and I was at the university. I was doing some historical research up in the library, at the historical collection, and I didn't even know about it. And I got a call to George Gause, you may know him.

Eduardo Robles: Yes.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: George says "hey your wife says to come on home or look out the window. And I looked

out the window and there was this big bunch of fire. So I got on home, by the time I got home the fire department was out here. So that, that's one thing, yeah! I haven't thought about that for quite a while, but that was, so after that why we, uh...well even living in a house where the whole house was heated with wood we had a wood stove. The chimneys never worked well. I mean the fireplace never worked well. The chimney in the middle of the house that would take smoke up did. It worked. So we had a wood stove there and, uh, until nearly 1970, right after Hurricane Beulah, we got electric stove. And before that we had the wood stove that we'd heat the house with or heat the downstairs with it in the winter, and it was, uh, fire was always on our mind that way. It was always on our mind so uh, it's always...and there have been other times we've had, we've had fires in this orchard I'm telling you about here. This corral was one time – a pasture just south of it caught fire and my dad and I were out there with wet gunny sacks slapping at it and everything and shovels and, and then we'd get some of the men that were working around here and my mom putting it out. A fire department that - it just wasn't available at that time. But it was not a big fire, it was just creeping in the, in the grass, and uh, and it, it burned then and we've had other smaller ones around. Right now where we have the hay field on the other side of the lot, I'm always concerned about that when it gets dry. Because we've got people living all around there now so I try to keep it mowed down or the hay cut on it. [to Sandra Salinas] So uh, anyway, you get...?

Carrol Norquest Jr.

[conversation between Sandra Salinas and Marie Sleeth] (sitting on plastic chairs by the Big House patio) while others are with Carrol Norquest, Jr.]

Sandra Salinas: Ok, sorry.

Marie Sleeth: It's got too much poop; it's all dried.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, well...

Marie Sleeth: We won't sit on it; [Sandra Salinas: Okay] I didn't realize it was that much. [Sandra Salinas: That's fine. That's fine.] Or do you want to? I mean it's all dry? [Sandra Salinas: It's, well you're wearing white pants. I don't want your pants to get dirty.] I don't want to get in there anyway; it's too wiggly. There's a couple of chairs right over there. [Sandra Salinas: Ok, we can sit over there.]

(They walk over to the chairs)

Marie Sleeth: Oh, he's remembering all kinds of things, now.

Sandra Salinas: Well, that's ok. That's a good thing. We like when people remember. Yeh, I can sit down here. (Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Now there's another structure and that was my brother's house. [Marie Sleeth: Your what house?] Neil's house. [Marie Sleeth: Oh.] Yeh. [Marie Sleeth: Oh, yeh.]

Sandra Salinas: I was just wondering about the feminine hygiene. How was the feminine hygiene taken care of at that time? How were you guys able, how were you ladies able to cope with the feminine issues? And where would you throw it, what would you do, what would you use, products?

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, well we used, I guess Kotex (giggling). I think that was the only one they had back then. And it, I guess, went into the trash. I don't know. [Sandra Salinas: In the trash?] And it got burned.

Sandra Salinas: And it was just burned in the incinerator?

I know, my family makes their own sponges [Marie Sleeth: Oh, they did?] and things like that so...

Marie Sleeth: No, we'd use soap and, now whether mamma made the soap or not, I don't know, but uh, I wouldn't think so, cause she would buy soap back then and washcloths. [Sandra Salinas: washcloths?] Mhmm. Now if you'd like to hear something really gross (chuckling), Saturday night was our bath night, that's when we took baths. [Sandra Salinas: Saturday night.] Saturday night, yes. And it started with, I don't know which one first, [not too sure if this is what she said- "the oldest ones went first?"] (giggling) [inaudible] same water. [Sandra Salinas: Ha. Been there, been there] oh, you have you? Yeh. Same water, because it was so scarce. Water was especially, oh in the 50s it was just. Well, daddy, daddy used to bring in water in milk, big milk cans, in the back of his pickup, and dump them in the cistern. [Sandra Salinas: Ok.] cause we, uh that's the only way, I mean, the cistern was used, I mean, it was filled with canal water, but there was on, right on this land, there was a filtering system, of sand and everything and by the time it went through all the filtering and into the cistern, it was clear, clear water. And of course, he would put chemicals in it. But during the drought, the seven years of

drought, it um, you couldn't get water. So, you got it where you could, and Daddy would go to Russels [Billing?] Station in town on the corn of Closner and Van Week and he would fill up all these cans of water, make several trips and dump them into the cistern. [Sandra Salinas: On Closner and what was it, I'm sorry] I think it was Van Week. [Sandra Salinas: Van Week.] Yeh, Russels, um that's an old family [inaudible] that's down here. But none of them live here anymore. They're all gone. But anyway, he would let us, you know, get city water, and I think every time Daddy went to town he would get a load of water and bring it out.

Sandra Salinas: As far as clothing and hairstyles and all of the jazz that, that us women love, [Marie Sleeth: Yes.] do you, what memories do you have as a little girl and then of course you know in teenager years and adolescence.

Marie Sleeth: Well, now, every late summer we would go to a feed store over on East University, and we would pick out the material on the feed sacks that we wanted our dresses made out of. [Sandra Salinas: Ok, the feed stacks?] Yes, and they were pretty-flowered prints. And so we would pick out, I want one of this one, and one of this one and this one. Well, we had to buy feed anyway, you know. So, so we went and instead of just burlap sacks, we would get the pretty and I think flour came in those kind of sacks too. [Inaudible] clothes were made out of. And momma had a sewing machine and then as us girls got to eight, nine, ten, eleven years old, we started making our own clothes. [Sandra Salinas: I wish I could do that; that's something that I want to take up myself.] And at that point we would go to get patterns and material and [veilas?]. So, and shoes, we got, we had one pair of shoes, or two pair, one for school, one for church. And golly, we uh, it was, everything, we wore dresses; we didn't wear pants back then. Um, now it was clothing and what else was in that question? About make-up and things, which we never had [inaudible] teenagers, had to buy our own, of course. But we never wore make-up. All of us were late daters. I was a senior in high school before I had my first kiss and boyfriend. And I don't know what happened [inaudible] It wasn't frowned on; it's just that nobody wore make-up back then, except maybe my mother's sisters. They were [Sandra Salinas: Very girly?] Yeh. I can see them in their flapper outfits. [Sandra Salinas: The flappers; that was the time.] And hairstyles, I got a perm, I guess, once a year or something like that. I remember going to the beauty shop, Mrs. [inaudible] Gelker. She lived down the road here, but she had a beauty shop over here in town. And that was something my mother did once a week; she had her standing beauty shop appointment. But this was when, actually, the beauty shop that we went to was down town on University and Frances was her name, and Frances, she lived right down, Frances Gelker, that's what it was, lived right down here. But anyway I would get those perms where, the old kind that they would put the roll your hair, and then put the elec- [Sandra Salinas: the little] hot, hot things on there. Yes, yes, those were the kind of perms that I got (chuckles). So it wasn't that Momma wasn't stylish or anything; there were just other things that were more important, you know. But when my, but when, you know, all of us kids were gone and everything, Momma, she used make-up and everything.

Sandra Salinas: And how many times did you say you got them once a month or once a year? [Marie Sleeth: What perms?] Mmmhmm. [Marie Sleeth: Probably once a year.] Once a year.

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, it would be cut short and then it would be curly a little while and then it would get longer and longer and longer and longer. You know, and no particular hair style; I think mine was parted down the middle a lot because that's where my natural hair break is. So...

Sandra Salinas: Ok, any braiding?

Marie Sleeth: Braiding. Not, nahah, my hair was never really long enough to braid.

Sandra Salinas: And were the, were the boys clothes um also made out of the same material?

Marie Sleeth: I would say so, but I don't know. I found that when my, when I was sewing for my own kids, that little boys shirts were cheaper to buy than they were to get the material and make them, spend all the time making them. [Sandra Salinas: Really?] Cause collars and sleeves and that all, you know, takes a lot of work to put on a collar because, it's, see it's three pieces, and then an inside thing that gets sewed on. Anyway, they were, it was, it took a lot of time to make a shirt.

Sandra Salinas: And you have two sons, right?

Marie Sleeth: I have two sons and a daughter.

Sandra Salinas: Two sons and one daughter. Um was the, how was childbirth? What was the childbirth situa-

tion?

Marie Sleeth: I, we were all born in this bedroom right here.

Sandra Salinas: All born in the bedroom.

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, and the doctor, which was [inaudible] but I do know that the preacher's wife who was a nurse, birthed one of my brothers, I don't remember which one it was, because the doctor wasn't available, but that's where it all took place.

Sandra Salinas: And your children were born in this location as well?

Marie Sleeth: No they were, one was born in, let's see, Sheryl was born in Corpus, Scott was born in Kingsville, two Navy bases. And then one was born in [Argencha] Newfoundland, Canada at a Navy base. So that's where my kids were born.

Sandra Salinas: It was Sheryl, Scott and what was your other son's name?

Marie Sleeth: Douglas.

Sandra Salinas: Douglas in Canada. Naval bases you said, right? [Marie Sleeth: Mmhum] My sister's fiancé's in the Na-, he recently joined the Navy about three years ago, and he just got deployed again on Monday so... [Marie Sleeth: Oh, I back over to the Middle East?] Mmmhmm. But, uh he's got some stories. [Marie Sleeth: Yeh, I'll bet, I'll bet.] Ok, um, and then everything was just, when the children were born, pretty much everything was just, any leftover rags, bloody rags things like that was just thrown in the incinerator?

Marie Sleeth: I imagine so. I don't know what they did with the stuff. I was nine when Neil was born. [Sandra Salinas: Oh, yeh.] So, I don't remember.

[WS600017.WMA 1:21:00]

Sandra Salinas: Um, is there anything else that um we haven't asked that you think might be important?

Marie Sleeth: I don't know; I'll probably think of something though.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, well, like I mentioned we're going to send you the transcription and if you [Marie Sleeth: Ok.] remember anything or remember specifics about any of the information that spoke about, we can change it [Marie Sleeth: Ok.] or whatever we need to do. [Marie Sleeth: That's good.] I just gotta find where the others went.

Marie Sleeth: They're right there. [Sandra Salinas: Ah, ok.] See, my brother's house is right over there. I think [Sandra Salinas: I see.] that's what he went to. [Sandra Salinas: To go show] To go show them because it was [Sandra Salinas: the structures] the original property [Sandra Salinas: Great.] and the structure.

Sandra Salinas: Did you want to walk that way or were [Marie Sleeth: Yeh] you going to stay here?

Marie Sleeth: I'm getting tired; I want to go [Sandra Salinas: Ok, that's fine] do something.

Sandra Salinas: That's fine. Thank you so much for [Marie Sleeth: Well, you're welcome], for [Marie Sleeth: ...this is] taking time out of your [Marie Sleeth: what, my busy, busy schedule] your schedule. Well, it's your vacation, right?

Marie Sleeth: Well, yeh, but I'm vacationing. If you all weren't here, I'd be in there working with beads. I make jewelry.

Sandra Salinas: Oh, great!

Marie Sleeth: And uh. So, I'll, between that and I sketch. I actually, I can, I do portraits in pencil [Sandra Salinas: Oh, beautiful, beautiful.] with all the shading and [inaudible-Sandra talks over her] [Sandra Salinas: Eloise the one with the bandana, and Amanda the one in the red, the other, both females, they're both art majors and artists. [Marie Sleeth: Oh, they are? Oh wow] So, they do a lot of art work.

[walking after interview is over back to the main interview with the rest of the group]

Marie Sleeth: This was where the little [inaudible] was and where, [Sandra Salinas: Right here?] when we had our fifth wheel. Yeh there's a septic tank out there, water, and electricity and everything so we parked our fifth wheel right here. So, it's...

Sandra Salinas: And what is that little house for?

Marie Sleeth: Oh that's Neil's kid's play house.

Sandra Salinas: Play house.

Marie Sleeth: It'll be there til... forever.

Sandra Salinas: [writing] the play house, [Marie Sleeth: Yeh.] and this was the storage facility.

Marie Sleeth: Now, when were living here those three years, we had a washer and dryer here and a freezer. [Sandra Salinas: And a freezer. the big ones?] yes.

Sandra Salinas: I wonder how much time is left on that camera.

[Eloise Montemayor approaches us]

Eloise Montemayor: I'm not sure, I don't think you got, the stating your name and that, so you wanna make sure you get that.

Sandra Salinas: Oh okay. Yeah.

Marie Sleeth: Okay.

Sandra Salinas: The interviewer is Sandra Salinas, and the date is Friday October 21st of 2011, and the interview began at ten o'clock a.m. and the interviewee is...

Marie Sleeth: Marie Sleeth, that's an Sssss (giggling) [Sandra Salinas: an Sssss for Sleeth] yes. I am the child number three and the oldest daughter.

Sandra Salinas: Well it's been a pleasure and we will let you go inside and uh...

Marie Sleeth: well I hardly ever get to talk about myself very much (giggling) So this is nice.

Sandra Salinas: Well this, this is a fun project that we [cuts off] they say that if the beautiful cardinals are around you, it means money.

Marie Sleeth: Well shoot, I used to live outside Banders, ten miles outside of Bandera, outside Bandera, where Scottie and I retired, we had beautiful birds all over the place. And I remember those, but I don't remember any money showing up. (laughing)

Sandra Salinas: Maybe that myth is just false (laughing)

Marie Sleeth: I don't know (giggling)

Sandra Salinas: Well we can take you back this way. Thank you so much Mrs. Sleeth [Marie Sleeth: oh no thank you] have a wonderful day. I know you are gonna go back retire to your beads.

Marie Sleeth: I make jewelry, you know necklaces and stuff.

Sandra Salinas: [pointing to Eloise Montemayor] She's an artist also.

[Sandra walking back to man group that is with Carrol Norquest, Jr. and Eloise Montemayor and Marie Sleeth stayed behind to talk about art]

Sandra Salinas: Yes! We got everything we needed. Um...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And I've found a few more things that we, that I told you we told you all about. Ok very good.

Sandra Salinas: Great! Great!

Interviewer: [inaudible]

Sandra Salinas: Uh, I think we got everything that we needed.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Mhmm.

Sandra Salinas: Let me just double check my questions really quick here.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Ok. I gave, I gave them my name and age and so forth, so you know who's talking on there.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm. Great! Yes, we got everything we needed. Thank you so much for letting us take some of your time.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [laughs] Well we've, we've enjoyed it!

Miguel Gutierrez: One more question.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh-huh? Yes!

Miguel Gutierrez: Just out of curiosity since you guys lived so different in such different times back then. Um, you guys mentioned you had no TV, you had no - the only, the only thing you had was probably a radio?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Miguel Gutierrez: that you'd listen to? Back then, like, when you were younger what were you what were your like, let's say your favorite stations or would you keep up with any sporting events? [inaudible]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay! Well we had, we had uh, either two, I think we had two stations here,

Miguel Gutierrez: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And then we had KURV and KRGV; Harlingen and, and Weslaco. We could pick WOAI up from San Antonio

Miguel Gutierrez: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and maybe one or two others and some of the Mexicans' not very many, they didn't have as many as they do now. There were, there were one or two of them and uh, then uh, let's see what was your other...

Miguel Gutierrez: Oh, if you were, if they

Sandra Salinas: Sports.

Miguel Gutierrez: would broadcast any other sporting events. Or any other events?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh yeah, they would have they would have events, like we would always listen to the news, the weat- the news like it was usually about a fifteen minute news at noon or half an hour at noon just like kinda like they do now. And as a kid like that, we'd get home from school we'd listen to uh, listen to the stories that were on there, ya know?

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I'm tryin to think what they were. Anyway they had, they had half hour stories like they do on TV now. Um, there was one about the Canadian mounted police, and then there was, uh, Batman, and there was things like this you know.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: What you'd have in the comics only it was on radio, and we'd listen to that. Sometimes if there were there were, I don't remember very many sports things, but there were some that got broadcasted. If we had an interest, if we had a vested interest in any of those teams we'd listen to them, and we'd listen to some national news, and then there were also uh, like on TV other, other comedy, comedy shows; Fiber McGee and Molly. And the folks, my folks always listened to The Breakfast Club in the morning - Todd - what was his name? It escapes me. Anyway it was kinda like, uh, in a way like some of the morning shows on TV only... So it was - the TV patterned a lot of what they do after that and then improved on it in a, for the visual, visual effect. But you couldn't get transistor radios yet even in those days. You had to, you had to plug it in here, and that was after the uh, the electricity came. Now I don't know before that...you read books, you visited people. They did a lot more visiting around too.

Sandra Salinas: Wrote letters.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, wrote - yeah! That's a lost art or getting to be a lost art. And uh, they had dances here in the house. It was the biggest house around here and my grandfather played the fiddle and my dad played the piano for 'em, and they'd do square dancing, they'd do whatever. The neighbor farmers around would get in too. So that's kind of - you were asking about entertainment. [inaudible]

Amanda de la Fuente: Yeah, I wanted to know about dances also. There was more of a sense of a community.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah. Yeah and the same way in town we could hear the, uh, you could hear on the - without the air conditioning, you could hear the bailes at night, wherever it was somebody's backyard or something you could hear the [imitating dance music] "bum bum bada bada bum bum" [group laughs] on into the night, you know!

Sandra Salinas: Uh-huh!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Or another thing! When our men were coming they'd go to Saturday, Saturday and oh we did a lot of singing ourselves among you know, music and so forth we were all musicians and so forth. People did a lot more of that. At night, on a quiet at night, not a lot of wind, you could hear late at night, you could hear some of our men coming back home you can hear 'em singing way in the distance you know. Off in the distance as they got closer, they'd be singing some of their Spanish songs that they knew and all, and that was real neat! Real neat. And then you'd go to bed up stairs and you'd hear the baile in town going "bom bom, barra barra, bom bom".

[group laughs]

Amanda De La Fuente: That's the same sound. It's still like that. [laughs]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah! With my grandparents from the Midwest - my grandparents were Swedish immigrants. But anyway my grandfather was a fiddler so the farmers, most of them at the time were uh, were uh, Midwesterners that had come down. There were some of the farmers around here like the Espinosas and, and some others, they had been chased out of Mexico with the revolution. They'd owned land around here too. But most of the ones my folks knew were the Midwesterners and some of them they'd even know back up in Kansas. They'd get together for dances and parties here at our - or some of the other places around here. So, anyway, back to finishing this up. [laughs]

Sandra Salinas: Well this is so interesting that when you start talking about all the different that... you know people say that we're so different from each other in race and all this, but really we have a lot of similarities. I think we need to focus more on that. And there's a big dog coming!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah and our... yeah that's, that's Babushka. Somebody

Sandra Salinas: Babushka!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Somebody, somebody left her out here.

Sandra Salinas: Awww!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: We never had to buy dogs or cats. All my life people have left them here.

Sandra Salinas: Oh you're so pretty. Hi baby.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, but you know along with that a uh, people are intermarrying my wife is from Mexico.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm. mhmm

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: You just met her a little while ago. She was born there she's a naturalized citizen. But it was the same group of people that uh, settled here along the border.

Sandra Salinas: Exactly.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So uh, two of my son-in-laws are like my kids half Mexican.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Both of them are also part Indian.

Sandra Salinas: Oh wow!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: One is Choctaw her husband and the other Modesto Vasquez, he's part Navajo.

Sandra Salinas: Oh wow. Beautiful!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So my brother Neil, his, his daughter

Sandra Salinas: [inaudible] rounds

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: that just finished medical school. She's married to a Flores, and he's a cousin of one of my brother-in-laws.

Sandra Salinas: [laughs] Small world, huh?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, yeah. So anyway, here in the valley though, we've found, getting into genealogy which is part of this all, we've found that here in the valley, it's not if people are related, but how. So if you're sitting in a restaurant, then you gotta be careful, you don't know who's relative or what. Especially in - the Edinburg area is the, is the most noticeable in that because people are all, all related either through blood or through marriage or through business or through church or through somehow. And they come out of the ranch country too, these people have been here for, for several centuries. And my wife, they go back to one of the original land grants on the South side of the river.

Sandra Salinas: Wow!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: 300 years...No, over 200 years, years ago. And uh, the little village she came from goes back at least 300 years ago, just right close by here. And when that happens, people intermarry, it was a small community that the Spanish had and then the Mexicans for years and years and it was uh, they didn't have anybody to marry except relatives.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And so people are all inter-related, and then of course as the valley has grown, all it takes is one marriage and you're related to everybody else.

[group laughs]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So, so,

Sandra Salinas: Cousin! so, yeah (laughing) and it's not strange, genealogy, I've uh, I've done a big study on the Pena Family, my wife and uh, anyway, you can see how they intermarried as they go way back. My wife's grandparents, her father's parents, he was a Pena, her mother was a Gonzalez, they were from the same village, but they were related. Her parents were fourth cousins, but her father's parents were second cousins. [Sandra Salinas: oh, okay] on the Pena line, they were third cousins on the Pena line, fourth cousins on the Pena line, and this was not unusual. So if ya'll ever start doing the genealogy, if you're from the border area here, you're gonna find this if you uh, uhh...

Sandra Salinas: Well that's our goal in the CHAPS program, to learn the genealogy and the history and everything that comes with it.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So yeah, people really, just don't know their history. They just DON'T know it [emphasizes this].

Sandra Salinas: That's what we're for, that's what we're trying to do!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: This has been a place where people leave, including my cousins, I have forty first cousins that grew up here, people leave from here, these little villages where my wife came from, they leave so that people can continue intermarrying like that, through the years and uh, and uh, anyway, by the time you get down to , get down to this time, well everyone is related. (chuckles) So I found out one of Odie's cousins is in, is in your class, uh, he's a Pena, he's the son of Aaron, Aaron [Pena] the state representative. So, he told my brother, "we're gonna be interviewing you", and he said, I'm looking forward to it, so I'll have to introduce Caroline [Twist] to her cousin when he ..(laughing) He's her fourth, uh with her he's about her fifth cousin. Yeah.

Sandra Salinas: I know plenty of my fourth cousins and fifth cousins, so it's really great when we, families have that connection.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well we've got, we've got some good friends that their daughters knew, they're eighth cousins [Sandra Salinas: wow that's great] so they could, yeah they could prove it through their (laughing) [Sandra Salinas: that's great! That's great] so they are all very interesting.

Marie Sleeth: From Alaska

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: From Alaska, so anyways...that's about to give out, well, well I've enjoyed it!

Sandra Salinas: We've had so much fun that we ran out of technology. Haha, technology just can't...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The old technology used to need us to crank it to keep it going.

Sandra Salinas: Yup, yup, that's why we need old technology.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: yeah, yeah (chuckles)

Sandra Salinas: Well it was uh, it was really wonderful meeting both of you! And uhm, we really do appreciate you taking your time out of your day and uhm, careful with the baby [referring to small dog]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: this is uh, an interesting project that Russ [Dr. Skowronek] is starting. I've known him for several years now, since he moved down, and in our Los Porciones Society, we've been pushing it, we've been working with him a lot to make it happen and uh, and I'm just delighted for him to do that. It's not easy for him to do that

Sandra Salinas: Nope of course not, but we are also happy that we're the guinea pigs. (laughing)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: (laughing) yup, so down the line, the next groups will benefit from our mistakes.

Sandra Salinas: yeah... (laughing) Well pleasure meeting you again and thank you so much for your time.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh yes. Oh yeah. Oh you've got the, oh, well I could've done the other hand [shaking hands with everyone] Real fun having you out here.

Sandra Salinas: Thank you Mrs. Sleeth, and thank you so much for your time.

Marie Sleeth: Oh yes, and some of you need to go back and get your stuff from my house. And we can say goodbye there.

Sandra Salinas: Oh yes.

Eloise Montemayor: Did you get her name for the record and all that?

Sandra Salinas: Yes, I did.

Marie Sleeth: Yes. Yes I already said all that.

Eloise Montemayor: Oh you did. Okay. Good. You might wanna get it on the camera.

Sandra Salinas: Oh okay.

Marie Sleeth: [in sarcastic tone] Okay, My name is Marie Sleeth! I was born and raised here in Edinburg. (laughing) [Carrol Norquest, Jr.: on this property] on this property, is that all you want.

Eduardo Robles: Your age?

Marie Sleeth: I'm seventy-three (giggling)

Sandra Salinas: The only time we are allowed right (giggling)

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, (laughing) well I'm proud of being 73...

Sandra Salinas: I like getting older personally.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: As I told you before, I'm the number one and she's the number three and Dixie is the number four-five and Neil is the number seven. The others are out of town [Marie Sleeth: out of state] out of state. I'm glad you were able to catch her before she leaves tomorrow night.

[video camera ran out of battery while walking back to small white with green trim house and only had the Olympus left]

[last conversation of the interview on Olympus device and conversation is between Carrol Norquest, Jr., Sandra Salinas, Amanda De La Fuente and Miguel Gutierrez]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [distantly heard] Alot of these berries are good to eat- (wind)

Sandra Salinas: So it was the, an th-, may you pronounce that, uhm, tree one more time?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Anacua.

Sandra Salinas: Anacua. Ok.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I don't know what they call it in English [Wind] it's an Anacua. And then, uh, I've planted some other native trees over in my. There is an Elm over here that is native that we planted. The Oaks of course, and the, the Athal there. The Mesquite. Of course you know the Cactus. The Nopal. The Tunas. They're edible. [Pause]

Amanda De La Fuente: Would you use that for cooking when you were younger? The nopal?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh yea. Oh su- yea, right, sure do.

Amanda De La Fuente: (light giggle)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: We got um here, I got a number of varieties this one is a- uh, that one is a uh, ah- Granjeno.

Sandra Salinas: Granjeno.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: It's a uh what do they call it, a spiny hackberry. It's related to hackberry. Or it is a hackberry but it's spiny, it's got thorns, full of thorns. But the, the ah- the fruit on it is good. It's a round orange colored one, and my wife really likes it [pause] and I eat it too I'm not that fond of it but she is. [Footsteps on grass] And uh, let's see I've got what they call in English a wild olive. I planted one myself back over there but that's an Anacahuita. This is the Anacahuita and for some reason that's named Anacahuita but I think they are not related.

Sandra Salinas: hmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: These cactus here are what they call a cerius cactus, c-e-r-i-u-s I believe. It's a cerius. And it, they have the most beautiful flowers that bloom at night. They only bloom one night. Big white flowers. Big beautiful flowers (wind)

Sandra Salinas: wow.

Amanda De La Fuente: Only with the moon right? When the moon is full it's when.. it blooms.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh then, you can, oh you can see it; otherwise take a flashlight and look at it. And then in the morning they open like this and the bugs are in there doing their thing and then as the daylight- after about an hour, -my little granddaughter and I saw it do this, after about an hour, hour and a half, it starts closing up and we stood there and we watched it close.

Sandra Salinas: Wow.

Amanda De La Fuente: That's beautiful.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And then it ah then it closed up and it goes into kind of a pretty spiral like this. And then it makes a red fruit, and the red fruit is, kind of like a tuna. Only it's like on a nopal, it's uh- there's different, it got a different flavor (wind) black seeds in it. I've got at least two varieties of this, -the birds planted.

Sandra Salinas: (giggle)

Amanda De La Fuente: Really. Yes, my sister works in- well she use to work in at a nature center in Weslaco, and she would tell me about that cactus, that it- it would- bloom- with the moon...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The cerius cactus. Oh ok so you've heard about it then. ok this one right here if you go out a little ahead out of my drive over there, you'll see on the east side you'll see some that look like this, only that it's smaller and they are about like this and uh- if you look you can see some of the little uh little fruits. I think there may even be a red one there now; and you may see some of the, uh the- some of the flowers that have curled up, maybe I'm not sure what's on there now...

Sandra Salinas: (distantly heard) I was wondering...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: but that one over there, that little one over there it's got a bigger flower then this bigger one. It's got a big oh- and they are just real beautiful, real beautiful. I had taken a number of pictures of them, get out here at night with a flash camera. (Laughter)

Sandra Salinas: I'm sure Dr. Skowronek would enjoy looking at those photos. He loves- to see uh beautiful photos like that, so...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I'll have to- yes. Over time I, I think I may learn a lot, I've gotten to be a good friend with him. And were working together on a number of things so, he'll, I'm glad to hear that too. Anyway, well I'll let you go, go get your stuff. Yeah! We'll hopefully see you again before the projects over. I don't know.

Sandra Salinas: Yea, I know there is going to be another seven groups coming out.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea.

Sandra Salinas: Uhm-

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: But there is other things going on with the project. So we may – we may run across you with some other things yet. Anyways it's been a real pleasure!

Sandra Salinas: [distantly heard] Bye! Thank you.

Miguel Gutierrez : Sir. Last second. Where did you find the, the arrowheads that you showed Dr. Skowronek?

Carrol Norquest, Jr. : Where?

Miguel Gutierrez: Yeah.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I. Ok, well my father found most of them, when he was young, back in the 20s, and 30's, and 40's, and we found um out in here, I don't know where, where all this corn is that's where he found them.

Miguel Gutierrez: Ohh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and [pause] -which indicates there is probably other places. I've heard of finding others around, finding around in the other locations around here. But the one, one of them that I found -was East of the house, about 100 yards a little bit south. You're going to see a conch shell; it's a shell, it's a sea shell. And- they used for various purposes, my daughter Christine found it over here in my brother's house, he's got a fence around it, he's got a gate over in the southeast corner of it and about uh 10 yards out there was crop there at that time. She was 12 years old; she's the one that in uh –working on her PhD in Iowa, at the University of Iowa. She uhm, she said, "Hey daddy I found a big snail!" (light laughter)

Amanda de la Fuente & Miguel Gutierrez : (laughter)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and she brought this thing to me. And I said good grief! You'll be able to tell that it's old, it's been underground for a long time, it's not shiny like the shells on the beach. (Wind) There's a part of it that's chipped out. Tom Fort at the museum did a little research on how they used those shells. (pause) And then I found, my son in law Patrick found and –uh you'll see that uh -ah -it's ahh it's the grinder on the molcajete.

Miguel Gutierrez : ohhh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: It's different from the ones we buy at the stores, you'll see. You're gonna see. I don't know if it's volcanic or just what. He found it right around here, just north of the little house... Right after they dug a sewer line, I mean, a septic line. They dug down a ways and later on when he was mowing the grass, it was green when he was mowing it, and he said "hey there's this little rock here, let me show you what it was."

It was-

Miguel Gutierrez: the molcajete.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I don't know whether two sections have different names or not. But the ah- anyway, so I saved that. And it's not what you see here in the stores. It was not. So whether it came here when from the people where clearing the land and it got lost here –or whether in Spanish times someone dropped it here or what. (Wind) I don't know. We just don't know. 15 feet north of the house, So you'll see that-

Miguel Gutierrez: ahh ok.

Carrol Norquest, Jr. : Yea. Maybe you'll all do a little more research on it. See what-

Miguel Gutierrez : Maybe in the future- (wind) Well thank you.

This transcription, approved and edited by Dixie Setti, contains minor orthographical changes from the original transcription done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

An oral history interview was conducted with one of the members of the Norquest family, which was the main focus for the Rediscovering the Rio Grande Valley course at the University of Texas-Pan American. The interviewee was the fifth born child to Carrol Norquest, and lived most of her life in the Norquest home. The interview took place in her new residence in an apartment close to the Norquest farm. The main theme for the interview dealt with history of the land, the daily life of Dixie Setti and her siblings and the plants and animals which were discussed in great detail. The interviewers were Robin Galloso, Mary Noell, and Maria Vallejo.

Information for interview officially starts at 3:06.

Maria Vallejo: Today is October 26, 2011 and we're performing an interview with Mrs. Dixie Setti.

Dixie Setti: I'm Dixie Setti and this is October 26, [cough cough] 2011. I hope I don't start coughing.

Maria: Ok well this is the beginning of the oral interview. Umm... We'll kinda start with the history of the Norquests. Do you know anything of the Spanish land grant history of the area or how familiar are you with it?

Dixie: Well, I'm pretty familiar with it. I know that large segments of land were given to Spanish subjects who came here years ago but I can't tell you the dates.

Maria: And just how it kinda applied to your family.

Dixie: Our family wasn't one of those. As far as I know, the land that our family has received was never a land grant. It's my understanding that it's been a part of the Texas - Mexican railroad but before that I don't know. I don't know why, exactly why some land was given and some wasn't but apparently this was a piece that was skipped.

Maria: On your property have you ever found any artifacts. Have your family found any artifacts on the land?

Dixie: Yeah, I've heard that they have... I..I haven't seen them at least... not recently. Although I understand that there are some arrowheads that were found and...I don't know really what else.

Maria: Do you still have that collection? Or does your family still have that collection?

Dixie: My oldest brother does.

Maria: That's right... Um... found anything else that relates to your land to or to your to whatever farming?

Dixie: I don't know. I was never out in the fields. That's where you'd find the things, when the dirt was freshly turned and things like that but I've really never spent much time out there.

Maria: What kind of holidays did you celebrate?

Dixie: The usual Christmas, Easter, 4th of July....Thanksgiving.

Maria: What type of food would you use in the celebrations? Would you use local ingredients?

Dixie: Well since my parents were...my father ... his parents were born in Sweden and my mother was German. The food... was, I suppose, a lot of it was of German or Swedish origin. Although it's just basically American food.

Maria: A mixture of both.

Dixie: Yes, I'm sure. My mother...as ...time goes on. I find a lot of things, for instance in a German restaurant that is near here, a lot of things are made just the way my mother did and the way she taught me to cook...so I suspect a lot of the food was just German because of the way they cooked.

Maria: So you kind of retained a bit of your, the native culture in your daily life?

Dixie: I suppose so...although I don't cook food that way. What you call chicken fried steak is the way she fixed steak (laughs). That's the way she taught us to. It's not real healthy.

Maria: How did the city of Edinburg look like when you were growing up? How has it changed?

Dixie: Well it was a small town that basically had the stores around that square. The courthouse when I was little was in the middle of the square. Yeah, know the squares and I never have learned my streets in town very well because I didn't grow up in town but...those streets, that...circle the courthouse...were the main streets, Clossner

street didn't go straight through the middle of town. You've been through a lot of little towns out in east and in west Texas where you have to come in on a highway and then you have to go around a square and go out the other way, that's the way Edinburg was until they tore down the old court house and then they built this new one. So everything... was based around the square. The stores, the doctors, the drug stores, the banks; the banks were both there. And there were churches that were really close. The Methodist... the Presbyterian, and I think the Christian church were really close and ... and Sacred Heart which I imagined is about the oldest Catholic Church in town. They were all really close to the square in that area.

Maria: What kind of stores do you remember going to?

Dixie: Well there was (laughing) ... before we had HEB, the stores that we went...shopping were Piggly Wiggly, you probably heard of those, and there was another one called The Valley Store and my mother did a lot of her shopping in there. It was owned by I think the two Trevino brothers if I'm not mistaken, and it was a little bit east of town but that's where we bought most of our things. And....Repeat the question? Where did you do your shopping? Clothes.. Well there was a JC Penny's store on one corner of the square. There were some dime stores. Um... I can't even think of the names of them now.

Maria: So these were on the main square?

Dixie: All on the main square.

Maria: So how would you get to.. to the store? Would you travel by a car? Did you have a car back then?

Dixie: Well yes I was born in 1942 so yes we had a car. I'm pretty sure we didn't have a phone when I was little cause I remember it was really exciting when we did get one and uh... I can remember that we didn't have indoor plumbing. I mean there were faucets in the kitchen, but we had an outhouse, That was a long time ago but ... but I think a lot of farmers lived with those outhouses for many years...until they finally (laughs) were forced to get something...indoors.

Maria: So you got indoor plumbing a while later?

Dixie: When I was a little girl. Yeah but I don't remember when.

Maria: So that changed.

Dixie: It was probably sometime in the 40's I would imagine. Mid 40's early 40's maybe.

Maria: So how... do you remember the University of Texas Pan American when that began to be built?

Dixie: Well the original college was a junior college and I believe it was called Edinburg Junior College and it was built there... along with the buildings that were the old Edinburg High School and... of course the building is now the administration building in... for the Edinburg School District, that was then Edinburg... when I was growing up it was a junior high and a high school combined and I believe the junior high was downstairs and the high school was upstairs. Now I understand that one time it may have been elementary, I'm not sure. But right across the street was Sam Houston and its sister school Austin was on the other side of town and those two schools were pretty much identical, I think those were the two elementary schools that I knew of and then. Later on they built Roosevelt, which was just a small kind of addition in back of Sam Houston. It was for handicapped students... but anyway then the college was sort of attached to the high school. The buildings.... on McIntyre street that basically has been demolished now, but it was the one that was right next to the Edinburg Auditorium. Those two were right next to each other... they were connected by a... I think it was a staircase. So that you could come down into the auditorium from that other building. The main building... had a basement that was, like a half basement, so you went up a flight of steps to get to the main floor and then those steps would go down into the auditorium from there. So that corner was considered to be the college but then in between there were some buildings. The science building that is still there, and that was used by both for high school and college, and I think some of the teachers were the same. And then on down, to the end of that street (I believe is 8th street) on the corner there was the old faculty, what was called the Faculty Club and it was a very nice residence for teachers. It was built for the original teachers I guess as a kind of... a boarding house, um... for both the college and the....

Maria: So the teachers were not local? They were brought in?

Dixie: I think a lot of them probably were... I mean because there was a college down here so they ...you weren't going to have teachers trained down here at that point. Umm... I mean the Junior College. I don't know what

was going on in Brownsville but the Junior College was the only college resource here so... but Edinburg had some visionary people who worked in the school district for many years and built it up, but I think the high school students were lucky in that they actually had college professors, certainly for math and science classes for instance. I remember for instance Mr. Elrod or I don't know if he was Dr. Elrod or what but the students... but he taught physics when I was in high school and I think he also was a college teacher so anyway it's...

Maria: So what type of education did you receive and where? Kind of leads into what we were talking about.

Dixie: Well I went to school here of course and went to Sam Houston and then the new school was Jefferson so I guess the bus students went to Jefferson or something. I don't know. I went there and then umm... then started junior high in sixth grade at the high school campus and went all the way through school there and...my teachers were very helpful in encouraging me. I went to North Texas State. I... I was the first student to be... in the Edinburg orchestra program. They... they had already by the time I was in middle school they had a really good band and they were developing a fine choral program. Dr., Mr. Ralph Burford started the band and Mr. Charles Nelson started the choir program or really built it up and so along about that time there was kind of a demand for an orchestra program and my... my father, since there were seven of us and the three oldest played in band and the next one was in choir... he was really wanting some of us to be able to learn some string instruments at that time, there was a young woman from Ohio who married a man from McAllen, her name was Jackie Pride and she'd come here and started the orchestra program in Edinburg. It took some doing, and it took a bunch of people umm having to push for it, naturally, but there was a willing school board that was willing to accept it and it started. So as a result I played violin and when I ... to make a long story short and umm and then they started what is now the Valley Symphony Orchestra during those years so I had a chance to play in something a little more challenging than the high school orchestra, because... because I was the oldest one, by the time I graduated from high school I was the only one left playing in a class of about 30 that started so umm but any way I had some good (teaching)... Jackie was a wonderful teacher and we had some good teachers come in and I had chances to go to All-State orchestra and as a result I had ... you know the opportunity, I had scholarships, to college so I could kinda pick and choose where I went I had 5 scholarship offers and I went to North Texas and from there I got my Bachelors degree...I went to Eastman school of music, got my Masters... that's basically my education ... so what do you need to know?

Mary: Can I ask what you played?

Dixie: Violin

Mary: Oh, okay.

Dixie: Excuse me. Cough Drop.

Maria: Umm so what was ... the Edinburg education system like? Was it...

Dixie: It was excellent. We had very good teachers, very dedicated teachers and... and many of us tested out of college classes. I remember I tested out of most of my college English. I started out taking a creative writing in college, a class at North Texas, which spoke very well of our high school faculty. I wasn't particularly strong in mathematics but I know that they had some really... brilliant young men that come out of the Edinburg School District at that time that went on and got doctorates in chemistry and science and so on.

Maria: So do you, uh, remember the proportion of ethnicities, when you went to school? Was there a lot of...

Mary: Hispanic?

Maria: Mexicans students or?

Dixie: Well yeah I... you know I can't ... can't remember I never thought ethnicity too much unless...

Maria: Was it not prevalent, you didn't notice it that much?

Dixie: Well, if the students didn't speak English or if they... they had trouble with English then it was pretty noticeable but umm other than that... Oh I think people segregated themselves... I'm sure they did. There were Spanish speaking churches... well and English speaking churches in some cases.

Maria: Here in Edinburg?

Dixie: Uh huh and well the Methodist church, El Buen Pastor is a good example of that... anything that wasn't a Catholic church was usually started by some kind of missionaries... well catholics were too... but they... the catholic church was around for a long time and of course many, many Hispanic people were catholic but not all

of them and so there was a Lutheran mission in east Edinburg and there was a Methodist mission church and many other, you know, churches... So it was kinda by church that people segregated and I think they segregated themselves. I think (laughs)... you know they just chose to go where they were the most comfortable.

Maria: So how many elementary schools were there in Edinburg or when you were growing up?

Dixie: Well... I know the two. Now I understand that there was another school that was for black students and I... I think .. I think it was Carver Elementary.

Maria: Were there much of them there?

Dixie: There weren't too many black people here at the time, umm but they were a part of this community from .. from the beginnings, you know, and it's interesting because I never felt any sense of of...

Maria: Tension?

Dixie: of tension? Yes, with the black students at all. I remember when I believe it was the 7th grade when this desegregation occurred and the only reason I knew that was because there were suddenly black students in school with us and my best friend in 7th grade was a black girl named, Ollie, who was very athletic and you know... I remember in high school choir there were several black students and it seems to me that ... that there was an episode on the choir tour... that I found about later. Where we went to San Antonio and this was in high school and I think that the hotel refused to let umm a black student stay in the hotel with us and I ... but I don't know that for a fact. I just... this was a rumor and then that the choir director wound up spending the night on the bus with the student but I don't know for sure... Yeah, but everybody stayed with the people they were comfortable with I think... but you know... It didn't occur to me just because this girl was black that she shouldn't be my friend... you know.

Maria: Umm did you see any distinction between male and female students when you were growing up?

Dixie: In terms of how they were treated in school?

Maria: Their education they... make them strive for domestic life or what kind of electives, or activities in school?

Dixie: Well I think the farm boys particularly ... I think really had to work hard at home and maybe some of them didn't do so well in school. It seems to me there was a little bit of that in my class... and also it seems to me, I was in what I guess what they call an accelerated classes in high school, I was in the accelerated classes and it seems to me that most of the students in that class were boys and there were very few girls but I think that may have been because they were just high achievers cause I think it was based on your grades... I really don't know... test scores... but in those days they didn't even tell us our test scores. I didn't know what mine were and I didn't know my PSAT or whatever. I remember they took us over to the new court house auditorium to take this test, when we were in high school, in preparation for college, but I never knew what my scores were. I just know when I went to college my advisor called me over at the beginning of my freshman year... you know, music majors take not very many classes because they have to practice a number of hours a day and so those classes are practice intensive...and this guy called me in and he said according to your scores you should be carrying 20, 21 hours I thought, my gosh, so I did it, but I didn't know what my scores were.

Maria: Umm did you .. talk about your higher education did that lead you away from the valley...

Dixie: Yes for a long time ...aa.. the valley was hot (laughing)... the valley was very hot and even when I was in college you know there wasn't much air conditioning and... I remember coming home in the summer. It would be difficult to practice because my hands would get all sweaty in the house even with fans going. My father had a stroke when I was in college and so they got a room air conditioner for his bedroom so it was really nice to practice in... in the air conditioned bedroom but, you know, they didn't have all the air conditioned cars and buildings. That makes it so much easier for the majority of people to live down here now and anyway...but I just, I got jobs in other places. But then I always intended to come back cause I wanted to be there for my mother especially... in her old age.. and I did... I was.

Maria: So what was a typical day for... typical day for you? What was your routine. Did it differ from your father, your brothers?

Dixie: Say that again?

Maria: What was a typical day for you in other words, when you were growing up?

Dixie: In school... a typical day at our house was that we'd got up about 6 o'clock and we all had to practice or do chores. If you had an instrument then you we had rooms and there was a music room... the living room and the kitchen and we were kinda spread around practicing before and after breakfast and people who didn't play an instrument were vacuuming the floor or helping mom with the dishes or something and then daddy took us to school because when I was younger we rode the school bus but the school bus would come an hour before school and he felt that... that was time wasted and he was very interested in us not wasting any time so, he would take us to school and that gave us an extra hour to do these things, the same thing was true after school we had ... of course we were supposed to do homework after school but if we had rehearsals they would pick us up. Now the boys in our family did work outside whereas the girls did didn't .. that is they did farm work, farm chores. Going to get the cows was about the extent of my farm share (laughing) and I didn't really like that too much either' cause I was the type that didn't want to step in something. Now my older sister thrived on that, she loved working with the cattle and so on. As we grew up, for instance, our summers .. the boys would all be out working whether it was in the fields because during cotton season... you know they would bring people from across the border.. who had boats they would ferry... they didn't stay. At the end of the year take their money and go home but... so my brothers would work outside with them but we girls usually were working at the house, helping out with chores.

Maria: What type of activities would you do, or chores?

Dixie: Well, we had a pretty big house out there and so my job at one point was just to empty... all the trash cans and take them out. We had an incinerator and when I got old enough I could burn the trash (laughs) and then when I got older you know it ... was to vacuum the house. My mother had heart trouble so my dad, got a little piece of property, a lot in Kerrville and built basically a one room cabin up there for her. Where she would spend a good share of the summer and he'd come up on the weekends with... members of the family. When we got old enough... well we girls... (the boys would still be out working with the men)... the girls would stay in and cook and clean and take care of the house so, as each one of us got old enough, we would do that. So we'd stay home with the boys while the younger members of the family go to Kerrville with mama and at which we ... was great because she got to read and we had a bicycle, or maybe we had two, so we could go down to the library in Kerrville and check out books and read and just have a high old time.

Maria: Was there actually a public library here?

Dixie: Here?

Maria: When you were growing up?

Dixie: No, but I can remember going on my bicycle to the high school library and checking out books in the summer. When I was... the one that was staying home. It was only for a few years that we actually...had that place, but it got my mother out of the heat. She had an enlarged heart and she couldn't take the heat.

Maria: So that was your summer vacation?

Dixie: what?

Maria: That was your summer vacation.

Dixie: Yeah, right. Ah, there was a period of time when (pause) that is one thing that my brothers would do and then as I got older I could do too was to go out, to go be the one that weighed the cotton. Ah, when ...you'd go out with the...Daddy would take us out with the trailer where the men were picking cotton, and we had these big four Bale trailers that you could sit underneath (laughing) that's what...sit underneath and stay in the shade! And they had their sacks of cotton and there was a tripod. The scale was set up on the tripod. There was a big can of water, and I think the men had canteens and stuff, so they'd come in when they needed to and either pour the water over their head to cool off you know or drink water out of that. It was, like those old milk... those steel milk cans. And...and so when they'd bring the sack in they'd hoist it up on the, on the (pause with laugh) there was a hook with a rope and they'd put it over that rope and then you weighed the cotton. The person weighing the cotton would just mark down how much it was and tell them [emphasis] how many pounds it was, and so we had to learn a certain amount of Spanish to be able to do that. And... So that was what the cotton weighers did, and they'd (the men would) all come in at lunch time and eat their sack lunch and lie down under the trailer (laughing) a lot. And you know Daddy would stop by from time to time 'cause sometimes he'd have

more than one, as you see on this map, [Map provided for Dixie Setti highlighting the properties owned by the Norquest] there are different fields around, so he'd have more than one that he'd have crews picking cotton on at the same time. So he'd get around to various ones. He had had Polio, um [pause] a number of years before, and so he wasn't really, really strong like he had been when he was young. So, my brother, my oldest brother had to learn how to drive when he was thirteen as a result. So that someone could, besides my mother, could take him places.

Maria: So, um, so your family actually planted cotton?

Dixie: Yeah, well my dad was a farmer (laughs). Yeah, so he would sell the cotton and hope that it rained when it should and didn't rain when it shouldn't. In the early days it was all handpicked. And then when the trailer got full they'd take it off to the gin. And there was one right (pause) back (laughs) here, wherever, I can't get my directions right, but right at the corner of, I believe its Fourth Street and Schunior. There was a big cotton gin there. That's where you normally took it, that was the co-op gin so the farmers all kind of owned it jointly. And, and they would, pull the cotton up through a big suction pipe. Miraculously it would be deseeded and made into bales of cotton. And, uh, anyway....

Maria: Did you get to see them actually do it? I mean, you know, the process?

Dixie: Yeah, they had a big metal suction pipe. My younger brother Mark worked there one summer, with that big, uh, I can't think of the names of those things, that big suction thing that they used. Yeah, and it was a lot of fun during cotton picking season 'cause the men all came by on Saturday afternoon then and Daddy would pay them. Mama would go to town for their groceries usually on Saturday morning, as well as her own. They would give her lists because they were [emphasizes] illegal, and they couldn't really go downtown too much. And, well many of them were. And so she'd, get their groceries and stuff and then, they'd come by and he'd pay them. Sometimes they'd have a big... would get a watermelon (laughs) and have a party, you know, a watermelon party in the yard and stuff like that. Those were kind of exciting times...and sometimes, you know, we'd go out after supper and they would give us, fresh tortillas that they'd had just made, which were always just delicious. And then they'd go home (laughs), but daddy always, he would always train one or two people and get them papers to stay here and work for him because he couldn't do all that work himself. And those people, became wealthy eventually because they had skills, you know, he taught them the skills of farming and they went back to México, and made it and would come back in their fancy pick-ups to visit. Honk the horn in the front yard.

Maria: So they'd come back and visit your family?

Dixie: Oh, yeah. My brother Neil; they still, some of them come to his office to visit him, yeah. They're quite old I imagine, because they were young men at the time. Yeah, I can remember lots of times, even though I lived away from here for a long time, I always came down at the holidays at Christmastime, because I was a teacher after I finished my education, and in the summer time I'd come and every once in a while in winter I'd be sitting with mom and daddy in the living room and there'd be this honking in front, in the drive way, and this big pick up, and the guy would get out and come in, leave the wife in the truck (laughs), come to the house and they'd invite him in then visit for a while, then he'd leave (laughs).

Maria: So you got many visits like that?

Dixie: They did, yeah.

Maria: So talking about this line, did you have any Bracero program workers on your farm?

Dixie: Yeah, when that came along that's what daddy did. He didn't care for it as much, because he had no choice over who worked for him, and the men who usually worked for him couldn't pick him, you know.

Maria: so this is kind of an assigned...?

Dixie: It was assigned, I don't know what the, criteria was or anything like that. I just remember my father was always a student of people, and he had mentioned that there was one worker who, was very fair and freckled and did not speak Spanish. And he wore, uh, his huaraches, you know, were like a rubber tire (laughs). And Daddy said he was, thought he was from the mountains somewhere in Mexico... very faired skinned, light complected, light hair, and no Spanish. So he was apparently an Indian. So they were, you know, very diverse people would come.

Maria: Especially during this period? The Bracero Program?

Dixie: During the Bracero, yes because that's what...they were just all mixed up, and you didn't know who you were going to get.

Maria: So instead of getting border people...

Dixie: Yeah, he had a family that came every year, the same people, an extended family from a little place called Rancho Grande, just on the other side of the border. I don't know if I'm supposed to be telling this or not (laughs), that's many, many, many years ago, but they had many escapades with the Border Patrol (laughs) and.

Maria: Did you see the Border Patrols presence here?

Dixie: Oh, yeah. They were. They'd fly over, everybody would hit the ground, or get under the trailer, hide between the cotton rows (laughs). Somebody would yell "La chota!" [make movement symbolizing hitting the ground] and would all hit the ground.

Maria: So you did have many of these Braceros working on the family farm?

Dixie: Yeah, during the time when they finally came up with that, yeah, that is what they used.

Maria: So how do you think that the border here with Mexico kind of influenced your family life? Would you go? Would you travel to Mexico, the borderland area?

Dixie: My father, uh, didn't like, didn't want us to do that. Well first of all, you know, Mexico is a different country, and it has, it's under the Napoleonic Laws, it's not under U.S. laws. So down there... there you are guilty until proven innocent. And, so the minute you leave here, you're not a citizen of that country, and he was always very aware of that. When my mother came down here 1914, it was still, you know, Pancho Villa, was still, was raiding I mean, and Mexico wasn't even settled yet at that time, so they had a strong fear of going to Mexico. Daddy would go, and we'd go shopping sometimes... every once in a while. On a Saturday or something he would take us and we'd go to the market place, that was it. And it was always very interesting and exciting, and (laughs) all that. I just remember all that meat hanging there (laughs), you know, it didn't even have refrigeration, you know, in those days at least not like now. It was all in the open air, under tent type coverings, nothing like it is now, but, uh, that was very interesting 'cause you just got into Mexico and it just smelled different, you know, because of all [emphasizing all] those things that were like I say in the market place with the meat hanging in the air, the leather goods, the smell of leather, raw leather, all those things...

Maria: A different world you might say.

Dixie: A different world, yeah, absolutely.

Maria: So you didn't travel there as much?

Dixie: No. Now one summer ...after I had graduated from college and was working, I persuaded my father and my younger brother to go down to Saltillo, 'cause I wanted to, and we did but my brother was just nervous the whole time. There are no shoulders on those roads, you know, what if something happens? He was [pauses] far more worried about things than I had the good sense to be [laughs], but it was a lovely trip. I loved Saltillo when we went down south from Saltillo into a little village called Parra? Parras or Parra? Where they have pecan groves and grapes, and uh...there is a little resort down there, I guess, we discovered. I didn't know, but we stopped there for lunch on the way back, but it was very beautiful. That is the only time I ever traveled into Mexico and probably the farthest my father ever went into Mexico.

Maria: That's really good. What historical events do you remember when you were growing up? Do you remember the Vietnam War [as an example]?

Dixie: Oh, sure. (Laughs) The end of the First World War, first, second [emphasizing WWII as her original objective] (laughs) the Second World War, I seem to remember that December, the war America went into the War in 1942, right before I was born in December, and so it was going on when I was a baby and a small child, but I remember when it was over, but I can remember big spot lights in the sky that they would have circling.... I guess in case of enemy planes coming across the border, and of course with good reason. Years later we find out that they had submarines in the Gulf of Mexico and things like that that we didn't even know, but we were concerned about. I shouldn't say we were, I was too little, but so. When I was very small it was definitely in that World War II mentality. And then they had a lot of surplus things that you could buy for not very much in the army surplus stores. Then uh my father got some warm woolen blankets for us (laughs) , they were very

prickly, sticky, but they , you know, when it got really cold you could stick that between two blankets. We didn't have heat in our bedrooms, in our homes so it could get pretty cold in the winter. And canteens. That's where we got a lot of those canteens. They're all army surplus. And he had a little army surplus camping stove, and he bought us a bunch of suitcases [laughs]. We each had our own, and so he fitted this thing at the back of our station wagon. It was [pauses] a little trailer that those suit cases would fit into and...the camping stove on the end, and then it had...the back flopped up it had legs on it and would come down and on the top there was a drawer too, that he and mom put their clothes in. Each one of us had a suitcase, so if we traveled that is how we carried our luggage. So there was a lot of army surplus use. Then after that, well the Cold War was happening when I was in high school. And of course the Korean War, I don't know the exact dates, but I know that affected a lot of people, not my family particularly, although a cousin of ours was stationed over there. But of course Vietnam, that occurred when I was in college. When I was at North Texas, I remember a young man that I had gone out with a few times when I came down here, you know, from here... was...went over to Vietnam as a helicopter pilot. Now that was during the peace keeping days but then that escalated during the time I was in graduate school. So that was going hot and heavy, really bad. Everyday you'd just see on the news how many casualties, how many casualties, it just got to where you didn't want to watch the news, it was so bad.

Maria: Did they have any effect on the Rio Grande Valley? Did you see them on TV, or did it affect rations... or?

Dixie: What Vietnam or any?

Maria: Any of them connected to...[Rio Grande Valley]

Dixie: Well, First World War, I mean [laughs] I don't know why I want to say that I guess that is the first war in my memory. The Second World War did, although it didn't affect me, but [long pause] my...well you know gas was rationed and so...That's actually when they started the Lutheran Church here that we now go to. It was first called the American Lutheran Church because it was part of a synod called the American Lutheran Church, but it was started here. There was already a Mexican mission, but they started this. This was a group of German, basically farmers, and my father and some other people who were Lutheran who went to Lutheran churches in other communities and daddy went to McAllen, and some of them went to Elsa or to Weslaco. But... they couldn't get... uh, you know, tires were scarce, gas was scare and it was...they couldn't travel that far to go to Church so they wanted to build a church here that they could all worship right here 'cause it was closer. And that is one of the main reasons they started this, the Lutheran Church that I go to and that now, actually has encompassed the Mexican original St. Paul's Lutheran church. They're one congregation now on a piece of land that my father used to own that the, so that church is all combined, but at one time, that, you know, the Lutheran Church that [pause] my father helped start, was because of gas rationing. And during, I don't remember, I wasn't here during Vietnam basically 'cause I went...off to college.

Maria: Do you remember the depression?

Dixie: No, that was really before me.

Maria: Oh, yes, yes, wrong period.

Dixie: [laughs] that is ok. My older brothers do, they were...well they were just coming out of the depression.

Mary: Did you guys have a victory garden, to sustain the family?

Dixie: Well not really because my dad was a farmer. And, uh, we didn't [pause and laugh]...we had cattle and uh chickens and you know we were sort of self-sustaining in that way. As to growing specific things, I don't... and calling it a victory garden I don't know about that. I don't think so; you'd have to ask one of my older brothers and sisters.

Maria: So... as going with that question, did you have any gardens in your property for your personal use like vegetable gardens or...?

Dixie: I'm trying to think if we did per se, you know, we had, of course we had fruit trees, citrus trees and we used to go out and pick the fruit all the time and squeeze it [laughs] drink it after school until we go allergic to it. And, uh, [pause] I don't remember if my mother had a garden or not, to tell you the truth. I, you know, I think everything was available in...there is so much produce and they grow it year round here... that you could... what you didn't plant yourself, tomatoes or squash or carrots or whatever corn, you know, you ate it when it

was in season or you could, you bought it in the grocery store what was available, but... or traded, bartered, I don't know, but I know my mother used to make her own butter and uh you know 'cause we had cows and uh... I don't know.

Maria: What kind of trees, or flowers, or grasses you kind of remember were in the farm?

Dixie: Well my mother loved flowers and had quite a few, she had...it wasn't a garden but in front of the house she had Turks Caps growing those...I don't know if you [we respond we don't know the flower and proceeds to describe it] they're those little red flowers that the ...

Mary: **humming birds like.**

Dixie: **yeah, humming birds like and then she had... there were three windows in our music room which** was bordered on the west and the north, and so she had a trellis there and she had queens wreath, do you know what that is? [we don't know what they are she explains] They're tiny, tiny, little pink flowers and again the humming birds like those. You used to see the humming birds out, but that formed a shade over those west windows. And she had, for a while she had gladiolas growing out along the side of the house. There was a fence on the south side, and she'd have various flowers growing out there, you know. Eventually she wound up with a rose garden in front of the house that's still there, but mostly I think she planted flowers..I don't remember her planting food to eat, guess that was daddy's job.

Maria: That would be the farm, I'm guessing, area. So what trees do you remember?

Dixie: Well, of course, the mesquites and [laughs] that big live oak tree in the back of the house, daddy planted that from a seed that he'd gotten up north of here, years and years ago and it just grew and grew and grew and its huge. It was one of the first, I think, live oaks growing down here. He planted that back in the twenties, 'cause there were no trees around there, uh 'cause everything else was basically mesquite. We had a lot of hackberries eventually in our yard but those grew up later. They of course weren't planted, I think the birds planted those (laughs). Plants? I can remember there being a lot of sunflowers along the roads, and uh [pause] I'd have to think about that [laughs]. I remember the sunflowers, of course, there were years ago, in the fifties we had this terrible drought, and so there were times when all there were were just weeds even for the cows to eat. And so I mean pigweeds and the milk was bitter [laughs] it was just not drinkable.

Maria: It wasn't good.

Dixie: Yes, so, you know. Some years we had green things and some years we didn't.

Maria: Did, were, did you any, use any of the plants for medicinal purposes, you know?

Dixie: Plants? Medicinal purposes?

Mary: Aloe Vera, maybe or something?

Dixie: Well I know aloe has been around a long time I'm not sure that my mother ever had any, uh, I don't remember it.

Maria: 'cause, you know, it would make teas and stuff like that. I don't know if you ever used that labor.

Dixie: Well, you know, the Hispanic families have a rich, rich culture with all. There's a lady that comes and helps me clean my house, and I mean anything that is wrong with me she could totally make a tea out of something and drink it whether is garlic or onions or you name it, you know, and then she'll swear that that's the thing that'll cure that, but I don't remember growing up with any of those teas or anything. You know, tea to us was something you drank with ice [laughs]

Mary: 'Cause it's hot.

Dixie: Mama...tea and coffee... and well the Swedes love their coffee, of course, and uh [laughs] I don't remember [pause] herbs and things like that too much.

Maria: We kind of talked a little bit about wild plants with the sunflowers. Were there any other type of wild plants you were familiar with?

Dixie: I am sure there were [laughs], I can't, I... you know, don't have a...I'll tell you someone you should interview about that is one of my cousins who is going to be down this weekend, 'cause he didn't grow up on our farm but grew up just a quarter of a mile down the road. And, he went into biology, but he was very much a botanist, and he could tell you every kind of bird and flower and plant that existed here, but I can't (laughs). I'd tell you I was very allergic and I spend a lot of time in the house [laughs], a lot of time, 'cause with those

winds, you know, comes lots of things... probably more time than any of the other members of the family was spent in the house.

Maria: So you would use that time to play with your...?

Dixie: Well I did a lot of reading. My father wouldn't allow a television set in the house even when they became common, because he expected us...if we weren't working, then we needed to be reading or practicing. So, I read a lot.

Maria: I think this kind of goes along with...did you know any poisonous plants you would stay away from or like the cattle you would kind of keep them away?

Dixie: Again I wasn't very involved with the cattle. [laugh]. Well of course everybody heard of poison ivy, but I don't think we didn't really have it here.

Maria: You didn't have it here?

Dixie: I don't think so. They had it up in Kerrville, but I don't even remember knowing about poisonous plants. I think they did say to stay away from the cactus berries, because they would bother your stomach a whole lot.

Maria: So what kind of animals were you on your property, you said cattle, but what kind of other animals?

Dixie: Daddy had cows, yeah, mostly. He had some Herefords when we were young, and Herefords don't do real well down here because they get pink eye and eventually the kind that he wound up with was the Brahmas because they're... or the combination the King ranch developed that Santa Gertrudus which is a combination I think about five different kinds of cattle that did well down here in this is what most people wound up having the Santa Gertrudus, but uh... we had some Brahma bulls. [Pause]

Mary: What about wild animals, do you know?

Dixie: Why there were coyotes definitely...coyotes around and you'd hear them howl. That wasn't at all uncommon. Uh.

Mary: Did you ever see any ocelots?

Dixie: No, I...the only time I ever saw an ocelot somebody had one caged; a professor at Pan Am that my cousin had, who is the one that loves the animals, he showed it to me, Dr. James had a caged ocelot, but no I never saw any... in the wild...you know, everything was farmland around here at the time. Just the coyotes they didn't care about that.

Maria: They are still here.

Dixie: They go, yeah, wherever they can, um, I think there are probably a lot of semi-wild cats intermixed with the, you know, the feral cats around here, because we've had cats before that had wild characteristics, you couldn't tame them. They hated to be held. they had an odd body structure, the longer, back legs, and things like that.

Mary: Did you see a lot of, they are endangered now, the Texas tortoise and the Texas Horned Lizard?

Dixie: What we called the horny toad (laughing)?

Mary: Yes, they- they changed the name (laughing).

Dixie: Oh yeah they were all over, they are in danger...that is sad, and I don't know what happened to them. 'Cause I remember them being all over, especially when it was hot and dry.

Mary: It's mostly habitat depletion, that's why there....

Dixie: Yeah, somebody said once, and I don't know if this is true that when hurricane Beulah came...after... that wiped an awful lot of them. I saw one once, uh [pause] since then, and I can't even remember when I saw it, uh, when I was living out at my mothers or just visiting, and it was just a rare instance because you just don't see them anymore, but there are a lot of lizards. Tortoise I don't know, I think we saw turtles but whether it was a Texas Tortoise I'm not sure...because there was, you know that north of the...west of the house there was kind of a brush area, where the holding pond is now, and that was kind of wild in there, but uh cats I never saw them. Like I said...

Maria: So apart from cats you said you had chickens, did you have sheep around?

Dixie: No sheep. I don't know if sheep do well down here. We never had goats, we did have chickens, and you know, we had our own eggs. And every once in a while they would kill a chicken to eat or daddy would take a calf off to the sale, the sale yard or have one butchered, then we'd have meat frozen, I forget who had their meat

lockers, but you could store your meat there until you... Although we had a big freezer on the back porch, fairly early on for all the meats, like that. For a while there, they got some guinea hens, I don't know why, but those were (laughing), all over the place! You couldn't keep them contained and they were loud and they were better than any watch dog. They just messed all over everything too, guinea hens are really funny. But my dad did have a, he started a grape arbor over the terrace, the patio. Have you been over there to the house?

Maria: No, we haven't.

Dixie: I guess maybe we should have gone there (laughing). Anyway he got some grapes and started them back, when, I was in elementary school and gradually they covered that whole terrace area and so we had lots of grapes. Mama would make grape jelly and stuff and then one summer, I think it was hurricane that Alice came and hit those grapes vines they were brimming with grapes and so they had to do something quick so they picked them all and he tried making wine out of them (laughing). And mama made jelly out of, you know, what was left and that worked out pretty well so that started his wine making hobby that he would try different kinds of wines and stuff like that. I just remember that in connection with these guinea hens cause they'd go swarming around the patio, pick at the grapes and leave their messes behind (laughing).

Maria: Did you have a dog?

Dixie: Oh, we always had a dog. Yea, usually just one, just one. Um and they were various... (laughs) I don't know where they got the dog. They'd keep the dog until it died and then find a new one somewhere, I really don't know what the criteria for it was, just so it would bark. And we had cats, sometimes too many. But that was always fun, when we had a bunch of little kittens. Anyway, those were the only domestic animals we had and you didn't bring them in the house. Although I have to say there was this little calf that my father rescued at the sale yard, its mother had died and it was just tiny and that's what they named it, Tiny. And they sort of bottle fed it from a bucket, I don't know just how they rigged it but my older brother, Rick, was the one that kinda took care of Tiny. Tiny just adored him and it followed him everywhere he went, including, into the house, and around and back out (laughing), which my mother hated, but it was really funny though that calf just adored him cause I guess he was its mama.

Maria: So that's the only calf that was allowed in the house (laughing)?

Dixie: For a short while, yeah.

Maria: So, keeping up with this kind of topic, what kind of birds would you see in the area?

Dixie: Again, I wasn't real, real aware of the birds. And my cousin Herb could sit on the bus and say, "Ok, see that? That's a..." and he would tell me what kind of bird that was, but I don't, I know we had sparrows and we had black birds and pigeons, um... I can't tell you about the rest.

Maria: Since this is a very important area for seasonal migration, did you ever actually see these large amounts of birds during migrations periods?

Dixie: Oh yea, I mean, just like now, you see them flying over.

Maria: Did they affect any of the crops?

Dixie: That's a good question. Not that I was ever aware of. I never heard... I'm sure if they would have been devastated, we would have known about it, we would have heard about it. But birds plant a lot of seeds, you know, that's why all these fences have mesquite trees growing along them. All that stuff growing, they weren't built that way (laughing) it's birds sitting on the fence.

Maria: When you were growing up, did you see any unnatural land formations, like mounds or any geological features that were not natural?

Dixie: Around here? No, not that I know of. Not in our area, there may well have been in other areas, but not that I know of.

Maria: So, what other crops would your family grow apart from cotton?

Dixie: Well daddy grew tomatoes and corn, squash, I don't know if he grew cabbage or not. I remember there was a period he wanted to experiment with soy beans. I don't know whether he did or not but cotton was a staple, you know. Every summer, that was the big cash crop that either kept you going for the year or if you lost it, it was very hard on you. And of course, he had orange trees, he had about, I don't know, 20 acres maybe, just south of our house and then he had planted another 30 back on another piece of the land. They were just reach-

ing the age where they would bear fruit but there was a freeze in the early sixties and it wiped them out. He had a stroke not long after that and I'm sure that that was one of the reasons, you know. My oldest brother had just gotten out of the army and had come home and was farming with him. And at that point, daddy couldn't work anymore, so my brother had to get a job outside of the farm to support my parents. But they had oranges, it seems like there was always corn, nowadays they don't grow that much corn for eating. It gets fungus, I think, a lot. But I don't remember, I just always remember tomatoes.

Mary: What about sorghum?

Dixie: Oh, yeah. Yeah, he grew a lot of that. That's one thing I never think about cause we don't eat it, but yea, that's a staple.

Maria: So cotton was the main economic base?

Dixie: Yea I think a lot of the valley was based on that. And then, of course, when they started having the cotton pickers, the big giant machines, daddy didn't own one but he would rent one and he would use it but that was sad, because in order to work, to make...to use those they had to defoliate the cotton, so they would come and spray the cotton with that defoliant and that stuff is not good for you. And of course our house was not closed up, it was open and you would smell that stuff and you knew and it wasn't good for you but what could you do about it? If somebody had a cotton crop near your home or whatever. That was probably during my high school years, but then the cotton plant would just be all dry with the just the cotton itself, yeah, the bulbs, then they'd go through and pick it with the pickers, so that was the end of the, I guess that was why the bracero program probably closed down, because the cotton picker came along, so that lost a lot of jobs for people from Mexico too. So what else?

Maria: I was kind keeping with the pesticides, so they would use a lot of pesticides in the area?

Dixie: Some, yeah. Well, you know there were crop dusters. They had a booming business, there was an airport just north of Edinburg, which... right near McColl road, off of 107. They would uh... I think that's where the airplanes were kept that were used for crop dusting. My second oldest brother, actually, he never did that here, but he learned to fly at that airport when he was a teenager and later on, after he had been in the Air Force, then he was living in Idaho, he did some crop dusting. But they did helicopters up there. But he had done some of that flying, in old World War II bi-planes, I guess that's what they were flying, they'd come in real low with both pesticides and the defoliant.

Maria: Kind of keeping with that military, how many in your family actually went into the military?

Dixie: Three of my brothers. Well there was the draft in those days, so you just about had to unless you weren't eligible. My oldest brother, Kelly, had polio when he was in high school so he wasn't able to, but during the Cold War, they wound up drafting him anyway. And he was in the army and then my second brother, Rick... Erik was in the air force. He volunteered for that because he wanted to fly and so he went to Lackland Air Base in San Antonio and went through officer training and became a pilot and learned how to fly the big, those big bombers that were up in the air, circling the arctic circle (laughing). He was one of those pilots, yes. And that was an interesting time period because those things would be in the air for like two weeks at a time and they would refuel up there. And then my younger brother Mark was in the air force also. This was during the, it was during the Vietnam era, I think. He was based in Okinawa, he would work on electronic equipment and things. Just my youngest brother wasn't. I guess he missed it. But I have nephews that were in the service too. Next question (laughing).

Maria: How did your land change, did your father acquire more land, did he sell land through time when you were growing up?

Dixie: When he had his stroke in 1962, and he couldn't farm anymore, he sold that 60 acres, almost 60 acres where the BETA school is now. It was the South Texas School district that purchased that from him, they had, I think they had bought an option on it some years before, but he was forced to go ahead and sell it at that time, just to go ahead and pay off his debts because he couldn't work, he kept three acres and that's where they put, our church got moved to. And I think that was in the early sixties that he sold that and basically, as far as I know, that 40 acres there and the 100 on the home place, which includes where the house is... well anyway that, you know, where the house is, there's the big field behind it, that and then there is some apartments just west, north

of there, those apartments are on like 10 acres on part of his original 60 that was there, so he had that 60 and the 40 over across town, that's what he owned, the rest he rented and farmed. And then your question was, as to selling, yeah he sold that, the 40 acres and I don't know when he sold that 10 across the road from us, I know he farmed it for a long time and it stood vacant until a few years ago when they built the apartments, whoever bought it, I guess they were just using it for land speculation, because they never planted anything. But, you know, there was 10 acres that they had to sell to the city, it was condemned (sarcastically) to put a housing project on, I can't think of the name of it, to the housing authority. I'm sure you know the...it's that housing project just north of... You know where they are buying all those homes, it was over on Cooper Street and Garner, just north of Schunior, there's a housing project just north of that and that 10 acres was part of his farm and he had to sell that to the city, so then he acquired the nine acres next to our property and we still collectively own that, so we've managed to hold on to that so far.

Maria: So that was basically, that constituted what you guys owned? And what were the other property that your father would rent?

Dixie: Well they were these various pieces that are shown here (points to highlighted map of Norquest property). If they're yellowed in, I'm sure he was the one who had something to do with that because he's the one that remembers, my oldest brother knows exactly where he farmed. But he, at one time I think he farmed up to about 300 acres, when he was busiest. But I'm sure somebody's gonna interview Kelly.

Maria: They should be interviewing him soon.

Dixie: So that is the extent, and for years we've rented that land to various farmers that surround the home, the home place there. Are there any other questions?

Maria: What else would you like to tell us about your family?

Dixie: Ah...in conjunction with the land?

Maria: Anything you like.

Dixie: Well, uh, we have a close connection with the land, I think. Because it's always been part of the family, I mean, anybody who tries to take it away for anything other than our choice, I mean, we go after them (laughing) but because that's just part of your heritage, if your parents leave you something, it's... it's your home, you know. My grandfather, the Swedish grandfather had had farms in Kansas and Nebraska and before him there had been my grandfather that, great grandfather that had land in Sweden, so there was always land in the family and it was just part of the culture of farmed, to be without your land was to be without part of your...so its...

Maria: So who's continued that legacy of farming in your family?

Dixie: Well nobody is farming right, I mean, we own it, and we're renting it but daddy always wanted us to have... he worked it out so hopefully they would never take that land for taxes, that we would pay for it, so he could pay the taxes on it as were growing up. And he wanted everybody to have like five acres that they could come back and have for theirs, if everything else worked out wrong in the world, they would have that land. Now one acre is, you know (laughing), sounds like a lot, but in those days, I mean, for a farmer, five acres was nothing, but now with the population explosion and the valley population explosion, land suddenly becomes dollar signs to people, and they don't think of it as your, your heritage, where you can grow your vegetables, and have your cow and your chickens (laughing).

Maria: What kind of factors, would you say, influenced your family to come to the valley? Did they have any advertisements like, "Magic Valley?"

Dixie: There were advertisements, absolutely and uh, I think in both cases, it was health reasons. My Swedish grandfather, the Norquest grandfather, had arthritis, I think, or rheumatism, or something like that, and the cold was really getting to him. He had raised all of his kids, he had, well a total of 10 children but seven lived and they had farms, well the men had farms, so one of his daughter married a young man, whose family had lived in this area, and so he came, my father, came down to see it for him. Anyway they purchased this farm and he sold his and they moved everything down here by train in the early twenties. But it was, it was his health that caused the move. I guess his older children had been able to attend college but my father had to quit college after one year to help his father farm and then they came here and he (my grandpa) died not long after that, he died in 1929, I think. So, but my other grandfather, the Nordmeyer side, the German side, was very allergic to a lot of

the plants that they had on their farms up there and so his father purchased some land for him down here. It was over on McColl Road some place and he came down. He wasn't much of a farmer, but he was the original, the first McAllen city engineer, as I understand, E. F. Nordmeyer was his name. But it was hay fever that brought his down here, it was, you know, achy joints that brought the other one. So it was health reasons.

But they were opening up all this land because of the irrigation, they started that pump house.

Maria: In Hidalgo?

Dixie: Have you ever visited that? Take the tour, they give you a lot of interesting information but that place gives water to the whole valley. It's all downhill, you know it's an amazing, amazing feat of engineering. Because before that the valley was just a desert, literally, and with the engineering knowhow and, I guess, the money that was invested, they built all this series of canals and drainage ditches where they could open all this land up for farming, so it was a, it was a garden (laughing).

Maria: Do you remember the canals and the irrigation on your land?

Dixie: Oh yes, of course. And part of it, they still have, they still irrigate that land, yeah, and the old house, they still have irrigation there; that's how they water the yard. And so it's still part of the irrigation district. Yeah, I remember the canals and drainage ditches, we used to like to go play by the drainage ditch, which never had any water in it, because there were cattails and bamboo, it was like a big sand dune made out of clay, we'd run up and down and play games, it was wild, you know. I was trying to think what else, I remember the palm trees, rows and rows of palm trees, because as I understand it, when people bought land, they gave them so many palm trees to plant along those roads or something like that. They wound up being very, very messy and the ones that weren't frozen out, I think that they got rid of because they had to haul those big leaves, fronds off the land so it wouldn't ruin the tractors, or the equipment when they were plowing. But it was really pretty to see all those rows of palm trees.

Maria: Anything else you would like to add?

Dixie: I think, probably not (laughing).

Maria: Well basically, kind of, this interview is for us to know your property, what kind of biological environment you have, like the animals, and a little bit of the history of the area and you provided very good information for us, thank you very much.

Dixie: Well, thank you. Yeah, my father was a, very much, although he only had one year of college, he was very much an educated man. He had a library of books that would be the envy of any college professor. History books, all kinds of things, he read and read. Because you know there are months when the farmers can't work very much and he did a lot of reading and he really knew a lot about history and philosophy.

Maria: Do you remember some of the books in his library?

Dixie: I remember when he was reading War and Peace, that was probably when he got a little older (laughing), I remember, yes, because Seven Pillars of Wisdom, as a matter of fact, that rust colored book (points to book on her shelf), I got that right before the Gulf War, the first time they went in because, I had, there was a movie based on that book but Daddy had read it when it was sort of current events that. You know, that the author, I'm trying to remember his name, he was known as Lawrence of Arabia, I can't remember if it was T. S., two initials Lawrence, he had gone with the British army to try to unite the Arab tribes to, that was during the first World War or just after the first World War, and uh, but he had a lot, a lot of interesting stuff about the way the tribes were and this was in the 1920's. And it's amazing, you know, and I knew what we're going into, we're taking our young men over there, what's it like? And, I mean, you read that book and everything we've heard in the news the last ten years, just backs up the fact that those people are still very tribal and very um, not civilized (laughing). Lots and lots of them, you know. But he had that in his library and he had lots of history books about the Civil War and that was the war that had interested him. And the revolution... I literally, when I was in high school, history (class), I wouldn't even go to the library to do a research paper, I'd just use daddy's books (laughing) cause they were just all there in the shelf in the living room that I could find historical topics about just about any period of time.

Maria: He was really interested in history, I'm guessing.

Dixie: Well, yes, just in general, he was just a big reader.

Maria: So what do you remember about your parents most?

Dixie: They were great parents. They were very strict. They expected a lot from us in terms of work. I can't every remember any pressure about grades but they expected us to do what we were supposed to do, in school and out. Of course, religion, we had to go to church, and um, big part in that. And they were just very loving parents, my father before he had polio, he loved his kids, and he would take us out in the yard and, you know, play games, very physical games with us, you know, we'd play tag and we'd play hide and seek and we'd play crack the whip, (laughing) have you ever? The big ones in the middle and the kids all hold hands down to the littlest one on the end and the one in the middle and they all run this way and pull each other, that's cracking the whip. You just try to keep (the chain) from falling apart. But they were just fun things that he did with us. And I remember when, in, I was about probably third grade when my oldest brother was, got polio right at the end of the school year. And we were quarantined, we had to stay home from school for a period of time, and he got board games for us, and we sat and the family played board games. We always did things as a family, we had a family orchestra. Every Saturday night, we got out our instruments and played, that was daddy's instigation, you know. And uh, I was trying to think what else it was that he did, and Mama of course, she always had health problems, so, you know, we always had to be very careful that she had her rest time during the day but she was a wonderful strong, strong woman. They were beautiful parents.

Maria: I'm all out of questions. Thank you very much for giving us this interview.

Dixie: Thank you. Oh boy, that was a long interview. You can edit a lot of it. [joking]

Interviewee: Neil Norquest

Interviewer: Sarah Garza

Date: October 28, 2011

Location: Conference room of Colvin, Chaney, Saenz, & Rodriguez Law Office

Transcribers: Myriam Lopez, Cassandra Davila, Randy Castaneda

On October 28, 2011, my group and I interviewed Neil Norquest. Mr. Norquest is the youngest child of Mr. and Mrs. Carrol Norquest. The interview took place at the law office where Mr. Norquest is employed as a Counsel. My group composed questions in context to plants and animals as well as historical events that occurred here or could have impacted the LRGV in some way. The interview presented insightful information that will benefit the examination of the class concerning land and human interaction.

Neil Norquest: You're gonna have a good time with Kelly.

[group laughs]

Neil Norquest: He could give you weeks of information.

[group laughs]

Sarah Garza: Ok well just to introduce myself again my name is Sarah Garza and I'm a graduate student at the, at UTPA and, um, today is October 28, 2011 and, um, can you just state your full name?

Neil Norquest: Yes. Neil Norquest.

Sarah Garza: Ok. And, um, when and where were you born?

[00:42]

Neil Norquest: I was born on October 17, 1947.

Sarah Garza: Ok.

Neil Norquest: Uh, in the old house uh that you just conducted an interview

Sarah Garza: Ok.

Neil Norquest: in, on the corner of, uh, Sugar and Chapin here in Edinburg.

Sarah Garza: Um, so you said you were born in the house, um, did, was there a midwife?

Neil Norquest: Uh, actually uh, Dr. Ralph Homme was, I think, either on his way, you can ask my brother Kelly this, but uh he was either on his way or was being called or something. But I don't think he had gotten there. He had, I think, all my siblings were born in the house there and uh he had been the delivering doctor for several of them. I was the last. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.]

Neil Norquest: And, uh, I think his nurse was there but he may not have arrived yet by the time I was born, I'm not sure. [**Sarah Garza:** Oh.]

Neil Norquest: I think maybe he had not. And so his nurse might have actually done the delivery.

[1:57]

Sarah Garza: Oh, ok that's interesting. Um, and I was wondering if you could, if you knew, um, if you could recount the circumstances to like as to why your father decided to move to the Lower Rio Grande Valley?

Neil Norquest: Uh, yes there are, of course these are stories that I have heard. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm. Mhmm.]

Neil Norquest: So I would have no first hand knowledge, obviously. But, uh, my father had - I'll try to make it as to the point as possible. Uh, he had originally been born in Nebraska but his family had moved when he was a child to Lindsborg, Kansas, the town of Lindsborg. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] **Neil Norquest:** Uh, it's a Swedish community in Southern Kansas. and uh his father, my grandfather, had owned a farm there. And my grandfather by the early 1920s was already in his 60's, I'm pretty sure, and he, my father was one of the youngest of his children and the oldest of four I believe of his children had already become married and moved away from home and settled you know, they were grown. And he was, he and my grandmother were nearing what we would think of as retirement age. And, as in many cases, the cold weather was starting to bother him and he had perhaps a form of rheumatism or arthritis or something wrong with him. But he determined, he and my grandmother thought that this would be a nice place to... you know warm, [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.][4:00] warm

environment. And so, he and my grandmother and the youngest of their three children, of whom one was my father, [Sarah Garza: Mhmm.] who were grown but not yet out of the house.[Sarah Garza: Ok.] So they were college age or thereabouts. And my father had attended a couple of years, uh, I think at Kansas State University or College at that time in Manhattan, Kansas. But he wanted to farm. And so when my grandfather determined that he wanted to move to the Valley, and trade his farm in Kansas for some land here in the Valley, my dad, determined that it would be a good idea to go with him both for the purpose of continuing the farm and, sort of being with my grandparents as they, in their older age. [Sarah Garza: Mhmm.] So that's the best of my, that's my father's side. [Sarah Garza: Ok.] On my mother's side, her father had been raised in Illinois and his father, my grandfather, their name was Nordmeyer. And they had, uh, had been farmers in Illinois and my grandfather, that is my mother's father, and his wife and their oldest children of whom my mother was one, moved here in 1914. And they moved to McAllen, where my grandfather [5:41] had a small farm, but he also had a, I think it was a citrus, uh, not a citrus, but a vegetable, um, like a packing shed (inaudible) kind of thing [Sarah Garza: Mhmm.] on the railroad on old 83 there in what is now Downtown McAllen. So, that's how those two came and then they met and married in the 20's. [Sarah Garza: Mhmm.] But my, the farm, this farm that you're dealing with here was, uh, the one that was settled by my grandfather [Sarah Garza: Ok.]from Kansas.

Sarah Garza: Ok. Ok. Alright. What are some of your earliest memories, um, as a child here?

Neil Norquest: Well playing of course, [laughs] playing. You just came from the old house there so and of course it looked different back then. The roads were not paved at that time, um, they were...uh, I think both Sugar and Chapin had gravel by that time. But it was all rural, very much rural. And we had, uh, a lot of room [Sarah Garza: Mhmm.] as you might suspect out here in the farming area. And my earliest memories are simply being with my large family and playing. Very, very pleasant happy memories. [Laughs]

[7:15]

Sarah Garza: Yes. That's great. As, your.. okay... Since you had a large family was it, uh, did the family participate in, like, the maintaining of the land or did your father, like, hire outside help?

Neil Norquest: Well both. [Sarah Garza: Ok.] Uh-huh. Uh, he, all of the children, we had - there were 7 siblings of course. My mother was a housewife. She did not work outside the home any at any point in time [Sarah Garza: Ok.] after marrying my father. Uh, but um..all of the boys, there were four boys and three girls

[Sarah Garza: Mhmm] and of the siblings, and all of the boys as we got, you know old enough, we worked out there on the farm. [Sarah Garza: Ok.] and, in addition to that, my father had, during, on a year round basis he usually had, at least one or two or three, hired hands and then in addition to that, during harvest season of course, he would hire a lot of, a lot of folks. Everything back then... nothing was mechanized.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm...mhmm

[8:29]

Neil Norquest: From a harvesting standpoint, uh everything was hand harvested, so...

Sarah Garza: Okay.. Um.. and what kind of crops did was, did he specialize in?

Neil Norquest: Uh...well of course, in the, the summer, he grew cotton

Sarah Garza: Ok.

Neil Norquest: most years. And, in fact just about every year that I can remember until my adulthood. Um, he also grew, uh, grain sorghum, uh, and occasionally corn and, uh, one year I think, one or two years, he grew broom corn.

Sarah Garza: Mmm..

Neil Norquest: Uh, but mostly it was cotton and grain.

Sarah Garza: Ok, ok was there any...sorry.

Neil Norquest: [interjecting] I'm sorry, in the wintertime he grew sometimes vegetables.

Sarah Garza: Oh, ok.

Neil Norquest: Uh, winter vegetables; carrots...uh [pauses briefly] I'm trying to remember if he had other, uh, he had, um um...Spring, spring crop would often include tomatoes and that kinda thing. Uh, so he had winter and spring vegetables. And he also had a small, depending on which times you're talking about but a citrus orchard. [Sarah Garza: Oh, ok.] [9:45] We had a small grove on the south side of the house, now, um, to the

south of the big house, the main house. And then in later years he had, uh, he planted a, an orange and grapefruit, uh, probably another thirty acres or so on the what we call the home place, [inaudible] where the place where the land where the house is as situated there, and you had that, and then we had some cattle

Sarah Garza: Oh that was what I was going to ask.

Neil Norquest: as well. So we had, uh, depending on again which years you are referring to, we would have anywhere from three or four to, um, oh up to fifty or so cattle [**Sarah Garza:** Mm Ok.] um which would be - we would pasture there. We had pasture land. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm] and as well we would feed them, uh uh, [inaudible] or silage hay and so on so forth something to feed them - beef, beef cattle.[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] and also he had one or two milk cows most of the time so it was kind of a lot of different...some cattle, some a little bit of citrus, some winter vegetables, but the main, um, commercial crops that he grew were mainly the summer crops of cotton.

Sarah Garza: So the, the, the, the land was definitely, um, it supplied, it was self, uh, the income was well..

[11:08]

Neil Norquest: Oh yes, all of all of my dad's income, all of our family income during all of those years came from his farming.

Sarah Garza: [inaudible]

Neil Norquest: So, and and plus, we consumed certain, you know,

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: we had, in some we would have, well not always but on occasion, we would have you know one of the beef cattle slaughtered. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and we had pigs and we had chickens with eggs and we would have the chickens also for chicken, you know, and that kind of thing as well.

Sarah Garza: Yeah.

Sarah Garza: Ok um, so you said that mostly, uh, the harvesting was, um, labor oriented but uh, when was it, around what time did your father purchase, like, machinery?

Neil Norquest: Ok, now the actual cultivation of the land, he bought tractors. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] they had tractors all the way going back into the...my brother Kelly can give you a better idea of it, probably into the early thirties maybe in the late twenties.

Sarah Garza: Ok.

[12:17]

Neil Norquest: There was a time when my dad and granddad, uh, did their, some of their plowing and cultivation and so on with mules. [**Sarah Garza:** Oh ok.] He then bought tractors, by the time I came along in the late forties he had three or four tractors that did the cultivating work. The harvesting work which was primarily the summer crop of cotton, of course, would have been handpicked it in those days. The mechanical cotton pickers didn't come along until probably the fifties. Uh, my dad I think bought one of the early cotton pickers and it didn't work very well or something happened. And then he just went back to hand labor, and did not really have the crops commercially harvested mechanically maybe ever or maybe in the very last couple years of his farming, I'm not sure, mhmm.

Sarah Garza: Ok. Um, how did adverse weather conditions affect, um, the land such as the freezes or the Hurricane Beulah?

Neil Norquest: Mmm...Mhmm [chuckles] Yeah, uh, the, uh, as freezes, uh, weather of course you know as a farming entity that...the weather is always a factor.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: And, so again my brother Kelly could give you more precise information. But obviously early frosts and things like that would, would affect whatever they were doing. But the main two things, the freezing which we occasionally had, the biggest, uh, injury was to the citrus.

[14:00]

[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] and he, my dad had several citrus, crops frozen out. And he had in a big freeze I think it was 1963 he had a large part of his citrus orchard was frozen at that point, the trees were frozen, where many of them [**Sarah Garza:** Mmm...yeah.] didn't come back. Most of them didn't come back from that freeze. And

there have been other freezes that hurt trees as well as crops. But as far as the hurricanes go we had, uh, several. Most devastating of course was Beulah, as you mentioned. And I have very, very vivid memories of that. 67' and it was my first year at college, I was at Pan Am. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] And obviously, it was, whatever it was I think it might've have been, by the time it got to Edinburg, it might've been a category - downgraded to a category three. But whatever it was, the hurricane took a kind of a circular course around, around this area. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and as a result of that, we had something like twenty four hours of straight, you know, wind and we had, uh, just to give you an idea of how that affected things, we had trailers that had been, that were being used to feed. They had been at one time, they had been cotton trailers but my dad had converted them to feed trailers for the cattle. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] [15:28] And, when the hurricane was...first came in, all of the trailers, there were three or four trailers, and they were all blown over on their sides this way [demonstrating]. And as the hurricane - and all of the telephone lines going up and down the roads as far as the eye could see were blown over this way. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and then as the hurricane circulated, uh, the telephone lines were back up [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] standing up and the trailers were back up. And then, the hurricane circled more, the trailers were blown over all the way on this side and all the telephone lines were blown over all the way on this side.

[**Sarah Garza:** Oh my goodness.] And we had some damage to the house and so forth. At that point it was in the early fall, we did not, to my knowledge, have a crop in the ground. We did have cattle. And our land is north of the University there and so, as you know, that's fairly low area, comparatively speaking. And because we had water draining, as you may know, we had, uh, around twenty-five inches of rain in a twenty-four hour period. And then that was on top of other rain, and then there was rain that followed that. So we had a total, over a period of maybe twenty to thirty days, we had a total of around fifty inches of rain. And so during the worst of that, we got, uh, runoff water from all, all over the place including McAllen that headed across country this way and came across Pan Am where the University is and then kind [16:57] of through our place. And our house was high enough to be barely out of water, but all the land around us was totally under water as far as we could see. And, the first departure from the house was by means of a boat. We had kept a boat that belonged to our pastor. And I'm not sure why we had it there, maybe for safekeeping, but we tied it to our front porch, and we, um, my dad and my brother Kelly and I got in that boat with poles and we poled our way all across all of the area between us and the University, uh, including the fence line between us and University, the barbed wire was about like this, but the water was high enough over it where the boat didn't even touch the barbed wire [**Sarah Garza:** Oh wow.] it just went all the way, and we docked the boat up near the highway, and bought groceries up there because one of the little store up there, um, West Manor Grocery, had opened up just a few days after the hurricane and a couple days so we that's how we got our first groceries after the hurricane. Uh, as far as the - we had haystacks that were ruined, uh, and of course a lot of, uh, improvements were harmed. But as far as crops go, we didn't have any crops on the land. However the cattle, we had to, uh, bring the cattle out of there and there were some calves, you know little babies and the water was so high that there was a place or two where the babies had to swim kind of the calves did. And we drove the cattle up to a higher area, um, the east side of our place the water wasn't as deep, it was only about maybe six inches deep or something like that, and the cattle remained there until the water subsided. But there was no grass because the water was covering all of the pasture. So we would try to, I think my brother Kelly tried to float some hay bales there and so that they could, we did that. And [19:05] then we had a variety of grass that was called, uh, African Star, which is like a Bermuda grass but it is very long runners, very, very large. We didn't know it would do this but, uh, within a few days after the hurricane when the water was still quite high, uh, the grass grew up on top of the water and it grew it out across the water so that there was like another layer of grass on top of the water and all of the runners were crossing the top of the water. And it was...so the cattle could stand there [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and eat off of that grass it was quite, quite interesting.

Sarah Garza: Wow. And how long did, uh, about how long did it take for the water to recede?

Neil Norquest: Um [short pause], completely - several weeks. Um within a few days maybe within a week it was down to the point where the cattle were, it was muddy rather than it was water where they were. But it probably took a good week before the water really began to recede any because after the hurricane, after the

wind that died down, uh, as you all may know, what occurs from a weather standpoint, is that there is so much moisture that, uh, you continue to have thunderstorms and things like that, that occur simply because there is so much moisture. And the clouds build up and then they drop more rain. So that continued to happen for a period of several days and actually probably a week or two after the hurricane. But uh maybe a week to two weeks when the water kinda started to go down.

Sarah Garza: Um, [three second pause] I know your father, um, contributed land for the, uh, advancement of then Edinburg Regional College?

[21:12]

Neil Norquest: Uh, it was Pan Am.

Sarah Garza: Oh it was Pan Am?

Neil Norquest: It was, yeah.

Sarah Garza: And, um, how much did he contribute?

Neil Norquest: Well, what he did is he was farming some of the land where the college now stands. He did not actually own that land, [**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] he was simply farming it. But, um, he purchased some options, uh, that some of the farmers there had expressed an interest in selling. And so he went around to various farmers and he paid for options to purchase their land. And then he, uh, once he had a sufficient number of those, he took those to the board of regents. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] At that point to the board of Regents he said if you're interested in college, these folks are interested in selling their land and... [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] [22:05] Here's what they'll sell for and I've purchased options to sell the land and I am going to give you those options. So what he actually gave the college, and he had never saw or had gotten reimbursement for what he had paid. But he what he actually gave the college were options to buy the land, that he had paid for.

Sarah Garza: Oh I see, I see. Um..Ok, um moving on from the plants and line aspect, um, I know that you were attending the University in the late, latter 60's?

Neil Norquest: In uh '66, in the fall of '66, and the spring of early '67,

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: uh, I attended a full year. And then in the fall semester of '67, I attended as well.

Sarah Garza: Ok. Um did you, um, how was the diversification of the University then, as far as gender. Um, was there more males or females?

Neil Norquest: Uh, you know...I don't remember. [laughs]

Sarah Garza: You don't remember?

Neil Norquest: I think, you know, if statistically probably was, uh, a little bit more male than female. I don't know if it was substantially or not, uh, also the Vietnam war was going on at that point and, uh, some of the guys were gone for that reason. But I think it was I don't know [laughs]. I'd just be guessing.

Sarah Garza: What of you, um, ethnicity-wise like was at that time was it, um, was there more Anglo-American versus Hispanic at the college level?

[24:00]

Neil Norquest: Uh, probably proportionally more than now, uh, but not...I think that I really, it'd be difficult for me to say. I think probably there would have been, uh, a majority of the students probably would've been Hispanic but I can't, I just have no recollection. It probably would have, I don't know, maybe fifty, or sixty, or seventy percent would have been Hispanic, something like that.

Sarah Garza: Ok, um and at this time when you were in college, your father was still farming the land up until what point?

Neil Norquest: Uh, he farmed until - he and my brother Kelly, uh farmed until...the late 60's and I'm trying to remember perhaps the early 70's. I went to Austin in sixty, early '68 and didn't come back until '72. And during that period of time, I think all of the farming operations were terminated except the cattle. We continued to have cattle there on the pasture there, for another ten to fifteen years after that. But all of the row crops, you know, the traditional farming operations had stopped by the time I came back. I'm trying to remember, I think we may have had still some of that before I left but I'm not positive, but but late 60's.

Sarah Garza: Ok, um and you mentioned the Vietnam War.

Neil Norquest: Mhmm.

Sarah Garza: Um did you notice any...what did you notice different in the community, um, during that time period?

Neil Norquest: Well, there was, obviously, a lot of classmates who went, friends. After I graduated from college, I was called up for a physical, and then uh shortly after that they did a [26:19] lottery and I got a high number in the lottery, so...But the number of friends and classmates went and, um, it was obviously, the Valley community, uh, was affected mostly in terms of the, just, people going to the war. The University community when I went up to Austin, obviously there was a lot of anti-war sentiment and so that the protest movement that got underway in '68 and '69, that was a very, at the University of Texas campus, that was a very, very vibrant, you know protest movement, and there were parades and demonstrations and a lot of the things you see in movies like Forrest Gump, and things. They depict that pretty accurately. There were people with anti-war, you know, symbols and the hair and there was a lot of drug use that began about that time as well. All of that was a part of the campus life back then on that campus. It wasn't as, that kinda thing was not nearly as pronounced here at Pan Am, at least in '67 when I was here. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] Students were more interested in studying, and getting an education. But, uh, up in Austin it was much different.

Sarah Garza: Uh what, before you left to Austin, um, there was, um, I don't know if you, well I think you were in Austin at the time, the 1971 Pharr riots? And the movement here in the Valley, any recollection?

Neil Norquest: Uh no...I was barely aware of any of that.

Sarah Garza: Ok, ok um I also wanted to know um why did you choose, uh, to pursue a career in law?
[28:36]

Neil Norquest: Uh, that's an interesting question [laughs]. I actually took the GRE as well as the LSAT, and I was undecided about whether to go to graduate school or law school. My undergraduate majors were history and government, but it primarily was government. But I had taken so many history courses that I wound up with a history major as well. And I really enjoyed history, and I thought about becoming a history professor, and it was something I really thought very seriously about. But, uh, it really had more to do with preserving, uh, all of the available options for making a living if I were to move back to this area, and if I were to come back to this area as a professor, there would only be one option, that would be to teach at Pan Am, which may or may not be something that I could do. So I decided for, uh, economic reasons more than anything else, to, uh, to go to law school because if I did that then I could do any number of things if I came back here. And my parents as well as my wife's parents were, well my parents were getting up in years and uh at that point the only sibling here in the valley was my brother, Kelly, uh, I wanted to come back and kind of be with them in their later years. And my wife wanted to do the same thing. Her mother had passed away at an early age and her dad was here by himself and so her younger siblings were, uh, going to be moving away and everything, so she wanted to be near her Dad. So that seemed like a good, uh, a good option.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm, Did you meet your wife here in the Valley?

Neil Norquest: Yes

[30:25]

Sarah Garza: You did? Oh ok.

Neil Norquest: Yeah, we were in high school together.

Sarah Garza: Oh ok. Um...I wanted to also ask if, um, of course the agriculture market, um, started declining, it's declined from the way it used to be but if it would have been a possibility for you to, um, continue that lifestyle, would you have?

Neil Norquest: Uh yeah, my brothers and I actually discussed that, specifically. Because we uh, the last enterprise we had agriculturally was our cattle. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] And we tried to think of ways that, uh, you know it would be worth, uh, profitable and everything to continue that and enlarge. We would have to have acquired more land and more cattle and, you know, would have had to really, really worked at expanding that. And, uh, that would have been a preference. I think, my brother Mark, and myself, and my brother Kelly, definitely my brother Kelly, definitely my brother Mark, and probably me, would have preferred that. But, uh, at that point in time and for years prior to that, farm prices had been declining [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] relative

to the cost of machinery, uh, labor, all the other costs that go into running a business. And so as a result of that, fewer and fewer over the decades, well as you probably know, farms had increased in size, the farm size had grown and grown and grown and there were really very few family farms left. There were larger commercial farms [32:30] and, as a result of that, a smaller proportion of the population was farming or could afford to farm. And, that was our story as one of a very common one of that day.

Sarah Garza: Mmhmm. Have you noticed, um, what has been the most significant change in like the land, the vegetation besides of course the growth of buildings and stuff? Have you noticed maybe, um, a plant or something that was predominantly here, in the area but is not?

Neil Norquest: Oh yes. Of course, well when we were here, now these are not native plants but from an agriculture standpoint and just generally, the citrus groves when I was little, uh, they did not have the expressway you know that goes to Brownsville and all of that, none of that. And you could drive down to what is now old 83 all the way to, all the way from Mission to Brownsville. And most of the land was covered by, on both sides, was covered by citrus groves, at least in those areas. Now, ya know, in different areas they had different kinds of crops but all along there and particularly out, when you get out west of Mcallen in the Mission area and west of there. Um, there were just thousands and thousands of acres of citrus groves. And the freezes and population growth and things decimated all of that. Also there were a lot more palm trees back then. You see a lot of palms now, but back then, um, many, many country roads and a lot of the state roads, county roads and state highways were lined with palm trees. And a lot of those either froze or with the widening of the roads they had to be taken out. But there were several major freezes that also hurt a lot of the palm trees...so those two. Native brush land obviously has as the land has been cleared there's...the brush land has moved back from where it was. We used to have brush for example, uh, north of - you didn't have to go very far north of Monte Cristo. All that land that's north of Monte Cristo, not all of that was cleared and being farmed the way it is today.

Sarah Garza: Oh, ok. I see.

Neil Norquest: The brush was much closer in.

[10 second pause]

Sarah Garza: Was there mesquite on your property? Mesquite trees?

Neil Norquest: Uh, not on our property. On the property that was immediately adjacent to us, on the west side, there was 40 acres of mesquite trees there. It had been, um, my dad later farmed that and there might have been a point in time when it was being farmed. But for some reason it had been, uh, it had either re-grown or it may be that some of it had never been cleared, I'm not sure. But yes there was quite a bit right there.

Sarah Garza: Ok. Was there wild animals? I know you mentioned cattle, but was there, like, maybe coyotes?

Neil Norquest: Well yes, the mesquite that I just mentioned across the road had some, uh,

Sarah Garza: Coyotes...

Neil Norquest: Coyotes, uh huh. And we'd see the occasional, occasional Bobcat, things like that. But not, um, we didn't have any big animals. We didn't see deer for example [**Sarah Garza:** Oh, ok.] or anything like that. We were too far into the settled area for that. [36:41]

Sarah Garza: Mhmm. When you were younger how many, how often would you come into, like, the town or where the square is?

Neil Norquest: Right. Other than to go to school, we went to town probably about once a week.

[**Sarah Garza:** Ok.] Ya on Saturday my mom would go shopping, and when we were little she would take us along. Um, and that was usually considered a weekly, a weekly thing.

Sarah Garza: I think that concludes the questions I have. This is a map I have of the property. This is one of the maps they assigned from the class and I also...this was a little more clear. I did Google, a Google map

Neil Norquest: Sure.

Sarah Garza: of the address. And so, it was this one.

Neil Norquest: Mhmm [examining the map and agreeing]. It's this right here starting on - well, actually when my grandfather first came he had this, all of this [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and this here. And then he farmed, a neighbor or a friend of his from up in Kansas owned some of this land and my father farmed this, and my uncle farmed this, and my father farmed, well, came to farm, this and this. And, um, he was farming, my brother Kelly

can tell you, but maybe fifty percent of all of this. [38: 43] [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and then he had this down here, all this from the highway, excuse me, from this area down to Sprague, and then where Lee school is. He owned all of that. [**Sarah Garza:** Wow.] And where that - the South Texas High School, or whatever the BETA school is, there. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm the Beta school.] He owned all of that and he gave this property here to the church, to the Lutheran Church. And then this, he owned this, and then he farmed, um, on this side of Sugar Road, he farmed some of these pieces, I'm not sure which ones, I know for sure this piece here. And then coming over here he farmed, let's see, um, yeah he farmed most of this, and then going down this road there were some other things. And...so it was all various [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] pieces right in here.

[6 second pause]

Neil Norquest: Things were much more rural back then it's hard to put a definition to that term. It's just, just a... also old fashion I guess you would say. The old cars, you know they were. Everything was different.

[40:36]

Sarah Garza: Well in your lifetime you've witnessed the technology revolution, and what, I mean, what, which what would you prefer?

Neil Norquest: [laughs]

Sarah Garza: Or what would you say is better? 'Cause I've heard people say, ya know were, now a-days the families are not close knit

Neil Norquest: Mhmm. Mhmm.

Sarah Garza: and everyone's off doing their thing. I mean, what's your opinion?

Neil Norquest: Yeah. You know it's a, it'd be easy to be romantic and say it's, uh, you know, because I do enjoy history and having...you know, your childhood memories are always a lot brighter [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] or generally are. But I think it's a tradeoff. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] and there are certain things as we go along and as we've come along, that we get better, better medical care. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] You - we get, a lot of...things are better. Higher wages in general, [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] [41:34] More people enjoying more of the fruits of everything. But that comes at a price, and the price is some of the things you are talking about. The uh, the old cliché things like people didn't lock their doors, [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] people didn't lock their car doors, people didn't, you know you'd come up to the town here and you never were...I mean you would leave your car unattended with the windows down and the doors unlocked for, you know, all day, you didn't worry about that kind of stuff. And the same thing I remember, the first time I remember seeing a key to our house - it was one of those big skeleton keys that my dad found. We were going on a trip in 1958, and I was already 12 years old and I had never seen either of my parents lock a door in our house, front door or anything. I know that sound like a cliché, but there is elements of truth [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] in all of that. And it was a more relaxed time in many ways it was, you know,... and families were closer in some ways. Obviously the drug problems we did not have and things of that nature. Crime rates were I think less, I don't know for sure. I think they were, I don't know. Anyway but...those are tradeoffs.

Sarah Garza: Yeah. Well I'd like to thank you for taking the time to - I know you're extremely busy and taking the time to allow us to interview you.

Neil Norquest: Oh no, it's my pleasure. And, uh, I wish there were a way to convey impressions. [43:13] [

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.] Because I know that you, ya know, asked questions that you would like to try to develop responses to. But really, um, it's very difficult to convey in words memories and impressions. [**Sarah Garza:** Mhmm.] And, but anyway you've done a great job and thank you guys for your efforts to preserve history, which in this case happens to be something personal to me, but whatever it is it's a preservation.

Sarah Garza: Mhmm.

Neil Norquest: That, you know, as somebody who's always enjoyed history and understood that the more you get into it that the more complexities it has, I appreciate your, you know, developing and working at trying to get into the details of things and preserve all of that for people. Good luck with all of it and on your other projects as they come along as well.

Sarah Garza: Thank you. Thank you.

This transcription, approved and edited by Virginia Norquest, contains minor orthographical changes from the original transcription done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

This is the interview for CHAPS class that was done on October 28, 2011. The parts of the interview that were discussed or focus of the interview was on the plants, animals, garbage, human waste and architecture. The interview was conducted by Aaron Pena and Oscar Ysasi. The person interviewed was Virginia Norquest. The interview took place at a conference room at Neil Norquest's law firm.

Aaron: Let's go ahead and get this started. For the record uh, please state your name.

Virginia: Virginia Fankhauser Norquest.

Aaron: And your relation to Mr. Norquest?

Virginia: And I am married to Neil Norquest. We got married in 1972, we had I lived here in Edinburg from the time I was 4 years old until I went to high school here, and I met Neil in high school Edinburg high school. We both played in the orchestra. I played cello; he played violin. We dated until I went to the University of Texas at Austin for college. In 1967 I started as a freshman, 67, and I was there until I earned my Bachelor's and my Master's at UT Austin. And then we married in that summer of 1972 after I graduated and he graduated from law school that summer. We moved back here to the valley, and he began working in McAllen and I began teaching and I worked at UT Pan Am, well Pan American College at the time for a couple of years and then I taught in the McAllen school district.

Aaron: We thank you, this is rediscovering the Rio Grande and we are archiving the history and in particular the biology section of this area with your memories and your stories that you remember. So we have several questions here that we are going to ask. And try to remember what you can.

Aaron: What memories or stories of the Rio Grande being used for fishing or recreational use?

Virginia: Well, I do remember going to the river when I was in junior high or high school. Because a friend's family had a little lot, a river front lot down south of mission down south of Conway... around the Conway area where that meets the river, and they had a trailer like a mobile home out there and, we did go out there. I think we spent the night once and then we also sometimes would water ski...on the river, in a boat that they had there. That's really my only memory of using it for recreation at that time.

Aaron: Do you remember any stories of the river being used for food, to bring in for fishing?

Virginia: For fishing.... I know there were people that did go fishing in the river. My family wasn't really.... fishing wasn't something my father did so I wasn't really involved in that. I do remember going to Delta Lake. Also, for water skiing purposes....and Hargill Lake there were people fishing there.

Aaron: The canal system was built in the early 1900s, ah to, to transport the water for irrigation and what do you remember the canal system used for recreational use or fishing as well?

Virginia: Well I do remember people going to the canal and fishing, Sometimes as kids we would go down there and play. It was always kind of a wild and kind of a very interesting area to go somewhat forbidden, by one's parents because of it being dangerous but that of course that doesn't stop kids from going when they can. I remember playing there and collecting specimens of different kinds of animals in water and going back and looking in the little microscope and seeing what kind of microscopic things were swimming around in the water and collecting little toads and things like that.

Aaron: What types of foods were collected by your family for ah like natural plants or animals for medicinal purposes or for food?

Virginia: Well for food I think really only the only things you might consider, would be the, we had, we had tough little hot peppers, chili piquin bushes that would grow up and we would use have those sometimes. Let's see what else, what was the other thing,.....I know people did use the nopales for food, but my family didn't eat that. Although I know sometimes they were used for the cattle, when it was about dry times they would take

the thorns off the cattle, I mean thorns off the cactus and feed it to the cattle.

Aaron: You had mentioned earlier in passing ah that you all used to use aloe Vera?

Virginia: Yeah that's right. Yes aloe vera was I think the most common plant we deliberately grew the aloe Vera for to use it for like um... to use it for burns and skin problems. I know now they use it for all kinds of things, high blood pressure and, and I do remember some people would mix it in water, the aloe vera juice and drink it for different problems like high blood pressure or different maladies like that. I didn't ever do that personally, but I did use it as a skin, on the skin particularly for bad sunburns in the summer.

Aaron: Ok, do you remember any animal species or insects that you used to see back then, that that you do not see anymore?

Virginia: Right, Well I think, the thing I remember the most as a child were the horned toads that we had all over, and you know every time you went outside you were likely to see horned toads, and then I realized later when my own kids were young, in the 80's that there were not any around much anymore. I remember of course the cicadas where deafening. In the summers they were so loud even now they can be very loud, but I remember that there were a lot of those around. It seems to me that there was a lot more variety of butterflies and moths of all different colors and sizes, and there were other species of birds. I know one thing...ah... was when I was young, and it would have been in the 50's I think, that it seems like there were a lot more varieties of colorful birds, that were here in the valley throughout the year. Uh and then I, I think as the Grackles became more and more common, they kind of took over and drove them out, but we had beautiful blue birds that would come around, blue jays at our old house on Hollywood Drive. We had a chinaberry tree that had all kinds of berries on it. I think that it attracted a lot of birds at that time.

Aaron: So do you think the Urbanization of the valley has decreased the, population of the birds and..

Virginia: Yeah, I think so definitely. And the increase of the Grackle population, I think. That is what I've heard had a big effect on that. Ah, but even though I lived in town both of the places I lived growing up were right on the edge of town. So there were orchards behind and around the house you know, so we were, I was never right in the middle of the town.

Aaron: Let's go into the Sal del Rey, What memories or stories do you remember of the Sal de Rey being used for commercial use or, for personal use?

Virginia: Right, Well there is the story in the Norquest family ah in my husband's family, his mother, my mother in law, remembered as a young girl a teenager she, her father, came to McAllen in around 1915, and she would work, at his scale. He had a commercial scale, on old 83 somewhere around McColl Road and old 83 right along where the rail road is there now in McAllen, and she would help record the weights as wagons would come through. and Wagons of grain or corn I mean or corn or cotton, or whatever and apparently as a girl when as a young girl, there were still wagons coming through of huge salt Blocks that had been mined out of Sal del Rey. And they were being taken in these wagons, down into Mexico to sell the salt and so she would weigh sometimes she would record the weights on there, of those wagons. As a teenager or maybe I was younger than a teenager, but I remember going with my Girl Scout troop, north of Edinburg to a ranch and we camped, and we were having a camping outing up there. One of the things we did was to go on a little hike, and we did hike on to see Sal de Rey, but at that time it was private property. So, you it was readily accessible but we had gotten permission for us to hike in there and see it. And I just remember viewing it at that time and being amazed at the salty smell like at the beach.

Aaron: Um, Going to the Norquest ah property, Virginia. Were there nonnative trees planted on the property? Do you remember, Do you remember locations and?

Virginia: Well sure there most obvious one is the huge oak tree, that's was there on the west side of their house the old farm house, and which is, is supposed to be like the second largest around girth, girth wise of oak trees in Hidalgo county. It's a huge tree, beautiful tree. And the story is that, that tree was brought to Edinburg by Neil's father. He had purchased it or dug it up I think maybe in ah near Falfurrias. It's a live oak tree and brought it and planted it there outside the house and so I am not sure what year that was, but by the time I started dating Neil it was already a fairly large tree.

Aaron: Ah let's see, what ah did the community do to respond to flooding and water runoff during storms?

Virginia: Mm... Well the..ah.. Course drainage, water drainage, for Edinburg. Was a big problem. Um. And particularly where the Norquest property is there is a lower area than some other parts of Edinburg... Uh ..Edinburg downtown would always flood after big rains and especially um hurricanes of course and the water would flow north and west and across around the Norquest farm. And additionally water from McAllen flowed, flows north, and flows into that area north of UT Pan Am, so drainage is a big issue and especially after hurricane . Beulah .. During which time during hurricane Beulah the whole farm area was flooded very deep with water. Such that I mean the Norquest-- I wasn't here that fall that September of 1967 that flooded -- but um....they had to you know even after weeks they took a little boat, (laughter) down to where ah... 107 highway, 107 and Sugar road are right now. The county and all the cities had to get together, there in the 60's and 70's. They realized they needed a master drainage plan. And they went into quite a long process of expanding the floodway the drainage systems such that it would drain out into the arroyo. Up north of Hidalgo County. The cities had to negotiate you know, how they would get this water from one place to the other. There was a lot of work and planning that went into it. And then one of the other things was the holding pond that was built for Edinburg was built, right across Sugar Rd. from the Norquest property. The idea there was that water from downtown Edinburg could be pumped into that holding pond and held there until it could be taken father north along the drainage ditch the big drain that was over by that was over between Um Jackson and McColl road the big drain. . . .

Aaron: ok

Aaron: Ah what effect of the flooding, what effect did the flooding have on the land and, and uh particularly the Norquest property and , on the plants and the animals? What, what did they do with all these?

Virginia: Well one thing also to know about the Norquest property is that Neil's father Carroll Norquest Sr. was something of an engineer too. You know People would be all kinds of things right. And he installed tile drainage tiles under all that property. After he and his father had bought bought it and he moved here, there were a lot of salty areas because the water you know because the land, was not well drained. They still have a lot of that tile and drainage system that is under that property. But um the whole idea is that when you drain, when it is properly drained after a while even land that is salty will what they call sweeten up. You know And so he put in a major system of tile drainage under all that property. That was before that was many years ago, that was probably in the 30s or you know 20s or 30s that they started on that project.

Aaron: Going more into..ah.. Environmental impact. What do you remember of any heat waves or bad winters or freezes?

Virginia: Well I remember clearly you know, freezes that um froze out orchards, I had in fact two uncles, Glenn Fankhauser and Delmar Fankhauser, out west of mission who were in the, the orchard business so it was always very touch and go. Right (laughs) and ah I do clearly remember the really bad freezes of the 1980s that took out a lot of the citrus orchards that were existing at that time. Because you used to drive down country roads and there would be orchards on both sides you know, it was a large orchard area, grapefruit and orange orchards. After that time it was very noticeable that many of them were pushed out and most of them were not planted again. And the Norquest property itself had Neil's father planted a small orchard there south of the house. There is an area right now where there are some hackberry trees south of the farm house, and that area was an orchard on it but my understanding is that after he planted it, it was not there more than a few, few years because this severe freeze came along and wiped it out, and they, they did not replant it so.

Aaron: I see.

Virginia: And the drought there was a lot of drought. You probably need to talk with Neil or Kelly about the 50's. Drought was very hard on the farmer on, on their family and their ability to make any money out of the farming. Of course after the WWII there were some fairly good years for farming and cotton and so forth but then when they hit the drought in the 50's um it was very difficult to make a crop that made any money.

Aaron: Let See, What memories do you have? Ah, you had mentioned that ah you dated ah Neil?

Virginia: Ah ha.

Aaron: For a while before you were married. What are your first memories of him taking you to his family's property and what do you remember of the landscape. The city wasn't very much there yet and...?

Virginia: No, Sugar Rd. and Chapin Rd. were still dirt gravelly roads you know dirt roads, and I remember him taking me on a date one time which is kind of our family joke because we were going to a prom. I had this really pretty long white dress, and he came to pick me up for that date in the field car. Which was a (laughter) station wagon, an old Ford station wagon which was missing the rear window. The glass had been broken out. So the result of that of course was driving down a long dirt road with no rear window all the dust you know all the dirt just piled in the car. (sigh) So here he drove up and here I come up to get into the car in my white dress and he took out this old towel (laughter)and starts beating the dirt, you know off the seat(laughter)and like there was all this dirt flying everywhere and I was like mmhm ok (laughter). But I went anyway we went anyway so. It worked so but um yeah lots of dirt roads. The country dirt roads were where we all learned to drive as 12 year olds. I received my license at 13. In fact, Neil's brother Mark was a big kid and he drove at age 8 or 9. Received a ticket from an officer lying in wait along Sugar Rd one time. And then the ditches, you know along the road would always have water or high grass and weeds. I mean as a kid you were always going into ditches looking for tadpoles and you know all the frogs that were around and, always a wealth of wildlife. What was the question?(laughter)

Aaron: You have mentioned ah about, about the fajita you were telling us about the story you were talking about?

Virginia: Oh the fajita story

Aaron: Yeah ah mention a little bit about that.

Virginia: Yes, because I had a friend and there was a grocery store here in Edinburg called the Valley Store which was owned by the Trevino family Ruben and Rodolfo. There were two brothers ah Trevino's who lived here I can remember Rodolfo and Ruben I think Trevino and one of their kids was Eddie Trevino. He was around my age in school and had played orchestra with us. And after we married in 1972 we moved back here to Edinburg, and I would go to the Valley Store to shop and they had a nice meat section and, and some of the Trevino's were butchers. They did their own butchering there and sold the meat. And it was over on east University. Ah Across from that shopping center like a just a few blocks east of the courthouse square. And ah so in for some reason in 72, 73 ah there was a big spike in beef prices. And ah the cost of beef went way up. And so there was some creative butcher somewhere in the valley someone decided that these strip of the beef around the ribs called the faja the beef skirt in English you know. The faja or fajita was normally just ground into the hamburger because it wasn't considered worth that much. And somebody decided to take that strip off of the rib and start grilling it. Right? And so, any way one day I went in and I was looking for some meat and so my friend Eddie said well, have you tried these fajita? I said, "No, what is that?" you know and he said, well see its and they had taken a strip of fajita, kind of a long strip and they would wrap it like a pinwheel fajita and so that's why what he told me to do. He wrapped it he made a pinwheel and said, "Just put it on a fire, and BBQ it and it's great", and we did and of course it was delicious. And Um my understanding is really this area is where fajitas came from. Of course now you know some places they claim to have shrimp fajitas which is really impossible but fajitas now means any little piece of meat that's been grilled no matter what kind of meat.

Aaron: Let's see. Ah. I know you were considered a city girl?

Virginia: Yes

Aaron: Lived. Ah, inside the city limits and the Norquest property was, was outside the city limits a ranch area, do, do you know what you all did with you all's garbage compared to what Norquest did with their garbage?

Virginia: With their garbage.

Aaron: Where were you all's land fill

Virginia: My gosh. Edinburg landfill, the dump of course we called it the dump. At that time probably um. I am blanking out I thought it was over in the east side of Edinburg, but we had, you know, we had garbage service where I lived, because we were, we were, in town now they had to. Um I am not sure how they took care of their garbage. Out there I think they had to bury their own you know their own garbage. Had some area that was there uh for that. Ah You probably need to talk to Neil about that and see what they did. I am pretty sure that the city garbage dump was on the east side town but I can't remember now exactly where. Of course there were large areas where you would have people would develop unofficial dumps right which was always ah, ah

problem, and ah people would start dumping something on a certain cite and so others would follow suit. And pretty soon you would have ah dump going on there but ah , um because a lot of things were not taken care of you know not really allow a place where larger items it think to get rid of.

Aaron: Well that's ah pretty much actually I have one more we didn't really talk about this but going into the Rio Grande Wet backs, story, What type of effect did the illegal immigration have on this community? When dealing with trash, infectious diseases was that a problem when you were, when you were young?

Virginia: No, and of course I didn't grow up on the farm, but from my understanding the ah families that and usually they were extended families that would come return each year at the same time you know for the harvest or when the work was needed, and um they had um they would have a camp area that they would live in. and um You would have ask Neil or Kelly exactly where it was but I think it was somewhere to the west of the property of, of the Norquest property. And um But Neil remembers going, you know, out to visit or to talk with them, and of course they would have a fire, and he would always love eating the tortillas or what they were cooking, and they would offer him things to eat, and ah so um they had an area they lived and as far as diseases, I don't recall any problems about diseases really from at that time you know. Um and At least when I was growing up there were you know we didn't do things like drink water from the river or that kind of thing directly. We knew not to do that, but I think that's about it.

Aaron: What about colonias? Were there any colonias in Edinburg?

Virginia: Um well, There called colonias, yes there were, but no, I don't think you could consider what we call colonias in Edinburg you know, the colonias were something that was maybe located out, outside of the city. In the rural area where they would start a colonia or, or there would be somebody had gone and sold lots you know in an area without good water or sewer or whatever and Um that was a colonia you know those were colonias but. They were generally outside of the town.

Aaron: Well that is all I have **Oscar** do you have anything?

Oscar: Ah, Did, Did we go over the ah some of the animals like the migration patterns of the birds birds did you noticed or the ah butterfly's or dragonfly's at this time?

Virginia: That's right we didn't talk, the dragonflies toughs were seemed to me like there were a lot more dragonflies around. I remember swarms of dragonflies coming through the yard of course as a kid. In the, in the 50s you know there was no air-conditioning in the house there was really no T.V and so what you did was you played outside. The kids you know later my own kids they did not want to go outside when it was 100 degrees. When we were, when I was little when it was 100 degrees that was when you wanted to go outside (laughter) because it was more comfortable outside than it was in the house. And um that was interesting thing to architecture wise, you were asking me about that, the houses, had screen porches because of the heat, and also the house we lived at on Hollywood dr. had been built with a screen porch and um also it had a lot of open door such that it would catch the breeze going through the house, so the houses people were very conscious of having windows on the southeast and the northwest so that you can get the flow of air though your house to be comfortable.

Oscar: So at this time the house didn't have central air or any kind ?

Virginia: Well they by, The house I lived in on Hollywood St. did not have no there was no central air, now there was one window unit air-conditioning in my parents' bedroom but that was it and of course everyone wanted to sleep in my parents' bedroom. (Smiling)Uh but and I know from Neil's stories it was the same at their house. When they did get an air-conditioning unit it went in the parents' bedroom and that was it, so but no central air. And uh people stayed outside in the evenings, people used those screen porches to sit out on the evenings and things.

Oscar: Do you remember any like ah mosquito bites at the time?

Virginia: Oh yes mosquitos were all over the place yes, and one thing about mosquitos, You might be interested in environmentally, ah, in Edinburg they would go through with the ah big spray machines and they would come and fog the whole area, the whole neighborhood. And ah of course we thought that was great so we would be outside in the fog in the pesticide fog. Which probably was not very healthy. And ah, but ah you know after big rains or flood or hurricanes they would go around doing that in the city. I don't think they do that anymore.

Oscar: Last time I saw that happen was a few years back.

Virginia: I think they did some spraying overhead, when there was a lot of water, standing around yeah maybe Hurricane Dolly yeah, um to try to get rid of the um the larva, but these were really more than just getting rid of the larva it was just, just kind of fogging the whole area. Mm hm So.....which always helped, (laughing). Yes but there were a lot of mosquitos like I said, a lot of colorful birds, and lot of more colorful birds than you see, just even in town you know there would be a lot of them around.

Oscar: You also you remember that specific name for that frog we were talking about?

Virginia: Yeah bufo marinus.

Oscar: Wow.

Virginia: That is what I remember anyways and that is called bufo and that is that giant toad species, of toad and they had one at the Norquest home there that lived, it had a special hole under the sidewalk there. So I know when I first met Neil maybe after we were married I remember seeing that large toad at night if you were happen to going out there late at night you, you might run into him, him or her on the sidewalk, (laughing), and ah, but at some point it disappeared. And they had big snakes um we had for many years ah haven't seen it recent but he's seen them in the last few years but even as much as when was that, four or five years ago, we had a very large they there were some big holes out there that were large um black snakes ah not poisonous or harmful but in fact we had one and we were irrigating our yard there which is our house next to the old house and this snake I guess had gotten pushed out of its hole because of the irrigation water and it came up onto the back porch of our house. And um It was crawling along the back porch and I saw it and I went ahaha. (Laughing) so I got Neil and he started chasing it off and that snake, ah I remember very clearly because it got into the irrigation water and then took off swimming. It was very fast so I was glad I was not in the irrigation water at that time. Yeah

Oscar: You also said that as a kid ah you would go, you wouldn't do it for some, but people would go out to the canals and swim and fish and ah you know explore and stuff like that and ?

Virginia: Right Yeah canals were very an interesting area to go and explore there was a lot of brush especially in the bar ditch side on the side of the canal and they really didn't keep the canals mowed you know like they mow the grass along the canal there . There was like a just a track you know pickup or a car could drive on top of the canal, but it would be pretty weedy and grown up mostly around there and then there was a large pipe going across the bar ditch I remember right down the street from our house and so the kids in the neighborhood the big dare was you know to dare somebody to cross that pipe walk across it it was about a 15 or 20 foot drop down into the bar ditch it was a pretty large pipe and people would walk across it but nobody ever fell off(laughter) But um that was always you know kind of a mysterious spot. You know kids will find a mystery spot to go play.

Oscar: Oh ah, You had mentioned the freezes and hurricanes?

Virginia: The Hurricanes. I remember hurricanes, many of them Carla for some reason. was it think in 64 or something like. That was a major hurricane and there was lot of wind and rain. I remember standing at the window and watching the trees being whipped around and rain tremendous rain and, and lightning and all that. During Beulah Neil saw out there at the farm at the Norquest farm big probably what was a tornado came through near the area and um and the wind. He at one point they during Beulah that was in 67 and the wind was coming from the northwest and it blew in the windows upstairs on the house so there were just holes you know. And the water was coming in so he decided you know he had to go out to the barn to get some canvas and some boards to nail it down, and uh he remembers going out of the house, and he went out the south side of the house so the wind was blocked but then when he started trying running toward the barn, he said he just couldn't even breathe because the wind was so hard and blowing probably 100 miles an hour or something. He was trying to run and he couldn't get anywhere you know and it was kind of like the wind the air got sucked out of his lung. But he did finally eventually make it to the barn got some supplies and then went back in. And they nailed up some makeshift things just to try to keep the water from coming in. So they had major damage and ah, his dad loved to read, Carrol Norquest loved to read, He was always reading history and everything and he ah, had a lot of books that got wet and were destroyed so he had to ah, Neil remembers him shoveling a bunch of books and shoveling them and burning them you know after things dried up. But they were underwater for a long time now their house the old house the water in Beulah just came up to the bottom of the wood floor.

Cause it was a wood floor that whole house was built on, And it was just to the point where it might have come up thorough the floor boards. And it stopped right there so they had and it took weeks to get back for all of that water to go away. The cattle at that time all went to east end of the farm and ah, ah because the water was so deep around there.

Oscar: Now This was before they made that ah

Virginia: The holding pond,

Oscar: Yes the holding pond

Virginia: Mm hm Yah , Yah That was in 67 and so I think it was after that sometime in the 70s that or especially in Beulah I think that was one of the worst floods that they had that they started you know getting their master drainage plan for the county together. And started working and it took a long time to accomplish all that.

Oscar: Do you know kinda like the date that they established that pond?

Virginia: you know I can't remember I should know that I think that it would have been before the 90s it would have been in the 80s. Because we built our house in 89 and we moved in, in June of 89. And The pond was already there but it hadn't been that long but I would say early 80s. Because really the pond was a later part I think it was the city of Edinburg's you know drainage plan and, ah and so they put those pumps there the pumps were on the southeast corner of the drainage pond. And so they could pump the water from downtown Edinburg into that pond. And so they put a larger large drainage down sugar road when they widened that they put a much larger drain down the middle of the road. To, So they didn't have a large enough pipes it was kind of difficult situation because the pipe I can't tell you the exact size but the pipe that went into the drainage pond was much larger than the one going out of the drainage pond on the other side. (Laughing) and so it was a like a major bottleneck because you could not get water out of there as fast as it was coming in. so it didn't really I think they eventually corrected that, but ah It really never we saw water got up the sides of the pond but it never got in major rain, but I don't think we had as major as a flood after Beulah . To test it out as Beulah was yeah. And of course when you ever pave parking lots and stuff like that you're going to have more water than you had before because water runs off faster.

Oscar: You also mentioned the palm trees how there were dirt roads ah and lined up with palm trees?

Virginia: Yes that was I remember in the valley in the 50s and early 60s were all the dirt roads were lined with orange groves and grapefruit groves on each side and lined dirt roads with the lined with Washingtonian palm. I think the Washingtonian is that tall thin, skinny one. And they were beautiful I guess the land developer had planted those and it was very beautiful and you see old photos of those trees, and palm tree lined orchards and I saw them, and of course when they started paving the road they usually had to make it wider and it wound up taking out the palm trees. But a lot of people got killed with those palm trees too in cars because palm trees don't bend, I mean they don't break because they really are a grass the palm trees are a grass I guess its absorbent enough that if people run into them going very fast, It's not going to break down it's not going to give it smashes the car and the driver (laughter). There used to be a lot more roadrunners or chachalacas. I remember in the canal areas chachalacas were in around the towns and were a lot more common.

Aaron: I think they are now protected.

Virginia: Oh are they

Aaron: I remember try to shot them with my BB gun as a kid. My dad would tell me no can't do that you will go to jail.

Virginia: Right, They used to be a lot more common. All over and then a And now you mostly have to go to a bird refuge right, to see chachalacas,

Oscar: and what about the jack rabbits ah?

Virginia: Right, The jackrabbits have long ears right. I remember the short ear rabbits and in fact right now in our place, we have a lot of rabbits and it depends on how um you know much food there is around and everything. We have coyotes come to the place still yeah and ah, we had one come up right this last winter there from that drainage pond that developed its own ecosystem right. They have been pushing it right out of there, And we had coyotes show up try to come up and eat the dog food from the back porch. And depending how hungry they are they dogs were setting up a racket and everything and we went out and there was one out there,

so every so often they come out especially if it is very dry and they are running out of food. And We've had, had a chachalaka in that little brushy area between Neil's house and our house and the old house. Ah We had one in there for a while oh you know and the other animal is the tortoise.

Oscar : Oh yes We used to have a lot more of those

You could go out in the field like behind our house when I was growing up and you could find a tortoise, the land tortoises all over

Oscar: Tortoise I have seen one a long time ago.

Virginia: Tortoise and armadillos used to have more armadillos in the valley I don't know if you if we have them anymore

Oscar: I never seen I have never seen one out there.

Virginia: I remember seeing some armadillos, I mean you know you didn't see them all over but just every so often you would it was common to see one by the road or something. Mm hm So
(laughter)

Oscar: Well thank you so much for the interview. We appreciate it

Virginia: Ok

To conclude, the interview provided very useful information. The information gave a better insight into the conditions and events of the Valley and the events surrounding the Norquest farm and family in Edinburg throughout the years.

This transcription, approved and edited by Patrick Twist, contains minor orthographical changes from the original transcription done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

Interviewers: Maria Barrera, Lupe Flores, Juan Casas, Vanessa Saenz, and M.K. Slayton, the Techie from the Border Studies Archives

Interviewee: Patrick Twist

Interview Setting: Interview conducted in the home of Patrick Twist. The nearly 100-year-old house has been the home of his wife's paternal family, the Norquest, for all those years. The interview was conducted Friday October 29, 2011 at 5:30 pm.

Affiliation with interviewee: No prior affiliation prior to interview

Transcription Note: First hour of interview was not properly recorded. This transcript covers the last hour. It begins after Patrick Twist has given a tour of the property, the kitchen, living room and up stairs portion of the house. A few minutes of the conversation was held while the video camera was being set up. The conversation is regarding hiring process at local school districts.

Patrick Twist came into the Norquest family just 12 years ago, when he married Caroline Norquest, daughter of Carrol "Kelly" Norquest, Jr. However, the 42-year-old school teacher has made it an objective to internalize the history – the ins and outs – of the Norquest property, including the 98-year-old Sears and Roebuck kit-home he and his wife moved into almost four years ago. Patrick Twist and his wife are currently remaking the house, trying their best to preserve the way it looked in the past. We (Lupe F., Jose C., Vanessa S., and Maria B.) interviewed Patrick Twist at the home's location, Sugar and Chapin, on Oct. 28. It was a cool Friday evening. An informal interview about features in the area took place as we waited for the equipment to arrive. Once M.K. Slayton arrived, we continued, recording the informal interview as we went inside the home. The formal interview took place in the living room after we completed the tour. We were originally going to ask about the native plants and trees, but we came out with an incomplete, yet vivid and beautiful picture of the Norquest way of life more than 70 years ago.

[Video cuts to Patrick Twist explaining how a blacksmith tool in a shed works midsentence]

Patrick Twist: Go into the forge itself, we'd have a huge bed of coals, which that is built with right there [Patrick Twist points over from the shed to the outdoor house], that's where we made one so we can use out here, this [Patrick Twist directs everybody to an old wheel as an example of a drum], and blows air into the bottom, comes up, and you can weld things...

[Video cuts off]

[Video cuts back to Patrick Twist in front of wheel as example of blacksmith tool]

Patrick Twist: ...for hose for farm work out in the field, whatever you wanted to do, there you go... and the anvil, same thing, you just have them right there together and, you have the anvil right here next to the forge soon as it comes right out of the flame immediately put it on the anvil and start to work and you've got a very limited timeframe and you have to judge the steel by the color, by the color of how hot it, how hot it is, whether it's ready for welding, or ready, or whether it is ready for shaping, however you want it and the each part of the anvil is the specific, like the cone in the front is to curl things, to hammer and curl it, to bend it around like that, to curl in like this. And the flat part is generally for making things flatter. The round hole and the square hole are

called the pritchel holes and you put tools inside of that, which are in here, I keep moving around on you guys, I'm sorry.

[Patrick Twist leads everybody over back to the shed as video cuts off]

[Video begins with Patrick Twist holding two steel pieces]

Patrick Twist: So you have a piece of steel that you want to cut, you put this in the anvil, that piece right there fits in that slot, and you lay your steel on top of it, probably a bright yellow color, couple of good stiff whacks with a blacksmith's hammer [grabs a hammer nearby to demonstrate], and eventually the middle will begin to split [taps hammer onto a piece] and then you can break it in half, make shorter or longer pieces, and that you put into the anvil to lay things in and bend it and twist it for curls [demonstrates with u-shaped metal tool]. These are all the original pieces that go to the anvil itself, so these are well over a hundred years old, and there would have been different shapes for different projects that you would have on the farm or with the blacksmith itself. It's a wonderful piece of ancient technology that you don't have to have any electricity for whatsoever [puts hammer down]... at all. And... it's easy to turn. Want to try? [Demonstrates by turning a crank and watching it move on its own with little force]

Interviewer: Do I have to be on that side?

Patrick Twist: No, no, you just turn it right here. And it blows a lot of air very quickly.

[Video cuts off]

[Video cuts from Patrick Twist in the middle of talking about the barn midsentence]

Patrick Twist: come from the original barn itself, ahm, and it hasn't been touched since I guess the 1940s. Um, [pointing over at sheet iron siding on barn] they didn't call this, um aluminum siding; they referred to it as sheet iron, because it's very, very thick. This is, this is newer from about maybe the 1960s, 1950s that they put it in. But this stuff that's on top is original from the 1930s. It's never rusted through. I mean, the stuff is ridiculously strong because they give it a very, very heavy coating of galvanization to galvanize the metal. Wait, do you, saying stuff like this [leans over to rub a piece of metal in the barn with his hand] has it steel gray looking color to it, it's galvanized. Modern galvanization is real, real thin. A long time ago it was hot dipped galvanization; that's why this stuff is still here, decades and decades and decades later. Um, would any, ready for more?

[Everybody follows Patrick Twist as video cuts]

[Video cuts to Patrick Twist walking over to cast iron bathtub]

Patrick Twist: It's still usable, [placing hand inside tub] this is still the original porcelain coating; it still has the bear claw feet [holding hands out to demonstrate bear claw shape]. Um, this was what was upstairs and this thing weighs a ton; it's about that thick [holding up index finger and thumb on right hand to demonstrate thickness]. So it's cast iron, it's a true cast iron bathtub. [Walking away from bathtub] And, unfortunately you see a lot of businesses up north that'll take old cast iron bathtubs and turn them into planters for flowers and stuff like that, when a true cast iron bathtub today is, I don't know, twelve, thirteen hundred bucks, and they're using them for planters, so... [looking around] Um, but what else-

[Video cuts]

[Video cuts to Patrick Twist midsentence standing near a water trough of tree branches, pointing at it]

Patrick Twist: the fence, this also, 1940s... this [laughs] is a water trough for the mules and the cattle. The thing is, though, is that the ribs [rubbing hand down the ribs on the side of water trough] are from the sheet iron that was used to make the water tower for the house, because they had no running water and they had no, uh, water pressure, so you had to have your own water pressure system, so, more or less where that big mesquite tree is right there-

Interviewer: In front of the house, directly right in front of it was a

[rest is unintelligible due to background noise and wind]

Patrick Twist: -the teens if you wanted to buy one of those potential houses, well, there was no such thing as Edinburg Water Supply or Sharyland Water Supply, it was... you! So you filled it with water, it was on a tower, and that would provide the water pressure for the rest of your entire house. So the water would go into the top and then feed into the rest of the bottom of the house to create pressure for your sinks, your bathtubs, and your flushable toilets.

Interviewer: Was there ever an outhouse on this property, or was, or did they already have the indoor plumbing here?

Patrick Twist: Um, they had indoor plumbing at that time. So they had a septic system, they had a septic tank, and a grease trap.

Interviewer: And when did they stop using all of that?

Patrick Twist: When did they stop using all of that? Oh, [4 second pause] it's gonna have to be, probably around the nineteen... fifties, I would say is when Edinburg Water Supply probably finally came through. We don't live very far away from the center of town, but again, as the city grew, its boundaries grew with it. And then, of course, there's what they refer to as annexation: you get it whether you like it or not. [laughing] Not very fun sometimes-

[Video cuts midsentence]

[Video cuts to Patrick Twist standing near a fence and pointing over at a nearby house]

Patrick Twist: Immigrants would come here, and they'd have a sponsor family, and this little teeny house was built to sponsor that house right there [pointing at house] which was [noise distortion due to wind] the Temp-lins, and that's how it earned its name as the Templins. So the very first inhabitants was this pretty big family of Germans that were living in this really tiny house, and in fact, their son was my math teacher. And I didn't know this until I married my wife Carolyn, she said... 'You, you ever live in a Templin house?' And I was kinda, it's... it's the same last name as my [groans] math teacher that I didn't like! [Laughing amongst Interviewers at his reaction] He was really, really super strict and I couldn't figure out why until they finally told me [this sounds like what he said] the story of why he was the way he was, and that's at the old... the administration building for Edinburg School District, was my middle school. So, you know, it's kind of weird to go in there now, it was gutted and everything like that, to see it the way it is, but, um... They were living here and the really strange thing is they were, I wouldn't say shell shocked, but they were very weary of anybody who would come to the house. Somebody would knock on the door, they'd see somebody coming up the sidewalk, you could hear the [shuffles hands to demonstrate curtains pulled off camera] from within the house. And the kids, the mom, they would scurry off and they would leave dad to handle whatever thing happened at the door. They were still living like they were in East Germany, I mean East Berlin. So eventually, they had these [unintelligible due to wind noise]. I had a visit from two of the oldest sons that came down. Real, still, as long as they've been living here, they're both United States citizens, thick German accents. And it was strange, and they're like 'Oh, I remember this,' and they're walking all over the place pointing at everything, how it used to be for them. That's another group we should talk about: people that emigrated to escape political reform that was happening in their country.

Interviewer: What's your name?

Patrick Twist: Hm?

Interviewer: What's your name?

Interviewer: Templin.

Patrick Twist: Patrick.

Patrick Twist: Me or them?

Interviewer: No, them. Sorry.

Patrick Twist: Them: Templin. T-E-M-P-L-I-N... Templin.

Interviewer: Nice, so I can tell them about it.

Interviewer: When did they stop associ- um, when did they leave the house, or when did they, you know, besides, um, what do you call that?

Patrick Twist: Oh, goodness. Um, maybe [short pause] somewhere in the 1950s or 60s. I know but one of the sons [short pause] went to Vietnam, old enough to go, so that might give you a front- a timeframe for the period, and he came back all [short pause] really messed up. Um, drug use, combat, in fact, he was when- when he came to visit, he's still kind of, kind of spacey out there, this just kinda weird, and I already knew about him, so they're like "Don't worry, he's okay", so it's alright. I really wish I could give you a time period: Kelly can. He's got all that written down; he's got a huge archives, and some of it is upstairs. Okay, um...

Interviewer: Do you have any archives of the 1930s or 1940s?

Patrick Twist: We do, it's upstairs.

Interviewer: Really?

Patrick Twist: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. Because we're actually doing, uh, part of this project is about, um, the 1930s and 40s, so if you just look at them, maybe another day?

Patrick Twist: There's all kinds of receipts and stuff like that from when the farm was active. The cattle and harvest and everything, there's just, it's ridiculous the number of receipts that they've got. Let's head in that direction [pointing away from the Templin house].

Interviewer: Okay, that's fine.

[Video cuts]

[Video cuts to Patrick Twist walking over to soft dirt and moving it with his shoe]

Patrick Twist: Look here. This is powder. It's not because it's just dust, it's because this was the way the land was when Kelly's dad bought it. The land has a very high mineral content, so they had to literally siphon off all of the heavy minerals in the soil so they could turn it into usable agricultural farmland. So, uh, Kelly's father, along with several farmhands, dug, I think it's a six- four and a half to six foot deep [holding hands to give idea of size] ditches crisscrossing in a grid network all across this huge 30-acre block, all the way around, and then put in, um, [momentary pause] it's like a potted pipe, we've got pieces of it around here somewhere where... The water, when it would drain, it would go into those, those pipes and it would collect that brackish salty water and it would run off into the drainage ditches so they could turn it into arable farm land, so they could use it. So when they first got it, it wasn't that great; you could only grow certain things on it, and Kelly's father wanted to go beyond that. So [glancing back at the powder dirt at his feet] this is the way the land would look if he had not done that. So, this is the catalogs, or what used to be the catalogs. Um, come this way-

[Video cuts]

[Video cuts in to Patrick Twist standing in field with his arm extended with a thumb up and talking midsentence]

Patrick Twist: torch, and you burn all the needles off of the cactus so that cattle could come and eat it, because sometimes, your, I mean, down here it's not that great, sometimes as far as the weather's concerned, so they don't have the best eating material. So another thing was moisture. They had to have some source of water. The only problem is constantly doing that, eh, eating cactus and cactus pears and stuff like that, gives cattle essentially the runs, or diarrhea. So it was a stop gap that you would use every once in a while, so burning pear was very common. In fact, the pear burner is still up in the top of the barn. It's still there. I mean most people use them today to burn weeds and stuff from the yard, but their original use was to feed your cattle, to get rid of the thorns so that they could eat cactus. Um. Okay, this way, we've got...

[Only the sound of grass is heard as everybody follows Patrick Twist]

Patrick Twist: [Off camera] ...supply of water pressure for the house stood here, originally.

[Video cuts]

[Video cuts just a moment after Patrick Twist is asked a question]

Patrick Twist: [Laughing lightly] So you're gonna drive a nail in it, you need a very heavy hammer, and a lot of patience, because your nails are gonna [moves hands to demonstrate] just bend. Because it's double-walled for the whole house, again the structure was built to support snowfall. Then they, then there, it wasn't built for a quick, fast, easy deal; things were built to last a long time ago. They, eventually, dismantled the water tank that was there, and-

[Video cuts]

[Video cuts to Patrick Twist standing in front of a wall on the side of the house]

Patrick Twist: house, so he moved it closer. They need a lot more space for moving mules and everything like that back and forth. And of course, [turning to his right] they built their homemade swimming pool.

Interviewer: I was gonna ask 'What is that?'

Patrick Twist: Yeah, it's a homemade swimming pool. We filled it in just this past summer, [walks over to the swimming pool] and... I mean I could get, get down on the inside of it and it was ten feet deep, and it slowly

went back up like that. They got a lot of family photographs when they would use it, because to beat the heat, literally, and free water, so, just pumped it right out of the cistern and over here.

Interviewer: How old is it?

Patrick Twist: Um, they built this, I think in the 1950s, late 1950s. [Momentary pause] And they used it a lot. There's tons and tons and tons and tons of pictures, but we had to fill it in because, essentially, the ground around here, when they put in those casings that I mentioned to drain the soil to make it better for farmland. Those casings collapsed and it started to cause little potholes, sinkholes to creep up every now and then, and it started to erode [moves hand under corner to show eroded area of pool] underneath. So we had to fill it in to keep it from eroding away the land even more. Eventually, the water pressure system was gotten rid of for the house that was there [pointing past the house], and... they kept the windmill and moved the cistern over here. [Patrick Twist leads everybody over to the cistern]

Patrick Twist: Essentially they took it and put it right here [pointing down at the concrete on ground]. To be, step over this way, [moves with everybody on top of the cistern] you're now standing on top of a massive pit underneath your feet. Spooky, ain't it? [Laughs]

Interviewer: Really?

Patrick Twist: Yes, yes. This, this became the water cistern supply for the house, so they moved it from above ground to two different locations from the windmill to underneath, and that [pointing at cistern entrance on ground and lifting it open].

Interviewer: Oh my God.

Patrick Twist: Yeh.

Interviewer: Oh my God. It's so...

Patrick Twist: Relax, don't worry, you're safe.

Interviewers: Wow.

Patrick Twist: So this would be filled with water [pointing at nearby pipe], and that pipe right there, they'd pump the water in through that down into here, to fill this up [holding hand up flat]. And it goes all the way back over there [pointing away], so wherever you see concrete is where the water cistern was at. And the huge, there's a huge central support filler [pauses while pointing inside cistern at angle] support top part of it.

Interviewer: Joe, you want to move over here so you can see?

[Camera moves over as Patrick Twist continues talking]

Patrick Twist: And they would fill it with, uh, right there, that's a little tiny irrigation head. They'd open that, and water from the rear brand would supplement water from the cistern, so they, I mean back then the water was clean, it was- you could drink it. Of course, they would try to filter it. The thing is though, is how do you filter thousands and thousands of gallons of water [closing the lid to the cistern] on a self-subsisting farm? So you'd build this square that you see right here [pointing down at a slab on the ground], this outline. It's about that tall [holding hand forward at chest level]. Was an experimental sand filter. Run water through the top, goes through the sand, and eventually becomes cleaner and cleaner and cleaner, so now you can turn it into palatable drinking water. So this outline used to be a massive sand filter filled with sand and gravel to clean out all the particles and particulates of the water. So, a long time ago, you literally lived off the land. Um, swing set [pointing at swing set off screen], if I remember correctly, that came with the family when they came down from, good God, was it Kansas?

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: It is over a hundred years, the metal. I know it is a little unbelievable but,

Interviewer: Built to last.

Patrick Twist: ...it's built to last. Remember I mentioned the galvanization that they used is really really thick that's what this is, you don't. It's got like wrinkles in it that its so thick. [you guys use it], yeah [laugh] its uncomfortable [laugh]. Its covered with bird poop, so but anyway this, this is a hundred years old, all the framework is a hundred years old, except for the wood of course. Um, now did Kelly mention the tree? [your wife did] Ok, the...

[Video cuts]

Mr. Twist: So the tree hit the water table.

Interviewer: Was there an exact date of when they planted it?

Patrick Twist: Um, I want to say it was in the 1929 or something it's not very old. It is actually younger than the tree that has the plaque in front of the interschool district administration building. There's a tree that was planted there for Harbor Day but that way back in the 1927 when you read the plaque. It's a huge tree it's like this but this has a larger trunk, so, it's just another, the biggest tree.

Um oh, and the roofline, the roofline comes down if it continued out to about here more or less is where that massive front porch used to be. That went the whole length of the house just sad I really wish the porch was still here [laughs]. But for practicality purposes you had to do what you had to do back then. [Was there a tree here too or] No there was no tree, I mean, when you see the picture, you're like, oh my God, yes, get rid of the porch. But, you would think that it would shade the home but it didn't, it just captured the light and heat. Um all the electrical lines all the water lines are all on the outside of the house it looks atrocious [laughs] I agree, all these snaking lines that you see, you can come around this way.

[Video cuts]

Mr. Twist: The waterlines that you see, they supply water to the upstairs bathroom. The venting system for the sewage system the electric lines that feed all the way around the house. It has to be like that there's no again there's no way to chip away at the sheetrock and install electrical lines there is no such thing as sheetrock [laughs]. Its wood this thick on both sides and real 2 inch by 4 inch 2 by 4 are massive chunks of wood that are the whole frame of the house. That's why it survived every single hurricane since 1913.

Interviewer: Is there any kind of insulation?

Patrick Twist: Um, on the inner walls no ma'am um none. So, yes, you go inside and it feels like this outside and it's like this inside and it's very chilly. The interesting thing is though is that since the wood is so thick we will have warmth, warmth after the northern winter blows through for two or three days it will stay in the 70's on the inside of the house, and it slowly the temperature will begin to drop. But then oh my gosh it's hot again and it's like yuck [makes a face] it's muggy and everything but it's 60 degrees in there for three days [Oh wow] [laughs] so you get like ah it's like air-conditioning and it's the weirdest sensation; I still can get used to that. It still freaks me out like the house is going to be flaming hot in there and no it's like actually really nice inside the house like you got central air-conditioning and central heat but it eventually it equalizes itself.

Interviewer: Without paying for it [laugh]

Patrick Twist: No. Without having to pay for any of that; its nice, mother nature does its job, um.

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: This is aluminum siding and I can't remember the dates they had this installed I want to say it was the 1960's and underneath that then we finally get the insulation but it's this thin, um polystyrene fiber board whatever you want to call it that is underneath this. But then directly underneath that is clapboard wood like this up the entire side of the house. Um, this is a style of clay pipe that is out there in the field that they used to drain the land of all the heavy salts and minerals to make the land arable so it's farmable so it's useable. This is, that's that piece right there um, let's see (mumbles what else was I going to tell ya) um shall we go in?

Interviewer: Mmmhmm.

Patrick Twist: Let's go...

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: I know it's nothing but a brick these are the bricks that were used, this style [places brick on the pool] this style [places brick on the pool] this style [places brick on the pool] that's from Mexico [places brick on the pool] this style. Kelly has relatives from that time period 1920's, 30's, and 40's that had a brick company out close to Mission, Texas if I remember correctly or actually close to Sharyland in fact, and this style of brick is what was used to build the ways and means of the water system for McAllen.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Patrick Twist: There is a picture of it over at the Edinburg Historical Musuem [South Texas Historical Musuem] and you go inside and there is this massive round cylinder, it was all lined with bricks. Kelly's family remembers when they made the bricks and this is a brick from that time period. So I mean the place is littered

with them so Kelly's family can get them rather inexpensively and it helped have family members have their own brick factory back then but um let's head inside lets head inside. Oh um we have two Chihuahuas and they are very loud.

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: Sportships, silverware, coffee pots, plates [dog barking] you name it, it ended up on the surplus market. Farmers took advantage of it families took advantage of it so this [tapping on the countertop] came from some ship somewhere. Don't know what it was or where it was but it's a stainless steel. I mean everything [dog barks] again, it's been here since you know creation [dog barks]. It still has lead suldrain on it from that time period when they put it inside the house. We still have some United States Navy silverware and serving um serving sets up at the top of the barn USN on it is punched [punches his hands] onto the spoons. Um, and Kelly's father would use all of that for the farmhands they'd come to work they'd bring their food and they were well ok we're going to go ahead and cook something so they'd end up using um all the surplus silverware and plates and they just used that it was stainless steel so it would never rust. So they, again, they took advantage of whatever and you see really old houses they had original paint in it. It's an odd colored paint and you're like why would they want that paint it's all surplus from World War II. If houses are still standing and have the paint um inside of it generally it's going to be surplus or that was all that they could get. Ok, um let's see um the living room um original 1913 wood floors um and let's see if we can get light in here to make it a little bit brighter. Underneath the rug, you see that old outline?

Interviewer: Yes.

Patrick Twist: Ok, that old outline was from the rugs that were in here from the 1930's and we lucked out we didn't plan it we just lucked out in finding rugs that matched the same size. So the coloration difference is the original rugs that were in here from the time period so I know it's not perfect but we're trying to get it back to the same look from the time period. So you had wood floors with rugs you didn't have carpeting it was too expensive. So you just used area [dog barks] rugs and from here to here was a huge rug that was in the room. Gigantic even bigger one and then you can tell and from here to there and then right here is where um Kelly's dad went ahead [laughs] went around the room with just enough varnish that they could get because this was back you know when they didn't have a lot. So they would varnish just what they could and then they lay the rug [barks] on that so it would look...

Interviewer: [Laughs].

Patrick Twist: ...oh its varnished all the way around. No it wasn't [laughs].

Interviewer: [Laughs].

Patrick Twist: Um this the real blond colored stripe that's here was worn down from the backings of the rug. So old rugs were really really really stiff again the made to last type attitude for decades. Unfortunately, the backs of rugs would polish down the wood so the rugs would sweep and move a lot [dog barks]. So essentially the old idea of slipping on the rug comes from the back of the rug would polish the back of the wood. Um, it's all tongue and groove it's not just um the bark and lumber together. So there is a tongue and then the groove and it's laid all the way across. Um still the original nail everything we've never touched it. All we did was take boiled linseed oil and old t-shirts and a mop and go at it to revitalize the wood it was very white, lightish in color to get it, bring it back to where it was. Uh, let's see...um, the original...

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: And you can come on in. This is the music room and the family would play on, uh Carroline's grandmother played the organ, and played the organ for church and so on and so forth. The same thing the same idea that was in there was in here for the floor with the, you see the black striped outline. Um, where were these French doors? They weren't here originally, they were somewhere else, over on another part of the house. But, I can't remember where they came from. Um, the ceiling tiles that's what I was trying to remember. Long before our time including mine a really really really bad hurricane came through and that hole [point to a hole in the ceiling] that you see right there. You see where the ceiling tiles have nails in them?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: Well a massive hurricane brought, caused a leak upstairs and flood its way through and Kelly took a pencil [laughs] and poked right there [points at the hole] and it just poured water [girl laughs]. So it was stuck up because all those tiles you see tacked back up were bowing down, holding all this water in the sub flooring of the house so it just, it just poured [making splashing noises] right there. So buckets and buckets and buckets and buckets later they had to take everything out. Um, let's see what else?

Interviewer: Mrs. Twist had said that there was chimneys [Patrick Twist: yeah] before, where were those located?

Mr. Twist: Yes, thank you, you're reminding me of things I'm forgetting. There was a fireplace that was right here imagine the TV is now a magical fireplace, it was here and it went up the side of the house. And there was a door here that went out and there was a small little side porch just on the outside of this window. So you can come in this way and come into the house right here and there was the fireplace. Um, now you have to remember that the construction of the house was changed around because of the heat issue. There was no air conditioning, it was open the windows and hopefully the fan would blow enough cool air to keep you comfortable, which didn't last very long.

Interviewer: [Mumbles something].

Patrick Twist: Huh?

Interviewer: I put those folders there with the pictures.

Patrick Twist: Oh, ok thanks. Let me move that out of the way.

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: They were first told. Your farm would be absorbed or taken over by the county or the state and then it was auctioned off for backed taxes or whatever or to pay your debts. Um, they had water. It was ridiculous. it stood for two weeks! Two and a half weeks almost out there, knee-deep. You couldn't walk outside and it was there for days and days. The mosquitoes were horrible and it was really, really bad. Um, Kelly's family was fine because they didn't have, this was not, this plot of land was not the only piece of land that they used. Where Panam sits [chuckles]. That was our family's land. Across the road where what's that school system?

Interviewer: Beta.

Patrick Twist: Beta campus.

Interviewer: Yes.

Patrick Twist: We farmed that too. So essentially going straight back like that. I mean you have land that you can tell changes its elevations. So they had farmland that wasn't buried underneath water. Um, we found, I found a grinding stone for a mocajete that was uncovered from the rainfall. It's about that long but it doesn't look anything like and I can't remember the name of the professor that came out here to look at it.

M.K. Slayton: Skowroneck.

Patrick Twist: Yes.

Interviewer: Um.

Patrick Twist: Came out and looked at it and he saw it and he's like "what's up with this" and I said "Well I don't understand. What do you mean?" He said, "Where did you find it?" So we went and showed him, he wrote it all down. And it's not it doesn't go in a perfect like a spike or anything like that. It's flat-sided for some reason, when generally they're round and smooth with a round, large bulge at the bottom. This one is bulged and then has flat sides on it. So he said that was kind of different. And Kelly's family, he's got a box of arrow heads and spear heads from the land as they would farm. When you'd have mules, you're looking at the soil, and there up comes a spearhead or a spear tip, up comes another arrowhead so we showed them all to.

Interviewer: Skowrowneck.

Patrick Twist: Skowroneck.

M.K. Slayton: Yeah. It's a hard last name; Everyone has trouble with it [laughs].

Patrick Twist: Skownek. Did I say it right? And he looked at everything and of course, you could see flags going off and his wheels turning really, really quick. And then hence that's why you're here. [laughs] Because he was like "ok I got to talk to you people!" I said okay! Um, this is the original layout of the house. Um, the stairwell, that is through those tiny double doors, and we'll go up through in just the minute. It faced the oppo-

site direction, and the tools that were used, the block and tackle, I brought them from the barn, I put it upstairs, and you can take a look at it and see how they picked up a staircase and pivoted it around, because even to me, Kelly finally... his memory clicked; he's like, okay, it's the block and tackle, it's in the barn, this is what they did. I was like, OK. And this is what we were talking about just a minute ago. This is the water system for the house. There's the water tower, but if you look, there is the cylinder feeding water supply to the house [pointing out old pictures]. The windmills back over here somewhere. So it would feed...this was your water system that it would bring it into the home. And what's the date? Nah that's twenty-eleven, nineteen twenty-nine is the date I think that is going to be the date right there. And same thing with this one. this one is just a different color so you can see the differences in it. Here is another one. Ok...west...ok original barn! West view of the old barn, um, circa nineteen forty-one. So, right out that way. Right in front of the yard where the cars were parked was the old barn. "South west view current machine shed." Because its barn/machine shed technology brought with it a change in terminology [interviewer laughs]. So and you can see behind that where all the apartments are right now that's nothing that was open, open farmland as far as you can look. Um, so all of the construction from this [points at the picture of the barn] all the wood that was used here all this sheet iron that we took a look at is what made this. Uh, there is forty-six. There's forty-seven. West view of the old barn. There's their nineteen thirty-eight Chevy [laughs]. Nineteen forty-two, nineteen forty-six so, um, three, four, five, six, four year time period it went from this to this. But this...I'm not sure when the original barn was actually built. Whether it came with the house or not. I'm pretty sure that the, um, land development company more than likely just had the house. The barn was kind of "you're on your own for as far as that's concerned." Let's see that is a color picture the same thing we were looking at. I hope this is helpful?

Interviewer: Yes.

Patrick Twist: Ok. I hope it is I hope I'm not, like, distracting you. Alright! Picture album! The Fox Company! This should give you an idea on how old these things are.

Interviewer: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: Um...Uncle Rikky. He was a pilot. He was part of, oh what was it called? SATCOM? COM-SAT? (Strategic Air Command, SAC)Whatever it was they flew...his base was in Mountain Home Air Force Base...take off from Idaho, go across the Arctic, and patrol the border between us and Russia and-

Interviewer: Oh.

Patrick Twist: Then fly back that is pre ICBM. Pre intercontinental ballistic missiles technology. So in the back of his airplane - he was a wing commander - on the back of his bomber was a nuclear warhead. Stress!

M.K. Slayton: Wow.

Jose Casas: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: Stress. So he's a real hoot to talk to. Um, so he decided one day of his fun flights he decided to take a picture of the farm-

Jose Casas: Oh wow.

Patrick Twist: from up above. So this gives you an idea of - this is before Edinburg grew-

M.K. Slayton: Oh.

Patrick Twist: There is the house right there. And that's the orchard. It was growing outside the house from one of the original pictures we got upstairs. the orchard was still here in fact. It should give you a pretty good idea, if you can focus in on that. And that's looking from the south to the north, like coming in at an angle like that. Um, let's see what else? I guess Kelly's got these...yeah that's pretty much the same thing and that's a different home further down the road in fact... Ah, sorry. I'm going through memory lane in front of you. Um, not long after this is 1947 here-

M.K. Slayton: Can we pass it around?

Patrick Twist: You can take a look at it and here is the home -

M.K. Slayton: Wow!

Patrick Twist: Before the massive porch was chopped off its right there -

M.K. Slayton: Oh yeah.

Patrick Twist: So those three top windows that's not there anymore. So you have that massive front porch and

there's that orange grove that you what picture is this one time orange grove 1945 um-

Vanessa Saenz: When was that...when was the last citrus tree?

Patrick Twist: Hmm?

Vanessa Saenz: Because that would have been where the road is right? Or...

Patrick Twist: Exactly yeah. So where you're looking at across like that, Sugar wasn't there yet. No! Well it was, but it was dirt.

Vanessa Saenz: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: Remember the construction that was going on forever on Sugar Road?

Maria Barrera: Yes.

Patrick Twist: And they were ripping off all that concrete? That concrete was the original from the 1920s. That was the paved road that you had the clonkidy, clonkidy, clonkidy.

Maria Barrera: That's why it took forever to fix?

Patrick Twist: That's why. Because it was so thick. Back then it was, I mean, that's why it lasted for so long. Back then they didn't use asphalt, they used concrete. You go to Louisiana, Oklahoma and they have highways like that all over the place clunkidy, clunkidy, clunkidy.

Vanessa Saenz: Is there still orange trees on the property or are they-

Patrick Twist: No they're long gone. 1983 was the big wipeout freeze for the Rio Grande Valley. Um, essentially a lot of farmers took it real hard and unfortunately, um, simply because of the way the federal government has the system set up, a lot of them didn't have enough crop insurance or protective insurance to replant and restart their orchard businesses. Unfortunately it takes an orchard tree twelve years maybe to finally reach - or a little bit less than that to reach the maturity age to go ahead and produce fruit enough to provide money. Enough to pay for itself and it takes a lot.

Vanessa Saenz: And there was that freeze in '89.

Patrick Twist: Exactly. Exactly. So it was multiple successions of freezes that caused the citrus industry in the valley to kind of go downhill. At one time before that we were the king of citrus production for the United States.

Maria Barrera: Wow.

Patrick Twist: The Florida orange juice "drink it is good for you" - they took that in 1984 was when that campaign took off because they knew our citrus industry was wiped out.

Vanessa Saenz: Was that much part of the property or were they just...that wasn't...

Patrick Twist: No they had it. It was in one of the pictures here-

Vanessa Saenz: Yes.

Patrick Twist: It was these right there. There's the orchard right after right next to it...in fact the picture from the nineteen, 1925 there is the orchard planted next to the house. Very, very - and the trees are spaced very far apart. Orchard, or I guess you can say grove technology, back then it hadn't matured enough. Hybridization of trees, where they could push them closer together to maximize production, hadn't taken off all that yet. All that much yet. That's why you have like right down the street on Chapin going this way is the Rio Grande Citrus Association.

Interviewer: Mhmm.

Patrick Twist: So you go into that office and even then, that's another place you can go talk to. How far do your records go back? Or who was on your roll of citrus producers for the Valley? that's another thing. Um, let's see. I'm trying to think is there anything else here...Oh! Here you go. There's the diamond window. I wish these were still here. darn. Two windows they're covered up now-

M.K. Slayton: Oh yeah.

Patrick Twist: Hurricane blew them in. That's that - ha! The shower from the roof that you get, they were all blown in. Lots of leaks. I mean you have to understand the home was built for a certain area of the United States and not heavy rainfall and stuff like that. Hurricane seasons, and stuff like that. And unfortunately at one time... where is that picture at? Oh there's one! There's a real good one! There's the front porch-

Vanessa Saenz: Wow that was beautiful.

Maria Barrera: Wow. very southern [giggles].

Patrick Twist: Yeah, yeah. Exactly, exactly. It makes my heart break “grandpa why?” But he didn’t know. I mean, um, what was I thinking of. I mean can you imagine driving around in the countryside and seeing this place abandoned. ‘Cause this home was abandoned for a long time. And it was being used for, of all things, a corn crib. to store dry corn in for farm animals.

M.K. Slayton: Oh wow.

Patrick Twist: The whole house

Vanessa Saenz: ... (Unintelligible).

Maria Barrera: Wow.

Patrick Twist: So where we’re standing right now we would be buried in corn-

Jose Casas: (Laughs)

Maria Barrera: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: Because they would open the front door and they’d take out their dried corn and take it for the farm animals. And it was - the home and the land was owned by a separate family and essentially it kinda like a trade deal between the families. One was leaving to go back up north and one was coming down here. Um, so they would use it as a corn crib. And they’re like well there’s a house down there you can go ahead and use that. And they show up and ok...But they kinda knew ahead of time to begin with. And so, home was abandoned and eventually they re did it.

Vanessa Saenz: What year was that?

Patrick Twist: Oh this is going to be 1920’s I think, if I remember correctly.

Vanessa Saenz: Ok.

Patrick Twist: 1920’s - somewhere in that time period um

Vanessa Saenz: And then they came when? Or that...

Patrick Twist: When they traded places? Probably 1930’s. Very late 1925, very early 1930’s if I remember correctly. And imagine this whole room cleared out. No furniture. And they’d have dances in here.

M.K. Slayton: Oh.

Patrick Twist: So families would all come and there would be a fiddle and piano or I wouldn’t say an orchestra but maybe a quartet of some kind. Somebody playing music of something. And the floor was still the same floor, that’s why the floor is so smooth. Hard heel shoes with sand and whatever else that was tossed that allowed people to slip and slide. And when you walked in here, you felt that – you’re kinda going like this. If you...you can see the hump right there. There’s like this central ridge from whats coming up from underneath the floor. It’s actually not because the home is settled and it’s been here for...Right here where were standing it’s like woo! There’s the high point. And you can feel it right there. And underneath the house if you don’t mind getting dirty you can come back and wear overalls and dirty t-shirts and everything and crawl underneath the home-

All: (Laugh)

Patrick Twist: No I’m kidding. There is a...there’s a concrete rib about this wide and about that tall that runs from this point straight all the way across the house. So, this whole side of the home has settled. So you’re actually lower than... I’m taller than you but now I’m getting shorter because

Jose Casas: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: the home has settled. There’s not another concrete rib over there. And when me and Caroline first - it wasn’t before we moved in - it was when we were trying to figure out what was going on with the house. There is another family member you need to talk to. He is the historian for Golden, Colorado where the Coors brewery is located. He is the official historian for the entire city. He was down here and he and I were crawling around this whole place underneath the home, into the attic. And he was like “OK, wait a minute. There’s no concrete rib. And how come what for we found original pieces of the lumber from when the house was built. It was still underneath the house. No one had cleared it out. Um, what we figured out was is that if the land company was going to offer you a home for sale and they want to track you here well they want that house to be built [snaps fingers] lickety split. So pour the one rib. Big deal. Don’t worry about the other part. It’s just a

show house. It's probably going to get dismantled or taken down either way, not knowing the show home was still going to be here a hundred years later. Um,...what was I going to tell you? My mind is running with all these things I'm trying to remember. I'm trying to keep it all straight in my head

Vanessa Saenz: When did you start the restoration? When did you all move?

Patrick Twist: Um, probably about 3 ½ years ago. Close to 4, if I remember correctly.

Vanessa Saenz: And where were you? Were you here in the Valley? Or had you ...

Patrick Twist: Oh yeah! We were living in the little Templin house. That was brutal.

M.K. Slayton: (Laughs)

Jose Casas: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: That was really had. Two Chihuahuas and a wife. Hmm. In that little teeny house.

M.K. Slayton: (Laughs)

Jose Casas: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: It is not fun. It has no central heating or air or anything like that. The attic is nothing but a new roof built on top of the original roof. So you pull back the insulation, there's shingles in the attic. So, ok we need to build in a new roof. So the back rooms of the Templin house, the floor which was actually, um, a porch that they poured layers all hand poured so you're walking around carpet what's underneath the floor? It's the original concrete. They just poured it themselves and put it all down. Um, as far as restoration is concerned, all we did... We didn't do anything in here. We left it the way it had been since grandpa fixed it or changed it around a little bit that was it. Um, all we did was fill in all the little tiny tack hole and nail holes and just paint the walls. All this drip that you see like this, the style is all from when grandpa was here. 1940's. So literally we really didn't have to do very much cause he - there's pictures of grandpa repairing the floor and fixing things all the time. he kept this place going all the time. Um, let's see. I don't know if the key is still in there. This is from...when the family... this was the secretary. You put your finger in here...hopefully it'll open. It should [opens the secretary]. And this is what you would use...this is - if I remember correctly, sat right here next to the front door right. The farmhands, the door would be open, its payday, so they all lined up down the porch and grandma or grandpa would sit at the secretary and write out paychecks or pay in cash out of the [inaudible]. So, they would use that to pay all their bills. And, I don't know where the keys at but there should be...yeah its right there. There's a secret compartment in the back to hide valuables. It's from the nineteen teens if I remember correctly is all this piece of furniture is. So was the original lavatory behind you. That's also original from the time period - I'm sorry - with the marble top. You put the big dish station - [correcting himself] dish and basin. And you pour your water in it and wash your face with a towel and everything like that. that's what the marble was for. For the water dripping. 'Cause you dry and you'd have the, the bowl here and the pitcher behind it or on the side pouring in and as you did whatever you were going to do, the drips would be caught on the marble. So everything you notice has skeleton keys-

Maria Barrera: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: For everything. And we have a ring of skeleton keys that still operate different things. And we finally figured out which one operates the front door [laughs].

[Everyone laughs]

Patrick Twist: And that's another thing - all the door mechanisms, the hinges, the doorknobs, the locks are all original from 1913. Um, this one has one...That right there that's a ceramic coded iron doorknob with a brass latch in the back. it's a real simple little mechanism, but they are tough as hell. I mean they never, there almost a hundred years old, they don't wear out. I mean we can still lock them with no trouble whatsoever and it takes a heck of a good blow to get the doors open if you ever really actually needed to. Um, let's go upstairs. Let's get to the meat of the issue.

[Video cuts]

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Patrick Twist: Ok! Um, Aunt Ingre - I-N-G-R-E. And if I misspelled it Aunt Angry I'm sorry.

Maria Barrera: (Laughs)

Jose Casas: (Laughs)

Patrick Twist: I apologize. I love you with all my heart.

Maria Barrera: Was she angry? [laughs]

Patrick Twist: I hope no. She - her son is Ricky in Golden, Colorado. His mom, I mean his family, lives there and he's the historian for Golden, Colorado. She painted these going up the staircase. From this point up, we haven't done anything. So the fresh paint and everything you see over here this is over the last couple of years. But everything on forward is paint from the 1950's, 1940's, 1930's. let me turn the lights on. [Everyone walks up stairs] So it's a big difference from downstairs. This is what I was talking about. No sheetrock. you don't need it [laughs]. So all these little tiny tacks that you see are from when they hung real wallpaper. Fiber backed wallpaper with fabric. And when we - me [laughs] was up here with a dust mask and tearing it all off, the wallpaper, they put on in the 1940s and stuff like that it had pulled away and I'm tearing away and I was like "what's all this stuff underneath it?" And it was cotton seed hull sacks that they used from the 1930s to put as the backing for the rest of the house to attach the wallpaper to. Cause you bought - you buy wallpaper today and it's like a plastic substance with like a fiber that's on the inside of it. Well back then it was paper but you had to have a cloth backing to stick it to. You don't have a lot of money, what are you going to use? You're a farmer, you sell cotton seed hulls and you've got these massive burlap sacks. Attach it to the walls. Um, where we're standing right now would be those, well right above us would be those three windows and all those discolored pieces of lumber that you see up there; do you notice the drips go up? Huh hah! [laughing]

Maria Barrera: Wow.

Patrick Twist: The stains go up

Maria Barrera: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: Cause all of that is from construction from the porch that he dismantled he used on the inner walls. Um, all this wood if you...there's a place up here in fact. See right there. The dark areas of the wood, it's still, um, about two years ago when it was really, really, really super hot a hundred plus degree weather for a couple of weeks in a row. The wood is still... that's even better right there. Perfect. You see that?

Vanessa Saenz: Yes.

Patrick Twist: From 1913 the wood is still putting out sap.

Maria Barrera: Oh wow!

M.K. Slayton: Wow.

Patrick Twist: And I mean you can touch it and that's what it is. That's what - I couldn't figure out what that sparkling stuff that was all over the walls and eventually it would come off because it would dry and then flake away but this one spot it just keeps producing it. Um what else can I tell you well do you have any questions?

[Video cuts]

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Patrick Twist: Um, Kelly, Ricky, Mark, Ingrid, Dixie, Marie...So Kelly, Ricky, Mark, Ingrid, Dixie, Marie; seven kids. Hope I'm not forgetting one. Um, you got all the kids upstairs so you want somebody to come down. You want all the boys to come down because there's gonna be work. The boys would get so many rings. Bing! Bing! Bing! Bing! [imitating the bell] So they'd bring 'em all downstairs. And the button - it still works.

Interviewer: Wow!

Patrick Twist: It's in the kitchen. And I'm up here doing something and, of course, guess what happens? **Patrick!** Bring! And that thing rings and I gotta run downstairs. Um, chores for the day. Put it on the chalkboard. This is what you're going to do. And yes my brother-in-law left his stuff here for me to play with. Which I didn't really need [laughs]. Um, this gives you an idea. Right here. The thickness of stuff. This is some of the original paper from the 1920's. That right there...hold down a second let me go in here for a minute. Ah there it is! If I can find it. Yeah there it is. It's a little dirty. Watch out I'm going to have to come through there. I'm just gonna lay it on the floor and I'll just vacuum it up later. Ok there is your...now look carefully: [reading] Sears Roebuck and Company. We figured out this house is a kit house. Long time ago, you looked at your house in a

catalogue and you picked it out like this is the one we want and Sears Roebuck and Company would mail it to you via railcar and you'd put your house together. So we finally figured out when we tore out all this paper off. Ricky from Golden was here and he was like, "Hey this is a kit house! This is a kit house!" This gives you the backing number that was used for the original wallpaper from 1913. so this from 1913. Um, the cotton seed hull bags. I'm not sure if this is...has it or not. Does it? Yeah this is it.

Interviewer: Oh.

Patrick Twist: Cotton seed meal, that was. 43% protein. 1920's, 1930's. This was the backing that grandpa used. There's the staple holes that was holding it up on all the walls all around the entire house. Of course, downstairs it would have been done the same but; of course, there is more wear and tear downstairs so that gets stripped down more often. Upstairs, ok the kids grew up, moved away, got married and it just stayed, which was a really good thing. And that's why you're here. To document these events [laughs]. For posterity's sake, kids. [laughs] Listen to your grandma and grandpa. Let me move that out of your way. Its referred to around here as the east room which is right here. Here we go. Ok! Crowd on in. Alright. When we came in here and we were essentially it was get rid of all the wallpaper and dust mats. Seventy something years of rat pills and roach pills you name it dust it was horrible. Well I started on that end of the room and that gives you the pitch of the room outside and they go straight thru and when you go outside you see these windows then you see the pitch in the roof right on the other side of the shingles. It gives you an idea of the construction, of course, you can chink it up with whatever you got. And this is all still the same one where the whole house is still built with. On either side of it every single wall of the house is like this is double thick. Um started over here tearing and tearing and tearing tearing tearing and stopped, and they came back the next day tearing and tearing and tearing tearing and came to that. And I was, like, "what is that stuff" and staring tearing and tearing tearing tearing and it changed and I couldn't figure out why. I asked Kelly to come up here and take a look and he was like I don't what that is. He had not remembered it from the time period that he was a child. And from this point specifically to this right there, that's the original wallpaper choices you had from 1913, when they showed the house to potential land-buyers for the house. So it'd been under the wall paper since 1913. So you had a choice of something that had squares [**Vanessa Saenz** in unison: "Squares"] and little tiny floral pattern and that was this strip. Underneath that there's another choice that they just plastered over that. You have a floral pattern that was there. There's more of the brick. Then you have the top-trim right there, with a lot of filigree and weave-work on the top to match the square pattern underneath it. To compliment it [**Patrick** continues in a voice conjuring]. So, essentially, you want your wall paper trim, this is what we've got. And this is your wall paper choice. Uh, down there there's the blue one, if you wanted your whole room in blue. Or you wanted it all in deep-hunter-mint green-looking right there. Um, the outside laboratory sink was mounted right here [Points to the opposite side of the wall where the wallpaper is]. Gas line to go in there to provide light in the bathroom [Points upward to quarter-size hole]. That in there was were the cast-iron bath tub was [Points to the adjacent small room]. That massive things that was out there in the garage painted red. It took five of us to move it over to Caroline's uncle's house next door. We filled it with ice for the Fourth of July and a lot of good beer [raises fist enthusiastically and Everyone chuckles] and it worked really well. It held ice in it for over 18 hours. So this was your bathroom, originally. Um. It was [removes a board slanted on the wall]. There's the water-line connections that went through to provide water to the tub. So the tub was right here against the wall, so it wasn't on the other side. You came in right here and you got on the tub right there. Unfortunately, none of the bathroom fixtures ever survived. We don't know what ever happened to them. So when they, and the tub, when they came into the house, the tub is original to the house. It wasn't when Kelly's family bought it they put in the cast-iron tub. The tub and everything was here. So they used it for year, but eventually the old piping work went away. But it was sad because when you look at a cast-iron bathtub, the hook-ups go into the back of it and all of the piping work comes out and down. It's all chrome-plated sometimes solid brass, and has this huge ring to provide for a shower curtain. None of that survived, we don't know what happened to it. The home had carbide gas lights. And, essentially, that was your very first form, before you could have electricity in the house, that's what was provided. So it would burn very, very bright. It has a very harsh, bright, bluish-grayish look to it, almost like a welder's arch.

Patrick Twist: But it was a gas. So when you come into a home and you see in some places like that that the carbide gas would come in [Points to a hole in the ceiling]. The pipe was on the outside of the wall. It would poke straight through and come in here and come in from this room also [Moves arm from bathroom to hole in wall] and come out; you'd see this lamp sticking out, a very decorative oil lamp. Well it wasn't an oil lamp; it was the carbide gas. Like in old horror movies or something like that, you see these lights go along the wall that was the carbide gas. And outside where we were, where that mesquite tree was at, where I told you the water tower was, there's this big rut or a hole that we have to walk through, that was where a gigantic, huge, carbide gas tank was buried underneath the ground. So they'd come out once in a while and refill your tank and you'd come into the room and light the carbide gas and provide light in the room. And your whole house was a gas bomb.

M.K. Slayton: Yeah. Sounds interesting.

Patrick Twist: Yeah, exactly.

Interviewer: And who's room? [Unintelligible]

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: History nut and buff. Nuevo Santander [Opens scroll of a map labeled Nuevo Santander]. I guess that's gonna go back to your old Spanish land grants.

Maria Barrera: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: Uh, Kelly's a member of Las Porciones. The historical group around here.

Maria Barrera: Oh, really?

Patrick Twist: So he's got connections coming out the wahzoo with people for you to go interview and talk to. Um, there are really fun. They know so much about the area it's ridiculous. All the ranching families to the north, the Guerras, the Luna, the McAllen. Oh, the McAllen's are real picky. They won't let anyone on their land. They are very, very close-lipped [does the zipping gesture to his mouth]. They don't want anybody on their ranch. Um, there's actually something down here that not a lot of people know about. The fact that we have a hot spring north of Edinburg. Close to 281 there's a hot spring out there. Um, me and a group of my friends when we were in high school, we were just bumming around off the coast of McCook, that's another, sorry, getting a bit off topic, there's another group of people you want to go talk to are all the Polish farmers that immigrated into the Rio Grande Valley. Um, and the Germans one also. That land was all brush land. Virgin land. Virgin. Nothin. There's brush. And you go out there, you want to talk to a group of people that are here from day 1 living down here that immigrated to the United States that had zero, nothing but wagons and mules, you go out there. The, it's a catholic church, but it's a Polish-Catholic church, they do things a little bit different there. There's grandmas and grandpas, I don't know if they're still alive, but they were when I was in high school. All they could speak was Polish, all they could speak was German, so you'd go to their house and they'd ask, wh-wha-what was your name? And you've give them your first and last name if your name had a German last name and you were in a Polish house [MK laughs sarcastically], they didn't really want to talk to you [he give us his back to act out the scene]

Maria Barrera: Wow.

Patrick Twist: Feelings from emigration from Europe because of WWII, WWI, take your pick. But this is kind of neat because this house was here when WWI was raging; and WWII and Korea and Vietnam, take your pick.

Interviewer: And how long has your family been in the Valley?

Patrick Twist: Um, my family's been down here since 1920s and they came from Missouri, Wilamazoo [chuckles]; try spelling that one.

Interviewer: W-I-L-A

Patrick Twist: [With a long sigh] I don't know, it's really long, it's really long, it sound short, but it's not: Wilamazoo, Missouri.

Jose Casas: Sounds like Kalamazoo.

Patrick Twist: Or Kalamazoo, but it's actually Wilamazoo. My great grandfather, um, he was a famer down

here, east of Edinburg on La Blanca Road. And he would work on the farm, and then in the winter time, when the crops were aligned fallow to replenish the ground, he'd walk not too far away, about a mile or so, and work at the ice house, literally the ice house, bring it by rail and they would supply ice to what they would call refrigeration back then. So he did that in his spare time or to earn extra money for the farm.

Interviewer: And did you help out on the farm when you were growing up?

Patrick Twist: Oh yeah. We'd pull up, your arms would itch, be raw from carrying, uh, harvested corn from the garden, the sweet corn, to eat. You had corn for the animals and you had corn for people, which is the sweet corn, which is planted right outside the back, too [chuckles]. So you're, like, driving around, oh well is that corn, well yeah that's corn, got 30 acres of it [unintelligible]. Yeah, we would carry it in the garden for grandma and grandpa. We were the same way. Um, well water down here. Have any of y'all ever had real well water?

All: No.

Patrick Twist: Most people, they drink it for the first time, and it's like they're swimming at Padre and they took a mouthful of water from the gulf. Extremely salty. Um, your bathroom fixtures are completely corroded up or covered with heavy mineral deposits. Washing clothes was, is, a real chore using real well water. You heat the water up. the minerals com out of it [does boiling-like gesture with fingers]. Um, your hot water heaters are layered in it that deep. You gotta get a water heater about every five years or less than that. Um, that's what we grew up with drinking down here, was well water, which is the same what Kelly's family had. Very, very, high mineral content. It's amazing we never had a kidney problem, like kidney stones, because of what we had to drink. But that was what we had. Um, to me it tasted fine. My friends would come over and we had to go to H-E-B to buy them water, which my mom and dad were like, what's wrong with what we're drinking? Tastes like salt water. This is something my wife put together when she was a little kid [shows us an aged poster with picture clippings of the home's stages through time]. "This is My Grandmother's House," covered in dust, which gives you, you can barely read it, it gives you the successive history of the house, year by year, which are the picture we looked at downstairs on the coffee table. So they just went and they had them [chuckles] mimeographed a long time ago. There was no such thing as Xerox; had to go take it and have it mimeographed. It's like they take a picture and print it out on the paper for you, it's really weird. So this gives you, this is, if I remember right, I can barely read it, 1913, I can't even read it, 1922, well this is when the picture, 1913 to 1922; essentially, the house was occupied for a tiny bit and then again it was abandoned and the corn crib thing started and then off it goes. It had a picket fence, actually, at one time, neat. Thank God it's no longer here, it looks horrible. Um, gee wiz, you're surrounded in fact, by the family archives. Part of it, there's a whole storage unit totally devoted to archives. Um, there's old letter, there's great grandma Lydia's diaries right there. Lydia Nordmeyer photo collection, cigar boxes, grandpa's a cigar smoker.

Maria Barrera: Are these the archives that they have at the, uh, courthouse?

Patrick Twist: No. This is private, family stuff. Um, when we were renovating the home, we were finding books and magazine from 1940, 1941, 1942, 1922 [Opens a box].

All: Whoa. Cool!

Patrick Twist: So there's grandma and grandpa. Ding! And Carrol Everett 1960. Want cigars? Sorry they're all gone. Grandpa smoked them all. So, literally, oh wow, there's one of the picture of the garden off to the side [Shows picture], when it was still around, when they were still using it? That's what I was looking for! This is what proves of what he, this is one of the pictures I mentioned of him fixing everything. Grey haired, no shirt, perfect picture of fitness at, you know, a hot 60-year old man laying on the floor, 70-year-old man fixing the floor in his house, so essentially that's why the place survived, 'cause

Maria Barrera: They were constantly keeping up....

Patrick Twist: They were constantly. He grew up like that. Here it is, oof, when was this? Oh, this is after the hurricane. This is when everything got destroyed and had to be redone. See the diamond windows, patched, no longer there, had to be, because they all got blown in. Thank you. So grandpa was, like, [get photo passed to him]forget it, if it happens again, we're just gonna have more leaks in the house. I have fun stuff with older dates for you guys.

Interviewer: Did they burn the trash, or do you know when they had t rash service? What did they do with

their garbage?

Patrick Twist: Essentially, you burned it or buried it. In fact, they had, when me, my family, it was you had a trash pit. You just went outside, dumped your garbage in it. With all the vegetable cutting, you put into a compost, you never threw it away. And that was like ingrained in our heads [**M.K. Slayton** chuckles]. If its vegetable cuts and you're cutting onions and roots from onions or anything like that. Um, tomato peelings; um, rotten bananas, whatever you got, you don't throw that away, that goes into a container that you take out and put into the compost pile that you put on the family garden 'cause it needs all the help it can get 'cause you're going to be living off of it. That's just one box. There. Kelly has been in here [looks around], there were all these... Oh! Over there [points toward us]. There's more stuff in the other room I got to show you too. I hope I'm not wasting your time.

All: No!

Patrick Twist: I really hope not. I, because I hope I'm not, again, they told me, go ahead and ramble they seem to like for you to ramble [all laugh]. Ma Ma. Good Lord. I really don't know what's in this thing. Oh, good. (Sighs) Date, date, fewf, there's a horrible smell, this has got to have a date on it [peruses through a briefcase]. C'mon. It doesn't have it there. Anyway, what's in here, I'm not sure, but that... these are empty, let me put that down. This is Ma's.

M.K. Slayton: What were those suitcases there used for?

Patrick Twist: What?

M.K. Slayton: Like these, um, were just briefcases.

Patrick Twist: Oh. [Tries picking one up] Good Lord that's heavy. Everybody has a name: Momma, oh who was it, Neil, Uncle Neal who lives next door, Mark, Ingrid, the one that did the paintings in the stairwell. These are all again, G.I. surplus. This is what a G.I. would pack his clothes in. So your uniform, your under shirts, your dress uniform, this is what the military issued to you; this is your suitcase. Surplus came around, Grandpa, frugal as he was, suitcases for the whole family. So everybody got their own suitcase (old army suit cases that Marie Sleeth or Dixie Setti described) for when they were gonna travel. And they had, they had, where did they go? They went up to Kerrville, another German community up there. They would go up there to beat the heat. It's hot up there though. But they had property up in the hill country and aunt Marie, whose suitcase is not here, probably in another part of the house, she had property that was up there, in Bandera, Texas, up in the hill country, so the family would, like on a little short vacation, go up and they had relatives that lived up there also. So essentially, your suitcases are all from WWII [chuckles]. Um, let's see. Let's go in the other room to show you the chests the family had when they immigrated to the New World.

[Video cuts]

Patrick Twist: ...Chests from when you came to America from Sweden. So your clothing, all your belongings are packed in that. And this is what they brought across in a steamship to get to the United States from Europe. So was that [points to chest below]. That's from Sweden also. There's again, there's a skeleton key. Um, grandpas rocker. Another steamer chest. This is Carrol A. Norquest, this is Kelly's trunk that he used when he was in the army, that they issued to them. Um, I'm trying to think of what else is up here, unless everything we moved it all down stairs.

Interviewer: And is that a window or was it a door?

Patrick Twist: Oh, that's just a window, that's original to the house also from 1913, and not that one though. This is where one of the diamond windows would have been, somewhere over here in this part of the house. Um, again, straight through is shingles [knocks on top of wall]. Above head is the attic, but it's really, really small. It's not very big. Remember, it's a story-and-a-half. Downstairs the ceiling is a lot taller; so up here it's a whole lot closer. A story and a half. There's my brother-in-law's goofy drum set [all laugh]. High chairs for the kids when they were babies, this is from, this is from what, 1930. Um, there's a big, huge steel one out in the barn. The thing weighs a ton. It's a baby chair, a baby's high chair, from the 1940s. That's how, no wonder, it's survived the weather and everything, it's ridiculous. Um.

M.K. Slayton: Oh yeah, I was gonna ask what's that.

Patrick Twist: Don't worry, it's not poisonous [Retrieves large class bottles from corner]. At one time, when you made wine, so they made wine, but eventually wine goes bad and turns into what?

Interviewer: Vinegar.

Patrick Twist: Vinegar. But if you do it the right way, it turns into, like, balsamic vinegar. That's what this is. So this has been up here, I think, since the 1960s [**all:** Whoa!] This ought to give you an idea of how old the containers are. And Kelly comes up here every once in a while and takes out a fraction amount and puts it in his refrigerator and everybody, come get a taste, come get a taste. And it's magnificent. So they made wine.

Interviewer: What did they... With grapes or?

Patrick Twist: With grapes outside where the big water cistern pit beneath our feet. That whole thing was a huge grape arbor. So they would grow grapes like crazy and they had to figure out what they were going to do with it because they were making this huge mess on the ground [puts balsamic jars back]. And, of course, they went ahead and decided to make wine. So they'd make their own wine. Huge cans of it. Of course, they wouldn't all last 'cause it'd go bad, they had to drink it, so. [Kneels down and retrieves The Etude music magazine] Um, 1955 [passes it to us]. Again, 1955. Good lord, what are they playing? That's a heck of a saxophone. 1955. This whole collection for the whole year all the way through... Here's an even older one: Middle of WW11, 1942.

Interviewer: The family is very musical.

Patrick Twist: Everybody plays. All of us. My wife plays, let's see, the guitar, the organ, the piano. Kelly plays the viola, the trumpet, the piano. Caroline's sisters, uh, the cello, cello, violin, violin. I only play one thing, I play the bag pipes and the harmonica. I learned that from Kelly. Um, Uncle Neil plays the violin and Dixie plays the Violin. Aunt Virginia plays the cello. Essentially, oh, both brother-in-laws drums. Yeah, everybody plays something.

Maria Barrera: Do they have a music teacher?

Patrick Twist: Huh?

Maria Barrera: Do they have a music teacher?

Patrick Twist: Um, when Kelly and the three brother and the sisters were all growing up, their grand, their dad essentially told them they were going to play an instrument, there were no ifs, ands or buts. Um, so essentially, they had their own form of entertainment. You had to do something like that. You had a bunch of unruly kids in a farm; you had to give them something to do. So they all had to learn how to play something. They all had to choose something. And Kelly chose the viola, which is the bigger version of the violin. Um, and the trumpet. Um, Uncle Ricky, that was it, trumpet. Uncle Mark, piano, violin, guitar. Uncle Neil Guitar. His son plays the banjo, the guitar, I mean everybody, it's ridiculous. They all sing in the choir, they all sing in Pan Am's choir. [Chuckles]. My sister-in-laws, they play and so does my wife's uncle, they all play for the university orchestra. So they're all, whatever's going on, they're all, oh, we're gonna go. They're really weird [all chuckle].

Interviewer: Unintelligible.

Patrick Twist: I love them to death. I mean, when I got married, I didn't know I was marrying into this tribe of people with all these really different ideas of doing things. [keeps rummaging through the magazines] Um, 1945, the end of WWII. This is what's amazing, is, you look at Magnavox. Not TVs, it was radios [shows us old Magnavox advertisement].

Lupe Flores: The advertisements.

Patrick Twist: Yeah, yeah, very, very different.

Jose Casas: Look at the puppet here.

Patrick Twist: Exactly, exactly, you listened to the radio, that's you, you did something else at this same time. It's amazing [pauses and looks into the magazine]. There's stuff that we've gone through in this house, some of it unfortunately got destroyed with time. There were some things in here from 1925, 1922, that had to be thrown out. And they were, again, musical score magazines, stuff like this. This was 1951, 1950. We've found LIFE magazines. We found the one, the original one with Marilyn Monroe on the cover.

All: Oh, wow!

Patrick Twist: We have that one in the safety deposit box. We have the issue of LIFE magazine where, if I remember correctly, Kennedy's assassination. All that's here. I mean, this place was like a vault. Everything

they got is all stuck here. They had the National Geographic from when I was born, 1969, I was like, Pfft, so it's pretty amazing, everything they've got in the home, literally, saved, taken care of, they really didn't let anything happen to it. Um, this was the boy's room and it was very, very hot. No-notice there's no ceiling fans. You had to plug everything up. Windows always had to be open to let any circulation. You can tell its' stuffy in here. Um, this way. An here is the block and tackle that was used to literally lift from here over the whole stairwell all the way down, the whole thing, to lift it and turn it [makes gestures].

Interviewer: Originally it was facing that way?

Patrick Twist: Um, originally, where the bathroom is, that little door right there was the front door. You came into the front door, which was where that massive front porch was. And you came in this way and looked up and the stairwell went up and in and up around to the top story of the house. Well that wasn't practical with the heat and him having to change the inner construction of the home to fit the need at the time period. It just wasn't built the right way for what they needed for down here. So that block and tackle that's behind him [points to **Jose Casas**], that's what grandpa used. That's been in the storage in the barn since 1930s, 1940's and it hung from up here when the main support beams were exposed [points to the ceiling of stairwell]. You could lift everything up and move it. Um, the whole, everything is original. Nothing is, like, we had to replace it in the last 10 years, or 20, or 30, or 40. All the wood work is original from 1913. And we stopped. That's where we stopped. What you're looking at, the color change, from here to there, this is the boiled lynn seed oil from here going down and then the rest of the floors in the house. This is the way everything looked downstairs before we went in and said, ok, we're gonna go ahead restore the home. Um, up here eventually, where the original plan was to go ahead and re-paint everything, we were going to leave, of course, that's all gonna stay the way it is [points to Ingrid's paintings. But then Kelly brought Tom Fort from the Museum and he's, like, you don't want to cover this up yet. I was, like, okay. We weren't gonna do anything to it or paint it or something 'cause he said this is you, again, a view into the way they did things about 70-something years ago, 80-something years ago.

All: Mhm.

Patrick Twist: So we left it and everybody comes up here and they seem to kind of like it. It looks kind of weird, it looks like it's half-done or something [all chuckle]. Um, again, door knobs, everything up here is all 1913. Doors are all solid, none of them are hollow. It's ridiculous trying to close some of them. Oh, this is annoying as hell. When the weather changes or heavy rainfall, opening and closing the door, the wood swells and the house moves. You'll be laying in bed and POW! You hear this loud crack and it's the house settling and moving and contracting and expanding with the cooling or the heating temperatures outside and inside the house.

All: Wow.

Patrick Twist: Um, your doors, like weeeee [moves a door that squeaks] it'll close and stop. It won't close all the way. You have to shove it closed. But then in the summer time it just shuts. The cool weather, all the wood shrinks. So everything changes in the house [Sighs]. It's a real pain in the rump. This is one of the girl's rooms. There's not much about it, I mean it's just. We haven't really done anything. We have mace. We haven't really done anything with the top part of the house. All this little stains and stuff like that, that's just simply growth. Mold, I guess you want to call it, so it may not be good for your asthma [addresses **Jose Casas**]. Yeah, you're like, mmmm. Um, I don't know what else, we, the only thing we did add was a fire detection system, which is right there [points to center of ceiling]. And motion sensors in the house right there. Um, and a security system for the home. Before that, about maybe three or four years ago, it didn't have any of that, and that really cared me and Kelly's family never done anything with it, like no fire prevention. They had fire extinguishers in the house; I mean that's what you had. The problem is that when the alarm insulation company showed up and they, looking around, like, I've never done anything like this before, in a house this old, and they're drilling through everything. They had a hard time trying to do it. And they said to us that more than likely, if the house were to catch fire at all, it would take hours and hours to burn because the wood is so dense and thick and still full of sap. The floor, from what cousin Ricky from Golden, Colorado said, is heart wood. Essentially, this is the type of flooring you pay for today that's extremely expensive. It doesn't look fantastic right now, but this is the type of floor, the type of wood that you want. What you're standing on is from 1913 and still has not worn out from

being used as a corn crib and decades of kids running down the stairwell all the time. So you go and you want to pay for a real hard wood floor, heart wood hard wood floor, you're gonna pay through the nose because it's going to be here 100 years. This is, essentially, when you see picture of them cutting trees from Washington and Oregon and Montana and places like the major logging industry, this is the center core of the tree, the strongest part of the tree, that's what all this. The hard wood heartwood is what they wanted because they knew it was going to be a high traffic area. This is where it all came from. Um, all the wood that the house is built out of is 100-year-old hard heartwood, the entire house. We didn't know that. We thought, okay it's just the floor. And Old Ricky from Golden came up here and he's like, no, the whole home is built out of it. So all the support beams underneath there, what you see through that right there, piece of wood right that's a massive post that goes down and then it come back up again. It's part of that sub-flooring wall that comes all the way down like that. I don't know what else to tell ya. You got any question?

Maria Barrera: Um, we do. Can we just go down stairs.

Patrick Twist: Oh, sure, let's go downstairs.

Official Interview Begins

Maria Barrera: [Start of sentence was not recorded. She is referring to teachers who have retired and then rehired by a school district] ...they were getting paid double of what a new student, I mean, new teacher would get paid

Patrick Twist: Well, the...be careful with that. When you retire/rehire as a teacher, you, you get your paycheck as a teacher. All your federal withholding, your insurances- whatever you have chosen to have- is taken out. Along with that-no choice-is TRS (the Teachers Retirement System). Automatically, okay, you stock away money into that for years and years and years and you reach retirement age and number of years when you retire. Now you are drawing out of the state retirement system. The school district is not paying you two paychecks. The state is giving you the retirement that you've built up over 25 years and which you paid like just like Social Security. Teachers have no Social Security in the state of Texas. They have TRS. So you don't see Social Security withholdings on your check. What you see is TRS, Teachers Retirement System for Texas. So, you've beat the system. You're not tied to Social Security at all. So whatever job you've had in the past your Social Security is coming out from that. Soon as you start becoming a teacher, Social Security doesn't touch you at all anymore. It goes straight into your retirement system. A billion times better than Social Security. Because you get medical benefits that come with it and everything. So, when you get rehired, after having teaching for 25, 27 years or 30 or 32 or 33 you are getting a paycheck from the school district but now your due pay from your retirement is coming to you also. So it's not two checks from the district. One from the state, that you paid into-it's your money anyway- and then one from the school district. I didn't understand it either when I first started. I was kind of like, "How are they going to do this?" but the only problem-school districts look at it as a problem- for retire/rehire is that teachers that have retired/rehired, they are at the top of the pay scale. So they're getting whatever it might be 37 to \$48,000 take your pick it's somewhere in there. Versus a new teacher starting off at 28, 29, or 30 whatever it might be and then it will slowly increase. So it benefits the school district to "Please go away."

Jose Casas: (Chuckles)

Maria Barrera: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: We can save money so that we can go ahead and bring in new teachers. But there's really not much they can do. You can be a teacher for 40 years if you wanted to.

Vanessa Saenz: (Chuckles and says something that is unintelligible on recording.)

Patrick Twist: Oh, yeah. We've got a lady on our campus 35 years, something like that, it's insane. Her husband was my English teacher in High School.

Maria Barrera: They have a couple in Rio Grande City- the Schafer's- they have been there for years and years and both of them are struggling with their health and I guess they figured they would retire because you know he would have heart attacks and she has uh, osteoporosis but no, they are still going.

Patrick Twist: They're doing it, a lot of them will do it (quick pause) Buddhist Mantra: You suffer because you want. You want children? You've got to pay for that. You want a nice house? You will suffer (loud noise) because you want. You have to pay for that. Um, all these things, your home, cars, whatever you want you gotta pay for all of that. Well, you paid out. If you are going to be a teacher you better plan on being there for, what teachers refer to in this district as: "I've got to get my 30. 30 years of experience to retire... happily. When you've had two kids go through college, homes, automobiles and you've lived a very good life. I mean you go to any school district parking lot and campus and the cars all look freaking brand-new.

Maria Barrera: Yes.

Patrick Twist: Because they all buy brand new cars every two to three years. They trade in and get another one. If you don't do that then you don't have to be the Schafer's?. When you're walking around with an oxygen tank and tube and a wheel chair and still teaching. I mean that's not fun. It's gone beyond that. You're doing it so you can survive after you retire. So, sorry, not trying to be the wise man on the mountain. I've seen it on our campus. And if you notice there is no rugrats; we have no children. Well two, they're about this big. (Indicates size of small dog.) You hear them and they are barking. Just (unintelligible.) So ask away. Ask away. What do you got?

Vanessa Saenz: Um, growing up, um, you're helped on your...helped on your grandparent's farm. Did you live on the farm or did you just go and visit?

Patrick Twist: We lived next door. We walked across the (laughs) cotton field to pick corn. (Chuckles.) Literally.

Vanessa Saenz: What other chores did you have?

Patrick Twist: Lord, uh, okay it's a list. I still remember. Feed the horses in the morning. Make sure all of them have water. Feed the cattle, in the morning. Cut fresh grass for the new calves. You had to do that with a butcher knife. Um, if it's cold, make sure that the orchard heaters that are in the barn are lit and running. This was all before school, okay and we rode the bus. Yuck. Um, this is 1980s, okay, 1980s when I was doing this stuff. Not that far away. I mean when you live on a farm and do that, um that was before school. After school, same chores again. Feed all the horses, bring all the cattle in, bring all the horses in make sure Everyone has fresh hay in their hay bags. Um, then on the weekend or during the week mow the yard which you have a 10-acre plot of land which meant trimming all the fence lines, trimming trees.

Essentially maintaining, you wouldn't even call it, it's not called a ranch. You wouldn't even call it a ranchette. You just had a 10-acre block of land that needed maintaining. A ranch, to most people down here, they call it down here, it's not. A real ranch would be like what we mentioned earlier about the McAllen ranch or what they call the Arrowhead Ranch. Um, the Guerra's ranch and stuff like that. Where it's multiple, thousands and thousands and thousands of acres. That is a ranch. Where you can walk for a full day and not get to the other side. Down here people have this misnomer, I suppose.

Um, weeding the garden, watering the garden. Making sure the compost bin is filled up and turned to allow the decomposition of the vegetables to go through. Um, washing off the back porch and the front porch. Dust was constantly accumulating all over the place.

Um, picking the vegetables. "Make sure you go over to Grandma's." She's got chores over there that she can't do anymore because Grandpa passed away. So it was a double whammy.

Vanessa Saenz: Was there any chore that you just, "Ugh! I have to do that."

Patrick Twist: Yeah, cleaning out that freaking burn barrel. I hated that with all my heart. And I knew it was... I could see it coming because every time... You had this massive piece of oil rig pipe. It was huge. It was bigger than a 55 drum and maybe about 5 foot tall. You took all the garbage from the inside of the house minus the vegetable trimmings, dump it in there and set it on fire and burn it and you could see, I could, as it got closer and closer to the top. That meant that the time to clean that thing out was getting closer and closer. And I hated that. Cuz it was shoveling it out with a shovel which was dust and ashes and God knows what else burnt with the burnt plastic that was in that and then putting it in burlap sacks and then hauling it off and dumping it somewhere. You could dump it anywhere. Or burying it, they would dig a hole and bury it. Just to clean the house. We didn't have a burn pit. Burn pits for most people 2 or 3 feet deep. You dug it out with the tractor

or by hand. (Laughs.) Toss it out there bury it and eventually move over about 2 feet and dig another one and use that for a year and then move over fill that and then go back to the original one. By that time the cans and everything had rusted and you could dig that one and start anew. That was common. Everyone had that. Everybody did. Well water also. Change the filters for the well that was another thing. Um, cloth filters. They'd constantly need changing, every single month. Um, shock treating the water lines with bleach. You'd go out to your water well and like put maybe a quarter of a gallon of bleach and it would kill all the algae that might be living in the waterlines. Of course, you'd run everything in the house first, to flush the lines and it would kill the bacteria in the lines and it would purify the lines and you could start all over again using water and so forth and so forth. Irrigation that was another thing. Water usage. That was ridiculous. It was every 2 weeks in the summertime. Flood irrigation. You had to lay out aluminum pipe or plastic pipe and move it to irrigate everything you want. You've got a 7 and ½ block pasture, you had to flood irrigate that. And each pasture was divided with a, um, a built up like a furrow hump on top like you could move it to the next pan and then flood that also with irrigation water. And you would rotate your animals. And that's another thing. You wouldn't do that all the time. Give this side of your property rest and then move the animals to the other side. Maintaining electric fences, trimming, cleaning, recharging- making sure that the battery's charged. That was normal as a kid. That was like everyday life. But your entertainment was pretty good. You'd walk 8 miles, 5 miles in any direction and you wouldn't come across a single person.

Vanessa Saenz: Was there any types of animals or insect- insects that you've noticed aren't here anymore?

Patrick Twist: Hmm.

Vanessa Saenz: Or have you seen an increase in a certain amount of you know, like vermin or...?

Patrick Twist: I would probably have to say, more an increase problem probably. Uh, coyotes, Coyotes (said in Spanish) simply because human habitation has encroached on their world. We have moved into their world, the wilderness. I wouldn't say wilderness but open land, virgin land. And they're survivors they look for, what are they called? Um, opportunists. They take advantage of whatever they can get their hands on. So it doesn't really matter to them. More coyotes, a lot more uh, hawks- predatory birds. A lot more often. Simply because you've got a lot more, what would you say? Vermin, rats, mice stuff like that from human habitation. They're attracted. They are all along the power lines here sometimes. We have them on our trees. We had a wild turkey this summer!

Vanessa Saenz: Really?

Patrick Twist: We don't know where it came from. I am standing out next to the barn and just this "OH-WUF" wind goes past me. And these massive wing span. I thought it was an owl or another hawk and it had landed and it stood up. Freaking turkey! That had come from somewhere. A big old gobbler and a beard and everything. I don't know where it came from. I really don't know. I've got pictures of it somewhere. "Did I have a picture of it, Hun?" (Question directed at his wife, Mrs. Caroline Twist.)

Mrs. Twist: Yes. (Response is very faint on recording.)

Patrick Twist: And a little tiny video of it also. Or I tried to. I was using a tiny camera to take a video of it. I have a picture of it though.

Vanessa Saenz: Um, has Mr. Norquest, um, talked about any animals that they, that are no longer here? Here on the property?

Patrick Twist: Mules.

Vanessa Saenz: The mules?

Patrick Twist: The mules.

Vanessa Saenz: When was the...do you...would you know when the last year was that they used the mules? Did they keep it until it died or. "It's no longer a working animal so we don't need it..."

Patrick Twist: I really don't know. I...probably when the barn was rebuilt...the 1940s.

'42-46. That four year time span we took a look at in that picture that we saw. If that was the original barn for the mules to be living in and they moved over to the "machine shed". The change of operation to a change in terminology probably around the 1940s. But they...it's not like they completely quit using them. They had uses for them still. Tractors were for farm (unintelligible word). They might have used the mules for something

else.

Vanessa Saenz: Now a couple of years back there was, I don't know if you remember reading or hearing about the bobcat that was in the South Texas Museum. he just like wandered in one morning.

Patrick Twist: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Vanessa Saenz: Have you guys had any, like of the... You had the wild turkey come. Have you had any coyotes other.

Patrick Twist: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa Saenz: Or any other dangerous animals.

Patrick Twist: Yeah.

Vanessa Saenz: Come in?

Patrick Twist: Um, coyotes, yes. Right out here on the cornfield. No problem. Easily, all the time. You can hear them at night sometimes. Like right now, this time of year...the cool, you can hear noises a lot farther away. They're right here up to the North. They come from that direction all the time. The new orange groves that were replanted, there is literally a path that goes like in an angle straight this way, going NW of Edinburg. Any wild animal could easily make its way into the city limits, no trouble whatsoever. That wouldn't surprise me at all.

Vanessa Saenz: And do have trouble with rattlesnakes or any other rep...

Patrick Twist: Uh, rattlesnakes, not really because we have- I wouldn't say, a big population, but every year we see a large black snake, the Indigo snake. We have one that lives here in fact. My wife saw it. She has a picture of it. Outside where we were where the water cistern was- the pit with the water stuck in it. It was on the ground went up the homemade pool, went over to the bird bath and was just in the bird bath hanging off part of it and it must have close to maybe 7 feet in length. Huge. And about that big around. Beautiful black-blue, like this color. On its back. And then underneath it was this golden-bronze on the bottom and the belly. Massive snake. We saw it when it was irrigation. When we were irrigating. It was all coiled up in the water and then we came out to see if we could see it. It's hiding over there somewhere where you were standing. We know that it's over there. The ground has settled and there's these little holes that run all over the place- underneath that swimming pool, in that hallowed out area they would live in there all the time. We found a group of kittens living there one time.

Vanessa Saenz: Well, maybe he got to them. No...

Patrick Twist: (Laughs) No, no, no. Rattlesnakes, no. Um. I haven't seen any scorpions here, but I have just a couple miles away. We've had them in our school and even though they come out and do a regular pest sweep. There are scorpions. I don't know if that would really be considered a problem or not.

Vanessa Saenz: Is there any, well this was kind of rural, was there any important buildings around this land that are no longer, or...was it too rural at that point? Because I know that the center of Edinburg was...

Patrick Twist: The center of Edinburg, used to have that gorgeous court house, that was destroyed. You ever seen any pictures the original courthouse? You know where the parking lot is at? And you've got that disgusting, flat ugly thing they built that they can't tear down now. Where the parking lot was, was this huge gorgeous court house, very ornately built. Um, I can't think of any important buildings that are no longer standing, that are not here. Again, if it was, it was going to have to be over in the major center of the city. Since this was in the rural part of Edinburg, or at least it was. The city limits end right here, across the street. We just got put into the city limits not long ago because it was odd the way it wove around everything.

Vanessa Saenz: Now...we saw the vinegar, now, the wine, was there anything else that they produced during the...that they self-sustained. They had their wine, they had their orchard, their... did they sell that or was that just for the families?

Patrick Twist: It was just for the families. Um, tomatoes, canned goods. You canned all your own tomatoes, squash, okra. That was a real big thing- okra. Kelly's family loved okra apparently, a lot. No, they didn't have something like a you'd say, a general or private farmer's market where they could sell things. They didn't have anything like that. Um, basically, whatever they had is what they used. But they

used it for their family for the most part. She not living, anymore, she was one of my bosses when I put myself through college. Her name was Mrs. Allen. Allen floral here in Edinburg, a family owned floral shop, she was from the time period when they used nothing but wagons and mules for everything. And her biggest memory, as a child, was all the red dirt out here northwest of Edinburg and as far as they were concerned, during the Depression, there was no Depression. They didn't know what that was 'cuz everybody you raised their own food. You raised your fruits and vegetables. You raised your own meat, you had your own milk, you had your own cheese. You did everything on your own anyway. So for them there was: What- what Great Depression? What are you talking about? Yeah, there was a drop in farm prices but it didn't really affect them all that much. And you can say that they were poor but they didn't know it.

Vanessa Saenz: Was there any questions, **Maria Barrera**, that you (unintelligible).

Maria Barrera: Um, did the Great Depression affect the family, at all?

Patrick Twist: No, but part of the reason why, I think, they moved was for health reasons. Because of the cold, they came down to someplace that was warm- warmer. I don't remember Kelly mentioning something about it, how it did affect them, in some way, but it wasn't a great deal. It wasn't really, Um, again all the equipment that they had was so that they could do everything by themselves. I know that today, society is very service oriented. Someone else does it for you versus back then where, which was; you were your own service. You did everything on your own. Um, I really don't know. To be honest, Kelly would be your gold-mine for that. I know that he could remember. And you have all the other brothers and sisters. Um, Mark, Neil. Neil is just across the road here, right across the street, across the property. He himself, he is the youngest. He is the baby of all the brothers and sisters. He would be able to tell you some things too. Um, no not that I can remember. I just know that everybody saved everything. They saved everything. They have collections of junk. Scrap lumber was used for everything. The barn was rebuilt from the old barn. The house, whatever was taken off the front porch was used for something else. I really.... Kelly would be your best source for anything like that. Anything else?

Lupe Flores: Actually, I had a question, but it's kind of a bit off topic, but not really. I wouldn't think...Do you know if there are any documents that shows any interactions between the Norquest family, say at the time at the time, you know say 1914, 1930s um, to 1950s. That show any interaction with the Schunior family or some other familiar families at the time. You know like that show any kind of interaction from just you know, knowing of each other or actually...

Maria Barrera: Business?

Lupe Flores: Yeah, business.

Patrick Twist: Um. Okay. I really....I haven't seen anything personally. You saw that room up there that's got boxes and boxes and boxes. There's old letters up there. More than likely there's got to be something.

Vanessa Saenz: What families would come to the dances? Was it just family?

Patrick Twist: It wasn't just family, it was anybody and Everyone that they knew.

Lupe Flores: Like locals who would work the land?

Patrick Twist: Locals who would work land, other farming families besides the Norquest. They would all come. So, you would go to each other's houses to do things like that.

Vanessa Saenz: Was there a particular family that they were very close too? Aside from the...

Patrick Twist: Probably the Nordmeyer's but that's though marriage within their own families between their families. The Templin's, the family that tried to escape the Communistly run Berlin, Germany, rather. They got close to them. That's another family. But that was probably, hmm...Your talking about the Schunior family. No, not that I know of. Kelly might know. Kelly might. Um, no not that I can think of, that I've heard of to be really honest. Anything else?

Maria Barrera: Um, did any of them serve in the war? WWII, Vietnam?

Patrick Twist: Um, well Kelly is the oldest and back then, after WWII, up to a certain point everybody got drafted.

Maria Barrera: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: Everybody had military service, not the ladies of course, but the guys okay, concerning my age.

How old are you?

Jose Casas: Uh, 21.

Patrick Twist: And you?

Lupe Flores: I am 22.

Patrick Twist: They probably would have, somewhere along the line got the magic letter: “Congratulations. You have been drafted into the United States military,” and then they’d pick or choose or you’d get to pick and choose which service you were going to go to. And that is the era that Kelly lived in. Where you went and you did your military service because it was requested to do so because of the draft that was still in existence. Um, Vietnam, Korea, it would have to be one of those two conflicts, wars. I can’t remember if Mark did or Uncle Ricky did; Kelly’s brothers. Um, I did, I do know that Uncle Ricky was part of what we mentioned earlier, before we went upstairs. I remember now, SAC- Strategic Air Command. But he was part of that group and this was all during the Cold War and of course that was still going on, that’s after WWII to begin with up until whenever Communism or Russia’s communist or communism fell in the 1980s; 1989 I believe is when the Berlin Wall was taken down. Changed their style of government. But he was with Strategic Air Command. And as far as conflicts or wars I’m not really sure. Mark, might be...I don’t think he was though. They all could have easily gone in the time frame. They could have served; they could have gone into one of those. It might have been college, saving grace where you don’t have to go or something like that. Kelly or one of the brothers would have to be your best bet. Ask them that.

Maria Barrera: Regarding the workers, were the sons in charge of the workers or did they have someone else in command? To control the workers?

Patrick Twist: Um, more than likely it would have been Grandpa- which was Kelly’s father, but the boys all worked together with the hands. There was no, “You’re the hand and I’m the farmer’s son.”

Maria Barrera: Everybody was equal.

Patrick Twist: Everybody is equal. We all are digging the hole. So, there was no such thing as, “I’m better than you are and I’m on top of the hole.” We are in the hole together. We are all doing the same job. Um, a lot of the workers yes, had come over from Mexico, but it made no difference. It was, people needed work, the farmer needed someone to do it and the farmer’s sons were out there digging in the hole with them. So, there was really no such thing as, I mean at that time you really didn’t...everybody pitched in, everybody helped everybody.

M.K. Slayton: Did they employ Braceros here?

Patrick Twist: Braceros?

M.K. Slayton: It was like a program in the 60’s for Mexicans to have amnesty to work here.

Patrick Twist: I think that they might have, if I remember correctly. Um, Kelly’s dad put a book together that was published-

Maria Barrera/Vanessa Saenz: Yes

Patrick Twist: Um, Rio Grande Wetbacks and there’s copies of it and it gives

Maria Barrera/Vanessa Saenz: We’ve read it.

Patrick Twist: You’ve read it, okay.

Group: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: Okay, interesting. And it gives you that whole time-span of what it was like for them. What the families were like and what they did for each other back and forth. It was, they just looked at them like they were people, not nationality or borders.

Vanessa Saenz: Did they, did business boom, like during the war effort? Did he provide cotton for the war effort? Or was it just shipped off? How did that work?

Patrick Twist: Um, if I remember correctly, you essentially...everything was.. not everything but a vast majority of it went to the war effort. Steel production, cotton production, oil production, a vast majority of it went for the soldiers that were going off to fight. But more than likely cotton was probably used for uniforms, bed sheets, bandages, take your pick. Seats in jeeps, tanks, lining for helmets. You stop and think it wasn’t just your shirt, not just your camisa that you got there, not just your pantolones its going to be the whole nine-yards.

Anything and everything that used cloth. Parachute straps, chords you name it. More than likely, Norquest cotton was in somebody's uniform somewhere at the time. It wouldn't surprise me at all. Anything else? Ask away. I know you're tired.

Group: (Laughter)

Patrick Twist: I'm fine, I mean I've had a long day, but I'm okay.

Maria Barrera: Well, you answered a lot of the questions we had as we were going around the house.

M.K. Slayton: Well, just because it's Halloween weekend, I have to ask. Are there any ghost stories or anything about this house?

Patrick Twist: Um, not ghost stories but um, we don't know if it was because of all the stuff that was in the house, because it collected over years and years and years like right now you're higher than I am and not just because of the cushion of the seat that I am on right now but because of the way the house is settled. The front door would just open, just Click, real slow. And we all just be sitting here watching television, and this is when Caroline's aunt, Aunt Dixie was living here. Have you talked to Dixie yet? Have they interviewed her?

M.K. Slayton: I think the other group interviewed her last week.

Patrick Twist: Okay. The TV was over there where that pink love seat is at and the lounge chairs or the other furniture were all composed around the tv over there and the front door was there. And we would all be sitting laughing, talking whatever, watching whatever and then the door literally, Click, would just open and I wasn't married to Caroline yet and I was just looking at the door and I knew it was shut and Aunt Dixie would say, "Oh, hello, Grandpa. Oh, hello, Grandma, welcome back and didn't miss a beat. And that is what happened. But it hasn't happened in here yet at least since we've moved into the home.

M.K. Slayton: Creepy.

Patrick Twist: Um, smells. This is the strangest thing. It's not bad smells, it's a wonderful smell of un-smoked pipe tobacco. Beautiful. In that stairwell and it freaks-hair-I've got long hair but at the back of my neck I can smell it when I go up there when I walk around. And you walk through it and you'd stop and "What was that?" I'd go back down and it was gone. But for a brief instant you can smell those smells in that stairwell. And there is no pipe tobacco anywhere in the house. And the whole house has been totally cleaned out.

Vanessa Saenz: And Grandpa smoked?

Patrick Twist: Grandpa did pipe tobacco and Uncle Ricky too. And he was here when he was a young guy in college. But I can't remember what time period that is, but he's still alive. But Grandpa had all of his stuff too. You saw all of the cigar boxes that everything is stored in. So, stuff like that. A little sweet smells and I don't know if it's the sap from the wood or not but perfume, every now and then, you can smell that but only going up the stairwell. I'm thinking that it is pulling it from somewhere and its going up via draft. But it's hovering, it's just staying there. Only thing I can think about is, you don't hear any bumps or rattles or anything like that. Or the sound of chains dragging across the floor or something like that. Um, no, but just feelings. Like out at the barn at night, I have to go out and there and check if everything is okay, you get this feeling that there are people all around you or something.

M.K. Slayton: You're trying to scare me.

Everyone: (Chuckling/Laughing)

Patrick Twist: I mean and that happens to be. And it's sometimes I don't know if I am doing it to myself or not but laying here watching television, reading I look around and that floorboard has been here since 1913 that has been through every single president since 1913, every single war and conflict, every single political change in the United States. It was here when John F.K. was assassinated. It was here when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his I have a Dream speech. It was here when the atomic bomb was dropped. It was here when the atomic bomb was developed.

Maria Barrera: That's crazy. (softly said in background.)

Patrick Twist: All that stuff. And then you sit here and you think about that stuff and its overwhelming but at the same time it's very energetic in a way. Yeah, I get a very big energy kick out of it. Um, the glass, the door, the doorknobs. Everything that this room has seen. Filled with corn cobs, you know, and then a dance. They had dances in here. The multiple Christmases where the family comes and sings and stuff like that. It's dizzying,

it's dizzying. Um, its stuff like that. You think of Marilyn Monroe, John F. Kennedy, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and Frank Sinatra. The King and I um, The Music Man. Anything that you can think of since 1913 until now this house has been standing since that happened. I mean, fire place that was here that is no longer there, the wood stove. That's right, I'd forgotten about that. The wood stove in the kitchen to warm the house. And there's a place in the roof. I don't know if...no you can't see it...no, it's on the other side of the wall. It's in the kitchen. There's a hole that is covered over. Where the heat could travel up to the upstairs and provide heat for the kids upstairs. So there was a wood stove in the other room. Um, the kitchen floor that we came in and walked on, that is, that's new plywood, not brand new but they had to replace it because the kitchen was the most used room in the entire home. Everybody was using it constantly, all the time. So the wood stove would leave little charred marks on the wood floor and that had to be eventually taken out. What happened to the wood stove? I don't know, I really don't know. Um, but there's remnants of that stuff all over the place. I'd forgotten about that stuff. The fire place and the wood stove for heat. Um, what have we found? Um, there are Uncle Ricky's model airplane stuff. Ever since he was little, he wanted to fly airplanes. Find pieces of that in the attic. Little balsa wood pieces. Um, shell casings from a Colt revolver, a single action revolver, from the cowboy days that I found upstairs. I left them there I didn't want to move them from wherever the boys were experimenting with a firearm, a handgun or something. But it was... you can tell by the base of casing, it's got a huge dent in it from an old style revolver from the turn of the century. They were probably (unintelligible) they were using for that type of stuff. Just all kinds of tiny little things um you don't think about until you see it. Okay, wait a minute (unintelligible)...Um, the wiring in the house that's all from the 1950s. 1940s not all of it. I mean it's all new wiring. You saw some of it outside the house. Just this summer we had to replace a dryer because the original wiring that wrapped wrap in what's called Nomex covering, which is this woven fabric that you can literally see the weave like this. Around this massive, not copper, aluminum, woven wire that was huge. I mean it looks like a piece of rope. That went from that fuse box, which is original to the house, up that, up the side of the roof and then across the top of the attic and then back down again up to where the drier was at. But the wiring that is up there that has just been disconnected is still laying there. So its modern wiring but the old wiring from the 1940s is still in the house. You can still see some of the switchboxes on the screened in porch when you come in from that time period. Um, that is actually out in the barn. You can still see it. Amazing what survives, to this day, what is still here.

Vanessa Saenz: Made to last. That's the thing, are stuff is no longer made to last.

Maria Barrera: Yeah.

Patrick Twist: No...Yeah, to a certain point. Again it goes back to a service oriented Lifestyle that people have gotten very very very accustomed too. Again, in a new home you walk into it and it's very hallow sounding. And in here, thum! thum! And I can be doing something in that room, or that room and my wife won't ever hear it. Because it's so thick. I mean you hear the traffic go by...when the Northers blow in, the rugs will flutter because the North wind blows in through the drying vent but it's the house is built on a concrete lip. That goes all around the outside that the support walls rest on. Underneath our feet right now s nothing but dirt. It's hallow underneath our feet. It's not solid on a concrete pad, so there's a vent on the C side of the house and on the East side of the house. And two over there and one over on that end of the house, to keep the earth dry underneath it. So when the wind blows in through that hole the rugs will flutter a little bit. When there used to be indoor/outdoor carpet in this room, which is what they could afford, it would literally blow up would flip over from the...You can see where he's sitting there are these massive spaces in the wood where the house has settled and pulled the floor apart. But in the summertime it expands, everything will close back up again. So you get a little tighter house in the summertime versus in the wintertime.

Vanessa Saenz: Which is most of the year here.

Patrick Twist: Which is most of the year. Exactly. There were some records like from the record player. Um, real thick stuff. Not vinyl, it was a different thing, like a bake-light material or something. Real super thick like from 1913, 1914, 1915. Kelly said there somewhere around here. (Ambulance siren sounding off outside.) Don't worry we're safe.

Group:(Laughs)

Patrick Twist: The fire alarm would have gone off. I've got some of those in fact. Records that were really heavy. You need a record player that has enough turn so that you can actually hear it. They're so heavy that a modern turntable is not strong enough. The time period where you had to hand crank it until finally started to spin. You could use them for a Frisbee they are so thick.

Group: (Laughter)

Lupe Flores: The wooden crosses around the house. Are those original to it as well?

Patrick Twist: No, they come from our church. We are all, the whole family, we are all Lutherans. What's a Lutheran? Um, there the first group of people to break away from the Catholic Church. Martin Luther?

Group: Yes.

Patrick Twist: "Got away from the original stuff. Where are you going?" That's us. We're Catholics like that far away. So, um, yeah. The whole family is heavily religiously involved. Every Sunday, we're all at church. Some one's playing an instrument. Someone's singing in the choir. Someone's reading. Someone's doing something. Someone's in charge of the fish fry for the church.

Vanessa Saenz: Thus the peanut oil?

Patrick Twist: Yeah, the peanut oil, you saw that out there?

Vanessa Saenz: Yes.

Patrick Twist: Exactly. It's just.

Vanessa Saenz: That or you're getting ready to fry that wild turkey for Thanksgiving.

Patrick Twist: Exactly. If I ever find it again. If we ever found that thing it would be awesome. Um, we still do things around here the old way. Every once and a while uh, Kelly and his brother-in-laws will somebody will call and say we are going to dig a poso. We're going to dig a pit and put coals in it and wrap it and put the meat in it and bury it and let it cook all night. And then 7 o'clock in the morning you take the cow's head out.

Vanessa Saenz: Oh, bar-b-que, barbacoa.

Patrick Twist: Barbacoa. The real way, in a poso in a hole in the ground uncover it, and unwrap it of course Everyone's been working on it all night long so all the guys have been drinking too much beer and breakfast shows up and it just comes right off the bone. Who's had really good barbacoa?

Group: (Unintelligible Replies).

Vanessa Saenz: The cheek!

Patrick Twist: The cheek.

Vanessa Saenz: When it's in the pit you can't beat that.

Patrick Twist: Woo-hoo!

Group: (Laughter)

Patrick Twist: So yeah, they still do that. That's over there at Kelly's house. It's covered with a piece of tin so...

Vanessa Saenz: Aside from the, I just thought of a question, aside from the cows. Did they have other cattle? Did they have the goats, like the cabritos, did they have sheep?

Patrick Twist: Goats I'm not sure about or sheep I'm not sure about. Cattle definitely.

Vanessa Saenz: About how many about how many head, or

Patrick Twist: I don't know. I know that Caroline, when she was a lot, I mean not a lot, forgive me Caroline. I'm sorry. Um, she remembers when they had cows. And that was not a corn field but it was a uh-um, pasture. And their cows were out there and the cows would get out. And so they were, "The cows are on my front lawn." And they would have to go and get them but that was all before I married her. Most of my time, that I've been married to Caroline; the whole time in fact, it's been nothing but a farming field. Whenever they got out of cattle it must have been the early 80s, I suppose. That just a pure guess or speculation on my part. Um, again that's the Polish families from McCook. I know that its way off from just this family. You go out there and they have a sausage making party. They slaughter something, pig, goat, cow and they... You go out there and like, "Okay, what am I gonna do?" "You're on the grinder. You're gonna pack the grinder. You're gonna run the skins. Everything. They make their own sausage.

Vanessa Saenz: I haven't seen a grinder in so long. My grandma used to have one.

Patrick Twist: Yeah, you go out there and it's normal. And smoking it in the smoke house. I- I don't doubt that they still do that. It wouldn't surprise me at all. And that's just, that just 20 miles away, the little town of McCook. It's nothing but a crossroad with a blinking red light. You've got all of these farming families. That that right there alone would be a massive project for a genealogical study. See what people have done, where they've gone with their lives and such. Anything else?

M.K. Slayton: Where was your family from? Before (unintelligible).

Patrick Twist: Um, Well...from what I understand from my mom and dad. Ireland and Scotland.

Maria Barrera/Vanessa Saenz: Thus the bagpipes.

Patrick Twist: Yes, Yes.

Group:(Unintelligible. Everyone laughing and talking over each other.)

Patrick Twist: And I'm going on that from what my mom has told me and I've got a little bit of paperwork which was done by one of our family members- a cousin of ours that was a genealogist. And it went back to 17, 18, 17, and 15 something like that. Where our family had...he was able to discover things from Scotland and Ireland, ties that had linked the families and they eventually...My last name is Twist, T-W-I-S-T, but our real last name, my Dad had a choice of funny marriage situation going on, real last name should have been Wagers, W-A-G-E-R-S and even when I looked up, as far as I could get I found out that the last name Twist, Wagers came from pretty much the same area. The border between Scotland and England in North Umbria. There's a little area where the river of Twizel where they think the name Twist came from because "twist" means rope makers. To weave and twist ropes together. So, that's far as I've been able to go. Kelly's family, take your pick. He goes all the way back to Germany and wherever else the whole family came from. Sweden, I believe. Um, its ridiculously long. Same thing with Odie. The Pena family. Odilia. That goes all the way to Spanish land grants and then back over to Spain. So Kelly knows that Odie's family has Jewish roots somehow or another linked over to Spain. When they immigrated from Spain. Long, long, super long time ago.

Vanessa Saenz: To escape the Inquisition?

Patrick Twist: Uh, probably. I wouldn't doubt it. Um, anything else you want to know?

Maria Barrera: Any more questions? That's it. Thank you.

Patrick Twist: You're welcome very, very much. I hope I didn't bore you to tears.

Vanessa Saenz: Oh, no. We're taking this class for fun. It's not required.

Patrick Twist: Oh, sweet. That's awesome.

Maria Barrera: The last thing I need is your signature.

Patrick Twist: Signature? Oh, okay.

Maria Barrera: And, I brought you a couple of stuff. This is a picture from the Norquest. It covers the whole area. This is a brochure from the archives in case you have any questions.

M.K. Slayton : (Unintelligible).

Patrick Twist: Oh, okay.

Maria Barrera: And uh, this, I uh Dr. Skowronek told us to give it to you.

Patrick Twist: Okay.

Maria Barrera: I didn't really get to look at it...

Patrick Twist: Okay.

Maria Barrera: Um, I, uh think its just different kind of things.

Vanessa Saenz: It's your rights as landowners and they just can't come in here and take your land.

M.K. Slayton: The informed consent?

Patrick Twist: Oh, okay. Yeah. We've been trying to get a historical designation for the house to begin with because of the age and the history of the home. Hence, Ricky from Golden, Colorado was trying to help us do that. Have it. You know how homes have that State of Texas plaque stuck on them? They're hoping our family's hoping that we can have that designated because at one time Pan Am was actually trying to take away the land. They put it under "Condemnation" and we had to fight them on it legally.

Vanessa Saenz: And I think that's what this black-

Patrick Twist: Yeah, so there's...and that the beautiful things is, that they- not you guys- but the University its

Business Acquisitions Branch was run by evil overlord named, can't remember this guy's name. Anyway, he was doing all sorts of crazy things. And we ended up having to fight him off with a massive legal battle and so on and so forth. So...

M.K. Slayton: And has that been resolved?

Patrick Twist: Uh, yeah. We're still paying for it though.

Maria Barrera: I can just imagine.

Patrick Twist: Massive legal bills but...

M.K. Slayton: Did Neil represent you in that or...

Patrick Twist: No, no, that...having a family member represent your family.

M.K. Slayton: Uh-huh.

Patrick Twist: That runs in all into all sorts of lega- I wouldn't say legal conflicts but just conflicts of interests. So it's just better to hire out someone that's a pure specialist in that area of condemnation. That's what we ended up doing.

Maria Barrera: A friend of mine interviewed Neil today.

Patrick Twist: Oh, really?

Maria Barrera: Yeah. She was really nervous about it, and I wanted to go to see him because she told me that he went to the University of Texas- Law School.

Patrick Twist: Mm-hmm.

Maria Barrera: And I kinda want to go there for law school. So I wanted to talk to him and see

Patrick Twist: Oh, he is an appellate attorney and...I don't want to ringing bells but he is one of the best ones in the Rio Grande Valley. Um, he...highly, highly, super highly regarded by a lot of his peers...Hey, Mom! Hi.

Group:(Round of "hi's" as Mrs. Odilia Pena and Mrs. Caroline Twist enter room.)

Patrick Twist: That's Odilia, Odie. Not my mom, but my mother-in-law but I call her "Mom." She's my mom.

Maria Barrera: Okay. Can I get your signature here?

Patrick Twist: Sure.

Maria Barrera: And there's another. There's like two.

Patrick Twist: That down here?

Maria Barrera: Uh, yeah, sorry, down there.

Patrick Twist: Okay, so, here.

Maria Barrera: Interviewee.

Patrick Twist: Interviewee.

Vanessa Saenz: I'm curious about the paddle that's up there.

M.K. Slayton: Yeah, what does it say?

Patrick Twist: Die Klatsch it means goof off.

Vanessa Saenz: Did they use that

Jose Casas: I think that's self-explanatory.

Patrick Twist: Yeah, they used it. They got whacked.

Vanessa Saenz: (To Mrs. Twist) You never got that, did you?

Patrick Twist: Dei Klatsch. The paddle. See even there they are like, "No, oh, no" Everybody knows about that paddle. Caroline? Oh, she disappeared.

Mrs. Twist: Yes? (very faint).

Patrick Twist: I hear Dot, that's Dorothy. The Chihuahua.

Jose Casas: Chihuahuas are adorable.

Vanessa Saenz: Unless you've been attacked by them. I'm keeping my calf facing away from her...

Group:(Overlapping conversations and laughter).

*Following 4 minutes consist of conversations regarding the date (Friday 28th) and the Mr. and Mrs. Twists dogs and pets: Penelope "Penny", a Chihuahua, Dorothy "Dot", another Chihuahua and Minerva a kitten.

This transcription, approved and edited by Caroline Twist, contains minor orthographical changes from the original transcription done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

This is the interview of Caroline Twist that took place on Friday, October 28, 2011 at 12:00 pm. Caroline Twist is the oldest daughter of Kelly Norquest. This interview took place on the Norquest property at the intersection of Sugar and Chapin streets in Edinburg, Texas. The main interviewer was Geoffrey Waters with additional questions by David Garcia, Michal Hartman and Liza Soria. The interview itself took place in the living room of the center house of the three houses of the Norquest property.

The file used for transcription is Olympus – WS600061.MP3

[setting up and talking about origins of the house]

Kelly Norquest: ...after World War II, and my dad built it for a um, a um – OK, there ya go - [assisting someone set up] built it for refugee family he was sponsoring from Europe.

Michal Hartman: Oh, wow!

Kelly Norquest: They were a German family, ethnic Germans from uh, from Poland the communists had chased out. They did not have anywhere to go. And it was a widow lady with about 3 – uh, about 4 or 5 kids and he guaranteed a job for the oldest son who was about 18, 19 years old to work on the farm here. And after they got here, the lady herself found a job at the hospital since she was a nurse and they raised their family here.

Michal Hartman: Wow.

Kelly Norquest: And the oldest daughter, who was about my age at the time, she ended up, uh, going to Pan-Am and getting an English degree and teaching English in high school all of her career.

Michal Hartman: Wow. That's awesome. Just from getting a place to stay.

Kelly Norquest: So yeah! Then later on we fixed the house up. Years later when I got married and our two kids Caroline Twist and Catherine who were little at the time they lived, we lived here for several years. And then in more recent times Caroline Twist and her husband Patrick have lived here about 8, 8 or 9

Caroline Twist: Yeah, 8 years.

Kelly Norquest: 10 years!

Caroline Twist: 8 years.

Kelly Norquest: 8 years. And they started fixing up the old

Caroline Twist: 9 years...8 years...yeah.

Kelly Norquest: house where my sister had been living - repairing it, and maintaining it, and getting it all fixed up and everything and they moved in over there now. So that's

Caroline Twist: Yeah.

Michal Hartman: Oh, ok.

Caroline Twist: That's the possible Sears house. But my grandpa had, um, what do you say? He...not...did he remodel it? Is that the word?

Kelly Norquest: Yeah, he remodeled it on the inside.

Caroline Twist: Yeah he didn't renovate it, he like completely remodeled it.

Geoffrey Waters: Oh, wow.

Caroline Twist: So it doesn't even look like it used to look.

Kelly Norquest: Yeah he remodeled it on the inside. He was only about 30 years old when he remodeled it and it's, it's been in the present configuration now, uh, since 1940, I guess. 70, 80 years.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there pictures of it before?

Kelly Norquest & **Caroline Twist**: Oh yeah! Yeah.

Geoffrey Waters: Cool, cool.

Kelly Norquest: And they've got a few of 'em over there. Patrick's gonna look at them with her husband this evening and so forth. So I don't know. Are there plans for the...do you know if there are plans for the students to come out here again later or...I don't really know?

Geoffrey Waters: Um, we had talked about possible follow up interviews if we wanted to ask more questions, but I'm not sure.

Kelly Norquest: Yeah.

David Garcia: I think we do have to come back because we have to go over the transcribing with you and make sure everything's correct.

Geoffrey Waters: Yeah we have to go through the transcription with you so you can...

David Garcia: And then if you allow us to do any additional interviews...

Kelly Norquest: Yeah. Well y'all have got, ya know, with all the five disciplines during a one semester time period, you know, that's really a lot of stuff! And to gather of all kinds of things it's really just a brief snapshot. There's no really in-depth interviews with any single person it's, it's an overview. And I guess that what Dr. Skowronek has told me. I've known him for - since he came here. And he's trying to develop a history of the region, the area here that, uh, is...people like I was telling you that historians they've - they just haven't focused on this really. And it's all going under concrete and asphalt and everything and that history is being lost everywhere. So he's trying to get snap shots with this CHAPS program.

Interviewer: Mhmm.

Kelly Norquest: Snapshots everywhere they can as the growth continues and not lose everything. And it's just so...but...more in depth is what your graduate studies, theses, and papers and so forth that you're studying more in-depth will come in if they'll get more students to do that too so...Anyway those are just some thoughts for you. Now I'm chairman of the advisory council for the historical collection here at the university I have been, I've been working with that for many years along with George Gause. So, and we're still working on it. In fact, we have a meeting coming up next month. Ok well I'm gonna go. Caroline, is there anything you wanta ask before I leave or what? I'm gonna leave 'em with you. I'm not gonna -

Caroline Twist: Ok. [laughs]

[04:48]

Kelly Norquest: Tell 'em whatever they ask the way you see it.

Caroline Twist: Ok.

Kelly Norquest: You wanta tell 'em your dads an old fool well you can do that too.

[laughter]

Caroline Twist: Well... Yeah, I better not say too much or he might not come back and get me.

Kelly Norquest: Yeah well, let, let me know when you're done then and whatever.

Caroline Twist: Ok. Yeah, I'll give you a call.

Kelly Norquest: I'll be over at the house. Ok nice meeting you all!

Michal Hartman: Bye sir.

Eloise Montemayor: Bye!

Kelly Norquest: and Eloise nice seeing you again.

Eloise: Ok. You too! Thank you.

Michal Hartman: Nice meeting you.

Kelly Norquest: Ok, take care.

Michal Hartman: Have a good day sir.

[setting up recording equipment from 05:19 – 7:51]

[07:51]

Geoffrey Waters: I'm Geoffrey Waters and this is

Caroline Twist: Caroline Twist

Geoffrey Waters: And today is October 28th. And it's what? 12...

Eloise Montemayor: Almost 12:15.

Geoffrey Waters: 12:15. Um, I guess I'll just start. The first question is, um, if you remember any extreme weather occurrences that happened during your life time?

Caroline Twist: Yes. Um, two hurricanes and snow. [laughs] The ...hurricane Allen was 1980 and then hurricane Dolly in 2008. And it snowed here! We had about 3 inches on the ground and that was December 24th, 2004. And with hurricane Allen, um, it flooded badly enough that the house next door, which is where we were living at the time, um, started taking on water and we had to evacuate over to the house on the corner, which is up on, it's up higher anyway. And I was about oh 6 or 7 at that time. So I basically remember just the hurricane and the rain and stuff. It was real grey outside. Then we went out, my dad took us outside at one point when the sun came out then we went back in the house. And sometime during the night my mom was like, [laughs] "Okay girls! We need to leave! There's water coming in the house." So, um, that's what we did. We put on the - we put on the little clothes we had and some boots and we walked down the street and went to my grandma and grandpas house. Um, I don't know how long we stayed there. I just remember going on the porch and, like, watching the water go by. And I think we ended up with, like, six inches of water in the house. And I remember after that the earth worms crawling all over the floor thinking that was really disgusting. [laughs] And so that was - there were frogs all over the street. You couldn't drive. I mean you could but you'd just squash 'em and slip and slide. And, um, yeah...But since I was like 6 or 7 I just thought, "ooh there's a lot of water where there shouldn't be and that was like really exciting stuff. And hurricane Dolly the water didn't get as high which was a good in my opinion. It did come up to the, like, the porch step out there and since this house is on septic tank that was flooded. So we had to go to my parents house about once or twice a day to take care of business over there; wading through 7 or 8 inches of water that began to stink after awhile. And, I think the snow was a lot more fun. But yeah I should mention that it just doesn't snow here. I think it had been 109 years since it had showed before. So yeah, we got like 3 inches that was really cool [laughs]. So, those are major weather occurrences that I can remember since I've lived here. Well ones of note anyway.

Geoffrey Waters: I guess in the same line, do you remember any periods of drought that were significant?

Caroline Twist: Um...I just remember it being hot and everything would be brown. But I don't remember, like, how it affected people much or animals or anything like that. I just thought, well, it's always hot here. I'm just trying to think if there was a pattern or anything. I don't remember...like, I don't remember if it was wetter when I was younger or if there was a period when it was, like, really dry. I just remember "oh, well it's hot" or "oh, it didn't rain for a few months." Yeah I guess it was pretty dry this past year.

Geoffrey Waters: Um, so in response to the hurricanes and snow were there any significance responses by the land? Like you said there was a septic tank. But were there any other responses? Were there maybe trees that fell down?

Caroline Twist: Uh, oh yeah well there was a Hackberry that fell down next door during Hurricane Dolly. It was a sizable tree. It didn't damage anything. It sort of fell on a shack and the shack held it up [laughs]. So I guess the shack was pretty well built and there was just a random storm we had, like I don't know, 5 or 6 years ago and one of the, I think it was an elm tree on the side of the house next door twisted and it fell over and someone who came to look at it said it almost looked like tornado damage, but we don't know if there was or not. And that was unrelated to the hurricane. It was just a random storm. And yeah, I don't know, I think...those are the trees I can remember. And, like, the houses have been pretty...pretty well built so they hardly suffer much.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember anything specific about canal systems around here and the crop irrigation system?

Caroline Twist: Well, I remember. Just not like specifics about canals or whatever, but I remember when they watered the crops out here. My Dad...my uncle had a herd of cattle. They - that's what I remember when I was little. That there was cattle out there in the pasture. And then after my grandpa died, I believe, they sold them off to help with some bills and stuff. Then they started farming it the way you see it now. But I think they had a

farmer come in and rent it. He rents – the farmer rents the field. So he’s the one who would do all the irrigation. But I remember... just... seeing how – thinking it was interesting how they would have to make the big ditches. And then sometimes there would be fish swimming in the ditches [laughs] that they were using to irrigate. Um, and of course well then they do just regular yard irrigation too. And we’d go out and play in that. But um, yeah other than that I don’t know much about it except just that I was kind of fascinated with the fish [laughs] coming from the canal water out there. And that they would make the big ditches to store the main water and it would go out in furrows. And I guess that’s how they’re still doing it. I mean, just a couple weeks ago they irrigated the corn out there. So...

Geoffrey Waters: Do you know anything specific about how the farmer’s maintain the irrigation canals? Did they bring workers in?

Caroline Twist: Um, I guess they must. I don’t know that the farmer himself does everything. I don’t know who it is. I mean sometimes you see a man working out there, with a shovel. That was like a couple of weeks ago I saw one working. I guess they make the break in the big ditch that they dig and then it flows out the furrows. But I don’t know who specifically they hire or anything like that.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there any wells on the property that you remember that might still be there or aren’t there anymore?

Caroline Twist: Mmm...as far as I know they had a cistern- like a water collection. I don’t know that they had wells. I could be wrong. My dad would know more about that. But he told me about the water collection cistern that they had over there at the old house. And... I guess that was just like rain water maybe and they just let it collect there. And there is one, there is another cistern that’s not in use over there that’s still there but, I mean we don’t use it, obviously, ‘cause now its connected to city water and stuff. [laughs] So...

Geoffrey Waters: Have you always had city water connected here since you’ve lived here?

Caroline Twist: Um...water – yes. This house still has the cistern out over there in that corner. Um, and I think they had it since they built their house in 1976. And of course they got hooked up to the city at that time as far as I – no wait they had a cistern there too! They filled it up. I don’t know when they got connected to the sewage though. But yeah we’ve always had like the tap water, of course. But then the septic tanks took care of the sewage for a long time. This house obviously still has it. That house I don’t know when they put in city water either. Um, but I remember my grandma having to drink, like, the big bottled water from H-E-B because she didn’t want to drink out of the taps. So, I don’t know what that had to do with - if it had, like, lead pipes or something that you wouldn’t want to drink out of it. Or if there was something wrong with the water itself. But, yeah, she always told us to drink out of the bottled water.

Geoffrey Waters: Um, what is, what was done with garbage since you’ve lived here?

Caroline Twist: The city picks it up.

Geoffrey Waters: it’s just been picked up?

Caroline Twist: They gave us - we used to have the regular aluminum trash cans, whatever you want, but now they gave these big gray things. But yeah, uh, that’s all I known living here. Um, yeah, my parents and my grandma used to have this, those silver aluminum things and then, like, plastic stuff that you would buy at Wal-Mart or whatever. Um, all I know - my dad had told me sometimes they would burn stuff, but I guess that was before we were in the city limits. Um, because you can’t do that anymore. But that was like years and years ago. And I’m trying to think if there was anything else I can remember. But, yeah, ever since I’ve lived here the city gave us all those grey, uniform trash cans.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there any structures that were once on the property that aren’t there anymore?

Caroline Twist: Um, there was a barn. There’s a barn now but there used to be a barn that was facing or it was, yeah, it was facing west I believe and it was running north to south. Now the barn that’s over there is facing south and it goes east to west but um...I’m not sure why my grandpa pulled that down. But that’s what used to be over there and I don’t remember it at all. Um, so I know that building used to be there. And other than that, my uncle built his house so there was a building put there that wasn’t there. And then my dad had built his house like 10 years before that so that was another building that wasn’t there before. Um, I’m trying to think if there was like some, there was probably like little outhouses or something that I think my dad said they would move

those around, they wouldn't keep it in the same spot. You have to move it around. Yeah I can't think of any other buildings that used to be there except that old barn.

[10 second pause]

Geoffrey Waters: [inaudible] Are we supposed to stick with those two questions?

David Garcia: I think the majority was supposed...

Michal Hartman: I wrote a lot of questions. They weren't asked.

David Garcia: Do you remember anything about those outhouses that you mentioned? Like where they were... or was that before?

Caroline Twist: No. Yeah I don't think, personally no. but I could tell you stories [laughs] but it would be like... [inaudible]

Michal Hartman: How many times a week did the trash get picked up? And like, was it the men? 'Cause I remember men, [inaudible] now it's just automatic.

Caroline Twist: Right, yeah. It used to be the men would get out of the truck. It was just once a week as far as I know. And, yeah, they didn't used to run on holiday

Michal Hartman: Oh.

Caroline Twist: So like, [laughs] so like if your trash was supposed to get picked up on the fourth of July that year, it like was you just wait 'til the next week.

Michal Hartman: Oh wow!

Caroline Twist: Yeah so it was like a big thrill when they started paying 'em overtime to work on holidays to [laughing] to get the garbage picked up. But yeah, um, I do remember the men now that you mention it. They used to get out of the truck and throw it in the back of the thing and now it's that little arm that comes out. Yeah.

Geoffrey Waters: Also in reference to the garbage, I know these are like farm places so there's probably like large pieces of garbage also? Did the city always come by to pick up big things or, like, brush piles and stuff like that?

Caroline Twist: I think... I think, like, big stuff they would take to the dump. I remember going once. Um, my parents had a friend that lived like way, sorry, way northeast of town and, um, she had them, I don't know if like the dump was on the way to her house or something but I remember going out there to, with a trailer load of stuff to take to the dump and we stopped at her house. But yeah, I know that the big stuff they used to take to the dump. And probably since they haven't really been doing farming, they're kinda retired from that um, it's more like just regular stuff...but yeah.

Michal Hartman: And where's the dump?

Caroline Twist: I don't remember. I was like 10 or something at the time. [laughs] I was little. I just thought it like "oh look we got a trailer full of stuff and we're taking it to the dump!" I remember thinking the dump was pretty cool. [laughs] But when your 10, yeah, that's a highlight.

Michal Hartman: Was the jail house still here? Like the jail house that's there, like the architecture and stuff of it? Like, does it still look the same as it was now? As it is now?

Caroline Twist: Um...

Michal Hartman: The museum. The South Texas Museum.

Caroline Twist: Oh! Well it was just that one little building, that little - the original jail I guess. The white building and then they added all that other stuff, all the new buildings, the big buildings. But, yeah there used to be a jail out that way. That was like the "new" jail. That was over by, yeah it used to be K-Mart. It's not K-Mart anymore and I don't think it's even a jail anymore. [laughs] I think they moved that one too.

Geoffrey Waters: So the canals that they used to irrigate the crops are all in the same place that they were? Or have they changed or have they gotten smaller or bigger?

Caroline Twist: Uh, I guess they'd be in the same place. I haven't heard of them making any new ones.

Geoffrey Waters: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: I think there's one out to the east and then there's the one that way and there's, far as I know,

like the stand pipes and everything are in the same place. Um, I don't think they've done, I mean don't think they've made any new ones.

Geoffrey Waters: So they are all still in use and everything?

Caroline Twist: As far as I know.

Michal Hartman: How big was Pan-Am? Like, is it the size now? Like, were all those buildings there?

Caroline Twist: No. It was smaller. It was a lot smaller. Yeah, and then they started building stuff, like, I think even after I graduated. I graduated in '96 and they started putting even more buildings there that weren't there before. It was kind of smaller. [laughs] But I still thought it was real big.

Geoffrey Waters: Like, which parts of campus do you remember being bigger?

Caroline Twist: Uh, well everything, like, to the northeast corner that - what is it? That, um, that ITT building wasn't there and there's a lot of the science, uh, I think they have a new science complex that it was like a lot smaller. Um. I think they even did like the nursing and education buildings too. They used to be like just two stories, like they're bigger now and they probably modernized everything. It seemed kind of - It was like scaled down before and then they just expanded it [laughs] and added new buildings like that ITT building or whatever it is. I noticed a bunch of houses aren't there anymore that used to be there around the campus. Those little houses in that little neighborhood. There used to be a lot more houses. Like, little small cute houses and now they're kind of gone.

Geoffrey Waters: Maybe where the parking lots are now, right?

Caroline Twist: Probably. [laughs] Yeah.

Michal Hartman: Was it as, like, the ratio or the size of the school that it is now with all the people with, like, no parking. Was it like that back then?

Caroline Twist: Um, I don't think it was as bad back then. I mean I remember having, like, to circle the parking lot sometimes. But a lot of times you could just go in or you would go, like um, to the fine arts parking lot and you could always find a space there and I think it might be different now. I think it might be a lot harder now [laughs]. Yeah, and there was, like um, across the street where the little police thingy is, you could always find a parking space there. And I think yeah, they expanded it and now you can't find anything. So, oh yeah! They put a gym there too. That wasn't there before. It's like you could go run on a track. [laughs] So, yeah.

Geoffrey Waters: Um, how did most people get to pan am? Did people live in the area or did people commute?

Caroline Twist: Yeah I think a lot of people lived in the area. And... well like when I went there was a few people like maybe that came in from Harlingen. But I mean since UT Brownsville was down there they also had that option. Um, yeah it was a lot of people from Edinburg, McAllen, Mission, um, Pharr that were kind of closer I think. And then they had the dormitories but they were smaller. I don't know what the dormitory situation is like now I think they have different ones now. Yeah, but, that was mostly, like, athletics and stuff, those people that had to come from out of state would stay there pretty much. And yeah I think, I think the just the student body was probably a lot smaller back then. It had just, um, it had just gone from being Pan-Am College, Pan American College to being with the UT system and so, it was still small when I went there at that time. But then it was like gradually every year it would get a little more students and more students since they had, since it was affiliated with UT.

Michal Hartman: Were there any drought regulations, like, where you can't wash the, I mean you can't water the grass and stuff?

Caroline Twist: Yeah every once in a while they would give notices. Like, you could only water it on a certain day, during these certain hours and stuff. I think we probably got some this summer too.

Michal Hartman: Do, like, the water and light come together on the same bill? Like, I mean, the water and the sewage or trash pickup, or was it a separate charge and stuff?

Caroline Twist: Um, I don't know how they did it back then but now it's like, I think trash is on one and water is on another one. They send little postcards. [laughs] Yeah.

Liza Soria: How did weather affect your houses here? Eventually, over time the houses start to deteriorate. How did you guys keep them up?

Caroline Twist: Um, well in the case of the house, the big house on the corner, my grandpa took out the chim-

neys because water would start pouring down the chimneys and um, bats lived in one of 'em. And he was not fond of having bats in the house. [laughs] So that kind of helped. But unfortunately, um, the house doesn't have central heat so you take out the fireplaces and yeah the house is really cold in the winter. Um, my dad's had to replace shingles and stuff on his house. And this house got, um, the siding is that um, what is it called? It's like a composite, cement composite thing so to help withstand the sun and water better. Because like the sun blasts on it and the paint strips off and...yeah, but it's a lot of, like, shingle changing mostly keeping the roofs intact to make sure no water comes in.

Michal Hartman: Do you know the type of architect used, like architecture used? Like um, like downtown you know 'cause they, uh, like the style like the way that theater is, is it like a Mexican style or Italian style like of the buildings that were around? Like, did they look the same or was it just like cookie cutter boxes that all look the same?

Caroline Twist: Well I think there's several different architecture styles from what I've just been able to see, like, passing by or whatever. It looks like some of its, like, craftsman type from, um, the late teens and early twenties and then some of it I think must have been after World War II and those houses look a little different. They look more like this one. [laughs] But, yeah uh, I don't know like specific architecture styles very well but, um, that courthouse is interesting [laughs] compared to what used to be there and that was, like, I guess that would be kind of, I don't know, that arts and crafts era, craftsman. It was real pretty. So I don't know what the new one is, what that style would be called, modern or post modern or something.

Michal Hartman: So, like what was over there? Like, in the main area where the courthouse is at?

Caroline Twist: The square?

Michal Hartman: Yeah.

Caroline Twist: Um, people had their businesses there. Um, there used to be more stores now it seems like it's a lot of law offices. There was a pharmacy on a, what is that? The southeast corner?

Geoffrey Waters: 12th street.

Caroline Twist: Yeah I think so. There was a pharmacy on that corner and I remember a store called Letell's that had dresses and nice clothes. And uh, I'm trying to – those were, like, the two main ones that my parents would take us to; [laughs] the pharmacy and the clothing store. And I remember the buildings, those started kind of I guess needing work. The Citrus was there too; the theater. And um, eventually I guess Edinburg or someone started fixing those buildings up a little nicer. I guess they were trying to get back to how they used to be 'cause they covered them over with like white paint and stuff like that. So now I think they look a little better. And now they're mostly law offices now. [laughs] But there used to be, like, a variety. I think there was, like, a little restaurant there too or maybe more than one. And there was a bank. It wasn't just the tax office. It was like First State Bank or something. So yeah, there was more of a variety of stores and shops and things and now it's mostly law offices, which is kind of different.

Michal Hartman: At what time did, like, the trash man come? In the morning?

Caroline Twist: Oh, I don't remember. Right now they come whenever. [laughs] I haven't figured out their schedule yet. You put it out in the morning and hope they haven't come to pick it up. But yeah...

Geoffrey Waters: You mentioned the Citrus Theater. Was it still like not being used or what was...?

Caroline Twist: No, I remember watching a movie there! I was like five and I think we went to go see one of the pink panther movies with inspector Clouseau. Yeah uh, I might have seen another movie or two there and there was a drive in where Wal-Mart is and we saw some movies there too, that was fun. It was kind of sad when they tore it down. [laughs] And yeah the Citrus was nice. Well I thought it was nice, I didn't know, like we didn't go to the movies much. There weren't really places to go so we had the drive in and we had the Citrus. And I think the Citrus had a balcony but I don't know if the balcony was in use at that time or not. I know later on they said that, you know, you couldn't go up there. But yeah, it was nice to have those two different styles of movie going experiences.

Geoffrey Waters: So, what else did you for fun growing up around here?

Caroline Twist: [laughing] We made mud pies! No. [laughs] Um, um...well, obviously my grandma's house was there, so we would run back and forth, get bored over here and go visit grandma. Um, there wasn't a lot of

houses at all. [points to across the street] That was, like, a little field across the street. It was a field it wasn't the reservoir. Nobody really lived - there was a couple of houses on the corner, but like Smith Street wasn't even there, I don't think. It was just, like, more fields and things. And um, so we just kind of do what we could. We would go out - my sister and I would go out to the pasture and play under the mesquite trees [laughs] and we had a little garden and I remember we used play in that. And yeah, we would go out wherever there was a patch of dirt. We would get the hose and we'd make mud and coat ourselves in it. [laughs] But I mean that's, like, what we would do here. Obviously, we would go to school and play with our friends and stuff like that. But, um, [laughs] for fun yes, it was like go into the pasture and rile the cows up or something. We had ducks. So, we would play with the ducks too. And dogs and cats too.

Liza Soria: What was the wildlife like? Because I mean, it's changed so much.

Caroline Twist: Um, since we didn't have as much brush at that time it was mostly - we had the pasture which was kind of just, um, a few trees and a lot of grass. And then, they had, um, stuff to take care, stuff to take care of the cows. Um, so they had it more cleared for the cattle to go over there. Um, I remember, like, blackbirds and sparrows and just our animals that we had here; the cattle, the dogs, the cats, we had some ducks. Um, and then once the brush started growing up, um, we got a lot more, like, birds and rabbits and things coming in. So, yeah, the birds have increased as far as variety. Yeah like, now you can just go outside and see kiskadees and um, cardinals and there's a bunch of little warblers of different kinds that migrate through here. And, um, rabbits - we've got rabbits and jack rabbits and, like, cotton tails and jack rabbits, indigo snakes which are helpful. That means we don't have rattlesnakes [laughs]. And so yeah I would say since actually, I think the only bird we lost since we got rid of the cattle, since we sold off the cattle was egrets. We used to have a lot more egrets and now we don't really see those. But since the reservoir is there and it's got water in it, it's like attracting birds. So, now there's whistling ducks and we've seen a few flocks fly over and um, hawks! The other, like about a month ago, I woke up early and I looked out the window and there was a hawk sitting up on top of the security light, eating something. You could see it pulling stuff. [laughs] But yeah, that's part of the wildlife and of course, yeah rodents.

Liza Soria: Did you see any falcons? 'Cause I remember a few months ago seeing a falcon at Pan-Am.

Caroline Twist: Oh, really?

Liza Soria: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: Um, there's different kinds. I guess different, I just kind of all classified them as hawks. But yeah they're different - some of them are larger and some of them are smaller. Oh, turkey vultures too. [laughs] They eat the dead things. But yeah....there's a lot, a lot more birds. We had a chachalaca out a few years ago and that was really noisy. And I remember once I was coming out of one of my classes at Pan-Am and there was a chachalaca in the um, history building and it was trying to frantically get out and it was screaming a lot. And so yeah it eventually made its way out the door and, like, then the people were screaming because it was making its way out the door with them. Um, and last spring, uh, we had a wild turkey fly in. I'm not entirely sure why, but it just flew into that lot over there. But it was just kind of walking around and making little turkey noises. Um, my husband got that on tape. So, yeah...it's...I think that since the brush has grown up we've, like, attracted a lot more wildlife. I mean its little stuff. It's not like coyotes and things like that, but yeah birds and rabbits and snakes.

Michal Hartman: What about like swimming pools? Were there any swimming pools or anything or lakes where you could go swimming?

Caroline Twist: Well, this whole area turns into a big lake when it rains, but um, my grandpa made a swimming pool over there in, like, the 50's, I think. And we just actually had that filled in this summer because it was, um, caving in and so it was becoming a hazard. And so, like yeah, I've got a little niece and nephew and they would wanna come and play and it's like, "Don't go over there!" So, we just filled it in. And yeah, we just had an above ground swimming pool. Like, you know the kind you would buy at Wal-Mart that's like 3 ft deep [laughs] and eventually the ducks took over that so we didn't swim in that anymore. But the one my grandpa built was kind of neat 'cause it was in-ground; it was, like, all cement and brick. It was just kind of like long and thin like this table. But obviously big enough for people to go swimming in it. [sighs] But that is no longer there. I mean, it's

there, the structure is there, but it's filled in not to be a swimming pool anymore.

Geoffrey Waters: Where did you go to school around here? What schools were you zoned for?

Caroline Twist: Um, well, at that time, the schools were a little bit more limited. We didn't have as many. [laughs] So, we had North Junior High, which is the old one. Uh, it used to be the old college and...so that's where I went to junior high until somehow they rezoned and I was over at South Middle School which is the one in town that used to be the high school. And then, they shifted things around again and there was the 9th grade campus, which is just like by itself on the south-southeast side of town. And then I went to Edinburg High School because there were no other high schools. So, I spent all four years there and then, like, two years after I graduated, they built Edinburg North. So...and my elementary school was, uh, St. Matthew's Episcopal School, which is where my parents sent us since they had helped fund that to get it building. I guess they figured well we better send our kids there and give 'em some more money to help keep it going. So, that's where we went for elementary school and, um, yeah there were a lot less schools. We sort of had a boom I guess in the 90's. And they're still building them. So, yeah, it wasn't as confusing I guess. It was like you knew what school you were gonna go to pretty much and now, I guess it's like there's a lot more.

[brief pause]

Michal Hartman: Were there any reports of alligators in the water or anything? Has there ever been any, like, ever?

Caroline Twist: Hmm...I think the only one - my parents saw one in Falfurrias on a trip. It like, went across the street. [laughs] I was kind of surprised to hear that, but I've never heard of any here. Um, my sister when she was living out on Seminary road, she thought she saw, like, a big cat, like, I don't know what you would call them. They're like a cougar or...?

Michal Hartman: Bobcat?

Caroline Twist: Yeah, some kind of big cat. She and her husband were driving and it was in the morning and they just saw it were like, "Ooh! That was not a dog!" [laughs] They didn't know what it was but yeah....

Geoffrey Waters: So, what kind of chores and stuff did your parents make you do around the house and the ranch?

Caroline Twist: Um, well, I remember ironing. I ironed my dad's clothes a lot. Um, just basic things --washing the dishes. A lot of times they were like, you need to work on your homework, so that's your chore! Do your school work. And um, I guess when we weren't doing that sometimes we would help him with the cattle. Like, we would help him feed them or call them in to come get fed. And I mean, I was really little at that time from the time I was born until....I think we sold them when I was 9, so I was little, little and it was probably more like for fun. [laughs] Um, I'm trying to think....what else did we do? I remember...clearing some brush out here - that was when I was older. Probably like in high school or something and it just started getting overgrown. So, my dad and my uncle were like, "Let's go clear the brush!" So, we did that. And there was a lot of trash that had blown in [laughs] so, it was like clearing trash and brush. But yeah, oh it's hard to think about because I do I remember them telling us, "Your school work is your main...your main thing to do." And so, we always had to work on that.

Liza Soria: Did they not want you helping out with the land?

Caroline Twist: Um, there really wasn't much to do I guess. Like, they had the farmer who would rent it and he would just come and do his thing and we had a little garden and we grew like carrots and stuff and that was our own thing. And I think my mom really was the one who took care of that and was like, "Let them help. They can pull weeds, whatever." Um, my dad used to mow all of this himself. Um, until I guess he retired and then it got to be a little bit much for him to do it and um, other than that I guess my sister probably would have been the one she seemed to have been outside more than I was. I was always inside reading and stuff. Um, so if she did anything that I don't know about that is quite possible. She might have done more than I did outside.

[brief pause]

Michal Hartman: Were there any potholes that created, like, puddles of water?

Caroline Twist: Um, this a low spot. So, if we get any rain of any sort, it fills. [laughs] Yeah um...I think it's mostly just where this house is though.

Liza Soria: How would that affect transportation? Just getting places? Since, it floods so badly.

Caroline Twist: Um, here I didn't notice it as much. It seems like we were always able to get out onto the street. Where I was living there was some apartments like kind of across the street from Pan-am when I was - after I had graduated. That! Those streets would flood so bad you couldn't even get out and I would have to call into work and call into work a couple of times and say, I can't leave. There's no way to get out of here. Um, I don't know if they fixed that or not, but it used to be a real problem. Here it was like, this was the low spot, so you could just drive up to the high - to the street, which was a lot higher. And...see I don't remember anything like hindering. Hmm...yeah, I wonder what happened over there if they fixed that. [laughs] If they got better drainage...

Liza Soria: Well, it flooded pretty badly during hurricane Dolly, like you could just swim in it practically.

Caroline Twist: yeah, that's kind of how it was here. I was really happy that the water didn't get high enough

Liza Soria: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: to get into the house. Because what we did I think I woke up at 4 in the morning and I saw the water and it was getting higher outside. So, I woke up my husband and we got the dogs and we went next door, um, to the big house again. Which is on higher ground. And I was afraid to come back because I was like, "Ugh...what if there's water in the house?" [laughs] I didn't want to see that, but there wasn't! Thank goodness. But it was bad enough as it was. [laughs]

Geoffrey Waters: Kelly mentioned that you live here with your husband. When did you meet him and how did you all meet?

Caroline Twist: Um, the first time we met was in high school. I was a sophomore and he was a senior and we had Spanish class together and I sat right behind him. And I thought he was big and scary at that time. [laughs] It was probably 'cause I was like, a sophomore and he was a senior and he was acting like a senior! [laughs] Like, "give me some paper! I don't have a pen. Let me use, let me use your pen." But um, then ten years later we were working here at Allen Floral when Betty Cox used to own it and that's when we met for the second time. And I think we were married like, a couple years later. [laughs] So, yeah, then we moved here. I mean, I was, like, living with my parents and my husband had been living here for a little bit because by that time he was teaching, so this was a lot closer to his school than where he was living before. So, he lived in this house and then, we got married and we lived here for eight years and it was pretty uneventful until Hurricane Dolly. The snow was nice. But yeah, Hurricane Dolly was the one that was kind of like, I was glad to move out and move next door. That was not fun with all of that water. [laughs]

[brief 6 second pause]

Michal Hartman: You said there were fish in the canals. Did you guys ever go fishing at the canals?

Caroline Twist: No, no....

Michal Hartman: Or skip rocks or anything? [laughs]

Caroline Twist: No. [laughs] I mean if we had water out here, we would go play in whatever ditches they made and yeah, again, my sister was the one who was, like, much more adventurous and she would go and do things and I would be like, "Don't do that! No you're not supposed to do that! You're gonna mess it up." So she was the one that would go and have fun and I would be the little prissy one telling her not to do it. Yeah, I don't know where the fish I mean I guess the fish must have come from the canal, but I don't know why, like, they were there or how they got into the canal. I always wondered because they were big fish. I think they were catfish probably.

Michal Hartman: And the canal like, what source of water was it from?

Caroline Twist: Um, I'm guessing probably the one to the east maybe. They might have also used the one over there. I was - I think they have pipes underground and they come, like they have somehow they have underground pipes and they have stand pipes also. Um, but as far as that goes, I don't know how they make it work to make the water come over here. My husband probably knows more about that than I do. Um, my dad for sure would know more about that than I do.

Michal Hartman: And also you said this is the only house that doesn't have city water?

Caroline Twist: Yeah it has, like, city tap water, but not sewage.

Michal Hartman: Oh! Ok.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, so there's still a septic tank.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there other septic tanks around on the property that might still be there from the previous

Caroline Twist: Mhmm.

Geoffrey Waters: houses that switched onto city sewage?

Caroline Twist: Yeah. My dad's got one and that one is funny because every once in a while, um, part of the dirt has settled and so you're walking out in the yard and your foot will sink in the ground and there you are stuck in a septic tank. And I think there's one out by the street, um, at the old house. My dad showed me where it was. It's closer to the street than I thought it would be. And then there's the cistern still there. And when it rains or we irrigate the yard that will take on some water but it's really not supposed to. It just does. So as far as I know those are the – this one here that's in use and my dad's old one and then there's an old one over there and a cistern.

Michal Hartman: So no wells were ever used on here?

Caroline Twist: I don't think they had wells. I'm not entirely sure though. Because from what my dad has told me, it seems like they used like cistern water collection. So I don't know I could be mistaken.

Michal Hartman: And how did that cistern get filled, like did they come bring water or?

Caroline Twist: I know some of it was rain water. Um but I don't, I really don't know like if they had a drought where they would get the water from.

David Garcia: So you all would use the water directly from the cistern? Or would you, you had a filtration system or how did that work?

Caroline Twist: I don't know. All the time that we've lived here we had, um, city water

David Garcia: Oh ok. I see.

Caroline Twist: like, from the taps. So yeah my dad would he's the one that would know like about the older stuff. But I think even he would say, "well I was just a kid!" [laughs] But yeah...

Geoffrey Waters: You mentioned that that one septic tank is really close to the road. Have there been like a lot of – has there been construction on the streets? Like, city construction since you've lived here? Like have they made them wider or?

Caroline Twist: I'm not - I think just on the other side of the street where they put that sidewalk and as far as I know on this side, they haven't done anything. So I don't think they've like uncovered anything. As far as I know it's all been on the other side.

[10 second pause]

Michal Hartman: When was the architectural boom? Like when did all these buildings start coming? 'Cause you said there was like no houses, no schools [inaudible].

Caroline Twist: 2003 is when they put in all these apartments. I remember because as soon as they started breaking ground I went to the hospital so that was kind of - I remember that very well. Um, 2003 is when those started going in and then shortly after they made the little neighborhoods over there. Um, and more and more houses were getting built around. And probably some of those, like, on the other side of the intersection, um, were probably more like in the 90's maybe. But yeah there are a lot of subdivisions and apartments and things have been going in, uh, late 90's and early two thousands and have just kept on.

Michal Hartman: Yeah. Like, and how did university look 'cause all that stuffs new, within the past ten years? It was just land or?

Caroline Twist: Um, yeah. They had, like, some little parking lots. Some of those buildings that they put in now I think were on, like originally were on parking lots. And then they had to make the new parking lots and that's what yeah it's like, uh, there's a bunch of little houses gone that used to be there. They probably turned that into parking lots. So, yeah there was a church there too and I think they bought, bought that and now they use it for something. Oh! Lamar School. That's also part of the university now. That was the elementary school where some of my uncles and aunts went.

Geoffrey Waters: Isn't that in McAllen? Or?

Caroline Twist: No here, it's Lamar Elementary School.

Geoffrey Waters: Oh, ok.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, and that's part of Pan-Am now. I think they use it for something.

Michal Hartman: Oh yeah! Right here, yeah.

Caroline Twist: Yeah.

Michal Hartman: I know what you're talking about. On Schunior.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, and um... Yeah I don't know what they're doing with Sam Houston Elementary. But yeah I forgot they took over Lamar. Huh.

Michal Hartman: And those railroad tracks are - were they in use? Like...

Geoffrey Waters: Yeah they're still are.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, they still are. There are trains.

Michal Hartman: Oh I never see a train pass. I just see the thing's always down.

Caroline Twist: Oh I hear them! I mean you can, you hear 'em.

Geoffrey Waters: They'll whistle. [inaudible]

Michal Hartman: Was that bothersome that you could hear 'em?

Caroline Twist: No I liked it. Because I would wake up at night a lot when I was little and I would hear the whistles and I'd be like "oh there are other people awake too, it's not just me!" [laughs] So yeah, I liked that. Um, yeah I was thinking that RAC building is on the Lamar playground now. That used to be a playground for the school. That's funny! [laughs] 'Cause I remember when it was still a school and one of my friends who would coach little league and he would take the kids over there to play, to practice on that playground, and they started, later they built the RAC there on that playground so, that's funny.

[7 second pause]

Geoffrey Waters: Um, you said that the farmers have always rented this field out; have they always grown the same crops or, like, have they tried different things? Or changed things over the years?

Caroline Twist: Um, I remember when we first started renting it out they did cotton. Um, and we used to go and pick a few little balls and we'd make little pillows and stuff and my dad said the cottonseeds were good to eat so we would eat the cottonseeds. And um, after that it was a lot of sorghum and corn. So basically sorghum and corn is what they've been growing, like, lately - like the past 10, 15, years I think.

Michal Hartman: And how is the drainage for like the water and stuff?

Caroline Twist: I think it might be getting better. I think one of the reasons...

Michal Hartman: The city put something in?

Caroline Twist: Yeah. I think one of the reasons that the house flooded in 1980 was 'cause there wasn't as good drainage as they have now and I think we probably would have been a lot worse off with Dolly if we didn't have the reservoir and, um, the new, I guess they do underground drainage and stuff. So I think it's helped. Definitely.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember if laborers would come to pick the fields or if they still do? Or how do they harvest the?

Caroline Twist: Um, they use tractors. Um, I remember once and it was when I was little and they were still doing cotton. Um, the farmer himself was out on the tractor and so he took us for a ride. [laughs] My dad was like "oh yeah, go ahead". So we went in the combine and helped him. Or we watched him, whatever he was doing. But yeah, big tractors is all I remember. Combines and stuff. [softly] There's people walking down the street. Um...so yeah.

Liza Soria: I see that you guys have an alarm system. Is that, was it a thing necessary, a need to have?

Caroline Twist: Kind of, yeah. When I was in high school, I guess I was a senior, my parents house got broken into twice in two weeks. And so after that it was like "let's put in alarm systems". And so that's just - I feel more comfortable

Liza Soria: Yeah.

Caroline Twist: that way. We haven't really had much problem since then. Just like every once in a while, like if you leave something outside it goes missing. [laughs] But yeah, it's just nice to have it. It feels more comfortable that way.

Geoffrey Waters: What did they take when they broke into the house? Did they take things or they just broke in?

Caroline Twist: Mhmm, no they took stuff. Like the T.V. and jewelry and things like that. So yeah um, and they used to - my uncle couldn't keep lawn mowers cause those would always get taken um, and things like that.

Geoffrey Waters: Did they file, like, a police report and everything?

Caroline Twist: Oh yeah. I think this house got broken into once but I wasn't living in it. Actually it got broken into many, many times when I wasn't living in it when there were other renters here and stuff. So if it was, like, a personal vendetta type thing which wasn't very good but it was, whoever was living here at that time I guess had an enemy or something. And once, I think it was just before me and my husband moved in here, it got broken into and those people got, actually got, apprehended because they tried to pretend like it wasn't them so they were like walking away real slow. [laughs] And my dad had already called the police and so the police, like, stopped them and it was them! But yeah, it generally, that's why I was like "there's people walking down the street!" It's like opportunistic things I guess you could say. Like they see "oh it looks empty".

Geoffrey Waters: Especially 'cause there probably weren't lights and stuff like that out here [inaudible].

Caroline Twist: There were - yeah, there was a lot less, um, traffic and a lot less um yeah lights and things, so...

Geoffrey Waters: Were there always lights? Because there are street lights out here now?

Caroline Twist: Yeah I think, like, I remember the one next door. There was a security light there in the yard and I remember that one. Um, this one here that we have out in the yard is newer and I don't, I don't know if my parents had one or not. But, like, the street lights and stuff they weren't there. It was just like on your own property.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember when they put the street lights in?

Caroline Twist: No. I'm thinking maybe, like, 80's maybe. Late 80's. I'm guessing 'cause yeah, before that I just remember my grandma's security light out there. But no real city lights.

Michal Hartman: And how were the houses around here? Like were they wood? Were they brick? Like, the neighborhood houses.

Caroline Twist: Most of them were wood frame houses for the most part. Like, my parents' looks like its brick but it's just brick veneer. It's all wood frame. [laughs]

Michal Hartman: Did they have bright colors back then like with the architect? You said also that they painted the town square, like, all white,

Caroline Twist: Yeah.

Michal Hartman: How did it look when it was in its prime?

Caroline Twist: I'm trying to remember. It seemed like there was, like, different, like some of them were just brick, like just the natural brick. And I'm trying to think, I think, like, it wasn't just plain white. I remember, um, I think, like, Latell's was brick and it had some trim and then it had the sign and stuff and now I think it's pretty much all white. But yeah, I'm trying to remember. It's really hard to remember. And I think that building that's like, I guess it's the tax office now, it didn't used to look like that. It was just a bank back then. Hmm. [pauses briefly]

Michal Hartman: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: Okay. I'm getting a little sleepy. [laughs] I don't know if it's because of the surgery thing that I had or what. I'm like wearing down. Do we have more questions?

Geoffrey Waters: I think we're just seeing how much we can

Caroline Twist: Oh ok.

Geoffrey Waters: get out of the interview. Um, nothing specifically. Is there anything else you wanted to say? Anything you wanta talk about?

Caroline Twist: Um, well I guess just the way I think it changed most was just that it was a lot less populated here when I was growing up. Um, a lot less traffic down this street, a lot more open land for fields and stuff. And my parents, like, knew the people - neighbors. But the neighbors were like, you know, half a mile [laughs] or whatever, a quarter mile down the road. It's not like now where you can throw something across the street and there they are.

Geoffrey Waters: Do y'all have relationships with new neighbors, your closer neighbors, now?

Caroline Twist: My dad takes the dog, he takes her for a walk around there, so he knows some of the people over there. But I haven't really been much over there mainly because my personality is like stay inside and read. [laughs] So I don't get out much as far as walking around. But, um, yeah no my dad knows some of the people over there and one man has given him, like, chili peppers and stuff in little pots. He's Pilipino and he grows them himself and I guess it's like the kind of peppers that he liked from the Philippines.

Geoffrey Waters: On that, on that subject have you noticed, like, a lot of different types of people moving to the valley? Or just like the same or similar ethnic backgrounds?

Caroline Twist: No it seems like there are a lot of different ethnic backgrounds. Like now we have a mosque and we've got a Hindu temple, and those were not there before. And like it was primarily Catholic and, like, you would find some protestant churches like a Lutheran church and the Presbyterians and the Methodists but they would have like one church each, at least in Edinburg, and it was primarily Catholic. And now it seems like there's a lot more of these, um, nondenominational type churches and sometimes, like there's one down the street I think it's like on McColl and it's like just in a house and they have their name out there. So yeah there has been more of that too. And um, a lot more, like, ethnic restaurants [laughs] which my husband and I really like so that's, like, really nice. And yeah, there was not a lot of fast food places in Edinburg before. It was like Pizza Hut and I wouldn't even consider El Pato to be fast food because that's like local and that's what they serve, it's like local stuff. And so yeah all this sprang up I guess in the 90's and there was like no Jack in the Box, no any of that stuff. And there was like one McDonald's and now I think there's, like, three! And there was no Subway and now there's like five! [laughs] And it's, like, weird.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember any local restaurants that were really good that aren't there anymore?

Caroline Twist: Um, I was really, really tiny and there used to be this pizza place where the guy made home-made pizza and we would could see him tossing it and I mean I was like probably like three or something and I remember distinctly seeing in the window of the restaurant like to the kitchen and the guy is there throwing the, (laughs) throwing the dough and stuff so that was neat. Don't remember what it tasted like but they don't have that anymore. And I think there was like a Greek restaurant in town, and my dad would know who owned that. Yeah 'cause he told me about that. They're no longer there. I mean they probably retired. Um, but yeah and, some of the more recent ones I wish were still there but I don't know why they're gone. [laughs] Like Suteki that sushi place that was there, that was like there for a couple years and now it's gone and it was really good. Um, it seems like the fast food is kind of, not running people out but it seems like they're more successful simply because they're, like, a big chain already and they have support. Whereas it's harder now for the little individual restaurants to keep at it, to keep going. Yeah... It is nice to have some of those fast food places when you're not feeling well and just go and stop and pick up something and bring it home. Yeah.

[brief pause]

David Garcia: This is it.

[inaudible]

Geoffrey Waters: Alright. Thanks a lot!

Caroline Twist: Yeah I'm kind of wearing down.

Geoffrey Waters: That was really awesome

Caroline Twist: Well I hope I was helpful in some way. [laughs] I don't even know I heard about "water usage" and stuff and I was like I don't know if I'm gonna be much help with water usage but

Geoffrey Waters: Well they had specific questions and we tried to work around them.

Caroline Twist: [laughs] Yeah ok. Let me just call my dad so he can come over and lock up.

Interviewee: Mrs. Virginia Castañeda Mata
Interviewers: Sandra Hernandez-Salinas and Lupe Flores
Date: March 2, 2012
Location: Mrs. Mata's home in Granjeno, Texas
Transcribers: Raul Zavala Soto and Sandra Hernandez-Salinas

This interview was conducted with Virginia Mata. There were times throughout the interview where her son Rogelio Mata, Jr. would help in translating or giving some of his memories about his father. The group conducting the interview was Sandra Hernandez-Salinas and Lupe Flores. This interview segment took place in the kitchen of the Mata home in Granjeno, Texas. The interview gives insight into Mrs. Mata's experiences as a farmhand. She also gives us intimate details of daily life with her father, husband, and cousins that were all farmhands on the Norquest farm site.

Lupe Flores: Namas con unas pocas palabras, conversación se recuerda un poquito si van hablando

Virginia Mata: Si puede ser que mi papa haya trabajado alla, pero yo todavia estaba muy mediana. [Inaudible]. La que podría saber era mi hija la mayor, pero ella murio. Y quien sabe...estas están jóvenes. Se me hace que no. Mi papa trabajaba mucho para alla. Eramos cuatro y namas yo quede. Las niñas y mis hermanitas ya murieron.

Lupe Flores: Si podemos empezar con su nombre completo y su apellido?

Virginia Mata: Virginia Mata. Era Castañeda pero luego soy Mata, por el señor.

Sandra Salinas: Y cuando nacio?

Virginia Mata: Eso si te voy a decir la verdad, que no se, porque no me acuerdo. [inaudible]. Porque ya, 87 años, ya es mucho. Y ahí vamos, me cuidan mucho pero la enfermedad te lleva.

Sandra Salinas: Le puedo bajar a la televisión poquito? Porque apenas la oigo a usted.

-TV off-

Virginia Mata: Papa trabajo mucho para alla, pero yo estaba muy mediana cuando nos cambiamos para aca.

Lupe Flores: Siempre ha vivido aquí usted en Granjeno?

Virginia Mata: En Granjeno toda mi vida. No, aqui tuve mis hijos, ocho muchachos. Y aquí dos, uno...dos o tres van al PANAM.

Sandra Salinas: A donde?

Virginia Mata: Aquí al PANAM

Sandra Salinas: Oh aquí al PANAM, oh whoa.

Virginia Mata: Y, este, las otras no...bueno una si se fue lejos pero no aquí, se fue para California y alla tuvo su [cannot understand], y asi namas una, las otras no quisieron. Valgame Dios señor.

Sandra Salinas: Su fecha de nacimiento?

Virginia Mata: 16 de abril del 24...1924.

Sandra Salinas: Y que se puede recordar...que se acuerda de su papa?

Virginia Mata: Pues me acuerdo tanto, de tantas que no...de lo que era mi padre, que era muy bueno y muy trabajador, era bien bueno, muchote y trabajador mi padre para mantenernos. Eramos cuatro porque antes estaba como esta ahora. Antes nos cuidábamos. Y aca se vino, para Hidalgo y aca los amigos le daban trabajo y le ayudaban. Le daban comida antes y nos traía. Mi papa se nos perdía, verdad. Y decíamos "On 'taba papa, on'taba?" "Ay hija de mi vida alla estabamos en Hidalgo con los planches y las velas". Alla lo tenian, lo querían mucho a papa. Y era muy bueno...

Lupe Flores: Como se iba el para un trabajo? Se iba en un troque [camioneta] o lo levantaban?

Virginia Mata: Venia un troque, a levantarlo y se iba.

Lupe Flores: Venia un troque para levantarlo para ir a las labores verdad, para trabajar?

Virginia Mata: No...ay pues yo no se donde trabajaban. Andaban pa'ca. Por en el [¿]. Era como en el...pues no se como era donde trabajaban...no me acuerdo. Y alla iban a dar a Hidalgo o en McAllen, o en las Pompas,

yo no se...se iban pa'lla.

Lupe Flores: Y no se acuerda de sus amistades?

Virginia Mata: Oh, papa tenia muchas, muchas amistades. Tanto de aca de Mission...todo, todo Hidalgo. Tenia muchos amigos papa. Tambien era muy noble mi padre, era muy bueno.

Lupe Flores: Y no se acuerda si su papa se quejaba de sus patrones o les contaba historias de que lo trataban mal, lo trataban bien?

Virginia Mata: No, fíjate que no, nunca. El nunca se quejo de que lo miraban mal, el trabajo que le dieron. Nada, nada.

Sandra Salinas: Nunca le ha dicho historias de sus patrones?

Virginia Mata: Mi Apa? No, no. Ya, el hijo mio, el mayor, tambien queria saber lo de papa. Hijito de mi vida yo no me acuerdo ya ahorita con esta edad, ya no, para nada. Le digo, ciertas cosas y ciertas no le digo yo.

Lupe Flores, Sandra Salinas: Y aquí en la casa, como sus modos de vivir, se acuerda eran los tiempos difíciles o...como eran los tiempos en los 40? Los 20, 30, 40

Virginia Mata: Pues, era namas asi, asi. Era pobre la gente, era muy pobre. Y el donde quiera que lo ocuparan iba, para darnos que comer, porque estaba duro.

Lupe Flores: Si nos puede dar el nombre de su mama?

Virginia Mata: Maria de los Santos.

Sandra Salinas: Y su papa una vez mas?

Virginia Mata: Enrique.

Lupe Flores, Sandra Salinas: Tenemos razón que si es el mismo. Ayer el señor que...el patron, estabamos preguntándole como se llamaban la gente que trabajaba con el, y el nos dijo Enrique Castañeda. Y por eso.

Virginia Mata: Pues venia cansadito mi padre y venia y se acostaba y le dabamos café o agua. Y se levanta y se baña y se acuesta. Y le dabamos aspirina o algo para que descansara...antes de irse a trabajar. Pero mi padre murio muy...ya murio grande, no murio muy chiquito.

Sandra Salinas: Y cual año se murio si se puede acordar? En que año murio su papa?

[cannot understand]

Virginia Mata: A ver Sandra, ven pa'ca.

Sandra Salinas: Hello, my name is Sandra, we are UTPA students.

Sandra Salinas: We're UTPA students and we are actually doing a research Project [**Virginia Mata:** el papa...] which is over Edinburg and your, well this is your grandmother?

Sandra Mata: Yes

Sandra Salinas: Your great grandfather, which is her father, right. Your great grandfather was actually one of [**Virginia Mata:**-talks-] on the farm.

Sandra Mata: Really?

Sandra Salinas: So, as a matter of fact, yesterday when we had called Mr. Norquest, we were asking him about names...and he was all like "you know what? I remember Enrique Castañeda". And so, we said, let's go to Granjeno and see what we see, right?

Sandra Mata: She's like one of the oldest ones here. She's the one that knows the history

[crossover talking]

Sandra Salinas: So we are excited, we are so excited. She knows him...just talking to her.

Sandra Mata: Little by littel she'll remember.

[...]

Sandra Salinas: I forgot the consent forms but I can bring them to you tomorrow and get them signed and everything.

Sandra Mata: That's fine.

Sandra Salinas: We been doing interviews all day.

Sandra Salinas: Do you know when your great grandfather passed away?

Virginia Mata: Se que es el dos de febrero, pero...

Sandra Mata: No. I really didn't know my great-grandpa. My sister did...I really don't. Papa no sabe?

Virginia Mata: No, papa menos. Yo tenia todos los certificados y los tengo y todo lo de papa pero no se ya donde están. Nombre, que voy a saber. Yo los tenia, y los tengo que tener.

Sandra Salinas: Her son is back there. I wonder if he knows anything. Y su hijo no trabajaba alla? [**Lupe Flores:** El hijo o alguno de sus hijos no trabajaba con su papa?]

Sandra Mata: Dice que del 84. February second of 1984.

Sandra Salinas: Did your father, by any chance, was he one of the workers? Did he ever worked in the farm, in the fields?

Sandra Mata: My dad? I don't think so. My father I don't think so...Le digo que son de UTPA, they're doing like a research on, uh, your grandpa, on your grandpa y vinieron a dar con grandma, con la mera planta...le digo que I really don't know nada about y no.

Sandra Salinas: Do you happen to know of uh, farm workers that worked in Edinburg, on the farms in Edinburg? A lot of the men here, in this área, worked on these farms, so we are trying to get as many of their stories...because they were never told and that's what we are trying to do, we are trying to tell the untold stories. There was like the Castañedas, the Magallanes, the Aradondos. Those were the...and the Garzas, those are the primary families that lived here and we...knew they wouldn't go out. So we are trying to get information.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: She is a good source. Porque ya casi los, the old, los que te llevaban a trabajar, los [...] workers ya todos se están muriendo.

Virginia Mata: Muy viejos.

Sandra Mata: Cabrer...they didn't work?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Los Cabrera

Sandra Salinas: Um, I don't remember the Cabrer...they didn't come up but we can check and see.

Sandra Mata: No I'm just saying because they are...

Virginia Mata: Los Cabrer...pues si puede, a ellos yo no...

Sandra Salinas: Que se acuerda de su papa? Cuales memorias tiene de su papa?

Virginia Mata: Muchas

Sandra Salinas: Nos puede decir algunas memorias de el?

Virginia Mata: Oh...como que?

Sandra Salinas: Asi como cuando el estaba trabajando, en las mañanas le hacían unos taquitos que, como?

Virginia Mata: Ah, si. Mi madre. Yo me levantaba con ella porque ya tambien era grande y le hacíamos el lonche para que llevara. Y ya ahí en la tarde que venia, no te digo que le llevabamos el café. Y decia yo "ahorita que ya este la cena le hablamos" dije, para que venga a cenar. Era bien noble mi padre con nosotros, era bien bueno.

Sandra Salinas: Y que tipo de lonches le hacia su mama? Que era un ejemplo?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Fideo con pollo.

Virginia Mata: Los frijoles

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Tenian maíz, con el molino hacia tortillas, freshly made. Y tenia su metate. She would catch that chicken. She would catch that chicken...and boom....that was lunch.

Sandra Salinas: Do you remember your grandfather?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oh yea, I lived with him for uff, all my life.

Sandra Salinas: Can we interview, can we get you in the interview? [hesitation to be in video] I'm just saying, like your memories.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Well I lived with him all my life because uh...I was too young.

Virginia Mata: Nos iban a dejar a los trabajos y no querían que me lo llevara y se quedaba con mi papa y mi mama.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: She got photos of me before they made the Levy. He used to live right here, it used to be [pointing just north of the house to house across the street]...y para alla tenia su casa, su rancho. Me dijo, su farm, worked it most of his life.

Sandra Salinas: Well that's what we are trying to get, his story, we are trying to bring up stories. So we are asking her what memories she remembers about him. Little things like that because those are important, those

are part of who we are. So, um, she said los frijolititos, le hacia el maíz con el metate.

Virginia Mata: En el metate, si. Ahi nos ponía a moler, pero nos lo comíamos todo. Y decía, “pobrecitos, andeles”. Y nos ponía un baño y ora si, sentada, se podía sentar o parada, como quiera, para que desgranáramos el maíz, y lo desgranábamos todo y decía “ora si, se pueden ir a jugar”. Pero el nunca nos pego, nunca, ni nos regañó tampoco porque el era bien bueno con nosotros. Y pues este era mas chiflado, pues el lo crio. Mi chiquito se pelaba porque nosotros nos fuéramos al trabajo. Y lo dejábamos y ellos lo criaron.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No tiene fotos de ‘buelo (abuelo)?

Virginia Mata: Los que?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: On’tan las fotos de ‘buelo? Cuando yo estaba chiquito.

Virginia Mata: Oh, pos onde estarían.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Well we have photos, of when I was a young kid pushing a lawnmower, I was playing with a lawnmower.

Virginia Mata: Los tuyos?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Si, pues ahi sale ‘buelo.

Virginia Mata: Ay, pues donde puse...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: La unica que puede saber es Irma.

Virginia Mata: Tengo dos cajas de plastico llenitas. Onde los podemos conseguir? Ya como tengo ahi, tambien. Ay no. Pero donde estaba este mediano, estaba papa, el los cuidaba tanto que no se le fueran a pelar. Y decía “Mijo no le haga [cannot understand]” le decía mi papa. Y no fijate como es el todo el tiempo. El fue y se [cannot understand] de sus hermanas. Y esta retratado el verdad, con el, muchas pero donde los hay? Y los tengo en una caja, en caja grandes de plastico, estan llenitas de puros retratos, y todos esos retratos me los trae la nuera. Y dijo nombre, ya no me traigas retratos, que hago yo con tantos?

Sandra Salinas: Se me fue la pregunta. Oh. Cuando su papa se fue, se iba al trabajo, que hacían ustedes? No iban con el verdad?

Virginia Mata: No, nos íbamos nosotros a trabajar al monte tambien.

Sandra Salinas: Y por donde trabajaban ustedes?

Virginia Mata: Pues segun, en el rancho, donde quiera habia labores. Y ahi la limpia o sembrar y cortar, repollo. O trabajar cuando lo cortábamos, en la cebolla. Todo eso...yo fui mas trabajadora en la labor, las otras hermanas no. Tenia una hermana, se llama Maria. No le gustaba la labor [cannot understand], ella se quedaba con mi madre a cuidarla, pos ya mi madre no estaba muy bien tampoco, y a ella le decía “Andale, acabo que nunca trabajaste, que tienes que estas cansada?” Y nos peliábamos con ella. Como buscaste novio y te casaste, dice ella. Ah pero no es igual, pero ah si es le dije. Ella era la que menos trabajaba, se quedaba con ella. Pero yo y mi otra hermana y la otra. La pasábamos muy bien. Nos pagaban muy poquito, asi “25 cents” la hora, algo asi, me acuerdo yo ya.

Sandra Salinas: Y cuando trabajaban ustedes, trabajaban por cuantas horas al dia?

Virginia Mata: Todo el dia. De las ocho...

Sandra Salinas: De las ocho...a que hora, que tiempo entraban?

Virginia Mata: Entrábamos a las...en la mañana, como a las...siete entrábamos.

Sandra Salinas: Y salían como a que hora?

Virginia Mata: Como a las ocho o siete, por ahi. No, si trabajamos mucho y andábamos con [cannot understand] un japones.

Sandra Salinas: No se acuerda del nombre de el japones?

Virginia Mata: No, aqui vivi en Hidalgo mucho y ya murio el, pero el era tan [cannot understand], cortar en la matita de tomate. Valgame. Y dije, pues si ya la habias cortado, porque? Y a varios le llevaba corrida, si era muy mendigo el viejo. Que ya se murio el...todos ya murieron, ya no quedaron ninguno en Hidalgo. Vivian ahi en Hidalgo.

Sandra Salinas: Ustedes tenían experiencias de discriminacion o no?

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: En ese tiempo.

Virginia Mata: No, nos miraban todos muy bien, a mi, a mis padres, bien que nos miraban.

Sandra Salinas: De los tiempos de andar trabajando, lo que se acuerda del tiempo pasado, como era la experiencia para usted?

Virginia Mata: Pues bien, a mi pues, no me...me gustaba porque, cada quien agarraba su gorrito, lo que sea, y no tenias que hablar con nadie, namas tu ibas jalando. Andabamos enlistando, limpiando, sembrando y asi. El repollo y [cannot understand]. A medio día que saliamos a comer, nos sentabamos todos alrededor a comer y comiamos. Y ya iban y nos decian, andale que ya llego la hora de jalar otra vez. Si, yo trabaje mucho.

Sandra Salinas: Y su papa trabajo de bracero tambien? O no?

Virginia Mata: No, creo que no.

Sandra Salinas: No trabajo de bracero, ok. Y se acuerda que tipo de ropa usaba su papa para el trabajo?

Virginia Mata: Pantalón khaki.

Sandra Salinas: Tenia gorra, no tenia?

Virginia Mata: No...bueno si, cuando se sentia mal que le daban punzadas, se ponía una gorra. Y su chaqueta muy bonita que tenia.

Sandra Mata: Ella tiene tambien, pero [cannot understand]

Sandra Salinas: I have a few pictures. I wonder if you might be able to...the farmers, they took a lot of pictures of the workers cause they were, they were really good friends with the workers. Uhm, so we have quite a few pictures, so I wonder if Mr. Castaneda was actually one of the people in the photos that we couldn't identify. And I have them with me, maybe we can [Lupe Flores: Or maybe her son] Yeah, maybe he might be able to identify or you can identify him right. Cause that would be really cool. If we can identify him in the photo, that would be awesome.

Sandra Mata: Yeah cause I was only 3 when he passed away, so I, we didn't know, but my uncle was raised by him. [Virginia Mata: Donde esta el niño?] Esta en el cuarto viendo la television. He's trying to find...[cannot understand]

Virginia Mata: Y fijate trabajamos desde en la mañana temprano entrabamos a las seis, salian como a las...no tan temprano. Limpiabamos naranjo. Naranjo, los limpiabamos, bien bien por debajo, [cannot understand] no nos miraban. Pero trabajaba uno mucho tiempo y en el algodón, bastante en el algodón.

[Sandra Salinas telling Lupe Flores: It might be in the Cotton Picker pictures while sifting through the pictures]

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: He used to be a soldier in the Mexican Revolution. [Sandra Salinas: Really?] Yeah. Peleaba con Carranza.

Sandra Salinas: Todos peleaban con Carranza verdad?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: He was an avid, le gustaba mucho la pelota, Baseball.

Sandra Salinas: They used to play baseball a lot on the field. A lot!

Virginia Mata: Papa era muy buen pelotero, de donde quiera lo venian a llevar.

Lupe Flores: And was he, was he born in Taumalipas?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Uh, yes, he was born in Mexico and my grandma was born here.

Lupe Flores: And was it, do you know where in Mexico, was it here in Taumalipas?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Donde nacio, aqui en Reynosa o en Rio Grande? Donde nacio apa, guelo?

Virginia Mata: Pues nacio de aquel lado, papa, yo creo. Como se llama? Ay no me acuerdo.

Sandra Salinas: Rancho Grande?

Virginia Mata: Ah, Rancho Grande, andale.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, that's him.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Alla esta todo la gente de el. And supposedly we got a, his father left the, his mom and moved to Harlingen, and he had another family overthere, in Harlingen.

Virginia Mata: Y ahora, ya no le quedan hermanos, ni nada de nada, ya todos se murieron.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, this is definitely, the Enrique Castaneda that, I was telling her, that I have pictures from the family photos that I have of the workers and everybody, together, and there are a few men that I haven't identified so I wonder if maybe he's in there. And I have the photos in my tablet, you can, you can go through them and look at them and if it's, if we end up finding them ...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oye pues, no tiene Irma las fotos de guelo, unas fotos de guelo?

Virginia Mata: Te digo que si, pero quien sabe donde estaran.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No, Irma.

Virginia Mata: Irma? Pueda que si las tenga.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Porque Irma tambien vivio mucho ahi con guelo, que te puedo decir historias.

Virginia Mata: Tambien

Sandra Salinas: We can always do a follow up interview, so that way we can...no that's fine, today we were just like, 'cause we've been having so much trouble finding the workers

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Ya casi todos murieron ya

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, that's been our experience. We've called funeral homes, we've done everything, everything but go to Mexico because of the violence right now. We really don't wanna. [Rogelio Mata Jr.: Right] and especially since we are university students, that's even worse.

Rogelio Mata, Jr. : Yeah, the old field workers and all the old managers, casi no...ya todos se murieron. Nada mas queda aqui uno y otro. [**Sandra Salinas:** Yeah] that I remember.

Sandra Salinas: I'm bringing up the pictures right now, so that way if you might be able to go through them, you might be able to point out if it's your grandfather, that would be really cool, because we can identify...we've identified 3 total so far.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: On'tan sus gafas? Le van a enseñar unos retratos.

Virginia Mata: Pa' que quieren los retratos aquellos niños?

Sandra Salinas: Yo tengo unos retratos, de los señores que trabajaban ahi con el patron, y hay algunos señores que no sabemos quienes son. Y a lo mejor uno de ellos es su papa.

Virginia Mata: Pues a lo mejor me los se.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Jalo guelo...I don't know that far

Sandra Salinas: Do you remember him as a farmworker? [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** Yes] Oh, I'm sorry, can you state your name? No? [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** hesitant] Okay, well you don't have to state your name, this is, uhm, this is ...

Rogelio Mata, Jr: Mira, from what I remember, mira, my dad is her husband, her husband and we used to live, como te digo, that levy is where that house is. Y aqui 'taba la subida, y subia pa'riba y "boom" alla habia un rally. Y alla teniamos una casa, el tenia su casa y atras habia, 'taba la casa y despues hacia un [cannot understand] y pues estaba el rio. Y ahi el venia a...whoever, aca unos vecinos tenian unos tractores y ya se venia el tiempo de el "plowing season" y iban y le hacian el favor de "plow su land" o si no "he would" a mano. And he had his own water well with a big 'ole motor, and I used to help him. That's what he did when I was young. It was a beautiful place. Y ya se hacia el lote, pumpkins, calabazas. Pumpkins season las tenia aqui en el shed. Ponia todas las pumpkins and he would sell them.

Sandra Salinas: That's pretty cool. I'm just bringing up these pictures that they gave me. [Showing pictures to interviewees so that they can identify people] Now these are from 1948. These pictures.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Son del 48.

Sandra Salinas: Del 48. I don't know if you might be able, do you recognize any of those men? Uhm,

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, dejame...I'm trying to bring up the photos a little bit more for her.

Sandra Mata: Ese no es guelo, guela?

Virginia Mata: Pos no...se me hace que tampoco...

Sandra Mata: Guela, su esposo.

Virginia Mata: Si, si. Se me hace que es el.

Sandra Mata: Y este se me figura a tío Jaime. No es su apa ese? No ese no?

Lupe Flores: Wasn't there a Jaime? [asking Sandra]

Sandra Salinas: Yes there was a Jaime, but no, it was a Jaime Magallan.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No, guelo, guelo era bien alto.

Sandra Salinas: Mas alto

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Guelo was about 6'1, 6'2. Era guero.

Virginia Mata: Si puedo pero...No ni uno de estos.

Sandra Salinas: Ninguno? These are the same men, 1948. Es que alguno porque tambien, son de la misma familia, se parecen tanto.

Virginia Mata: Papa nunca uso sombrero, ni nada.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No uso sombrero.

Sandra Salinas: Okay, like these, this is when they were bringing them to Granjeno that day I remember them telling us. So let me see, I have another set.

Virginia Mata: Por eso te digo que papa nunca se retrato.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: 48, whew, that's way, that's way out of my league, so.

Sandra Salinas: The only other pictures that they have given me have been the individual pictures of some of these men.

Sandra Salinas: Dejame ser las mas grande por usted...these are the Magallans, estos son los Magallans. Conocio a los Magallans?

Virginia Mata: Oh, son como los hermanos mios.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Yeah, they're related.

Sandra Salinas: Really?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Her mother and their mother, or their grandmother are sisters. So their...

Sandra Salinas: So, usted conoce a Florentino, a Carlos, Domingo...?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Todos.

Sandra Salinas: Todos ellos conoces?

Virginia Mata: Si, todo.

Sandra Salinas: Me puede decir un poquito de los Magallanes? Lo que se acuerda?

Virginia Mata: Pues viviamos retirados de nosotros. Pues no tanto. Vivian alla. Y nos mirabamos muy poco casi ninguna hija contra nosotros.

Sandra Salinas: Si. Aqui vive...se llama...Gilberto

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: If you keep coming back, keep talking to her, it will take you, not in one sitting, it will take you about 4 or 5, 6 sittings with her to get that information out. [**Sandra Salinas:** Yeah] it's there but you just have to sit there and have patience. But if you keep asking her..

Virginia Mata: Como se llamaba? Gilberto?

Sandra Salinas: Gilberto Magallan. El que vive aqui, vamos a ir alla ahorita. We're gonna try to go over there next. [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** She knows but you have to have patience]

Virginia Mata: Somos primer hermanos tambien. Tambien tenemos a la gente aque [cannot understand]

Sandra Salinas: Y los conoces, los conoces aqui? Mire, este es Florentino. Aqui esta Florentino. Yo tengo mas, es que...Es Florentino, y Domingo and...Benito Arredondo. Those are the 3 that we've been able, and Chive, but we don't have Chive's full name. Those are the 3 that we know, that we've been able to uncover.

Virginia Mata: No, estos yo nunca.

Sandra Salinas: Su esposo no es uno de estos? De ellos?

Virginia Mata: Ummm...no

Sandra Salinas: No?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Es del 48?

Sandra Salinas: These are in 54, yes, these are in 54.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Es el 54.

Sandra Salinas: No? No lo conoces?

Virginia Mata: El Magallan? El es Jose Magallan.

Sandra Salinas: Jose Magallan? This is Jose Magallan.

Virginia Mata: Se parece.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: She has to sit there, and you have to tap in there

Virginia Mata: Se parece...al que venia con papa.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Cual de ellos?

Virginia Mata: Jose Magallan, el que venia con papa [**Sandra Salinas:** Jose Magallan, he looks like Florentino]

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Todo el tiempo, guelo tenia muchos amigos.

Virginia Mata: Pero muchos, pero este venia y [cannot understand] [**Sandra Salinas** telling **Lupe Flores:** And it was the one before the thumb wrestling]

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Si, si si.

Sandra Salinas: Conoce a alguien?

Virginia Mata: Pues sabes que, todos estos Magallanes, no eran de aqui.

Sandra Salinas: Algunos eran de Rancho Grande verdad?

Virginia Mata: De Rancho Grande, por eso muy pocos los conocian.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Eran seasonal workers. Mas antes, era muy facil, cross over in a bam.

Sandra Salinas: Y este es, Benito Arredondo.

Virginia Mata: Pues conoci uno que otro Arredondos, pero no que los haya conocido a todos.

Sandra Salinas: Y al el? I like his smirk.

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: No se acuerda de el?

Virginia Mata: No, porque nunca fuimos pa'lla

[cannot understand]

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: it's cause that's when they were young, and now los miras and whoa, they've totally changed.

[**Sandra Salinas:** Yeah] Whoa that was you back then, wow, look at you now.

Sandra Salinas: A el?

Virginia Mata: A el tampoco.

Sandra Salinas: Estos son...este es el patron. Bueno era el hijo de el patron al tiempo. Mira este era Florentino y aqui esta Jose.

Virginia Mata: Si, Jose es al que conozco.

Sandra Salinas: A ver, si las hago mas grande.

Virginia Mata: Mi tio Jose si venia muy seguido, aqui con papa. Les traiba machete, le hechaba [cannot understand]. Porque para componerse. Y decia "Ay, que hacer con el?". Yo te los traigo aqui, decia el. Porque la casa de apa estaba alla. Y...y estamos [cannot understand].

Lupe Flores: No se puede acordar si su...lo que le pregunte, que si los Magallanes, sus papas, nunca se quejaron de los patrones de alla?

Virginia Mata: Nunca, eso si, pa'que les digo yo. Yo nuna oi que dijeran algo, nunca. Los Magallanes eran medio traviesos, medio pelioneritos, pero fijate que, con otros no, ni con estos tampoco. Y habia tambien [cannot understand] eran traviesos. Pero son muy buenos, ya se compusieron, pero antes. Todos los Magallanes vivian alla en Rancho Grande estaban en [cannot understand]

Sandra Salinas: Y el unico Magallan que esta aqui en este lado es Gilberto. El es el unico Magallan?

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: No hay mas Magallanes que a lo mejor trabajaban alla en Edinburgo?

Virginia Mata: Grandes, verdad, no. No se yo.

Sandra Salinas: A lo mejor el sabe.

Virginia Mata: El trabaja aca, aqui en el puente, aqui en Anzalduas. Ahi trabajo muchos años el, en una compuerta. Despues de que se cambiaron de alla.

Sandra Salinas: That's, and on the bridge is where they did the uh, the swagger, all of that, the story of them moving over. Have you guys ever read the uh, Rio Grande Wetbacks: Mexican Migrant Story? Your grandfather, he might be part of the stories. The patron, wrote, I know that the title is a little misleading, but it's totally, it's just a descriptive word because they had braceros, they had Mexican-Americans, they had, you know, but he's, he's talking, he's saying his memories about the workers that worked on the farm. And he gives them all pseudo names, for protection, for their protection because a lot of them were from Rancho Grande right, uhm,

so I'm gonna try to see if uhm, cause I remember Kelly giving me the story behind Enrique Castaneda, so if I can get that story and I can tell you which one it is, you are more than welcome to get the book, because there might be a little something for you guys to cherish. And all of these, all the audio that I am doing right now, I will put them all on a CD and you guys are more than welcome to it, because it might be memories that you guys might remember also.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Y sus primos, los Magallanes, este Mike [cannot understand] ese eran sus tiempos no? Los 48, cuando estaba joven.

Virginia Mata: Pero no son los unicos, ya eran muy pocos. Ya estaban aqui, alla estaban, no vivian muy retirados.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No pero yo digo, en el tiempo que 'tan hablando, como Mike Magallan, y este Maga, estaban pues joven en ese tiempo no? En el 48. [**Virginia Mata:** Oh si] You know, they're, they're about in their 70s or maybe early 70s. [**Sandra Salinas:** And are they still alive?]

Sandra Mata: Yeah, there's one of them in they live on La Prima. Mike [cannot understand] right next to the lady that told you to come here. Right there, a trailer house right in front.

Rogelio Mata: Right there on La Prima. There is an empty lot, you'll see a mobile home park right there, and you'll see a Chevy in the back. Alli vive.

Virginia Mata: Aqui vive en La Prima y alla vive la otra prima. Magallanes.

Sandra Salinas: So Mike Magallan, we can definitely see if we can pass by, and at least get an appointment to come see him. We just came because we were like, well we have been having such a hard time that we said, you know what, let's just go and see who we see, you know, and so, I mean we would love to do a follow up interview, I'll leave you my contact information, and get your contact information to so I can call.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Yeah, you have to come back and y pos yeah, we can find some photos de el and [**Sandra Mata:** We have to go through the photos, we have photos (cannot understand) she'll start, and she'll sit there and she'll start remembering

[overlapping, cannot understand]

Virginia Mata: Van alla para anca Gilberto?

Sandra Salinas: Si vamos para alla.

Virginia Mata: No, porque luego [cannot understand] para que lo niego? Para que lo niego, porque es muy mala gente.

Sandra Salinas: Oh, ok.

Virginia Mata: Si, hasta con uno tambien. Por eso les digo que...a ver como le entran.

Lupe Flores: No, si, le agradecemos mucho.

Sandra Salinas: Podemos venir otro tiempo?

Virginia Mata: O tambien.

Sandra Mata: She's always here, she's always here, somebody is always here.

Sandra Salinas: I'm gonna leave my contact information also and may I get a phone number from you guys?

Sandra Mata: Yes, I'll give you my sister's.

Virginia Mata: Los que nos estamos viendo mas, son los Garzas. Si. Como Gloria Garza todos somos los mismos tambien. Esos son muy nobles todos. Todo este barrio. [**Sandra Mata:** I'll tell her later on when she comes] Pa' quel barrio no, para este barrio si, le digo yo.

Sandra Salinas: Aqui estaba llamando y llamando a todos los Magallanes in the phonebook, and I have all the numbers here. And Domingo is the one I'm trying to get a hold of, his son, because I know Domingo passed away and I know that there is definitely a story about Domingo and Florentino, her cousins and this book has their stories [**Sandra Mata:** I'm pretty sure there is because (overlapping and cannot understand)]

Virginia Mata: Pues ya casi todos, pero como nos retiramos mucho, ya.

Lupe Flores: Si esta bien con usted si venimos la otra semana a hablar otra vez? Esta bien con eso?

Virginia Mata: A ver si no, si no me...te cumplo mas años. No, pero si, si me acuerdo de todos, de muchas cosas, como no. Ya ven que estoy sola, ahi rezando. "Oiga 'ama" me dice mi hijo "Porque habla tanto sola?". No hijo, le estoy rezando tanto a la virgen. Yo rezo por todos, yo no soy mala, ni estos niños mios, son muy buenos.

Son muy nobles, y mas...no esta aqui la otra, anda trabajando. Ay aqui esta. Nunca en las calles. Hasta que le digo "callate hombre, deja que hablen los demas". Ah, aqui viene, es la que digo yo.

Sandra Salinas in background: I'm leaving this here, and I'll bring the consent forms when I come back for the follow up interview. [**Sandra Mata:** Okay]

Lupe Flores: Le agradezco mucho.

Sandra Salinas: Le agradezemos mucho. I was gonna leave, can we set an appointment up, do you wanna set an appointment up?

[Virginia Mata's granddaughter walked in and everyone exchanges hellos]

Sandra Salinas: [talking to the granddaughter that walked in] Hi, we're UTPA students doing research on the Norquest property, and uh, you are her granddaughter. Okay, your grandfather worked on the property as a farmhand, on the property that we are researching so we are trying to get all of the workers' stories because no one ever talks about their stories or tells their stories, and that's what we're trying to do. We're trying to, so we are trying to get all of the Magallanes, and the Castanedas, trying to gather up as many memories of them, and Enrique was one of the men that we were told about so it was fate that were able to find her.

Jessica Dominguez: Yeah, cause she's the only one that's left.

Virginia Mata: Los Castañedas estan pa'lla, los Castañedas, hermanos de mi papa. Aqui en la blanca, en, en La Blanca y [cannot understand]. Aqui en la pompa, ahi en McAllen, tambien hay otro. Tenia 8 o 9 hermanos papa.

Sandra Salinas: Pues aqui le dejo mi nombre y mi telefono. Es mi nombre y el nombre de Lupe. Y podemos regresar la semana que entra, como el viernes? El viernes estara bien? El viernes que viene.

Virginia Mata: Yo creo que si.

Sandra Salinas: So this way it gives her time to just kind of remember things, and ...

Jessica Dominguez: And what is it? Just what they used to do before or what is this?

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, because he was a farmworker...

Jessica Dominguez: Oh okay. well they all were, even she was all her life.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, and that's what we're getting. That's great! This is exactly what we wanna do because we wanna try, we wanna tell the untold stories.

Jessica Dominguez: Mostly everybody here. Everybody that, everybody that lives here, I mean honestly, EVERYBODY that actually lives here, most of their parents, cause everybody here is related. So like, these guys next door are her nieces and nephews from her sisters. They are her sister's kids, and it goes, you know like, everybody here [making looping gesture with her finger] Like the Cabrerias that live right here at the corner, they actually still do it. They still, they used to go out and work with them, yeah. Everybody here is related in some way or another, whether we talk to them or not, that's something different.

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) it's totally understandable.

Jessica Dominguez: What? My grandfather's name came up in one of the

Sandra Salinas: He was one of the farmhands on the Norquest property over in Edinburg, and we, we've been talking to Kelly which is the son of the main patron, so when the patron died, he took over the farm, and they still had those friendships. They became friends. I mean they really respected eachother and became friends and as he was giving us names, he was like "oh Enrique, Enrique Castaneda" so he just told us last night so

Jessica Dominguez: Yeah and they lived on that side, my great-grandfather's house was on the other side. Which they rebuilt their house because they used to live in the middle of the 2 levies.

Sandra Salinas: That's what he was telling us about. The 2 levies.

Jessica Dominguez: Yeah the levies, there used to be homes before they actually built the levy so when the first, the water came, I don't know if you all were here the last time the water came through when the first ones, all of their stuff was lost, so the government actually built them a house over there on that side. It's so hot in here guys, I'm burning up.

Sandra Salinas: Well we're gonna get out of the way here too. We're giving up a lot of heat.

Jessica Dominguez: No, no, no, it's just hot here, I'm sorry.

Virginia Mata: Tanto bolsillo y nada de money.

Jessica Dominguez: I'll try to see if I can find a picture of my grandfather.

Sandra Salinas: That would be great because I have pictures that the family has given us and we were trying to ...well that's what we were trying to show them to see...[overlapping and could not understand]

Jessica Dominguez: Pos guelo was not in any of those pictures? Can I see?
[overlapping in conversations and could not understand]

Sandra Salinas: They were, these are in 47

Jessica Dominguez: He was a very tall slender man with glasses.

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) they were all tall slender men so ...

Virginia Mata: Vente papi [talking to small child].

Jessica Dominguez: Usted no lo miro en el retrato guela?

Virginia Mata: A quien?

Jessica Dominguez: A su papa.

Virginia Mata: No, pues donde los hayo.

Jessica Dominguez: No, pero en el retrato que enseño.

Virginia Mata: No, yo no lo vi, a papa. A mi tio Jose, al que alcance a ver.

Jessica Dominguez: Al tio Jose.

Sandra Salinas: Well Jose, Florentino, they were all in these pictures.

Jessica Dominguez: Actually I should give you my uncle's name because he would probably be the one to, my the oldest uncle, because he also [**Sandra Salinas:** And he lives here?] yeah he lives here. [**Sandra Salinas:** Oh, great] well not, not here in the house. He lives here in the valley. He knows a lot...

Sandra Salinas: And where does he live?

Jessica Dominguez: He lives (could not understand) but he comes every Sunday with my grandma to be here (could not understand)

Sandra Salinas: Okay, well if he comes this Sunday, feel free to give me a call. We are gonna be working, just on the research, if he does come in and he's up for it, I mean I have no problem.

[Conversation overlapping and hard to understand]

Sandra Salinas: What is his name?

Jessica Dominguez: His name is Jaime.

Sandra Salinas: Jaime Magallan?

Jessica Dominguez: Jaime Mata.

Sandra Mata: Grandma doesn't remember a lot of stuff anymore like she used to.

Sandra Salinas: Well she remembered quite a bit.

Jessica Dominguez: Really?

Sandra Salinas: Yeah.

Lupe Flores: Just with conversation and getting her going she did

Sandra Mata: It's like papa said, you gotta come and tap in.

Jessica Dominguez: Did the picture come up?

Sandra Salinas: Yeah

Jessica Dominguez: Yeah, Jaime Mata

Sandra Salinas: And I left my phone number here. So if he does come by, feel free to give me a call and we can come on by on Sunday or even if it's just me. I think Lupe, we're gonna be together anyway on Sunday right?

Lupe Flores: Yeah

Sandra Salinas: Uhm, these were pictures from 1947, these were the cotton pickers or some of the cotton pickers, over on the Norquest property. I just had it up...if I can just find it. Here it is. (mumbling)

Virginia Mata: Y yo creo que los retratos de papa, no estoy muy segura, pero se los ha de haber llevado mi hija para California, porque ella los queria.

Jessica Dominguez: Ahi esta guelo. Right here. Yeah, here he is.

Virginia Mata: Ya ni lo conozco.

Sandra Mata and **Jessica Dominguez:** That's our grandfather.

Sandra Mata: Ahi 'ta guelo tambien.

Jessica Dominguez: Yeah, that's her husband.

Sandra Salinas: Okay. So I do have, I have 2 on cotton pickers.

Jessica Dominguez: I wouldn't even doubt that one of these are also related, but yeah, they're all ...
[overlapping in conversation and could not understand]

Virginia Mata: Los otros son todos primos. Tiene que estar mi tío Ernesto por ahí.

Jessica Dominguez: Guelo, aquí está guelo.

Sandra Mata: Ahí no le dije? Parece Guelo

Virginia Mata: Oye y mi tío...

[Overlapping in conversations and cannot Understand]

Virginia Mata: No se mira ahí? Tiene que estar ahí también.

Sandra Salinas: I'm gonna ask Mr. Norquest (could not understand) and he'll probably say yes. (overlapping in conversation and could not understand) I can make you guys a copy so that you guys can have a copy of him. So I have number 4 was her husband, and number 7 was who?

Jessica Dominguez: That looks like her dad. They look so familiar.

Sandra Salinas: They look so familiar.

Jessica Dominguez: Yes, they look really young Sandra. So it could either be like a brother of grandma's dad

Sandra Salinas: So number 4 is for sure...

Jessica Dominguez and **Sandra Mata:** Yeah that's him.

Jessica Dominguez: That's her husband. That's Rogelio Mata. And actually he worked for Pan American also as a custodian for [**Sandra Salinas:** Really?] Mhmm. For a lot of years.

Sandra Salinas: Do you remember what times?

Jessica Dominguez: He was, he worked during when my aunt, when my aunt's daughters started going so probably like in the 80s. 70s and 80s. He worked as a custodian there at Pan Am. Yeah, the other ones I could, if you were to bring these with my uncle, he could probably tell you.

Virginia Mata: Como te llamas? Sandra?

Sandra Salinas: Si Sandra.

Virginia Mata: [pointing to Sandra Mata] ella también se llama Sandra (laughing)

Lupe Flores: Son tocayas

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) Los especiales verdad.

Sandra Mata: What papa, remember I was telling you, he was in there, it was him.

Sandra Salinas: The thing that was weird was (could not understand) you were right.

Jessica Dominguez: That's your dad, that's guelo, but guelo Enrique, they look like the same age, but it can't be. See he looks like, that one right there, him, he looks just like her. That's the one I'm thinking

Virginia Mata: (could not understand beginning) era as joven.

[mumbling conversation about pictures between Rogelio Mata, Jr., Jessica Dominguez, and Sandra Mata]

Jessica Dominguez: Dad, that's guelo right there.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oh yes.

Sandra Salinas: I'll let them know, to try to get you guys a copy of that. So you guys can have it.

[conversation about picture and wedding picture between everyone]

Sandra Salinas: Well we'll give you guys some time, we'll come back, so...

Lupe Flores: No we really appreciate.

Sandra Salinas: This is great. This is like SO great. This is so good, and we are gonna go try to catch up with Gilberto right now and see if we can get information from him. [**Jessica Dominguez:** Magallan?] yes.

Jessica Dominguez: Yeah he's from here.

Sandra Salinas: She told me that it was the pink house.

[conversation between everyone about which house Gilberto Magallan lives in]

Sandra Salinas: Next to the brick house. Last house?

Jessica Dominguez: When you come this way it's the last house on the right. There is gonna be a silver Extera.

Virginia Mata: Allí vive María Magallan.

Jessica Dominguez: He was on there too? Cause they are all related. They were all related.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, that's how we got the names for the Castanedas, the Magallans, and that. Because we know that everyone was related and they would come and get everybody and then head out.

Jessica Dominguez: That's actually pretty cool, I mean I never would have thought that my grandpa's name would have come up.

Sandra Salinas: And Toribio, not Toribio, Florentino and the Magallans, they are actually in this book. The patron wrote this book called Rio Grande Wetbacks: Mexican Migrant Workers, it was printed in 72, and it's all the stories of the workers, like all the stories about the workers. There are stories of Florentino, there are stories of , like this one of El tanque, is Florentino Magallan. They have all the Magallan brothers in there, the have, when he would visit them over in Rancho Grande, and their stories there and [**Jessica Dominguez:** Wow!] So little by little, we're uncovering the actual people that go to the stories.

Jessica Dominguez: So ya'll are making like a...

Sandra Salinas: A research. We are doing a research, we actually wrote a book recently about the workers and the farmers and everybody that worked on this farm together, and how they came together to create a bond that you don't see in other places. So it's been really fun, but days like this that we actually get to know some of the people that were there and that we've read about that we've researched about, it's just amazing. It's just a great ...

Jessica Dominguez: Yeah cause her and well all of them, all of them worked in the fields. Even, I mean even my mom and my 2 older uncles. The oldest 3, her kids, they also worked in the fields also.

[background conversations and noise make it difficult to understand here]

Interview #2 with Mrs. Virginia Mata

Virginia Mata: Y fijate que no saque los retratos, para que los engaño.

Lupe Flores and **Sandra Salinas:** No se preocupe, no se preocupe. Nada mas con hablar con usted. Es un privilegio.

Virginia Mata: Es que no puedo entrar alla. Si entro, a agarrarlos donde yo los tengo. Pero luego que va el niño y ya me hizo un batidero, porque se sube arriba de todo lo que hay. Y ahi quiere jugar. Y como el quebro una ventana la semana pasada y le [cannot understand] y dice que no. Como quiera se nos va, se nos pierde. Y lo vamos a buscar. Y dije, mira, fijate como se mueve la ropa. si ahi esta escondidito el. Si es...por eso ahorita, lo estan llevando con el doctor, por que tiene mucho catarro.

Lupe Flores: Y su hijo anda en el trabajo?

Virginia Mata: El que esta conmigo? Se acaba de ir. Aqui esta conmigo. A ver...[cannot understand]. Dejame ver si esta.

Sandra Salinas: (mumbling something to Lupe) [Greeting Rogelio Mata, Jr.] Hi. I don't have it on right now (video camera) I don't have it on right now, I know that you were worried about

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oh no..

Sandra Salinas: Today we were just going to finish up the interview and just see what we can remember and I was going to videotape our interview today, and I brought the consent forms so that we can read it to her. Uhm, go over the consent forms [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** Oh, okay] about the interview, uhm, and just wanted to you know, do a follow up interview of what she remembers and uhm, and then of course I wanted to take pictures of her. Just proof (laughing)

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oye, no jalaba guelo en el, en el...el otro dia que hable con Gerardo, dijo que si.

Virginia Mata: Dijo? Quien dijo, Gerardo?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Gerardo dijo que si jalaba.

Virginia Mata: Pero pues yo no me acuerdo. Pues seria muy mediana. Estaria muy mediana yo cuando el trabajaba.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Nosotros somos ya 3ra generacion, ya no.

Virginia Mata: No pues ahora ya casi no quedo nadie de...y no pues si yo iba, como quiera yo iba y les preguntaba. Pero...no me acuerdo. Que sepa yo, cuando ya creci yo, que el trabajaba. El salia, pero en el otro trabajo. Pero no me acuerdo.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: You are talking about, whoa, the 1940s...and 48...Que hacia guelo en el 48?

Virginia Mata: Mande?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Que hacia guelo como en 1948?

Sandra Salinas: It doesn't have to be...whatever she remembers.

Virginia Mata: Ya no trabajaba. Si andaba en el trabajo ese del...en Michigan, era el otro trabajo que agarro. Cuando nos vinimos pa'ca, otros veniamos medianos. Tabamos medianos cuando veniamos pa'ca.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Pero no se acuerda de nadie que trabaja en el gin?

Virginia Mata: En el gin?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Si, en el algodón.

Virginia Mata: No.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Los Magallanes no jalaban ahi? Los Magallanes.

Virginia Mata: Bueno, ellos yo creo que si. Yo no se pero, de papa namas ese trabajo tenia. Pero que el nunca trabajara en el gin, ellos si, los Magallanes donde quiera, que por cierto ta bien gacho pa'lla, y alla se quedaron.

Sandra Salinas: Ynos puede decir poquito de su esposo? Que se acuerda de su esposo?

Virginia Mata: Que era muy malo, que era muy travieso. Nada, era bien bueno, conmigo y con todos sus hijos, y todo.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Era buen bailarador.

Virginia Mata: Ah

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: He was, how do you call it...the uh...the...llegaba el y estaba ...the life of the party.

Virginia Mata: Y me venia y me decia "te alistas porque vamos a ir a un baile". Nombre que ganas de bailar. Encontraba a bailar el solo aqui adentro. Fue muy travieso. Era muy amigo, tambien, de todos, era muy amigo.

Sandra Salinas: Y, nunca le dijo de sus trabajos o del patron o de la familia del patron? Nunca le dijo historias, su esposo?

Virginia Mata: Pues si hubo [cannot understand]

Sandra Salinas: Mande?

Virginia Mata: Yo creo que ni trabajaba. Pues no que me acuerde...trabajo en la labor si, pero ya ni me acuerdo.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: If he worked in the gin, that was before they met. But other than that...

Sandra Salinas: Cuando se caso con su esposo? Que era la fecha, se acuerda?

Virginia Mata: El dia...ay no...no me acuerdo cuando fue.

Sandra Salinas: No se preocupe, no se preocupe.

Virginia Mata: Ni modo, si en el retrato porque [cannot understand]

Sandra Salinas: Tiene el retrato dijo?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Si...

Sandra Salinas: Lo puedo ver?

Virginia Mata: Ay, dejame irlos a buscar.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oh yea, they were a handsome couple way back then. You'll notice when she was younger, oh my God, it's totally whoa.

Sandra Salinas: Can, I get your name? I can give you a pseudo name if you'd like.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Nombre, yo soy Rogelio Mata, Jr. I'm the youngest of the boys.

Sandra Salinas: While she's looking for that, can we interview you about what you remember about your, it was your grandfather, Enrique was your grandfather, right, [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** Yes] and Rogelio was your father. [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** was my father] right. You're Virginia's youngest son. Okay, I just wanted to make sure I get everything, recorded on there. What do you remember about your, let's start with your grandfather first. What do you remember about your grandfather.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Well as far as abuelo, he was a fair man. As far as like ugh, he had chickens, pigs, or cows and all that, but at the very end he had a bunch of chickens. Then he had a bunch of dogs. Super barking, pos

antes ugh, crusaban la gente, there WAS NO border patrol back then. So en la noche, he would come out y los perros, “woww, woww, woww, woww, woww” start barking. He knew there was people crossing. And so he’d go out there, take out his ’45 and “bam, bam, bam, bam, bam” shooting the air. Then maybe about 10 minutes later...silence again. [**Sandra Salinas:** se fueron todos] Gente de el, que vivia alla en Rancho Grande, venia pa’su casa, y lo visitaban, they would stay about a week. Help him out do whatever.

Sandra Salinas: Do you remember uhm, any of the Magallanes like Florentino, Carlos, Perfecto, Domingo, any of those Magallanes?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No they’re all probably at the cemetery.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah but do you remember them when you were young? [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** No, no]

Lupe Flores: Do you remember hearing about them, like you know [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** No, no, not really, no, no]

Sandra Salinas: How about the Castanedas that worked in Edinburg on the Norquest property?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Te digo, la gente mia casi esta pa, on my father’s side para ya por Ojo de Agua. That way, paralla, I don’t know anybody that way. Es que es mucha, too many adopted, my mother, my grandmother and my grandfather adopted a couple kids. Well they grew up and went their own way and they’d come visit once in a [could not understand] pero lla ni vienen lla.

Sandra Salinas: And were these legal adoptions or were they? [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** no] Because people would come in and they would say “okay, pos sabes que, I’ll just take care of you” [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** Yeah]

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: They would uh, pos la gente would [**Sandra Salinas:** Take care of eachother basically] yeah. Back then, yeah. They would take care of them, yeah, that’s al they did. Son buena gente.

Sandra Salinas: I have a little bit of questions actually, because we’ve been reading on both sides how people will say that there was a big, big, that the border patrol was influencing a lot and then some people say that they weren’t. That there were hardly any border patrol. So how was it here in Granjeno? What do you remember of the border patrol?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Habia, there was no border patrol, si habia, maybe one unit, pero that was it. Back then, era puro monte. It was all monte. Alla no habia border patrol. No habia (could not understand) not like now. Wow. Now they’re like military, like we’re in a military zone.

Sandra Salinas: Tell us about this, if you can expand on this, how it feels like a military zone.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: pos it is, it is. Months ago, back then, you know where the bar is [referring to bar at entrance of Granjeno, Texas] there’s a little road going up, well the little road goes down and there’s a way to the other levy and you go that way and you take the (could not understand) y te lleva para Reynosa. Now you can’t do it. De volada (making siren sound) te paran. “What are you doing?” (could not understand) “Well you’re not supposed to be coming thru here...blah, blah, blah” Porque, pues crusan, crusan bastante marijuana y todo. It’s pretty bad out there, when was it on Saturday, no, no Sunday morning about 2 o’clock or about 2:30 am, the dogs started barking, you can hear them barking from a mile away, and (making gun firing bullet sound) parecia cartridges, one right after the other. Y los mojaditos ivan en chingas. They weren’t running, but they were power walking man. Immigration, who knows. (could not understand)

Sandra Salinas: And can you tell us about the levies before, how before there weren’t any, how before there wasn’t a levy there or it was, it was different, the levy was different. Now you have houses where there used to be a levy right. How does it work?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Bueno, when they did the spill way, porque the spill way has always been there but uhm, people used to live there but uhm, hurricane season soltava la agua, and get out. So the houses would get flooded. They had to rebuild again. Y ahorra, they finally said no, do away with that. That’s why we built the 2 levies. That levy, like I said used to be right here. [**Sandra Salinas:** Here where these houses are right across the street] yes, mira the spill way corria, boom, to the rio. All flooded. But then they got smarter and said, well why not divide it and they connected all down to Port Isabelle or Rio Hondo so, all this goes all the way, all the way over there.

Sandra Salinas: And uhm, if you can tell us a little bit more about when they built the levies, they built houses for your grandfather, can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Virginia Mata: Los estoy oyendo.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: De quien era la propiedad? Era del tio Manuel verdad?

Virginia Mata: Esta?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No, donde vivia guelo.

Virginia Mata: Si, Manual Olivares.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That's our...brother-in-law

Sandra Salinas: Como se llamaba?

Virginia Mata: Manuel Olivares.

Sandra Salinas: Ok.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: And so when the government came in, they said "hey we're gonna buy all these pitches of land" bam. So you had to sell. [**Sandra Salinas:** You had to?] You had to. [**Sandra Salinas:** There weren't any ifs ands or buts about it?]

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Verdad? Tenian que vender. Tenian que vender la gente los solares porque cuando vino el gobierno a hacer, el otro bordo, a limpiar todo, tenia que vender uno.

Virginia Mata: Noooo...pues era un bordo nomas.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Si bueno, pero cuando vino el gobierno y hizo el otro bordo, toda la gente que tenia propiedad pa'lla pa'tras.

Virginia Mata: Ahi esta todavia, la propiedad

Sandra Salinas: Pero ya no viven ahi?

Virginia Mata: Bueno, vivian los...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Pero, el gobierno vino y les compro

Virginia Mata: Ah, eso si no se yo. Pero si se que el gobierno...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: They had to sell. They're coming in there no matter what.

Virginia Mata: Ahi vivian los Villareales ahi en el rincon, vivian muchos. Y ya casi se acabaron, ya murieron muchos. Y los poquitos que cambiaron pa'ca pa' Mission

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Lo que pa'lla hay, es otro ranchito.

Virginia Mata: Mhmm, pa'lla hay otro ranchito.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: [cannot understand] ranchito. Pero ya the people done moved out. They still maintain the house, cut the grass and everything, water the plants, but they don't live there anymore. The house is still there, well maintained.

Virginia Mata: Pues no alle l retrato, no los alle.

Sandra Salinas: There's a wedding photo right here. Is that hers?

Virginia Mata: Ese?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No no, that's my sister.

Virginia Mata: No, no, tienen que estar en todos los que tengo alla, pero como son muchos en cantidad, tengo todos los retratos, de graduacion y todo, alla. Nombre no pude hallar nada. A ver si vuelven, a ver si los tengo pa' entonces.

Lupe Flores: No se acuerda de sus primos Florentino...si se acuerda como, si ustedes jugaban de pequeños...

Virginia Mata: No, no no no

Lupe Flores: el uno al otro?

Virginia Mata: Siempre...nos procuramos...pues como? Cuando ibamos a verlos aqui a Rancho Grande, ahi cuando los conoci a todos. Porque mi tio Alberto.

Sandra Salinas: Su tio quien?

Virginia Mata: Alberto. Era el papa de ellos. Era hermano. Y como el...el se criaron todos juntos, mi papa con mi tio Alberto, Talia...donde quiera, y como eran de los mismos.

Lupe Flores: Entonces namas cuando iban para Rancho Grande es cuando...se hablaban.

Virginia Mata: Si, ahi nos quedabamos todas. Alla y nos veniamos el lunes en la mañana. Y sabes que? Cruzabamos el rio. Pero no, no a pie, en lancha. En la lancha.

Sandra Salinas: En las lanchas ustedes cruzaban?

Virginia Mata: Si. Y ya pa'ca, cuando venian ellos...y decia yo "no vaya a chistar porque nos pescan". Bien calladito compartia, la mera verdad. Nunca...el animalito. Pero quien nos cruzaba? Pues mi tio Jose y todos los amigos de alla. Venian y nos [cannot understand]. Pero junto con papa. Y venia papa tambien "Hijita, nos vamos por aca, por el puente no, vamos por aca" ayyy no. Y cuando ya ibamos, llegabamos, era la mas gritando y decia "Ve, y usted queria venirse por [cannot understand], venia gritando"nos decia"ya no la vuelvo a traer". Me mandaron sobre la lancha con el que...con un tio. Ay no, que barbaro, ganas de llorar. Pero entonces no estaba muy largo, el rio no estaba tan largo. Y si estaba, pero no, como esta ahora no. [cannot understand] muy bonito alla. Y casi alla ibamos con papa y alla nos quedabamos, mi madre se quedaba aca en la casa sola. Y con papa, nos llevaba a todos los bailes que hubiera y cuanto [cannot understand].

Lupe Flores: Ar-que?

Virginia Mata: Aripeos. De caballos.

Lupe Flores and **Sandra Salinas:** Ah, ok.

Virginia Mata: Y nos llevaba para que vieramos. Muy bonito tambien que estaba, muy bonito. Y ahora no, esta muy feo.

Sandra Salinas: Se acuerda cuando estaban cruzando en las lanchas, se acuerda usted si habia la inmigracion? O...alguna gente le dice la chota. Asi le dice ustedes tambien, la chota?

Virginia Mata: Tambien mhmm. Pero no, fijate que no. Pero si estabamos watchando muchos, pero nunca nos para la migracion.

Sandra Salinas: Y habia...pocos de la inmigracion o...no habia muchos agentes? O nunca venian para este lado?

Virginia Mata: No, era monte. Era el monte, estaba el rio namas y ese era el monte y podias pasar por este lado. Teniamos que colgarlo, cruzabamos, agarrabamos una vereda que habia, y de ahi veniamos a dar aqui al ranchito donde viviamos. Pero si colgabamos de alla [cannot understand]. Estaba muy bonito antes.

Sandra Salinas: En que...su mama donde trabajaba su mama?

Virginia Mata: Mi madre nunca trabajo.

Sandra Salinas: Nunca trabajo, estaba aqui cuidando a los niños?

Virginia Mata: A cuales? Ya estabamos todos trabajando. Porque ella nunca trabajo.

Lupe Flores and **Sandra Salinas:** Y usted, en algo trabajo usted? En las bodegas o algo? Nos dijo antes que trabajaba en las bodegas. Nos puede decir poquito mas lo que se acuerda en las bodegas?

Virginia Mata: Pos no, porque el trabajo se acabo, el de las bodegas, [cannot understand], seguimos trabajando en las labores, en las labores. Limpiando naranjo, cortando cebolla.

Sandra Salinas: Y a cuales...cuando fueron a trabajar en la labor, por donde fueron? Se acuerda? Era en Mission, San Juan, Edinburgo?

Virginia Mata: Adabamos donde quiera, donde nos manadaron los de las bodegas. En tal parte hay cebolla, en tal parte van a hacer zanahoria, en tal parte...asi nos mandaban. Pero como ibamos ibamos en el troque de aqui. Pero pues donde quiera andabamos. Esta caliente? Pa'apagarlo.

Sandra Salinas: No no, esta bien. Me vengo para aca con usted. Iba a preguntar, nunca fue usted a trabajar en la labor, en las labores con su papa o su esposo?

Virginia Mata: Ah, pues con mi esposo, pero no aqui.

Sandra Salinas: No aqui, por donde?

Virginia Mata: En Michigan. Michigan y...a ver... pues ya ni me acuerdo, creo que namas a Michigan, habia mucho trabajo. Y nos ibamos a pizar el pepino y ejote...lo que tambien era alla...y estabamos...tres meses alla.

Sandra Salinas: Tres meses. Y su esposo nunca fue bracero? O si fue bracero?

Virginia Mata: Ay pues no me acuerdo si si o no. No, yo creo que no. Nunca se fue, nunca nos dejo solas, a mi nunca me dejo sola. Pero no me acuerdo que fue bracero. Trabajaba asi en las labores con amigo, aqui pero. Yo creo que no. Si iba, pero con su mama. Todavia no se casaba. Y se iba nomas, pero despues ya no se fue.

Sandra Salinas: Y cuando trabajaba en las bodegas o las labores, como fueron las cosas, quien les decia de los trabajos? Fueron contratos? Ahi como fueron a un lugar y los contrataban a diferentes lugares, o usted fueron a las labores a hablar con el patron ahi, o como?

Virginia Mata: Ya íbamos contratados por los...el...a ver. Mi yerno era el que nos llevaba en su troca, pero el tenia sus patrones alla. Pero ni me acuerdo como se llamaban.

Sandra Salinas: Como se llama su yerno?

Virginia Mata: Se llamaba Madeiro. Ah..

Sandra Salinas: Madeiro.

Virginia Mata: Villareal. Ahi con este el señor Olivares, tambien. Y nos íbamos a...y de ahi nos íbamos, nos contrataban otros. Lo allaste?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That's him when he was younger. Aqui esta, this is in the front, aqui estan los dos posters, ese es what he is used to look like. He used to be a front lawn. That's him.

Sandra Salinas: May we take a picture of these pictures?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Si, yea. Tiene que haber mas.

Virginia Mata: De quien, de apa?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Nombre, pues si, de apa.

Virginia Mata: No, es que faltan muchos de esos, cuando los allamos. Son muchos, muchos en cantidad. Tiene que ser...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That's him right there, you can see some of them...old photos, I dont know who they are. Way back then.

Virginia Mata: No yo digo que no, tienen que estar. Por eso le dije no se, necesito estar solita. No me deja el niño.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That's back in the 70s.

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) They are all silly. How cute.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: My brother, my oldest brother went into the Navy.

Sandra Salinas: It's great that ya'll have so much photos .

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: We have chingos, nomas que, it's all disorganized. Pictures, we don't even know who they are. That's him right there. Cuando iba para los trabajos. People, I don't even know who they are.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, I was doing my own family tree over the summer and there are a few pictures that I don't even know who they are but...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: There he is again.

Sandra Salinas: Maybe we can get the picture that you had up here in the front with him by himself, that would be a great one. Let me just go back.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That's before my time.

Sandra Salinas: No se acuerda donde era esto? Esta foto, este retrato?

Virginia Mata: Pues donde, de que seria.

Sandra Salinas: Los retratos estos. I'm gonna put this right here, just so they don't fall out. Donde fue esto?

Virginia Mata: Este...pues donde. Aqui este es esto. Pero eso no fue aqui.

Sandra Salinas: Ese era en Michigan o en donde?

Virginia Mata: En Michigan.

Sandra Salinas: You can zoom in and out on the little, this thing, the one that sticks up, you can push it up or down to zoom in or out. Y habia una foto que nos enseñó ahorita. Dejeme buscar el que me estaba enseñando su hijo. Trying to find that photo he was showing me

Virginia Mata: Las fotos estan...luego las busco, namas que tenga tiempo y que este a solas. Si, si no, como ya se va, la nieta mia se va con...para...porque esta viendo los otros niños. Estan viendo los niños de la cuañada.

Sandra Salinas: Este es su esposo?

Virginia Mata: No...yo creo que no. Si creo...

Sandra Salinas: Si? Puedo tomar foto de esa foto? Me deja tomar foto? Dejame ver como le puedo hacer. This is Rogelio Mata. This is Mrs. Mata husband. He was a worker at the Norquest property. Habia otra foto que me enseñó pero no se. Pero para buscarlo otra vez verdad?

Virginia Mata: Por eso te digo que el niño...y aparte ese de ahi tengo muchos tambien. Y aquel se fue a buscar mas. A ver, que es eso? Ese es de...si es de Rogelio. Esta con el nieto.

Sandra Salinas: Con quien?

Virginia Mata: El nieto.

Sandra Salinas: This is him again, loving father. Ok. Dejame...namas...

Virginia Mata: Nombre, namas le digo, me dan ganas de quemarlos. Tengo un monton de cajas de platico llenitas. Y todos los que se llevaron las muchachas.

Sandra Salinas: Y...me puede decir mas de su esposo? Lo que se acuerda. Las mañanas, que le hacia para...

Virginia Mata: Ah pues el se iba a trabajar porque despues de eso ya no pudo porque el se enfermo de los pies. De un pie. Llendo por alla por debajo, pusieron alambre y este se fue. Y dijo, yo voy...si iba pa'lla para [cannot understand] y se lastimo el pie, el dedo. Tenia como una cortada antes, y se estaba curando y llendo al doctor, hasta que no pudieron, tuvieron que mocharle...la...el adelante de el pie. Se lo tuvieron que mochar. Y despues ya no queria andar, de eso, se ponía a llorar. No lo que batalle con el. Y nada si podia andar y todo, pero no, el no queria. Pero el vendia, asi como estaba, se puso a vender fruta. Fruta, mucha fruta. Y se iba y alla por el parque habia camino para entrar pa'l parque y se iba pa'lla todo el dia a vender. Pero si trabajo el despues de que...se alivio de su pie.

Sandra Salinas: Y nunca le dijo historias a...de los dias que tenia en el trabajo? No se acuerda de su esposo quejando de cualquier cosa?

Virginia Mata: Fijate que no. Y namas eso fue lo unico que paso, fue todo lo que paso. Namas de eso, no tenia ninguna [cannot understand]

Sandra Salinas: Y que se acuerda usted del tiempo...se acuerda si habia discriminaciones o?

Virginia Mata: Fijate que no. Todos seguimos muy amistosos aqui. Todos, nos juntabamos, para las fiestas, y bien bonito que se ponian las fiestas. Pero todos muy amables, todos. Iban y todavia hasta la fecha. Nos estamos quedando, y yo mas vieja que todos. Me hicieron un party [cannot understand] porque aqui habemos varios. Pero todos dijeron, es mi tia, y si algunas de las sobrinas que estan aqui decian "no, es la mia". No le hace, le dije. No pude ir porque un dia estaba muy malita. Se quedo en la cama, [cannot understand], ya ni en la sillita ya no cabia. Y este...y no pues si el queria fiesta de todos los que habemos aqui en el rancho que seamos grandes de edad. [incmprensible]. Y me dijeron que porque no habia ido, y ay dije se queria ir pero como lo llevo.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: He worked for Pan Am now.

Sandra Salinas: He worked for Pan Am? Yeah, I remember you mentioning but...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: As a custodian, back then they were called custodians. I used to go to work with him. Sometimes. [**Sandra Salinas:** Really?] That was a long boring job.

Sandra Salinas: So he went from working on the farms and the factories to working as a custodian at Pan Am.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Yeah. And back then, even back then in the 80s, early 80s, ta como ahorrita, que estaba, the front was on. So he got a job in Hidalgo, where we used to go to school. He worked there for about 6 months. And then ya, I guess he quit or he...

Sandra Salinas: She said that he, his foot was hurt, that he hurt his foot.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Yeah. Pos tambien tenia diabetes. That's how it starts. You chop off the...and before you know it, chop off up to here, and before you know it chop off (cannot understand) system. It went chop, and then chop, and then chop and the other one chop, and before you know it, diabetes won.

Lupe Flores: How long did he work at Pan Am as a custodian?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Que tanto jalo papa ahi en el Pan Am ama?

Virginia Mata: Que que?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Que tanto jalo papa? Se avento los 20 verdad?

Sandra Salinas: 20 years.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: He retired at a really...como al año, dos años, boom.

Sandra Salinas: That's really cool that he not only tilled the land he worked, the farm, I mean at the University.

Virginia Mata: Y cuando fueron, no fueron alla?

Sandra Salinas: Donde?

Virginia Mata: Alla con Magallan.

Sandra Salinas: Si fuimos pero no nos pudo ayudar.

Virginia Mata: No...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Yea there's...they used to have a name for him, in Reynosa. She'll probably tell you.

Sandra Salinas: A nickname for...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: For my dad. La Loba.

Sandra Salinas: La Loba? Porque le decian La Loba?

Virginia Mata: No se, namas que todos le decian La Loba.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Pues no que porque le decian que nunca salia del monte? No es lo que usted dice.

Sandra Salinas: Porque nunca salia del monte.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That's what she says.

Virginia Mata: A pues si andaba alla con aquel del ojo de agua.

Lupe Flores: And where's the El Ojo de Agua?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oh alla por Perezville, Abrahams

Virginia Mata: En Abrahams, alla vivia el amigo. Vivia en el monte.

Sandra Salinas and Lupe Flores: Y...fue a la escuela usted? Por algunos años? Aqui o alla? La educacion de usted. Fue a la escuela usted?

Virginia Mata: A cual? Namas hasta seis. Aqui en hidalgo. Pero ya no, porque mi madre se enfermo mucho y teniamos que ayudarle a papa a trabajar.

Lupe Flores and Sandra Salinas: Y que se acuerda de cuando estaba chica? si eran buenos con los niños ahi? Que recuerda de los maestros? Habia discriminacion?

Virginia Mata: No, no, todos eran bien buenos. No habia nada, ni que fueran con nosotros cuando...no. Yo era pelotera. Si y yo donde quiera...fuimos hasta...pues fuimos a varias partes a jugar y eramos guapas porque ganabamos en todo. Y ya se murieron todas mis amigas, las que iban. Y creo que eran mayor que yo. Y las chicas me vienen a ver y me dicen "que vives y mas y mas". Pues yo creo que no, ya estoy muy vieja. [cannot understand]. Todavia trabajo, ando cortando hierba alla atras y riego las matas. [cannot understand]. Tengo quien me ayude, pero como quiera yo.

Lupe Flores: Cuando dejo de trabajar usted en las labores?

Virginia Mata: Pare, como de...te voy a decir...como de 15 o 16 años. Ya no pude, ya no quise trabajar ni...pues quien iba [cannot understand] ibamos y limpiabamos las labores, limpiabamos el repollo, vetabel, todo eso.

Sandra Salinas: Y cuando se caso? Cuantos años tenia cuando se caso?

Virginia Mata: Tenia como 23. Porque me [cannot understand] en abril.

Sandra Salinas: En abril que?

Virginia Mata: El 26 de abril...pero no me acuerdo...fue cuando me iba a casar. Tambien el [cannot understand]. Tengo que buscarlo.

Sandra Salinas: Y que año nacio?

Virginia Mata: El 16 de abril...el año...el 24.

Sandra Salinas: Del 24. April 16, 1924 is when she was born.

Lupe Flores: Por cuanto tiempo se acuerdo usted que levantaban a su papa en los troques?

Virginia Mata: Como que?

Lupe Flores: Como cuanto tiempo si se acuerda usted, por cuanto tiempo levantaban a su papa en los troques? Por cuantos años se acuerda usted que levantaron a su papa en los troques aqui?

Virginia Mata: Cuantos años?

Lupe Flores and Sandra Salinas: Cuantos años se acuerda levantaron su papa o su esposo aqui?

Virginia Mata: Aqui en la casa no. Ahi en el borde porque trabajan alla pa San Juan, todo eso.

Sandra Salinas: Cuanto años, se acuerda?

Virginia Mata: No me acuerdo de los años. Pues casi todos, cuando se cambio el pa'lla, trabajo en la labor muy joven.

Sandra Salinas: Y usted dijo que acabo de trabajar a los 15,16 años verdad? Se caso a los 23 años y de ahi ya no trabajaba?

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: Usted se quedaba en la casa.

Virginia Mata: En la casa. Nos quedabamos en la casa, namas la mayor era la que seguia trabajando.

Sandra Salinas: Y como...donde dejaban a los hijos, los niños? Se quedaban...cuando...tuvo a los niños, se quedaban con usted?

Virginia Mata: Con mi madre.

Sandra Salinas: Con su madre.

Virginia Mata: Mhmm. Ella me los cuidaba. Cuando yo me iba, entonces ya estaba...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Well we've got a lot of old pictures tambien, pero, I don't know who they are. [**Sandra**

Salinas: That's okay.]

Virginia Mata: Este...ella me los cuidaba.

Sandra Salinas: Y donde estaba usted?

Virginia Mata: Pues entonces, yo trabajaba, en las labores, y ella me los cuidaba. Y de aqui yo los mandaba para aquel lado del border. Ellos vivian alla, a lado del border. Eran cuatas. Los mandaba pa'lla. Y se iba, y ella venia pa'ca o papa. Y a este tambien porque el lo crio.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That was on 76. That's my dad and that's her.

Virginia Mata: No la mia [cannot understand] bien bonita.

Sandra Salinas: Cuando acabo de trabajar, tuvo a los hijos, y estaba trabajando y entonces, a que edad acabo de trabajar usted?

Virginia Mata: Cuando yo estaba esperando a los ultimos, ya no quise, ya no. Como porque, si ya me habia aliviado. Y ya despues ya no quise. Siempre trabaje como [cannot understand] y a mi hermana. Trabajamos yo y mi hermana. Tenia unas manitas que ni siquiera. Si iba a la labor con nosotros pero [cannot understand],nos decia, y ya nunca la volvimos a llevar. Que es la esposa de ese Manuel Olivares. Y trabajaba ya mi hermana, la otra que se caso con el [cannot understand]. Ella trabajaba con el, pero cuando me llevaba, tambien llevaba gente a trabajar. Era muy bonito, muy bonito. Y ahora que digo, nada, que feo. Que feo esta. Voy pasando por una ventana y digo, me van a dar un susto. Cuando pasan y le digo yo, me da tanta lastima, como quiera que sea, le digo yo. Y pues no, a ver que hacen porque unos viene a trabajar y otros vienen a robar. Tanto que han robado, tanto. Y ahi los ve. Yo se por los perritos porque ladran. [cannot understand]. Y el nieto "Guela, usted ve algo?". No mi'ja, yo no miro, mas pa'lla no miro. Y el dia que pescaron los diez, ahi estabamos afuera cuando los pescaron. Y pues dije, mira, pagaron. [cannot understand] porque si han robado mucho. Se la [cannot understand] el rio es muy ancho. Yo tengo mucho miedo, porque hay muchos jabalines. Tambien, en la sierra hay muchos. De que...que tenia el señor? Tenia un...pa'ca tenia una tienda pero tenia muchos marranos. Y se le fueron, para el monte y se hicieron como jabalines. Y ahi le digo, tenga mucho cuidado cuando vaya pa'lla. No si andan ahi, ahi mataron a uno. Qie ingratos dije, pa'que lo mataban. Y si hay.

Sandra Salinas: Y cuando iban en las lanchas pa'lla, para el otro lado, habia tambien los marranos y los burros?

Virginia Mata: No no no no, estaba muy bien. Ahi no te digo que no me querian? Porque yo venia gritando y tenia miedo a subir a caballo porque de aqui pa'lla nos ibamos en caballo para [cannot understand]. Y mi tia, mi tio, subanse, solas. Y nos subian, yo no, a mi me guiaban, me llevaban andando. Porque para mi [cannot understand].

Sandra Salinas: [talking to Rogelio Mata, Jr.] She's telling us how her uncle used to take them over in the lanchas. Did you ever go on the lanchas?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Sabes que no. Ya para es tiempo no, ya no habia.

Virginia Mata: Estubo bonito pero no, a mi no me querian. [cannot understand].

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Que año era?

Virginia Mata: Pues que año? Que edad tenia yo? Tenia como...como 8 años tenia yo.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: No se acuerda el año? 1930?

Virginia Mata: Pues sabe dios. Tantos años y todo, nunca apuntamos nada. [cannot understand].

Sandra Salinas: Y se quedaba usted dijo, que se quedaba alla con ellos, con su familia en Rancho Grande.

Virginia Mata: Alla si, cuando ibamos en la lancha. Y alla nos quedabamos por tres dias.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: That's Enrique Castañeda's family over there.

Sandra Salinas: Y que se acuerda de Rancho Grande? Que se acuerda de alla del otro lado?

Virginia Mata: Pues el [cannot understand] que habia. Sabado y ahi el domindo habia muchos bailes, habia bodas y todo muy bonito ahi.

Sandra Salinas: Alla aprendio a bailar?

Virginia Mata: Si. Nombre de esos luego luego. Nombre. Bien bonito. [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** My dad taught her] Veniamos hechos una tierra, porque era pura tierra. Nombre como crees, ay no.

Sandra Salinas: Y como se conocieron usted y su esposo?

Virginia Mata: En un baile.

Sandra Salinas: En un baile? Aqui o alla?

Virginia Mata: Aqui, en el rancho. Aqui cerquita de donde esta la iglesia. Porque estaba juntando dinero para una iglesia, para la iglesia que hay ahorita. Y hacian muchos bailes, habia muchos musicos porque habia quien fuera a buscar y todo. Nombre, se ponía tan bonito y nosotros y mi tia, mi tia otra Francisca y mi tia la otra. Y toda de aqui la muchachas nos juntamos a hacer tamales. Y haciamos muchos tamales, varios y varios. Y todos los vendiamos. Y fijate que los musicos nos cobraron. Ahi fue cuando lo conoci.

Sandra Salinas: Y que tipo de iglesia era?

Virginia Mata: Catolica. Es catolica. Aqui somos catolicas todos.

Sandra Salinas: I think we've covered everything. Y no tiene...yo creo que ya es todo lo que ibamos a preguntar, no tiene algo que quiere decir usted del tiempo pasado o lo que se acuerde de su papa o su esposo?

Virginia Mata: No, pues nunca acabo. Yo les puedo decir...si llegan a volver, a ver que mas me acuerdo y les busco los retratos.

Sandra Salinas: Oh una pregunta, que se nos olvido. Ibamos a preguntar de la familia japonesa, de las bodegas donde trabajaba usted.

Virginia Mata: Aqui en Hidalgo pero yo no se nada. Henry Kawajata se llamaba uno de ellos. Si, aqui en Hidalgo. [cannot understand] que ahora esta muy diferente. Y otro se llamaba...quien sabe como se llama el otro que vive aca donde este el border patrol. Vendio el todo ahi. A pero que perro era el japonés ese.

Sandra Salinas: Porque? Que hacia el que?

Virginia Mata: El no queria que le trozaran ni una matita.

Sandra Salinas: Perdon?

Virginia Mata: Que el no queria que le trozaran ni una matita del repollo que ibamos cortando. A eso trabajamos mucho, muchos años.

Sandra Salinas: Y habia discriminacion con la familia japonesa y ustedes? No habia discriminacion o nada? Todo estaba?

Virginia Mata: No, no. Cada [cannot understand] todavia no. Namas los mayordomos, como los dueños eran los delicados. Pero de ahi pa'lla la demas gente japonesa [cannot understand] en Hidalgo, eran bien buenos.

Sandra Salinas: Y nunca trabajaron por dueños, o patrones o mayordomos que eran mexicanos?

Virginia Mata: Pues casi todos.

Sandra Salinas: Casi todos eran mexicanos?

Virginia Mata: Y namas con unos japoneses y un americano, pero no se como seria. Nadie donde esta ahora todo que hicieron todo para alla nuevo. Y namas que [cannot understand]/

Sandra Salinas: Y usted no se acuerda de ningun trabajo de alla por donde esta el PAN AM?

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: Y nunca fue a trabajar con su esposo ahi a PAN AM?

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: Usted se quedaba aqui?

Virginia Mata: Aqui me quedaba yo, y se iba a trabajar en la noche, se llevaba lonche. Les hacia yo un [cannot understand] y les mandaba yo.

Sandra Salinas: No se acuerda del nombre del americano?

Virginia Mata: No.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, yo creo que es todo lo que necesitabamos. Muchisimas gracias. Dejeme darle las formas

que tenemos para usted. Namas explicando toda la informacion, para que vamos a usar la informacion. Estamos haciendo un reporte para la escuela y por eso le estabamos preguntando porque el reporte, como le estaba diciendo la ultima vez, el reporte que estamos escribiendo es de una familia que tenia labores donde la familia de usted, asi los Castañeda y los Magallanes, su familia trabajaba en las labores con el alla en Edinburgo. Y por eso estamos haciendo nosotros el estudio en esa labor, y por eso estabamos preguntando de su papa y su esposo, porque sabemos que ellos fueron unos de los señores que trabajaron en esa labor. Tengo una en español, tengo unas formas en español para usted y las tengo tambien en ingles para que tenga las dos usted, una para enseñarle, si tiene cualquier pregunta, su hijo o sus hijas, lo tenemos en ingles y se lo vamos a dejar en español para usted para que tenga toda la informacion.

Sandra Salinas: The CHAPS, actually, the CHAPS is gonna be, there's just the English one, this is CHAPS, and the general consent form is also for CHAPS.

Lupe Flores: That wasn't the general consent form?

Sandra Salinas: This is the CHAPS. And this is just the confidentiality. There it is, yeah. That's one that we need to give to her. And then, uhm, I don't remember, the Spanish ones we have, are they ...

Lupe Flores: They're for the deed of gift.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, I need one. Cause she's letting us take pictures of her pictures so, the deed of gifts, uhm, the Spanish one. Told you there are like a thousand forms, but I just wanna make sure that we get all of our forms in and stuff. Uhm, I think that's it, I'm not sure if we need one of these.

Lupe Flores: And there's one, there's one in the packet no?

Sandra Salinas: This one right? Oh, deed of gift, okay.

Sandra Salinas: Esta va a ser la forma de usted. Permitame estoy buscando mi pluma, mi boligrafo.

Virginia Mata: Esta como la nieta, si no es su pluma, no escribe

Sandra Salinas: [talking about video camera] No leave it on, just to make sure that...The first date was. La primera fecha que vinimos era? The 2nd, so March 2nd and March 9th. Esto namas dice que yo, Sandra Salinas y Lupe Flores, quien es el, yo y el, entrevistamos a usted Virginia Mata y a su hijo Rogelio Mata Jr. en las fechas marzo 2 y marzo 9, las dos fechas verdad, que vinimos. Y toda esta informacion, el video y el...

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Todo lo que esta diciendo

Sandra Salinas: La grabacion, el video y la grabacion todo va a estar entregado a la escuela aqui en PAN AM. Y como le estaba diciendo asi, si gusta usted ir a PAN AM a ver el video o a escuchar la grabacion o leer lo que escribimos, puede ir ahi a PAN AM y tienen toda la informacion ahi, las fotos, de todo el estudio que hicimos, esta ahi.

Virginia Mata: Ahora que hiciste eso, mi hija tambien graudio...

Sandra Salinas: Si? Salio de PANAM?

Virginia Mata: Si, pero no quiso ir a la graduacion. La otra si fue pero ella no quiso.

Sandra Salinas: So las dos?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Hermanas.

Sandra Salinas: They've graduated from there. Great, great. [filling out paperwork] Oh it's saying...I think I might need another Spanish one, sorry. I need another Spanish one. Give me another Spanish one. I have to fill it out again. Lo escribe mal, I need another Spanish one. We have like a thousand consent forms that we have to fill out. [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** Oh nombre, by the time you finish this...a stack about 'o big.] But we're just trying to make sure that we get everything covered so that we ...let me just rewrite this information.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: When I was in the military, there was a, ten copies for every, whoo, a whole stack, asi. [**Lupe Flores:** What branch in the military?] The ARMY. And everywhere you travel, you have to take a stack of papers. And by the time you finished, you had man...

Sandra Salinas: And I'm gonna leave one of these with you guys, so that you have all the documents, okay. Okay. So this is basically saying I, Sandra Salinas and Lupe Flores, conducted an interview with Virginia Mata and her son Rogelio Mata, Jr., on 3/2 and 3/9, March 2nd and March 9th of 2012 and all of this information will be inserted, submitted to the UTPA Archives. We have the Border Studies Archives there, so all of this is gonna be in there. The video, the recording, everything will be submitted to the archive, as well as the report, as soon

as we finish the report which we should have actually this weekend, we were just waiting for this last section.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Si, es que, ya, ya, they are all (making whistling sound to symbolize dead) all dying out.

Sandra Salinas: And that's, that's what's so special about the fact that we got to interview her because we get to cherish these memories. So that's why we wanted to also, that's part of this project behind CHAPS, we're trying to get as many interviews of people that lived here and they were, they were the pillars of the Rio Grande Valley.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: If they just wanna talk about people in general, ooo, she can tell you about people about as far as dates and all that, no, but as far as stories. She'll tell you [**Sandra Salinas:** That's what she was saying] she'll tell you a million stories, you can write a book. Do you know all you have is (could not understand)

Sandra Salinas: Well this is uhm, aqui dice yo, y va escribir su nombre or you can sign, it's up to you. I got one for her in Spanish since she speaks Spanish, and then my stuff is in English here. But uhm, de la ciudad, de ciudad Granjeno.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Escriba su nombre aca arriba, ponga Granjeno ahi.

Sandra Salinas: Virginia Mata. Ahi esta, puede?

Virginia Mata: Pues deja ver si puedo. No, si hace ya batallo para...para firmar, pago puras

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: La C.

Sandra Salinas: So it's her address. Y su, su, [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** Her mailbox or ciudad?] It would be her mailbox because here it says Granjeno. So it would be like the address, uhm this address, Granjeno

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Que es la ruta aqui? 4 4 7 6?

Sandra Salinas: Quiere que se lo escriba yo?

Virginia Mata: Si porque yo...

Sandra Salinas: Si, claro claro, claro que si. Que es la ruta?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: 447

Virginia Mata: Nombre no esta [cannot understand]. Se me olvida. Ahi esta afuera pero yo no se. 4 7...6 6? No se, ahi esta afuera.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, ahorita agarro su direccion.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: 4476?

Sandra Salinas: I know it's Camino Real...6676.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Oh, okay, I thought it was 44.

Sandra Salinas: And what was the post, the zip code?

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: 78572...that one I always knew.

Virginia Mata: Ta'bien.

Sandra Salinas: Aqui dice, yo Virginia Mata, de 6676, El Camino Real, es su direccion de Granajeno. Ciudad de Granjeno, Texas, 78572. Es su codigo postal. Aqui...dice...permanente doy, comunico, y asigno a la universidad de PAN AM mi entrevista. Que consiste en, una, dos o tres. Son dos entrevistas, conducidas en marzo 2 y marzo 9. Aqui le voy a escribir marzo 2, marzo 9 de 2012. Aqui dice que todas sus entrevistas estan grabadas... sus grabaciones y todo van a estar entregadas a la universidad, en la libreria en la universidad de Pan American de Texas. Si me puede firmar aqui, y la fecha por favor. Y esto nomas esta diciendo que nos esta dando permiso a entregar toda esta informacion a la universidad, a la libreria. La biblioteca.

Sandra Salinas: I don't know why it says libreria right there? It should be biblioteca right? [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** Yeah] Okay.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: It's cause we're Tex-Mex. Here in Texas, we don't...

Sandra Salinas: Y la fecha es, marzo 9. 3

Virginia Mata: No, pero.

Sandra Salinas: Aqui asi como. 3, 9, 2012

Virginia Mata: Que dijiste?

Sandra Salinas: Nueve, dos zero, uno dos. Perfecto. Le voy a dejar esta copia aqui con usted. Este va a ser para usted ok? Aqui tiene mi nombre, nombre de Lupe y esa es mi informacion y esta va a ser la copia para usted. Yo me llevo esta copia y lo voy a dar ahi en la biblioteca.

Virginia Mata: Te llamas Lupe? [cannot understand]

Sandra Salinas: Ahora esta forma quiere decir confianza. Que toda esta informacion es en confianza a que no le vamos a dar ninguna informacion a ninguna gente, asi como su direccion, nada de esa informacion. Le vamos a dar a nadie mas, namas a nosotros y la biblioteca va a tener esta informacion, por el estudio de nosotros. No le vamos a dar su informacion a ninguna otra gente. Eso es lo que quiere decir aqui. Esta es para mi. Le voy a dar uno, can you get me a copy of each of these? Yeah, cause I'm gonna leave her a copy of everything. [gathering papers from Lupe adn filling out paperwork]

Sandra Salinas: Esta va a ser para usted. Esto namas le esta diciendo, como le digo, que yo Sandra Salinas no le voy a dar ninguna informacion de usted a ninguna otra gente, namas a nuestros maestros ahi en la universidad por este estudio. La biblioteca y nosotros. Esto va a ser para usted, para que tenga usted. Estas dos son lo mismo. Dicen que nosotros le preguntamos a usted si podemos entrevistarla y grabar toda la informacion para usar para nuestro estudio, y entonces vamos a entregar todo a la biblioteca y nuestros maestros y nosotros somos los unicos que vamos a ver esto, ok? Y yo le voy a dar copias de su, de la grabacion y el video y las fotos que tome yo le voy a dar toda esa informacion a usted. A otro dia, vengo y se los doy con todo junto. Como le estaba diciendo al principio, la otra entrevista que este estudio es para el estudio que estamos haciendo de labores en Edinburgo. Cuando estabamos conduciendo este estudio, encontramos que su papa y su esposo trabajaban en ese labor y por eso la estamos entrevistando para que no pueda decir sus memorias de su papa Enrique Castañeda y su esposo Rogelio Mata. Y aqui le voy a dejar, con estas formas, les voy a dejar mi informacion y con cualquier cosa, si se acuerda de algo importante o de repente no quiere que usemos la grabacion o cualquier cosa, me puede llamar o a nuestra escuela, o al maestro. El maestro se llama, señor Russell Skowronek y si, pero de esta informacion va a estar en la biblioteca con la doctora Margaret Dorsey. Aqui esta su nombre, su telefono, su email. Toda la informacion de ella, si quiere ver la grabacion, cualquier cosa, puede llamar y hablar con ella. Namas es toda la informacion, todas estas formas, es lo que dicen estas formas. Bueno dejame entragar, escribir mi informacion para que tenga la informacion de la doctora y tambien mi informacion. Y aqui, esto esta diciendo. [Talking to Rogelio Mata, Jr.] This first part, these two are exactly the same only one is a general consent form, the other one is for CHAPS, the program that we are working under. Well not working under, well I'm working under, but that the research is under. So just basically saying that we're asking for the participation and that we asked if we could record everything that I've been telling you since the beginning. So that was that, and I left, if you have any questions, you guys are welcome to contact Dr. Margaret Dorsey who is the curator at the archives, and she's actually also one of the professors that was a professor for the class that we were founded with. Here's my information in case you guys have any questions for me as well. And now I'm gonna go ahead and put here your mother's information and then get her signature and basically this is the deed of gift. Este es que nos esta regalando su entrevista y la informacion que nos estaba dando, que grabamos, esta forma dice que nos esta regalando esa informacion. Y nosotros no vamos a dar esta informacion a ninguna otra gente, namas la biblioteca, y namas nosotros.

Virginia Mata: Tambien ya no puede.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: Ya los dinosaurios ya estan acabando.

Virginia Mata: Ya tiene el rancho quedan muy poquitos, ya namas creo que yo.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: She outlived three sisters so...

Sandra Salinas: That's what she was saying, she was like ... "even the ones older than me". The phone number that I have for your mother is Jessica's phone number. [**Rogelio Mata, Jr.:** yes] Dice que este es su nombre, aqui si puede firmar aqui. Esa es su direccion y su numero de telefono, namas diciendo que nos esta dando permiso para la entrevista.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: La informacion y la entrevista se la esta dando de a gratis.

Sandra Salinas: Mande? Aqui su nombre, si me puede firmar su nombre.

Virginia Mata: Asi me voy muy bien. Asi cuando ya me voy a [cannot understand].

Sandra Salinas: Si me puede firmar aqui tambien, es lo mismo. En esta linea.

Sandra Salinas: I can fill the address out and stuff like that. I'll have her sign all the forms...[reviewing forms with Lupe] I'm giving her copies of all the documents with my signature, with my information and everything is gonna be on there for her. I think I already got this one for her. I need the...this is the CHAPS one, I need the

regular generic one. So this one, I'll go ahead and fill this out for her right now. And on this one...Si me puede firmar aqui. Es lo mismo que este, esta informacion va a ser lo mismo. Este dice mas informacion sobre nuestro programa y estudio.

Sandra Salinas: This is a generic consent form, and this is the CHAPS program one. Si me puede firmar aqui donde dice interviews signature, y ahorita yo escribo toda esta informacion por usted. Y como le digo, le vamos a dejar copias de todas estas formas. Si me puede firmar aqui en esta forma, en esta linea por favor.

Sandra Salinas: [asking Rogelio Mata, Jr.] Because we did interview you, can we get your signature first on the bottom, since we did get some of your information in there. Again, this is my information here, as well as Dr. Dorsey's, and this is just to release the gift, the deed of gift, so if you can just sign here underneath here. This is the one I'm gonna turn in to the university. I'm only gonna give one of these. It's just my information. This I need, just that I'm not gonna be giving your information to anybody.

Rogelio Mata, Jr.: It's not National Security or so...yeah right (laughing) it's just todo la information from ways.

Sandra Salinas: But it's just insight into how things were back then. I'll just sign all of these right now. I'm just trying to get all the (mumbling) This one is done, that's mine. Okay, so this one I've got to fill out the same way right. She doesn't really need to get the signatures on these, I'll just sign all of my stuff cause this is her copy.

[Sandra Mata walks in and group exchanges hellos]

Sandra Salinas: I'm just doing all the paperwork.

[small talk about taking baby to the doctor while signing paperwork]

Sandra Salinas: Este es la forma esta que me firmo usted, esta es la copia para usted. Y la ultima.

Virginia Mata: Como que ya estoy cansada de estar [cannot understand] noche.

Sandra Salinas: El niño no se siente bien?

Virginia Mata: No, si esta bien pero empezo con mucho catarro y tiene tos. Pero es que no lo...es que se levanta sin zapatos, no le ponen chaqueta ni nada.

[Sandra and Lupe reviewing documents to make sure numbers are correct and that they are complete.]

Sandra Salinas: Ya me duele la mano.

Virginia Mata: Ay, como no.

[Sandra and Lupe reviewing documents to make sure numbers are correct and that they are complete.]

Sandra Salinas: Esta es su copia de esos papeles, los que me firmo. Aqui tiene toda la informacion que necesita. Este va a tener la informacion de los numeros de telefono de la doctora Dorsey, donde vamos a entregar toda la informacion a la biblioteca y tiene toda la informacion que necesita. Y tambien como le estaba diciendo, aqui tiene mi numero de telefono, si cualquier cosa necesita hablar conmigo, ahi me llama. Esto es como una vez mas. Si, ese papel tambien puede. Aqui estan, estas son las copias de usted y ya me dio las copias que necesitaba firmadas. Me da permiso de tomar una foto con usted?

Virginia Mata: Ah! Si. El painao.

Sandra Salinas: Se mira muy bella, no se preocupe.

/End recording

Interviewee: Mrs. Maria Rita (Rita) Ochoa
Interviewers: Sandra Hernandez-Salinas and Lupe Flores
Date: March 2, 2012
Location: Rita Ochoa's daughter's home.
Transcribers: Raul Zavala Soto, Sandra Hernandez-Salinas

This interview was conducted with Mrs. Maria Rita (Rita) Ochoa. The group conducting the interview included Sandra Hernandez-Salinas and Lupe Flores. The interview was conducted at Rita Ochoa's, daughter's home in San Juan, Texas, where she was temporarily staying. This interview focused on her experience as a farmworker and factory worker that was connected to a farmhand-contracting agency located in the Dickie's Factory in McAllen, Texas.

Rita Ochoa: Su padraastro trabajaba en eso, el llevaba gente a trabajar a las labores. Por ejemplo, primeramente para sembrar, después ya que crecía la planta cortarla, hacerla manojos y traerla a la fabrica, y de ahí la embarcaban para el norte.

Sandra Salinas: Eran braseros?

Rita Ochoa: Había de todo, había braseros y había de aquí. Quien sabe que día me hablo una mama, que fuera a orar por un hermanito de ella que estaba en un lugar ahí cerquita de la clínica de Sánchez, que tienen enfermos ahí. Bueno me llevaron para que fuera a orar por el. Entonces, pues estaba ya el muchacho... y le dije "mire yo sé que usted no puede hablar" porque ya estaba con puros aparatos, que ya no hablaba ni nada. Pero sé que tiene su mente, le dije, que esta trabajando. Voy a pedirle, que sé que usted estaba visitando la iglesia, pero que no alcanzo a pedirle perdón a Dios. Ahorita va a repetir conmigo la oración de fe, y entonces empecé a orar. Y le dije, padre nuestro, y que abre la boca, padre nuestro, que estas en los cielos, que estas en los cielos, te pido perdón, te pido perdón, por todos mis pecados. Y se quedaron. Era una hermana y luego llego otra y un hermano. Y al ratito llego su madre, pues alcanzo a pedir perdón. Y gracias a dios ore por el. Dije padre si eso es tiempo ya de su partida, porque en tu libro dice en el salvo 139 "no te fue encubierto mi ser cuando fui la verdad en secreto y entre tejido maestramente las partes inferiores de la tierra, tus ojos vieron mi perfección" y en tu libro todos mis miembros fueron escritos y mis días delineados cuando todavía no había ninguno de ellos. Por eso les digo, él sabe namas. Y entonces, era una cosa tremenda. La cosa mas hermosísima. Entonces, ya cuando yo le decía eso, se quedaban maravillados y acabe de orar. Llego otra hermana y otra y otro hermano. Llego una señora grande y cuando me vio "Rita!" y viene y me abrazo, dijo "que hermosura". Dije "quien eres?". Dijo "no te acuerdas de mi? Dijo yo trabaja con Isidro y contigo en la labor.

Sandra Salinas: como estamos conectados a todos verdad?

Rita Ochoa: Dije, perdóname mamacita, tantos años. Dijo, trabajamos mucho, mi madre, mis hermanos, trabajamos con todos ustedes en la labor. Por eso llevaba de toda clase de aquí y traía de allá. Por ejemplo, en las piscas, venia mucha gente de México, a trabajar a la pisca. Y ya cuando se acababa no íbamos de aquí para Corpus, para otra parte. Pero si traía gente de allá y de aquí.

Sandra Salinas: Y aquí en el valle, cuales lugares se acuerda usted que llevaba su esposo, a donde trabajaban.

Rita Ochoa: Ellos trabajaban en un lugar que era como una presa. Había en aquellos años, como hace unos sesenta y tantos años, que no había todo esto de casas ni nada de eso. Un arroyo grande era como una presa, pero no era una presa era un arroyo y ahí había una sequia que pasaba con agua. Y había un lugar grande, ahí se quedaban ellos. No querían ir a casa ni nada. Pero si, por ejemplo en mi casa yo tuve a mis hermanos, que venían ellos porque todavía no estaban, porque yo me arreglo mi esposo luego luego cuando yo me case, lo arregle inmediatamente.

Sandra Salinas: Donde era Rita?

Rita Ochoa: En McAllen.

Sandra Salinas: Los trabajadores son también de McAllen?

Rita Ochoa: No, los trabajadores te digo se quedaban allá, decían que era cerca de Edinburgo, donde estaba ese lugar. Y ahí se quedaban todos, hacían de comer y todo. Los iba a levantar Isidro y se los llevaba a trabajar.

Sandra Salinas: Es que nosotros estamos haciendo un proyecto de una casa, como un ranchito, ahí en Edinburgo, y a lo mejor, yo creo que es el mismo.

Rita Ochoa: Y deja tu, como en aquellos años estaba surtido de arboles por dondequiera, y la gente se sentaba en los arboles y se acostaba. Ahí como si fueran casas.

Sandra Salinas: Nunca fue a visitar allá?

Rita Ochoa: No, no yo nunca.

Sandra Salinas: No le ha dicho su esposo de memorias que tenia?

Rita Ochoa: De el? No pues namas decía que iba, por ejemplo, cuando yo me case que todavía no había manera de trabajar ni nada, se iban en la mañana, hacíamos el lonche y se iban en la mañana y ya venían en la tarde. Y pues allá recogía a la gente. Cuando yo empecé a ir con el, que veía le decía “Yo quiero, yo quiero ir contigo para ver como se trabaja” porque allá nada yo. Andaba de maestra. Y entonces yo me quiero enseñar. Y así, me empezó a llevar. Pero no pues ya cuando tenia a la gente allá, ya venia y me llevaba para la comida. Y yo si ayude a trabajar en la labor, a sembrar semilla y también cuando estaba chiquita a quitar lo que dela hierba.

Sandra Salinas: Y si se acuerda para que persona, o para que rancho trabajaba?

Rita Ochoa: Dickies.

Sandra Salinas: No, pero su esposo, en la labor.

Rita Ochoa: En las labores, el no sabia de los dueños de las labores. Era el de la fabrica, Dickies, en aquellos años, la fabrica Dickies es una que esta ahí grandota por la 23, yo no sé que tendrán ahora ahí, pero esa era la fabrica donde Isidro trabajo toda la vida. Ahí, con ese patrón, con Dickies.

Sandra Salinas: Y él era el mismo dueño de las labores?

Rita Ochoa: No, rentaban, en aquellos años rentaban. Los terrenos, ellos nadamas los iban a sembrar y pagaban por que los regaran y ya cuando estaba lista la hierba mandaban a los trabajadores. Si tenían ellos propiedad, pero la mayoría eran de americanos, puros americanos que tenían y yo creo que a ellos les pagaban, porque pues ahí iban a cortar la hierba.

Sandra Salinas: Si se acuerda si su esposo le hablo de las amistades que hizo con unos braseros o se acuerda si hablo de unos trabajadores que se él se hizo amigos con ellos, compadres?

Sandra Salinas: Así como las familias que estaban allí. Por ejemplo, el proyecto que estamos haciendo nosotros, las familias que estaban allí eran los Magayanes, los Adredondo, los Castanieves, eran familias que trabajaban ahí. Su esposo nunca le dijo de nombres?

Rita Ochoa: Nunca nunca de México, vinieron mujeres a trabajar, con Isidro no. Puros hombres.

Sandra Salinas: Y nunca le ha dicho su esposo de los nombres de esos hombres?

Rita Ochoa: Yo los apuntaba mijita, pero pues deja tu como ya el 73 ya dejo de trabajar en eso. Y pues ya deje las carteras, las avente, yo era la que apuntaba los nombres de todos ellos. Venían de diferentes partes de México.

Sandra Salinas: Si como, rancho grande a lo mejor? Rancho grande?

Rita Ochoa: No se. No me acuerdo. Pero venían de lejos como, por ejemplo mas allá de monterrey, no me acuerdo como se llamaba uno de los lugares de donde venían algunos. Tuvimos Herreras, familiares de esos, así conocidos. Pero pues ya murieron, hasta mis hermanos ya murieron.

Sandra Salinas: Usted anotaba los nombres de los trabajadores para su esposo?

Rita Ochoa: Si, si apuntaba los nombres.

Sandra Salinas: Y dijo usted que algunos eran braseros.

Rita Ochoa: Si, la mayoría que venían de allá, venían de contrabando mijita, se pasaban por el rio. Y entonces ya como sabían ellos tenían lugares, nomas si los troqueros, había muchos troqueros, si había donde se ponían ellos, donde se quedaban. Y luego ya namas iban y los levantaban. Pero a los que eran de aquí por ejemplo Isidro tenia mucha gente de McAllen. Mucha gente de Mc Allen y de... como se llamaba el otro lugarcito? Muy cerquita del rio, no me acuerdo, allá tenia tíos. El Granjeno. Tenia mucha gente del Granjeno. El levantaba de aquí unos poquitos y se iba al Granjeno y allá levantaba a los demás de aquí. Que eran de aquí. Y entonces

como te digo ya esos que eran de allá namas de pasada, donde íbamos porque varios lugares a dondequiera que íbamos. De ahí los levantaba y ya se iban. Y allá los dejaba primero.

Sandra Salinas: Y tu le escribías los nombres porque tu eras la que les pagaba a ellos?

Rita Ochoa: Si, si. Era la que yo, él me mandaba a mi. Él iba a cobrar y yo iba a feriar los cheques. Iba a pagarles a cada quien. Venían ellos a la casa.

Sandra Salinas: Y le pagaban igual a las personas que eran de aquí y a los de México?

Rita Ochoa: Si, igualito, igualito. Era muy derecho mi esposo. No le gustaba porque mira, cuando piscaban el algodón y venían a pesar. Ya cuando lo traían al lugar donde lo deben de...entonces este son tantas cajas y entonces apuntabas pues la libra verdad? Y ya cuando las trabajaban y todo, salía menos. Salían como 15, 20 libras menos. De lo que...y eso lo teníamos que pagar. Entonces, ay, que haremos Dios mio. Que haremos padre? “Ay” dijo Isidro “sabes que es lo que voy a hacer?”. Le dije a ver dime y dijo “voy a levantarle a la pesa” porque tenían una cosa larga así y aquí ponían los...entonces dijo “voy a ponerle a la pesa dos puntitos mas” para acá, como que, como dando a entender que no estaba correcto lo que...

Sandra Salinas: Si, si

Rita Ochoa: Bueno, entonces apuntábamos ahí los nombres de todos y las pesas. Ya cuando lo traía y entregaba el algodón, y salían 10 o 12 libras de mas o lo que fuera, y lo que costaba aquel dinero, lo juntábamos en la semana y les comprábamos pan y sodas, o comida, el dinero que ellos tenían, para que ellos no perdieran nada, ni nosotros. Eso me gusto de él, le dije “que bueno, todo lo que salga de mas, vamos a comprarles”. Y luego les decía el, les decía el “le subí dos puntitos mas porque perdían mucho y pues yo soy pobre”. Y entonces a ellos les gustaba, seguro que si, que bueno, encantados.

Sandra Salinas: Había discriminaciones? Se acuerda en ese tiempo?

Rita Ochoa: No tanto, como ahorita, no. No, no ya después empezó a haber mucho, pero en aquellos años no. Había mucha, como te digo, había mucha compasión. Para la gente de México. Luego luego trataba la gente de ayudarlos en todo. Y pobrecitos, cuando iban a mandar dinero le decía Isidro “no, no, no denme, cuanto le vana mandar y díganme donde y todo”, e íbamos al correo y todo pagábamos para que mandaran su dinero allá. Y ya recibían las cartas a la casa y todo.

Sandra Salinas: Y como es que se llevaban entre ellos, Rita, los trabajadores se llevaban bien entre si mismos?

Rita Ochoa: Nunca tuvieron pleito, quiero que sepas. Nunca tuvieron pleito, diremos, delante de nosotros. Ni supimos ni nada, namas que ya cuando se acababa el trabajo, decía Isidro “bueno ya no hay trabajo de esto” y ellos no sabían trabajar en otro, pues ya se iban. Y decían “en el año que viene si dios quiere, volvemos”. Y les gustaba mucho volver con el porque el los trataba muy bien.

Sandra Salinas: Por cuantos años estuvo su esposo trabajando en eso? Él era como un mayordomo?

Rita Ochoa: El, bueno, el empezó a trabajar desde que era joven, con su tío. El padraastro de él, era su tío y era su padraastro. Entonces él era el que tenia el [incomprensible] pero Isidro era el chofer y que recogía la gente y todo. Pero ya te digo, cuando me dijeron que tenia el corazón grande fue el 53. A ver, no, no el 57. El 57 fue cuando me dijeron, y entonces ya de ahí dejo de trabajar el.

Sandra Salinas: Pero entonces, cuantos, como cuantos años eran que él estuvo haciendo eso?

Rita Ochoa: Pues fijate, desde joven sabrá dios de que edad de joven, yo no se.

Sandra Salinas: Él ya estaba trabajando ahí cuando usted...

Rita Ochoa: Cuando yo me case, ya el siguió trabajando ahí.

Sandra Salinas: En que año se caso Rita?

Rita Ochoa: Yo me canse en...el...28 de mayo de 1919...a ver no...1938!

Sandra Salinas: Si porque en el 19 fue cuando usted nació

Rita Ochoa: Si, en 1938. El 28 de mayo, cumplí el 22 de mayo, cumplí los 19 años y el 28 me case.

Sandra Salinas: Entonces como por 20 años usted le estuvo ayudando a su esposo?

Rita Ochoa: Si, si.

Sandra Salinas: Como se llamaba su esposo Rita?

Rita Ochoa: Isidro Ochoa

Sandra Salinas: Isidro Ochoa?

Rita Ochoa: Isidro Ochoa Cortes

Sandra Salinas: Y el nació aquí?

Rita Ochoa: Él era de aquí.

Sandra Salinas: De donde, se acuerda?

Rita Ochoa: De aquí de McAllen.

Sandra Salinas: De McAllen, ok. Y me puede decir el nombre de usted completamente?

Rita Ochoa: María Rita Sánchez de Ochoa.

Sandra Salinas: Y como se llaman sus papas?

Rita Ochoa: Mi papa, Lorenzo Sánchez de los Santos y mi mama Beatriz Garza Benavides.

Sandra Salinas: Y ustedes vinieron de donde? Donde nació?

Rita Ochoa: Yo nací en Herrera, Nuevo León. Si, y mi madre pues no se, parece el padre de ella son de los que vinieron de España en aquellos años. Se vino de Monterrey y luego de ahí se caso con mi abuelita que era de... de la palmita. Y ahí trabajo mucho en Herrera, pero ahí anduvo en el ejercito, con el general Carranza.

Sandra Salinas: Ah, de Carrancistas?

Rita Ochoa: Si, mi abuelo anduvo en el ejercito. Nosotros teníamos el retrato cuando venia...

Sandra Salinas: Y todavía tiene ese retrato usted?

Rita Ochoa: No, pues ya no, no supimos ni que le hicieron ni que. No sabemos, tantos años que... Pero si, yo me di cuenta porque yo tenia como ocho años y este, una vez que vino y traía sus morralones grandes de donde iba, lo mandaban " Ve allá con el general Jesús Carranza", el hermano del presidente. Y el andaba con el general. Y entonces este, todo a donde iban y que era la orden que hacia, donde fuera que esto, que lo otro, y me decía, léale mijita, y agarraba, yo medianita, a leerle todo lo que hacían allá.

Sandra Salinas: Usted sabia antes que todos los demás entonces verdad?

Rita Ochoa: Si, si.

Sandra Salinas: Entonces usted se vino a vivir aquí, Rita, a estados unidos, en el 38, 1938?

Rita Ochoa: Si. En 1938.

Sandra Salinas: En que año nació su esposo Rita?

Rita Ochoa: El nació, aquí en McAllen nací el 31 de Marzo de 1917.

Sandra Salinas: Ah, era dos años mayor que usted nada mas?

Rita Ochoa: Si, nada mas.

Sandra Salinas: Ah, ya va a cumplir años, en este mes.

Rita Ochoa: Si, ya va a cumplir años. Ya le dije, le estaba diciendo a Oralia, ya le dije "va a cumplir tu papa años". Lo soñé anoche.

Sandra Salinas: Pues ojala que nos ayude a nosotros en este proyecto, porque necesitamos encontrar a los trabajadores estos que les estamos preguntando. Tenemos, en este proyecto, necesitamos encontrar a esos trabajadores porque no encontramos, no encontramos y ay no.

Rita Ochoa: Pues ya fíjate como yo, como mis hermanos todos trabajaron con el, ya todos muertos, todos, ya namas yo, quedo yo y Hermelinda, mi hermanita. Mi otra hermana murió antier, antier murió. Y este, era mayor que yo un año y meses.

Sandra Salinas: Era la que vivía en Herreras?

Rita Ochoa: La que vivía en Herreras si. El 2 de febrero cumplió ella 94 años.

Sandra Salinas: Era un año mayor que usted?

Rita Ochoa: Si, era mayor un año y meses que yo. Y ya namas quedamos Hermelinda la mas chiquita y yo. Y todos ellos vinieron y trabajaron aquí. Todos mis hermanos vinieron y aquí los ayudamos y sacaron sus pasaportes y se fueron para Chicago y allá vivieron muchos años. Todos.

Sandra Salinas: Pero, usted ya no tiene contacto, Rita, con personas que trabajaron con usted?

Rita Ochoa: Con nadie, nadie. Se murió la esposa de mi hermano, se murieron ya todas mi cuñadas, todos. Ayer me dijeron que murieron 7 en Herreras. No, ya no tengo yo contacto, ya no tengo conocimiento ni de tanta gente que nos ayudo y que vino.

Sandra Salinas: Y la señora que estaba diciendo usted hace rato Rita, que era la abuelita del muchacho que

estaba enfermo? Ellas son de aquí?

Rita Ochoa: Ellas son de aquí. Ellas namas trabajaban... Y por eso como le dije yo pues dijo, es verdad dijo porque pues como te digo ya en ese tiempo Isidro dejo de trabajar. Ya porque ya no quise yo porque me dijo el doctor "si levanta dos libras se le muere". Y no, pues no quiero que se me muera. Y él no quería, no, no, no. "No señor Isidro" le dije "yo voy a trabajar". Y así.

Sandra Salinas: Y se acuerda las horas que trabajaban en los labores los señores esos, los trabajadores? A que tiempo llegaban a donde su esposo los levantaba?

Rita Ochoa: Los levantábamos temprano para estar a las siete en el trabajo mijita. A esas horas teníamos que tener el reloj, a las meras siete empezaban a trabajar todos.

Sandra Salinas: A las siete entonces ahí en la estación...

Rita Ochoa: Eso era cuando trabajábamos por día, que te pagaban en aquellos años como te digo 50 centavos el día. Después empezamos a trabajar ya que empezaron a pagar 50 centavos la hora. La hora. Primero 50 centavos el día.

Sandra Salinas: Pero cuando trabajaban a 50 centavos el día, entraban a las siete de la mañana?

Rita Ochoa: Si.

Sandra Salinas: Y a que hora salían?

Rita Ochoa: A las... entraban a las siete y, no me acuerdo si eran las cuatro o las cuatro y media que salíamos.

Sandra Salinas: Como de 7 a 4, 4:30?

Rita Ochoa: Si.

Sandra Salinas: Y luego que trabajaban a la hora, que le pagaban por hora...

Rita Ochoa: Bueno ya después que trabajábamos por hora, nos pagaban la hora.

Sandra Salinas: Si, pero cuantas horas trabajaban al día? Entraban también a las siete?

Rita Ochoa: A según, sea lo que había, por ejemplo, si el terreno estaba chiquito y eran cuatro cinco horas, y a veces eran muchas, a veces tenia que trabajar en el mismo lugar dos, tres días, porque eran grandes los terrenos, esa era... a según el terreno que fuera, porque pues había muchísima gente que sembraba para vender. Todo lo que sembraban pues de ahí vivían. Piscábamos también de ese frijol, no frijol, como el... uno que hay grande así con las vainas.

Sandra Salinas: Y como, cuando estaba haciendo los cheques usted Rita, se acuerda como escribía para la gente? Como los hacia por nombre?

Rita Ochoa: No, a ellos no les pagaban con cheque. A mi esposo le daban un cheque, y yo pagaba, yo feriba en el banco y entonces venían los trabajadores todos y a cada quien le daba su...

Sandra Salinas: Y como sabia cada quien? Por nombre o...?

Rita Ochoa: Por nombre. Yo apuntaba el nombre de cada uno. Y por ejemplo cuando hacían trabajo, se decía por canastas. Eran 72 manojitos cada canasta. Y decían, cada canasta que hacia tenia un precio. Entonces como las contaban, decían "hice siete canastas, hice diez, hice..." y entonces allá juntaba uno cada canasta que tenían, y lo que valían y ahí sacaban. Era muy diferente, la manera de...

Sandra Salinas: Las canastas esas tenían... que tipo de fruta? O que tenían las canastas?

Rita Ochoa: Las que?

Sandra Salinas: Las canastas.

Rita Ochoa: Las canastas...

Sandra Salinas: Tenían fruta, que tenían?

Rita Ochoa: No, las canastas namas se decían canastas, namas las ponían, los manojos en el lugar.

Sandra Salinas: Oh ok, like a little trade.

Rita Ochoa: Si, y ponían, decían " aquí esta una, dos, tres, cuatro". Ya preparaba... las contaban ellos y las tenían separadas y ya namas iba uno e Isidro tenia dos personas que levantarán los manojos y los pusieran en el troque.

Sandra Salinas: Pero de que eran los manojos Rita?

Rita Ochoa: Los manojos... perejil, zanahoria, este... el frijol ese no era... no me acuerdo si... era por libras o... eran unas vainas largas de ese frijol, no me acuerdo. Eran unas vainas largas largas. Y eso lo piscaban y no me

acuerdo, yo creo que ese también era por libras. Y pues también el algodón era por libras. Namas lo que era por día del trabajo por día, ese no, no tenía, namas quitar la hierbita y aventarla y es todo. Pero como te digo, ya de los trabajadores, pues ya que.

Sandra Salinas: Y si había...tenían trabajadores que eran mujeres Rita? También había mujeres?

Rita Ochoa: Si, mujeres también trabajaban.

Sandra Salinas: Y como se llevaban los hombres y las mujeres trabajando juntos? Se llevaban bien?

Rita Ochoa: Si, siempre. Las mujeres agarraban en un lugar, los hombres en otro. Pero cuando se iban todos, cada quien...muy bien se llevaban, tenían amistad y señoras grandes y...

Sandra Salinas: Isidro verdad era su esposo verdad?

Rita Ochoa: Si, Isidro.

Sandra Salinas: Isidro los levantaba en lugares como...Granjeno?

Rita Ochoa: A los, a los que venían de allá, los levantaba. Por ejemplo, en el Granjeno, en las casas. En cada... el tenía mucha gente conocida en cada casa y los levantaba. Namas se paraba y ya la gente estaba lista, luego luego se subían al troque. Y así ya cuando...cuando llevaba toda las gente, ya nos íbamos para allá, para el trabajo.

Sandra Salinas: Y los llevaba aquí...a McAllen?

Rita Ochoa: Si, aquí...al terreno, al terreno

Sandra Salinas: Ah, al terreno.

Rita Ochoa: Donde se iba a trabajar. Y ya cuando ya, este, ya salíamos, los patrones dueños del terreno iban para ver a los trabajadores. Esculcar como quedaba el trabajo. Si estaba quedando limpio el trabajo y donde estaban aventando la basura porque tenía lugar. Aquí si avientan la basura que se saca de la hierba en este lugar aquí...aquí que se quede todo esto limpio. Y no, iban y checaban los patrones.

Sandra Salinas: Como era la relación entre estos patrones y los trabajadores?

Rita Ochoa: Bien, bien.

Sandra Salinas: Se llevaban bien?

Rita Ochoa: Nombre, los apreciaban porque eran muy trabajadores. En aquellos años la gente era muy diferente.

Sandra Salinas: Entonces los trataban bien?

Rita Ochoa: Muy bien y los patrones los apreciaban bien.

Sandra Salinas: En este día hay alguna gente que dicen que no los trataban así porque...los respetaban pero namas porque era el patrón y el trabajador. En ese tiempo, todos se respetaban?

Rita Ochoa: En ese tiempo no había pleito, no había maldad, no había envidia. Al contrario, ay que bueno, que bueno, pues venia la gente de allá de México, sabían que eran necesitados. Que bueno, que bueno que vienen a trabajar aquí. Y los ayudaba la gente. Digo, es como uno ahorita. Mi esposo. En aquellos años mi esposo también nomas llevaba, iba y llevaba ropa y comida, les comprábamos costales de frijol, de arroz, de harina, para llevar a repartir a la gente pobre allá. Compraba bastantes bolsas y allá iba...y todavía hace poco que íbamos nosotros, el hermano Chuy, y nosotros. Nos pararon porque nos dijeron allí en la aduana “ya no vengan porque esos muebles que traen son los que andan buscando los zetas”. Dijo “y no respetan” dijo “no respetan” dijo “los matan, les quitan el mueble y a la gente, a ellos no les importa”. Y entonces pues ya ahora no fuimos, pero nosotros seguimos yendo hace poquitito. Bastante, llevábamos bastantes costales grandes de frijol, de arroz, de harina y de ropa, de sillas, de colchones, de lo que necesitaban, de tabico para la gente viejita que no tenían.

Sandra Salinas: Y cuando estaba trabajando su esposo, los patrones estos, les daban un lugar donde vivir, donde dormir a las personas?

Rita Ochoa: No, ellos no. Ellos namas hablaban con Isidro. Si, que el buscara los trabajadores. Y por eso Isidro buscaba, tenía gente de aquí. Pero cuando gente que vivía allá cerquita de esa que decía que había tanta gente de México que necesitaba trabajar una vez que fue Isidro y ya le dijeron y dijo “Voy a llevarlos porque no pobrecitos, necesitan”. Y ahí iba y los llevaba el. Pero no había, en aquellos años no era como ahora mijita, que esperanzas. Ahora es una cosa tremenda, que los desprecian ellos, Toda la gente tiene necesidad.

Sandra Salinas: Y que es su mejor...su memoria favorita de ese tiempo?

Rita Ochoa: De ese tiempo? Todo recuerdo, pura hermosura hijita, pura hermosura. Para mi. Aunque mira te

voy a decir una cosa. Ella sabe, ya le platique. A mi esposo a los cuatro años de casados, que yo era una persona débil... y el buscaba otras mujeres. Y le decían “ay que tuvo cuatro hijos con otra mujer”. Sabe lo que hice yo? Cuando la mujer iba a tener su primer criatura, en aquellos años, en aquellos años, el doctor cobraba 20 dólares. Y agarre 20 dólares y le dije a Isidro “ten llévale a Cándida para que pague el doctor, para la criatura que va a nacer”. Se quedo...”lévaselos mijito”. Me los devolvió ella. Sus hijos cuando nacieron mijita, los sentaba con los míos, ahí están ellos que digan, a desayunar a comer, vénganse hijitos, vénganse. Ella la veía yo... y ya cuando me entregue a cristo venia un día caminando así y venia yo así, entonces se quedo ella así, Cándida le dije “dios te bendiga mijita” dije “déjame decirte una cosa” y que ya la abrase y la bese y le dije “mira, acepta a cristo como tu salvador, dile que te perdone todo” dije, busca mi iglesia, si no quieres venir aquí a la iglesita, porque aquí vengo yo e Isidro, este, busca una iglesia evangélica mamacita, donde prediquen la verdad, y ahí va a ver mijita el gozo tan grande que es tener a este cristo vivo que dio su vida por nosotros. Y se quedaba maravillada. Todos sus hijos ya murieron. Fueron salvos. Venían, donde quiera, cuando me llevaba la hermana conchita a los restauran a comer y venían los de ella y estaban, se paraban, mamacita linda y me abrazaban, madre querida. Y le decía a todos, ella, para nosotros fue una madre, nos sentaba con sus hijos en la mesa, siendo nosotros, mi madre la amante de mi padre y ella la esposa, y ella nos daba de lo mejor. Dije porque que culpa tenían ustedes hijitos de haber nacido? Ninguna. Ni tu mama, yo le pregunte a ella “Cándida, ya sabes que Isidro, pues es mi esposo?” si Rita, me enamore de él, pero yo no lo exijo, yo me enamore desde que era niña, así me dijo. Cuando era niña se llenaba de granos y yo la curaba mijita, en su casa no le ponían cuidado y la curaba yo. Vengase mijita, yo la curaba y todo. Era agradecida y decía que desde que era niña que veía a Isidro conmigo se enamoro. Ni modo, así que es de que yo no, por mi eso no señor. Digo yo, allá tengo un dios poderoso, precioso y eso es lo mas lindo que tenemos en este mundo.

Sandra Salinas: No se acuerda de experiencias chistosas o, así sociales con los trabajadores, entre usted?

Rita Ochoa: No, la única cosa de que me acuerdo cuando trabajábamos ya era cristiana yo, entonces cantábamos cantos, cantábamos allá en la labor. Y venían, por ejemplo, venían personas “oiga, que canto tan hermoso”. Es canto de Dios, somos cristianos, acepte a cristo como mi salvador, yo y mi esposo, y la gente que venia les empezaba decir “yo también quiero, yo también quiero”. Ándele vayan a la iglesia, los invitaba a la iglesia. Y me salía a buscar, a orar por enfermos. Todavía hasta la fecha me buscan a mi donde quiera mijita, cada rato me llevan para donde quieras, hasta ahorita, por donde quiera me llevan, cada ratito. Hermana la vamos a traer, quiere venir a orar aquí a mi casa, esta bien, al hospital a esto al otro el otro. Y todas maravilladas. María, una que vive ahí cerquita, en Edinburgo por unos hoteles. Bien linda la muchacha y se le...tenia al niño, algo le paso en las anginas, y lo iban a operar, y que no quería, que no quería. Entonces me hablo “hermana Rita” dijo “quiere ir conmigo?”. Había orado por el niño. Le dije, para donde hijita? “Al hospital” dijo “yo quiero que me lo operen por que no podía comer el niño”. Le dije, si como no, vamos y ore por el, y fuimos ahí cuando estaban, antes de que el doctor pusiera su mano me puse a orar. Ya no le duela nada el niño para que todo salga bien. Lo operaron, salió la criatura encantada, sin dolerle nada, no le vaya a dar quien sabe por tanto tiempo para que no le doliera su garganta. Le dije no le va a doler . Otro día dice “hermana, quería comer y empezó a comer el niño y no le hizo daño” le dije “porque tenemos un Dios poderoso”. Cuando el hace milagros, los hace. Entonces porque, hermana le dije, porque tenemos que creer lo que dios dice en su palabra. Le dije, fijate namas que tan grande es el cielo y que tan grande es la tierra. Y dice “el cielo y la tierra pasaran, pero mi palabra no pasara” le dije, porque? Porque lo que Dios dice se cumple y si Dios dijo, todo lo que pidas en oración creyendo lo recibiréis, es la verdad. Y también dijo, dijo el, todo lo que pidas al padre en mi nombre él lo hará. Que mas creemos? No si yo les platicara de las experiencias que he tenido, uy ay ay ay ay. Hará un poco de tiempo, tenia una mi seden, me mandaron una carta de acá del doctor, que debía 300...no me acuerdo si 38 o 36 dólar. De que dije, si no me cobran, pues todo lo paga el gobierno. Pues no se pero ahí estuve orando. Y estuve orando, un día, y otro y otro. Ya tenia como una semana y media y dije “Padre, todo el tiempo que te pido una cosa me la contestas, si no es ese día” le dije “otro día ahí esta. Todo el tiempo desde que te conozco. Porque ahora no?”. Y estaba orando y llorando con el. Y cuando dije “Ay, señor me quieres dar una mano de experiencia, padre?” cuando suena el teléfono. Y lo agarro. Dije “bueno?” y me dijo la persona que me hablo “porque lloras hermana querida?” Le dije “es que estaba orando mamacita” “Pero estas llorando?” “Si” le dije

“Pues ya ves que a veces la gente tiene cositas así” “Para eso te llame” dijo “en este momento me acaba de decir Dios que te mande 300 dólares inmediatamente” dijo “puede darme el nombre de uno de sus hijos? Que vaya al Wal-mart” dijo “para que lo reciba”. Y ya le dije, si, le di el nombre Rael y Omar. Y entonces ya iba a colgar y le dije “Oye perdóname, y quien eres tu? Como te llamas?” dijo Luisa. De donde eres de aquí? Si. Dije, muchas gracias hijita. Quien era? Fueron, me trajeron Omar y Rael los 300 dólares “aquí están mama”. Entonces dije “Padre, me faltan 40” eran como 39 o 39, por ahí. Otro día por la mañana llega un sobrecito de este tamaño, así “María Rita Ochoa”. Lo abrí, venia envuelto en un papelito blanco así. Abrí el papelito, ahí estaban los dos billetes de 20. Y decía en el papelito, dice “Hermana, Dios te ama tanto, un ángel”. Quien era? Y así siempre namas miraba, me decía mi esposo “hijita necesitamos mil dólares para mañana” “Isidro, no tengo, doce dólares tengo en el banco, es todo lo que tenemos papacito” “Lo necesitamos para mañana hijita, de urgencia”. Padre, mándame mil dólares, gracias señor. Otro día en la mañana cuando llegue del trabajo, dos sobres, del gobierno. Uno de 700 y el otro de 350. Gracias. Un día tenia una chaya, linda...no la chaya no, la guayaba. Pero linda y se había secado y la estaba desbaratando Isidro, trozando. Tenia el tronco, así, seco así, lo estaba trozando y ya le faltaba un pedacito así cuando de repente dije “Padre”. Dije “Isidro, ya no le des”. Se quedo con el hacha así. Ya no le des, ya no la cortes. Le dije “Padre tu sabes lo que me gusta, hazme un milagro”. Otro día en la mañana, fíjese eso fue en la tarde, otro día en la mañana cuando él se levanto a tirar la basura a fuera. Y se quedo así nomas “Amacita, que es esto?”. Un racimo, una vara de este tamaño de la guayaba, y las hojas grandes. Otro día mijita, de la tarde a la mañana, y cuando llegue del trabajo me dijo, vino, luego luego “Que le pediste ayer a Dios?” “No se Isidro, tantas cosas que le pido” le dije “tu sabes tantas cosas que le pido, tantísima gente que me habla y que pido” “Que le pediste algo especial?” “No me acuerdo papacito, no me acuerdo” le dije. “Ven para acá” me agarro de la mano y me llevo. Que voy viendo el palo seco todavía pero la vara verde y con las hojonas grandes. Ese es el Dios que tenemos, y hasta la fecha. Y cuantas veces se a secado y le digo, padre me gusta mucho. Tenemos un Dios...yo tengo historias que no, no, no.

Sandra Salinas: Pues ya me la voy a llevar para mi casa Rita, para que nos cuente todas las historias.

Rita Ochoa:Nombre, yo les digo, si yo les contara las historias, nombre.

Sandra Salinas: Pues muchísimas gracias Rita por hablar con nosotros y ayudarnos en este proyecto, muchísimas gracias, es una gran ayuda porque nosotros ya estábamos perdiendo la fe.

Rita Ochoa: No, no señor, déjenme hablar por ustedes.

Rita Ochoa:La mano. En el nombre de Jesucristo tu hijo amado me acerco nuevamente a tu trono de gloria juntamente con mis hijitos, tus hijos, te amamos con todo el alma. Para ti no hay nada oculto, a ti no te podemos echar mentiras por que tu conoces hasta los pensamientos. Pero aquí estamos adorándote, glorificándote, levantando en alto tu nombre porque eres nuestro Dios que nos amas. Y ahora que estuvimos aquí platicando tanto te ruego en ese sagrado nombre que la poderosa sangre tuya cubra a mis tres hijitos aquí donde están. Desde la cabeza hasta los pies. Que sea reprendida la obra del enemigo, del maligno. Que no venga a tentarlos. Que no venga nadie a hacerles daño a ninguno. Al contrario, que la poderosa mano tuya y el poder de tu espíritu santo los llene para que los uses en una manera preciosa. Abre sus entendimientos y dales una sabiduría preciosa y que tenga muchos aspectos de la vida Padre para que hagan el trabajo que ellos desean y que sean bendecidos, que no me les falte nada a ninguno, a ninguno. Sean revestidos con una nueva posición del poder de tu espíritu Padre, y que sean avivados en todos sus trabajos. Esto será para la gloria de tu nombre, tus hijos y yo te adoramos unidos dándote gracias de antemano en el poderoso nombre de tu hijo Jesucristo. Amen, amen.