

DWA 0003

(pause)

Q: This is an interview with Rita Chávez Medina at her home in Morgan Hill, November 12, 2008. Rita, what -- when you were growing up, there were a lot of family members who lived within walking distance - a couple of hundred yards maybe...--

A: (multiple conversations)-- Yes.

Q: ...of your house...--

A: (multiple conversations)-- Yes.

Q: ...which was called, "La Gallera"...G-A-L-L...--

A: -- La Gallera is a warehouse.

Q: [It] means warehouse.

A: It's a warehouse.

Q: G-A-L-L-E-R-A?

A: Something like that, (inaudible).

Q: And, describe, like -- you know, what were the family names who lived -- what were the -- what were the relatives' names who lived around there...I mean the blas -
- you know, it was the Chávez', there was --

A: The Quinteros; The Arias and the Ricos.

Q: OK. Quinteros. (Simultaneous conversation)

A: Quinteros. (Simultaneous conversation)

Q: Q-U-I-N-T-E-R-O. Ricos, R-I-C-O. Arias, A-R-I...

A: Ar-i-as.

Q: A-S? A-R-I-A-S?

A: Yes. Uh-huh.

Q: And, what were some of the other names? Of course,
Chávez(es)...

A: There were just -- those were the only one, my
tía Carmen, my tío Julian, my tío Julio were all Chávez.

Q: Right.

A: We were all Chávez. So, they just had the
Quinteros, the Ricos, and the Arias.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But there were a lot of them among those names -
there were quite a few that were born from the -- "itcha" -
like my tía Carmen, my tío Julian and, you know my tío
Andres --

Q: So all your aunts and your uncles, all of them had kids of
their own --

A: -- Uh-huh.

Q: Cousins of yours.

A: Yes.

Q: How many -- roughly, how many were -- family members were
in the immediate area?

A: I think, maybe, 60, 70.

Q: Uh-huh. Including kids, or...

A: Uh-huh. Maybe more. I don't remember the -- no, [Tía?] because they had great, great, grandkids. Maybe close to 80, 90, something like that...I --

Q: Because they would have -- their kids would have --

A: -- Yeah. Their kids had kids there, too.

Q: -- kids, too. And so, these were the family members who were closest to you.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And you would go to school with their school aged kids?

A: I went to school with a lot of them.

Q: And play with them...--

A: -- I went to school with the Quinteros, with the Arias, with the Ricos, of course, with the Chávez. I went to school with all of them. Quite a few, went to school with -- quite a few of relatives went to that school. They were all related, [we] were all a big bunch of kids related. They were all Chávez, but then their last name because the aunts married, you know, so, but they were all Chávez [I guess?], Chávez and Rico.

Q: So, farther north, outside the immediate area near your house, there were also relatives who were living in the north, in the North Gila River Valley.

A: Uh-huh, at the end. Yeah, there were Chávez and there were Rico, because, I guess the Quinteros didn't go that far,

just Chávez and Rico. The Ricos and the Chávez. They had a lot of kids, too. (laughing) Yeah. The rest of the --

Q: So, farther, farther south from where you were in the southern part of the valley, there were -- and also west, there were people who lived in little farmhouses?

A: Uh-huh, Uh-huh. A lot of families.

Q: A lot of families. Anglos?

A: Both, I mean, there were Black, there were Anglos, and there were Latinos, you know. All of them, together, and some Indians. Real Indians. The Yaqui Indians. They lived there. They lived close to us, the Yaqui Indians, like, not too far, but along the -- along the ri -- the river. The same side -- yeah, the canal. The same side that we did, except further.

Q: That was south of you...

A: Not really it was...it was that way.

Q: There was a Yaqui Indian family there, you went to school with their...

A: Valenzuela. That was their last name.

Q: Valenzuela.

A: Oh, yeah, they went to school with us, all of them.

All the kids. They had four kids. Two girls and two boys.

Not too far from the...--

Q: -- you said they lived on the same side of...--

A: -- side of the canal, yeah.

Q: OK. Not too far away.

A: Not too far away. It belonged to another farm, another grower along the place.

Q: But on the same side...--

A: -- on the same side of the canal, yeah.

Q: The east side.

A: And...- I don't know how far they lived, [as] a mile from us or something like that. Probably did walking distance all the time. (pause)

Q: La Gallera, it means the warehouse, and that's what it was built as.

A: It was built for my d -- for my grandfather, the putting all the hay and everything for the horses and the cows - all the feed that went to the farm, after they did, after they did away with all the horses, and the cows, and all that, then they made it a living quarters for everyone, including them, it was us who went first, I think. Because my Dad lost the pool hall, the station, and even that grocery store. So we moved to La Gallera because we didn't have no place to go, and this one we lived until we met -- until we moved to Arizona -- to California.

Q: Well, then, you remember when you were living behind the store.

A: We lived -- not behind. We had real nice house at the store.

Q: Near the store.

A: Yeah, real close.

Q: Next to store.

A: Next to the store.

Q: And, so, and, that's where, where...--

A: -- Richard...

Q: Richard and César were born.

A: No, César [and I] were born in Yuma.

Q: In Yuma.

A: In town.

Q: At the hospital?

A: No, in a house, but in town.

Q: And why, how did you come to be born in a house in Yuma?

A: Because my mom -- they were afraid of hospitals. They didn't want to go. They said, "hospitals kill families", kill people, so...in those days, you know, that was your goal, to the home, and deliver babies. So, I was born and so was César, but then when it came to Richard, she had to have Richard in the farm, where we had the store and all that.

Q: And this was a wood frame house?

A: Yeah, nice one. (inaudible)

Q: What do you remember about it? What did it look like?

A: I remember the porch, a lot...--

Q: --It had a front porch?

A: Yeah, it had a round (multiple conversations; inaudible)...

Q: Around the entire perimeter of the house?

A: Yeah. Very nice.

Q: Covered?

A: Covered, with screen, you know, screen...

Q: Screened off?

A: off, and - how much I remember? - it was nice and big, big nice bedroom. We had something, electricity, I don't know what it's called in English. Maybe Richard remembers, I know, at least to call it Carburo.

Q: C-A-R-M-U-R-O?

A: B-U, R-O, whatever. And then, um...

Q: And what does that mean?

A: Well, it would turn us, it would give us light like, electricity.

Q: So you had electricity there.

A: Sort of like electricity, but it was done by a machine, you know.

Q: Like a generator.

A: Generation, something like that, but they would fill it up with something, I remember very clear, after it can

generate and was going up, we have a lot of white stuff coming in, and was no good, and then we could refill it again, but we had electricity then. [Sort of, you know?] We didn't have inside water or anything like that, we had...

Q: Inside plumbing.

A: No. We had to carry our own water and...--

Q: You had a outhouse.

A: Uh-huh. Way out in the field, we had the outhouse, but the house was nice I remember it...(multiple conversations, inaudible)--

Q: --...and that's where the family lived while your father was running the store.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Now, was he also farming the --

A: The land? Yes. He did the farming, too.

Q: At the same time?

A: At the same time, yeah. He did farming. I remember one year he planted peanuts. We were all excited going, because it's lot of sand like, you know, they're growing sand, the soil is like sand, real soft. We'd go stick our hands in, you know? Then we'd dig a lot of pumpkins. Big, Giant pumpkins!

Q: You'd put your hands in to bring out the peanuts.

A: The peanuts.

Q: When you were harvesting.

A: Uh-huh. And then, the ones he sold [when they want him to come] and then we'd put them in the oven and roast them so they would, you know, be good to eat. And I remember the big pumpkins, we had real big pumpkins, [funny?] king root pumpkins, but big - I never seen any that big. I've never seen any that big, and he grew a lot of watermelons, he grew the yellow watermelon? We were all excited with the yellow watermelon. My Dad said it was called the "ice cream" watermelon. I don't know, that's what he used to tell us. The red one is one name and the yellow one [were] another name.

Q: They were sweet.

A: Oh, very sweet. They had seeds and everything, but they were just yellow. Yellow, yellow, like - yellow...like this.

Q: Yellow outside?

A: Like this. No inside.

Q: The flesh - was yellow.

A: Inside the -- the, of course it was green, but inside was yellow like this. My Dad said it was called, "The Ice Cream Watermelon".

Q: So, while your Dad was putting in hours running the store, and as a postmaster, and running the pool hall.

A: (inaudible)

Q: He also found time to work the farm.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: By himself?

A: But he had people there, work with him.

Q: He did?

A: Uh-huh. Cousins.

Q: So, he had, relatives?

A: Cousins.

Q: Cousins? He would hire.

A: To help him out, and some friends, I think. I don't know.
I'm not too sure about friends, but I know they used to
help him, but anyway he was --

Q: So you were born, what was your birth date?

A: August 21, 1925.

Q: 25. And then, how long did you live in this house near the
store?

A: In 1929. Just four years, but we lived there before I was
born. [But (inaudible) got married].

Q: So, when you were born, you were living in that house.

A: Except I went, I went to Yuma.

Q: Except when you went to Yuma.

A: And then I came back, and was raised in the house, and so
did César.

Q: Same thing with César. So you were 4 years old when you left that house?

A: Uh, let me see. No, I think I was 6.

Q: Six?

A: We lived there more [??] because I started school when I was living here, and I was six, then we left.

Q: Talk to me about the [score?]

A: Because when César went to school, we already lived in the Gallera, so, I was there until I was six. Yeah, I remember that because I went to school, I was six. In August, I went to school...

Q: So, 1933.

A: I was, yeah, six.

Q: So, you were born, I'm sorry, in 1925.

A: '25.

Q: Oh, so then, you were 1931, something like that. OK.

A: Yeah. [??]

Q: The store.

A: Oh, Richard and Helen were born there. I forgot about my sister, Helen, she was born in (multiple conversations; inaudible).

Q: She was born at that house as well?

A: '31. Yeah.

Q: OK.

A: And then we moved. So, we moved in 1931, because...--

Q: -- is that when he lost the store?

A: Uh-huh, yeah...--

Q: -- or he had to sell the store.

A: Well, yeah, because he went broke, he gave too much credit.

Q: I'll ask you about that later.

A: And then, Vicky and Lenny were born in The Gallera.

Q: Describe the store for me. You know, here's a drawing out of it, but w...-- the entrance was on the east, on the road...

A: Yeah.

Q: ...which was Laguna Dam Road.

A: I never knew the name, you know? I always -- we always was Route 3, Box, you know, for the mail, but that's got to be it. So...

Q: What did the store look like? Inside?

A: It was just...as far as I can remember it was just, you know, a big tall like, you know. Big room.

Q: (inaudible)

A: Yeah, and then in the beginning here were the registers and were the post office.

Q: So, as you came in the door on the right, there was a little kind of counter.

A: Uh-huh, where the register...

Q: Where the cash register was, and where all the mail slots...

A: [and then, around the side, on the wall. Where I used to go help my Dad put mail in there] And then, it went, like on this side...--

Q: -- (multiple conversations; inaudible) When people came to get their mail, they would -- your Dad knew who they were and he would just go reach behind him and...

A: I guess they had a number, I'm not sure, but then he would [put the work, too?]

Q: And he would give them their mail, personally. And then, inside there were, there were aisles, or...?

A: No. It was, as far as I remember it was just a plain room, right on this side was a big refrigerator.

Q: On the left.

A: Big. You know, and we had -- and it was just, you know, ice. We'd buy those big chunks of ice and put them in there, and then he had there, you know, meat and whatever when the refrigerator -- and in here, I think, he had bottles of soda and stuff that he sold.

Q: And another cold count...-- another...--

A: --No. I remember it was just piles of -- boxes, then from there he got --

Q: -- Room Temperature.

A: Yeah, from there he put them in the refrigerator, and then that there, it's a visual I can't remember what was back there, maybe, I think there were, there were sacks of beans and flour, cans of lard -- there was a lot of lard in those days, and I can't remember any more. You know, I can see, but I can't remember what it is.

Q: So, what kind of goods were sold at the store?

A: We sold everything - we sold cookies, and sweet bread, and candies. Soda, you know? Water, and then, vegetables, fruits, meats, canned foods, lot of beans, and garbanzos and stuff that's bulk, you know, that's not...--

Q: -- in bulk.

A: ...bulk.

Q: (coughing).

A: Not too many vegetables, I don't think, so, because there was not very too much room for a lot of vegetables - have stuff like oranges, that I don't...(inaudible)...I don't remember [?] because I always loved oranges, we used to grow the orange -- orange and grapefruit...stuffed lemons. Stuff that doesn't go bad...

Q: Quickly.

A: Quickly.

Q: (coughing).

A: So we had a lot of canned things. We had a lot of canned food - milk, cheese. I remember that much. I don't remember the ice cream...he might have, but I can't remember ice cream.

Q: Now, out front there were, there was a...

A: Two [?] tanks of gas. We had gasoline, too. It was a service station, right in front of the store.

Q: When cars would come up to get gas, was it self-service, or did someone go out and pump the gas, or...?

A: Yeah, somebody had to go pump the gas, I think. I don't remember anybody doing by themselves, I don't remember that that well, because we were just being [then?] nosy, trying to see everything, but I remember was one of our -- one cousin or one friend that used to do the pump -- the gas.

Q: [Can't take the mind?]

A: Oh, yeah. [Took?] my Dad.

Q: OK. Next [door?]

A: Seven cents. Seven cents a gallon, or, ten cents the good one, and seven cents, or something like that.

Q: So, one pump was premium, and one pump was regular.

A: Something like that, yeah.

Q: Next door, there was an almost identical building. They're both still there, and that was the pool hall.

A: The pool hall.

Q: Is that what you called it?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: What did that look like?

A: El Pool. (laughing) And another thing, too...--

Q: --What did you call?

A: El Pool. Es el nombre...

Q: (multiple conversations) P-O-O-L (laughing)

A: Yeah, like that -- El pool. It was another straight thing, they just had the pool tables, and then on the wall they had all the, used to call them, "tapos", you know, the things that you hit -- that thing, what's it called?

Q: Pool Sti -- the...--

A: -- the "sticks".

Q: Right.

A: Yeah, around the wall.

Q: You call them, "tapas", like what you eat?

A: We used to call them "tapos", yeah, I don't know...they used to call them "tapos", o...and then all that blue chalk, they going at it and then...

Q: The chalk that you use to...

A: Yeah, the chalk, and then they had the - the balls. That you play, the ones you hit, the balls that you hit with, and that's all I remember.

Q: How many pool tables?

A: I think he had 4, because he sold 22 to the farm. He put them in the Gallera -- not in the Gallera, but in Portal, and we used to play jacks on those. (laughing) Play jacks, and with a golf ball -- I love to play jacks. I still like to play jacks (laughing).

Q: Even after he lost the store, he kept the pool hall. He kept operating it.

A: No, we just had it there for us, for fun.

Q: So, it wasn't being -- now, but later on, didn't he open it as a business?

A: No. Not in the farm.

Q: Not after you moved to La Gallera.

A: Not anymore.

Q: Now...--

A: -- It was for us to play pool and to play jacks and...--

Q: But otherwise it was aban -- it was closed.

A: Oh, yeah. It was closed, as we moved from the store and then after, years later, he went back and rented the pool and we used to make -- to sell food, and have dances and I used to collect the money from the dances, five cents a piece, you know.

Q: On what -- on Saturday nights?

A: On Saturday nights, with all the people from the farms.

Q: So it was a -- so you were talking now, by the mid-30s...What would you say?

A: Yeah, yeah, because it was when -- right after Lenny was born it was -- (inaudible) '34 -- about that -- around '37, '38.

Q: Only a few years before you left.

A: Yeah, just a few years before we left.

Q: Now, was that when Gonzalo Flores, your cousin, went in -- he was his business partner (multiple conversations)

A: A business partner...

Q: In operating the pool hall.

A: Yeah.

Q: And he would -- he would rent that pool hall. Did he ever own the buildings?

A: Yeah, he did. He --

Q: He owned both of them?

A: Yeah, he owned everything - all the land.

Q: And the land around them.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then he had to sell them when he sold the store. So he came back and then I -- [landed a lease?]

A: And rented to the owner, I think, or leased it. I know that we went back because my Mom used to make a lot of menudo every Saturday for the dance, or they would make

chiladas to sell, because the people in those days they'd go dancing, but then they would eat, they'd take their partners to eat, or their wives and...then, they had coffee. I remember that, Mr. Monroe, we had a big coffee pot -- had coff...-- ever remember them selling any beer.

Q: They didn't serve alcohol?

A: I don't think so. I don't remember them selling any alcohol at all.

Q: At the pool hall.

A: Uh-uh.

Q: Did he sell it at the store? (inaudible)

A: I don't remember that either. I never knew anything about alcohol because my Dad never used it and so too much alcohol was something out of this world, we didn't know what it was. I don't remember he sold any alcohol at the store. I know he sold a lot of soda. But I can't remember if he sold any beer.

Q: So later, by the mid 30s when the pool hall -- when he operated the pool hall business, it became kind of a gathering spot for the valley. There wasn't much else, right?

A: No, there wasn't.

Q: There weren't many places to go.

A: No, not close.

Q: You had to go to Yuma.

A: You had to go to Yuma, that's all.

Q: And that was, quite a drive in those days.

A: Oh, in those days it was far to go to Yuma...(inaudible)--

Q: -- How long would it take, by car?

A: 20 minutes, I think, or more.

Q: [Do you want?] and drove slower back then.

A: Oh, yeah, very slow.

Q: So, it must...--

A: -- It was dirt road until you got into the main, in the "Laguna Dam Road", I guess. That was the main one. That's where the mailman used to come, and through dirt road.

Q: The pool hall would also operate during the week.

A: Yeah, all day. It was open all day and all night.

Q: And in the evenings?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: So people would come in the evenings, too, maybe after work to play.

A: (inaudible), play pool and sit around.

Q: Sit around. There were of couple of tables in there with chairs and benches.

A: Yeah, because it [was] for the, when they did the dance, they moved the pool tables...--

Q: -- over.

A: ... [yeah, and they] [lit?] the whole thing...

Q: What did they do for music?

A: Oh, they would -- people would come and play, yeah. You know. (multiple conversations) The "tower reigning" guitar, and you know, they would come from...--

Q: What kind of music?

A: All kinds of music. They used to play the jitterbug and all that stuff. Yeah, and some, of course, Mexican music, you know. But they did play English also, because the younger ones wanted to "the jitterbug" and, those days, you know, 1939, the jitterbug is one of the first big dances that the people had to you know, [jump and down?], some of our cousins would go playing -- dancing the jitterbug and, waltzing, you know, different kinds of music, but it was -- it was nice.

Q: What kind of crowd would the pool hall attract?

A: I don't know for sure about that.

Q: Mostly Latino, or?

A: No, I think all of the...

Q: Pretty mixed.

A: Pretty mixed. Yeah.

Q: Both during the weekdays and during Saturday night dances.

A: Well, I never went the weekdays, but I -- well, now and then, I would go, I would see different, I would see Black,

and of course, White and Latino. There were a lot of White people around us. A lot, cause we were real friends for all of them.

Q: And they would all attend the Saturday night dances.

A: The White people not too much [for] the Black. Once in a while, one White, but most of them were Latinos.

Q: Uh-huh, Uh-huh.

A: Once in a while they were real close, or they were going with one of the girls, so they would go, they boyfriends, but I never saw any Black at the dance. If they did, I don't remember, but I know [where ???], you know, White people did.

Q: So people had a good time on Saturday nights.

A: Oh, they did, and then they would eat. One Saturday my Mom would make menudo, and another Saturday, they would make chiladas, you know, different -- just Mexican food. So...-
-

Q: -- and a salad.

A: Yeah. With salad. And it was good, people wanted to -- they liked to eat. Some people came from Yuma, relatives came from Yuma just to spend, you know the evening and talk with the relatives, and have a good time dancing. So it was pretty good, it was pretty crowded, for being a small

little place and not [gaining?] so many people around the area, it was pretty good. I remember.

Q: How many people would gather in, for the dances?

A: Oh, I have no idea.

Q: Dozens, though.

A: Oh, yeah. More than dozens. Because I remember collecting the money - five cents. I would collect the money from every...(inaudible)

Q: That was a cover charge.

A: Yeah, cover charge. Every piece [to admit?] they had to pay five cents. So they had a lot of change, with, you know -- and the guys would pay, of course, not the girls. They had a lot of change in [their] pocket, and they'd get the nickel, and give it to me, and I'd take it to my Dad. It was fun for me, you know - and then, I think César helped, too. Richard didn't do too much, he was too young. Vicky - forget it. She was just a baby, but it was fun. To me, it was fun because, you know, I had something to do, you know.

Q: Would your whole family go to the dances?

A: No, my Mom never did.

Q: She would stay home with the younger ones?

A: Oh, she'd stay -- yeah.

Q: So the younger children, she would take care of while the older ones went to the dances. Would Richard and César also spend time at the pool hall during the week...? --

A: -- Oh, yeah, that's [right?]

Q: ..helping out?

A: That's where César learned how to play pool, and Richard, too. Although they were still young, but he managed to be around there.

Q: Your Dad, would he spend time at the pool hall, too?

A: Yeah, he had to be there.

Q: Even while he was farming.

A: (pause)

Q: But, this was mostly after work.

A: (multiple conversations) Yeah. Not every day, because, you know, he had to do some farming, but he would, you know...because they were in business. Him and Gonzalo. They had to be there.

Q: So, one of the other would be there.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: But it was open mostly during the weekdays, at night, after work?

A: I don't know. I don't remember that, for sure. I know the weekends they are, but I don't remember either it was open

-- I guess so, because I remember Gonzalo not coming home early, so I think they were open.

Q: During the --

A: During the week.

Q: During the weeknights -- weekday nights?

A: Yeah.

Q: But not during the day, or you don't know?

A: I don't know for sure - I don't remember that much.

Q: Uh-huh. OK. What happened to cause your father to sell the store, the pool hall, and all the land around it.

A: He went broke when he took on that -- they say, when [you] were, like, they were saying that from, you go out of business, what's it called?

Q: Going out of business.

A: Yeah, but -- does it -- they have a name...

Q: Bankruptcy?

A: ...Bankruptcy. He had to sell. He had so much credit they gave out...

Q: How did that happen? He gave --

A: He gave to the relatives credit and credit, and they never paid him, because you know, he wanted to be good hearted, "Oh yeah, they need, you know. I'm going to feed to them, like, and before I knew it.", before he knew it, he was in the hole, and he couldn't even buy no more groceries to

sell because there was no -- no money was coming in, but all the groceries were going out.

Q: So no one had any money then.

A: And he used to say, "If you guys would have been old enough, I would have never sold -- I would have never gone "brokeless", we wouldn't have to move, we would have..." you know, when they get a little -- he had [lent] so much credit out, and he said -- and it was all relatives, all relatives that didn't pay him. The other people, you know, that, the neighbor that weren't related, they would pay -- paid him. The relatives, took advantage of him.

Q: And he couldn't press them?

A: No - nobody had money, what was he going to do? They were all farm workers, and they didn't have any money.

Q: So he loses the store, the pool hall, all the p...-- the house that you had lived in and all the property around it.

A: Everything.

Q: And at that time, about 1931, you moved back to La Gallera, the homestead.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And you remember that move?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: What was that like?

A: Oh! (sighing), we were, I don't know, how it was. I think I liked it there because it was -- we had a lot of place to run in there, Big Mesquite Tree, and we do -- and over here, we didn't have a Mesquite tree, but we had a lot of farming, too, but I don't know. I did like that a lot, La Gallera. I didn't miss that big house, although the house was real nice because we had separate bedrooms and stuff like that, but I don't know. I kind of liked the Gallera - we had the [ganaldo] on which to swing!

Q: Yeah, I'm going to ask about that in a minute, but when he sold the store, and the property around it - then he spent, focused all of his time on farming, because he didn't have a store to run anymore...--

A: -- Nothing anymore...

Q: Except later on, when he went into business with his cousin Gonzalo Flores, he ran the pool hall, but that was later. How did it happen, because, you know, he goes broke, bankrupt, because he gives out credit to relatives, and none of them would pay him back, right?

A: Never did.

Q: And he couldn't press them, didn't -- no one had any money.

A: No one had any money, so, like he said, "What am I going to do? So, they don't have any money, where are they going to get money pay me?" They didn't have any money, they were

the same -- they were farmers and they -- they didn't have nothing, the government didn't buy anything, it was big, big depression. I remember, my Mom had a lot of chickens, but we didn't have a nickel to buy salt to cook the chickens with, she'd cook them and [we'd] eat them without salt because, well, not even a nickel to buy salt.

Q: [Is that?] you had to buy at a store...

A: Oh yeah, you had to buy your own food and everything, but it was -- I remember one of those days because, you know, I was already eight, and, you know, those hard times you remember, very well, like I do because, you know, we know we didn't have any -- nothing. We didn't have enough food, we had a lot of chickens, and sometimes she would try and grow, you know, little stuff in the garden.

Q: You Mom had to grow --

A: Yeah, but not too much.

Q: How did your Dad start to fall behind on the property taxes?

A: Because he didn't have any money (laughing). No money to pay. He couldn't sell any of that crop -- anything of those crops that he would grow in the farm...the only thing I think he sold, if I remember, if I remember correct was the Bermuda grass - the seeds, when we used to...

Q: They used it for cosmetics.

A: Yeah. The Bermuda grass and Alfalfa, they used to come big [treasures] in their trucks and put them in gunny sacks.

Oh, we'd love that - when we sold those. We were all excited because we wanted one of the gunny sacks when they would leave in the evening, and [up and down] the gunny sacks [several times?], that was the only thing I remember he sold them [not] a very good price, because he would tell, you know, and I could hear what he was talking --

Q: -- How would you have fun with the gunny sacks?

A: We'd race up and down, up and down, all of us, and then we'd stack them like stairs.

Q: Oh, they were filled with [alfalfa?]...

A: Oh, yeah, they were filled, and they were sold and everything. [???] That they'd come mixed in, work some more, so...

Q: Now, his brother, Julio, also had half of the home -- of the farmable land...--

A: -- Yeah.

Q: ...and he -- he was delinquent in paying his share of the taxes...

A: Well, yeah, he never paid, so, that made...you know --

Q: -- So, even when your Dad was paying his side...--

A: --He didn't pay. --

Q: ---...his brother was not.

A: Uh-uh. He wasn't uh, you know. Saying, well, you know, "Here's my share", and, he never did, and my Dad would ask him, and he never came through, so.

Q: You also had to pay for the water?

A: Yeah.

Q: From the canal, to the government?

A: Yeah, (inaudible), I think it was the government, it was irrigation...

Q: Distribute?

A: An irrigation district. I remember that, because I know the man used to come, we used to call him, El Sangero. I don't know why we used to call him El Sangero.

Q: Spell that for me, will you?

A: How do you say, "G" -- I'm not sure.

Q: (augmented volume) They would call El Sangero; E-L and a new word, S-A-R-G...

A: S-A-N

Q: S-A-N-G-E-R-O...

A: Sanjero, I think that's a "G" instead of a "J"...--

Q: -- That's what you'd call him.

A: Uh-huh. The man that would come to collect the money for the water.

Q: What did that mean?

A: I don't know that -- up to date, I know. But they call him Sangero because, I don't know. I remember the Sangas, would bring like a little dish that they would make and maybe that's why they called him [that], I don't know -- up-to-date, I don't know why they called him that name. I know that it was -- Ahí viene El Sangero, we got to pay the money for the water, and he'd go back with no money, because my Dad didn't have any money. When we had money, he would give him money, but I remember that much.

Q: Even though you didn't have money to buy store bought products, but you s...-- it wasn't that you were hungry, you grew fruits and vegetables, you had eggs and chickens?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: What was that like? How did you guys -- what did you have to eat?

A: Well, we had baked chickens and beans, flour - but we didn't have any salt, I tell you, we didn't have a nickel to buy salt. The big thing that was five cents, because I remember that well. Finally, my Dad went to work for this grower, I think he worked -- how much did he work? I don't know long they would get -- three dollars and some cents, and, so...--

Q: -- Like what, three dollars and some cents a day? Or,

A: No, no, no, the whole time he worked.

Q: The whole time he worked. So, a week or...?

A: I can't remember, I think it was a week, or four days, something like that - I can't remember exactly, but then they went to the store to get coffee, and sugar, and salt.

Q: And the store, being where?

A: In town.

Q: In Yuma.

A: Yeah, Yuma. There was no more stores in Gila. Nobody. My Dad's store went out, so, then we had, we had -- salt to eat chicken. Make a soup of whatever, eggs and, at least we had salt, you know. And then, my Mom had her coffee, because my Mom used to drink coffee. We all drank coffee, too. My Mom used to give us coffee all the time.

Q: How would you make it?

A: She had -- was one of those old fashioned, like you see in the movies? You know, those coffee pots and they have the little, like a little, um --

Q: Percolator?

A: No, it's like a little rag, like? You put the coffee in there, and then just put the water, and it drips down...--

Q: I see.

A: It's made out of rag, and a little [squig] It looked like coriander, but it was made out of woo -- out of fabric, and

you put in there, put the coffee and then -- that's how we used to make the coffee.

Q: Would you describe La Gallera? The house that you were -- the home you were living in?

A: Just one whole -- one whole big room, with two windows on this side and one on this side, and that's about it. Two big giant doors -- they were not just like, you know doors, you know? They were like the doors that you see in the movies when they close the door when Indians are coming those big, big doors -- that's the kinds of doors we had.

Q: This was the north part of the building that - that north paneling...--

A: Both sides. Both sides of the Gallera had the same thing. This door, this one, they had regular doors.

Q: This is the south side where you're grandmother and your aunt live.

A: Yeah, they had doors. We didn't. We had doors, but they like those big (incomprehensible), piece of board about that big to close it, in the evening, because you know, it was that kind of doors we had in the Gallera.

Q: And it was one large room.

A: One big large room with two windows on this side of it and maybe one on this side.

Q: So there were seven of you living there?

A: (pause) Uh-huh.

Q: Then after Vicky, and...--

A: And Lenny was born.

Q: and Lenny was born. Your Mom had a garden outside.

A: Yeah, she still had a garden. She used to make -- get zucchinis, tomatoes, and green chile, I don't know if it was jalapeño, or what it was - and corn. She kept corn, and what she, too, with the -- she did like, dehydrate the tomato slice and the zucchinis, and the corn, she would cook it and then laid it -- dried it, and we get it, take it off the kernel, and then when we needed corn, she'd get of it, and just cook it and it was like, fresh corn.

Q: Separating the two parts of the -- of La Gallera was a breezeway, you called it El Portal...-

A: That's what we used to call it.

Q: E-L new word P-O-R-T-A-L, and that served as just that, I mean the breezes would come in from...--

A: -- Yeah, we'd sit there, we would just sit there and be there in the wind -- in the summer. Cooling down, because we didn't have no air conditioning, no nothing, we just, whatever the wind, the wind was nice and cool, fine. If it was hot, fine. So, that's what we said and gathered together, like, talking about different, you know, when they were little, or different things they want to talk

about, or maybe would tell us a story, I think, that they remember, and we'd all sit there and talk. Had one of the pool halls in there -- one of the pool tables in there, too, so we'd sit there and -- in the summer, we'd sleep in there. My Mom would put a little mattress and we'd all sleep in that thing and...--

Q: On top of the pool table?

A: Yeah, because it was too hot inside the house.

Q: Who would sleep on top of the pool table?

A: Well, the boys mainly. Richard and César, [Elenie] was still too little. They loved to sleep there in the Ga- in the pool hall.

Q: In the other wing of the building where your grandmother and aunt lived, did you aunt take in people -- kids, other kids who would give (multiple conversations)--

A: -- Oh, she raised a lot of nieces, nephews, but at that time, she didn't have any more in there.

Q: OK.

A: She just had two little ones later. Yeah. Two little ones.

Q: And these were kids whose parents couldn't care for them or...

A: They just gave them to us so she could raise them, I don't know -- they had too many kids. So, I guess they gave

these kids to her to raise, because another of the last two kids she had to go out and -- she was a single parent, she had to go out and work (inaudible) for you know, for support the kids, because one of the kids finally went to Mexico and never knew about him, the other kid's father he got lost, too, they don't know where he went, so she had to (inaudible) --

Q: So she would take in, like, the kids.

A: Yeah, and then her niece would go work, you know, and (multiple conversations, inaudible).

Q: [Mother of the child?]

A: Mother of child, because she was single parent.

Q: And Josefa never married...

A: She never got married at all.

Q: So there were always (multiple conversations, inaudible).

A: She took care of my Mo -- my grandmother, my Mom, my Grandma went blind...--

Q: Right.

A: So then, she never got married.

Q: And your grandmother died in what year?

A: In '37. 1937.

Q: Now behind the house was a large area you called El Patío...E-L P-A-T-I-O...

A: Yeah, the patío.

Q: The patio, and there was a big Mesquite tree.

A: Yeah, there was quite few, but this was the biggest one.

Q: Right. And, what happened there? What was it used for?

A: Oh, we used to swing in there. My Dad used to make swings for us out of t...--old tires. Hanging on that tree, and that's where -- that was our recreation. We'd swing on those swings all day.

Q: How many of them?

A: We had three. If I remember well.

Q: It was a large tree.

A: Oh, it was very big. It had been there for years, I think since Arizona (laughing), Arizona or something, it was very big.

Q: Was a state, huh? Since it was a territory.

A: Yeah. We used to have a lot of fun in that, and there was another big hill on the back.

Q: To the south side, uh-huh.

A: Yeah. Where -- that's where I went with -- that's where César took his little truck that I tell you that -- we got in trouble.

Q: Tell me about that truck.

A: César always wanted a truck -- a little wagon, you know that little wagon?

Q: Little pull wagon.

A: Yeah. He always wanted one.

Q: Red?

A: Yeah, red. "I want a truck, I want truck so I can take the milk, and the eggs, and...", but we couldn't afford it, so one day my Dad, I guess he could afford it, because I remember it was three dollars, because I ordered from Sears Catalog and every day since he would go, "My truck came? My truck came?" So one day, we went to the mail -- the mailbox...

Q: At the -- where?

A: At the store, the mailbox only [one] at the store. So we'd go every other...(phone ringing)- Is that mine?

BREAK IN AUDIO

César always wanted a little red wagon, the pull wagon and my Dad -- we couldn't afford it, my Dad couldn't afford it. One day he says, "order the wagon". So he had...

Q: Your Dad says this.

A: My Dad says, "Rita, order the wagon". So I used to order for everybody, all the cousins, and aunts they came over -- they didn't know how to order in catalog. I was only eight, I was doing all the orders. I still had my Dad order the farm, you know, things he needed for the farm,

because everything was from [a] catalog. So anyway we ordered that, we would go, every other day to see the little truck come in, the little wagon come in, so one day it came in...

Q: To the same store that your Dad used to run.

A: Yeah, but to our mailbox.

Q: Oh.

A: We had a big mailbox, one of those big, big ones.

Q: But at the same location.

A: Across the street, yeah. The main location, eh? Just across the street from the store.

Q: Store.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Oh.

A: So anyway, the little wagon came in and, how we were going to take it? We didn't have no car to take it so, my Dad had to come in [on] the horse, with a wood sled, and take - - because it was a big box, it wasn't, you know, assembled. So we took it, and oh, that was César's love. He just loved --

Q: Your Dad had to assemble it.

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, because, you know, it was in a big box - by mail, you know, it doesn't come assembled. So anyway, it was done and everything, so we just [ran it a little every

day?], my Mom used to milk the cows, César would get the milk, bring it over, we'd go looking for eggs all over the little -- the farm, and we'd carry the eggs and everything -- we needed to do wood, my Mom said, "You better go get me some wood", and everything was used for the wagon. [He was] only 6, I was 8 and one day, it [was] started to rain. It was real cloudy and you could see the storm coming in, and we got Vicky was about a year and a half, and the Richard was 2 -- 3. Or 2. I don't know, something like that, they were little. So César and I got them in the wagon and my Mom says, "Don't go anymore, you better come in because it's going to rain. It's coming in hard." You'd better come in, and she was cooking and we didn't listen, so we went up the little hill, because we used to go there all the time - up and then come down with the wagon, we were rolling down. The minute we got to the top of the hill, the rain came pouring down, and here we come, like Humpty Dumpty, we fell and came down, all full of mud. My mother said, "you kill my baby, you kill my baby", "se mató, se murió", (inaudible Spanish), in Spanish. Vicky got [up?]; that baby really got full of mud, and Richard did, too. I think Vicky scratched her nose, or something. Anyway, we got it bad, César and I, and I got worse, because she said, "You're the oldest, you're should have

known better. How did you go?" and all that...anyway, she goes, "You're not having -- uh, you're going to be grounded, you can't have the little wagon anymore, because you don't listen, you didn't mind," and on...she gave us a good one. So anyway, at night, we were going to bed and César said...

Q: Who said?

A: Richar -- César said, "I know how to get my wagon. I'll get my wagon tomorrow." So now, you know my mom, because she was very strict. More than my dad, she was very strict. I go, "No, no, no..."

Q: (coughing)

A: César says, "I know. I know I'll get my truck." So, he said, "I know how to get it." So next morning, Mom says, "César, get up, you got to go get the milk, and then you guys go get the eggs..." and we did that every morning, he says, "I can't go, I don't have no truck -- uh, wagon". And my mom says, "OK. Get your wagon, do your chores, and then put it away." But she forgot that at the end of day, we still played on it, but it was -- César said, "I told you I know how to get my wagon." Anyway, it was...it was a lot of fun with the little wagon (laughing).

Q: (coughing). The Sears Catalog -- how old were you when you started using it?

A: Maybe eight? [End up?] seven or eight? By eight, I started...

Q: First for your own family, and then for other relatives?
(inaudible)

A: Well, yeah, they would all come to me, "I need to [you] order", another - there was another catalog called "The Walter Field", and they...--

Q: -- Walter Field?

A: Uh-huh. The younger girls, my cousins, younger girls, they used to order from it because they had dresses and, you know, pretty stuff. So, "Ay, Rita! Come on, do the orders for me, I don't..." [I] said, "Well, learn! You should read, ¿no?" They didn't know how to really read or, you know, do the forms.

Q: It was in English, too.

A: Yeah, it was in English. They would, you know, little stuff, but they really didn't comprehend (pause), you know, [what] the forms really said, and then, there was no tax, but you have to -- you know, the number of the item and -- I got it right away! And they would come to me - all of them, all the cousins - Julian, [??], all them, they were all there, "Ah, I want you to order for me, and could you do this me, and that's it." Yeah. Because the other -- their sons and their daughters - they didn't know how to --

they didn't know to do the forms. They didn't comprehend the form. You know? With the questions and all that. They knew how to read English, like, you know, they would get something and read it, you know, (inaudible) like that, but when it came to forms...

Q: They got con...--

A: They got stuck, I guess...--

Q: --confused. --

A: --...confused, they never did it. So, I was the one and I got a real nice pen from Sears.

Q: How long -- how many years did you do this?

A: Until I was 13, then we moved from [the deli?].

Q: And how did Sears find out about who you were?

A: I can't remember how it found out, but I know I got a real nice pen from Sears - whoa! It was treasure from [me handed, oh!] and then I left it in Broadway, in the big -- the big [business?], with Gonzalo and his wife - when the big earthquake in the '40s, they lost everything and my pen got lost, too, I never saw it again - so anyway. It was a real nice pen. When I went to work for Sears, I told them, I said, "Hey, I used to order a lot from you in the '30s and da, da, da, and I got us this really," I said, "yeah, and I never knew I was going to work for Sears." And I worked 25 years for Sears.

Q: On the patio, it was also a gathering place?

A: Yeah.

Q: In e -- after work.

A: In the evenings.

Q: Tell me about that. Who would come and from where?

A: Oh - well, the Quinteros, the Arias - all the relatives. The Ricos and the other Chávez didn't get too much to come, but Quinteros and the Arias would - they would be more, they would come more.

Q: When would they come?

A: In the evenings. In the summer, that's when it was more, in the summer - yeah. And [on] in the weekends, too and stuff...--

Q: -- They would come to visit your grandmother?

A: Well, she had already left, too. Well, she did - she would come to visit her...--

Q: -- When she still lived there.

A: ...yeah, when she still lived there.

Q: But then they would -- it was, you know...--

A: -- It was...--

Q: -- ...kind of a form of entertainment?

A: Well, we'd just get together because we felt like talking - all the elderly would tell us different stories that they knew, and they were just there - all in Spanish...--

Q: -- Describe the scene - would people sit around in a circle? On...(multiple conversations, inaudible)--

A: -- or whatever...on benches, chairs on buckets - those big buckets you see in the back, we didn't have enough chairs, really.

Q: And there would -- you'd make a little bonfire in the middle, or...?

A: Sometimes we did, it was cold, but in the summer, of course, we didn't, you know? We'd just sit there, and [if] that's the case, we would play games around, you know, the [dead end?] there - old, elderly people would be there. Sometimes they were playing cards, and we would play games.

Q: Now, Richard said that the rule from you parents was that if you played games you had to be out of earshot so you wouldn't interfere, but you could also listen if you wanted to.

A: Oh, yeah -- Mom -- if they were ta...-- like, if my mother was talking about pregnancy and all that...[slap!]...all she did was say...(pause)...she'd talk with her eyes, and we knew, and we didn't listen -- we knew...and there were...--

Q: -- She would move her eyes to tell you to leave.

A: Yeah, leave, and we had to leave because we knew what she meant, and if we didn't forget it! (laughing) Like Richard

once, he said, "I don't know what you mean!"...(inaudible)..."You don't know what I mean?" He goes, "No, I don't know what you mean." You know, like, "I don't know what you mean." Boy - (laughing) - he was always getting it because was always -- César and I, we would mind, all the time - "Let's go over there..." -- [go] Richard, "Ah, no. I don't want to go, I want to listen." And, my mom had a different word for - to say somebody's pregnant, she would say, "Esta bien gracias a Dios."

Q: Which means...

A: Which means, she's, um, Thanks to God, she is... but she didn't say the word, but everybody knew what she meant - but everybody did, they didn't want us to learn nothing about sex, or, you know, childbirth or nothing, nothing -- [real?] hush, hush. So one day, Richard got sick...--

Q: Excuse me...(break in audio)...In Spanish, that's bien, B-E-I-N, gracias, G-R-A-C-I-A-S, new word, -A-, new word, Dios, capital D-I-O-S, and it means, "Thanks to God".

A: She didn't say, "She's pregnant." She said, "Bien, gracias a Dios.", so that meant that -- to them, it meant -- Ay, [to know?] those ladies from those years. So we knew what it meant, but we never, really, you know - but anyway...

Q: Richard also told the story, once he went to a home in Yuma for baptism, I think...--

A: -- Oh, Vicky's baptism.

Q: Yes, and...--

A: -- I'll tell you, but let me tell you about this.

Q: Please.

A: Bien, gracias a Dios. So, he got sick- (laughing) - and that's it. I think he had a fever or something.

Q: Who?

A: Richard, and he goes -- he wanted to know what the word meant - you know? Richard...--

Q: -- which word?

A: Bien, gracias a Dios. So, mamá says, "What's wrong with you?" He says, "Ay, Ma, I think I'm getting Gracias a Dios." (laughing) He wanted my mom to tell him, my mom says, "No, no, you're crazy getting Gracias a Dios. OK, Gracias a Dios." She would say, "No, no. What -- what that mean? You? You have fever." She never said anything, but he wanted to get it out of my mom, but he couldn't because my mom was smarter than him. So anyway, when Vicky got baptized, another thing my mother was telling [us?], "When I tell you, you know -- when we go to houses and you just eat once and you, you know, don't ask for anymore and..."--

Q: One serving.

A: -- one serving. You don't ask for no more and stuff.
So...--

Q: Because...--

A: ...Just because she didn't want us to, you know, overdo it.
She says, "Once is enough." So, we went to the baptism,
they had the dinner after they bapeted [sic] Vicky and
then...--

Q: -- In Yuma.

A: In Yuma.

Q: It was at a relative's house, or a friend's house.

A: She was -- it was a friend. And so, she says, "Oh!
Comadre, you know?" Meaning, "The mom...mama", "Uh, the
kids can have some more." [she] says, "You want some
more?" César and I said, "No, thank you." Richard said,
"Yo, ¡sí! I do. I want some more." My mom look[ed] at him
like she wanted to choke him right then and there, and he
didn't care, he ate - boy! I think it was chicken we ate
then. Oh, they came in the kitchen, it was at least 2 or 3
hours after that had happened, they came [in] the kitchen,
the old ladies and everything they sat down and then my mom
goes, "Richard, you want peanuts?" - "Ooh! Yeah, yeah, I
want pea...(laughing).

Q: (laughing)

A: (laughing) Oh! It was so funny, and now that I remember it - she used to have an outside, it was a nice bathroom, you know? With running water and all, because it was in town - she come in there and she gave him peanuts...[said], "This is [pay] for what you did, and what I always tell them not to do, and you did it!" (laughing) Oh my God! We went to César's, "You want peanuts, too?" Oh no, we run back, César and I.

Q: So he didn't get peanuts.

A: Richard - no! He got a spanking.

Q: Right.

A: That's what it was, but my mom -- had [him] asking for peanuts.

Q: How old was he?

A: He must have been like - I'd say, he's 4, about 5 - maybe, because he's 3 years older than Vicky and Vicky was a year old. So, he must have been 4 or 5, around there. ;Ay! He was always that way - always that way, coming up. He'd never tell the story when him and Richard -- him and César were working, and we were working in Walnut Grove, over there by Sacramento, picking tomatoes and after about this time of the year, little [??] before Thanksgiving, it was already -- it had frosted a lot, so the grower says we can't pick anymore this is it - this is the end of tomato,

because they're all, you know, they're frosted and they're -- they're no good. We can't pick no more, so we were -- we went in the morning and it was real cold and it was -- had frosted a lot, we were coming and the sun was shining and everything and there were some horses, real [cold?] you know how they get that way, with their hair here? I always had my hair real long when I was younger...--

Q: -- The hair of the horses was over their foreheads.

A: ...and my hair was always real long, I always had real long hair. And then, Richard goes, "César, look at that horse. How does it -- Who does that horse look like?" He said, Richard - César told him, "I don't know." [He] goes, "She looks like -- She looks like Rita." (inaudible) --

Q: -- The horse.

A: Uh-huh. So, then they both decided, yeah - the horse looked like me. So, they went home and [it] starts in -- oh, my dad got so mad, he gave Richard a good spanking and said, "You don't talk about your sister like that..." [He] goes, "Dad, but she looked...--" (laughing) He got spanked, but he still say, "She does -- that horse looks like Rita." I didn't think of it, I just started laughing because I knew he was funny all the time. So at night, he was still saying -- he got under the covers, he go, "I don't care if you hit me, the horse looks like Rita." And he covered

himself back. He was terrible. Richard was terrible.

César and I were more, you know, more obedient or whatever

-- like we were afraid, Richard didn't care...--

Q: -- He was like, cut up.

A: He was the good one.

Q: When people would meet on the patio in the summers after work and they would tell s...-- people, the older people, would tell stories.

A: A lot of stories about...--

Q: -- What were, what do you remember about some of them, what were they about?

A: About their lives when they were young, you know, when they were little, when they were young and when they met whoever -- different things. Different, different -- made up their own stories like, you know, they would make a story about a horse or they would make a story about a lady and a man, or a princess -- different stories like, you know, like you have in English. Other stories about the one..."Alice in Wonderful Land", but they made them in Spanish, not exactly any one of them, but different ones, but something like that...--

Q: -- Fairy tales, sometimes.

A: Fairy tales. A lot of them.

Q: Did you hear stories about the history of your family in Mexico and Old West.

A: No, the only thing they would say is how they remember when they crossed the border, that my grandfather brought them all over across because there was a lot of -- war, really going on really bad in Mexico, so my grandfather came with all the family. Only one sister stayed in Mexico, it was -- she was married already, and Richard hasn't found her -- [says] he hasn't found [our] dead sister at all. He's found a lot of relatives, but he hasn't found the sister.

Q: Uh...what...-- go ahead.--

A: -- That's about it, they won't say...--

Q: -- Do you ever hear the story about your uncle, Andrés Arias?--

A: --Yeah...(multiple conversations, inaudible)

Q: What do you remember hearing about him?

A: That he had killed a man, but they would say [it] was self defense, and that he was in prison, and my mom would say they gave my tía Julia her divorce right away, because in Arizona I do not know, but anybody went to prison - because my cousin got her divorce when her husband went to prison, they'd give you your divorce right away, automatically, when they go to prison. I don't know now, but in those days, they did, because my cousin got it when her husband

went to -- to prison, for drugs or whatever, she got her divorce right away. So my tía Julia got married again with him when he came out, because he had...-- yeah, they said that he had killed a man in def...-- in self defense because he was trying to beat him, or kill him, or something like that, but yeah -- we heard, we really heard a lot about him, that he had been in prison - and then my mom used to take of the little one that my tía had, so that my tía Julia could wash and iron, so she could support the rest of the kids that she had...--

Q: -- Oh, so they already had a child.

A: Ah, I think they had 2, and [there were] that other one that my mom used to care...--he died, the little boy died. He got sick and he died. That's all I remember my mom saying - said, "But you know, your tía got a divorce right away. They gave her a divorce because he was going to prison." But since when he came back, they got remarried again, (inaudible)...

Q: What was the source of your -- the water you used for cooking, and drinking, and bathing?

A: It was from the canal, we just put it in a big, big ca...-- like tanks, and then it would - but it had to settle, and whenever it got settled, then that's what we used for everything.

Q: You used the water on the top and the sediment on the bottom you'd just throw away. You had two of them then, right?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And as one was settling, you'd draw from the other one.

A: The other and keep on and on, because we had a pump down below, but we never did like the water from the pump, or the well -- we never did use it.

Q: It was well water?

A: Uh-huh, and we never did use it, we had, you know, one of those pumps [they] use in the country, we never used it.

Q: Where was that located?

A: Down - down by the canal...--by the barn, I mean the -- fence, over there by that -- corral.

Q: That was across the canal on the west side.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was the canal -- the corral was made out of what?

A: Just wood. Wood.

Q: And barbed wire?

A: And barbed wire.

Q: And what was in the -- what stayed in the corral?

A: Just, uh, horses.

Q: You had mule, too?

A: Yeah, I had a mule and two horses - we -- one was named "Brownie", the other, "Black Beauty", we named him, and then there was another one, the male one...-- I don't know, we just called him "El Garañón" -- he was like a white, silver one.

Q: "El", E-L, new word, G-A-R-A-N-I-O-N, and that was the white horse.

A: Yeah, that was the...--

Q: -- and the other one was...--

A: -- no, like silver, sort of...

Q: Silver.

A: ...so, that's what we used to call him, El Garañón, and then, we had the mule, I don't know...--

Q: -- Excuse me, and the other horse you called "Black Beauty"?

A: Black Beauty (multiple conversations, inaudible)...--

Q: -- What color was that horse?

A: Black -- real black, and then the "Brownie", which was brown.

Q: So, there were 3 horses.

A: 4! Then, the mule. I don't we named the mule. I don't remember naming the mule.

Q: And what were they used for?

A: For the, the (incomprehensible), you know.

Q: Pull plows?

A: Plows and everything that my dad used them for - carrying different...-- because when we did the cotton, it was put in like a cage and then we'd, we'd pull all over [with] the horses. They would pull everything, they were real strong. And the cow - the cow was just tied up under a tree.

Q: It's for milk?

A: Ah. And then she had another little calf, and we named her Valentina because it was born on Valentine's Day and ...-- we left those, too, when we left Arizona.

Q: You left all the animals when you left.

A: We had two little goats -- they had just gave them to my dad. So we left those, too, and all of our furniture and everything. My mom had real pretty furniture. (pause)

Q: Your grandfather and the...-- you know, was the only one who homesteaded land, who owned land and then your uncle Julio and your dad were the only two who, again, farmed their own land. The other relatives...

A: No. That...-- the farm was in my tío Felipe's name. It wasn't even in my Dad or in my tío Julio's name, it was in - the one that lived in Calexico...--

Q: -- all those years.--

A: --...in California. Yeah. He never came. He never even came to the farm.

Q: No interest in farming.

A: Oh, no...--

Q: --but he kept title to the land?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: He could (inaudible) that in, but he never paid, you know, like, well -- help my Dad with a water tax or anything like that either, and then the land belonged to him. That's what my grandma did. She -- see, the -- when my grandpa died the land...-- the l..(slap!) farm became my grandma's property.

Q: Your "Mamatea".

A: Mamatea. So she gave it to my tío Felipe.

Q: So she's the one who decided to give...--

A: Yeah, she decided, uh-huh.

Q: Why?

A: I don't know, because he was the baby I guess.

Q: He was also the only one who was born in the country. Do you think that might have been a part of the reason?

A: I really don't know. I never knew. She should have given it to my dad, because he was the one that worked more on it and paid more, but she gave it to my uncle Felipe.

Q: But in any case, it was only your uncle Julio and your dad...--

A: -- The only one who were...--

Q: --...who farmed land that they owned.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the rest of the relatives did what? How did they make a living?

A: They worked outside the [land] with growers.

Q: Mostly as farm workers?

A: Oh, they were all farm workers.

Q: And the properties they lived on was just...-- you know, they didn't have to pay rent to anybody, it was just...(inaudible)--

A: -- It belonged to the farm.

Q: It belonged to your farm.

A: Yeah, but they didn't have to.

Q: Oh, I see. So all of those relatives who lived along the canal to your north within walking distance were...--that was all part of the same property. So, a lot of the property really, was not farmable land...--

A: -- No.--

Q: --...on each side of the canal, it was just part of the hills.

A: Hills and desert - just the little spots that they would work hard and...--

Q: -- I see.

A: ...even the little corn, and chile, and...--

Q: -- Each of them have their own little garden.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: That they would irrigate...--

A: -- Yeah.

Q: ...and...--

A: -- But their kids - they all worked out. Outside with us, with growers that are around there they had a lot of work to do.

Q: Uh-huh. So...--

A: -- Yeah.

Q: OK. So it was your grandmother who gave the...--

A: -- Yeah, she was the one that signed the deed to my tío Felipe.

Q: Because when your grandfather César do died, she inherited the land.

A: Yeah. [???] came, the lawyer or somebody came to do the deeds, so I was there when she signed it.

Q: And was this after your grandfather's death?

A: Oh, yeah - way, way...--

Q: -- Because he died in 1922.

A: Oh, this was done in the '30s. (pause)

Q: And a lawyer came out and your...--

A: -- I think he was lawyer, or real estate, I don't know. I know she signed those papers...(inaudible)--

Q: -- Because your grandmother was getting old and she wanted to...--

A: Oh, she was old already and she was, you know...--

Q: -- Couldn't see.

A: Yeah, she couldn't see anything so, she said she was going to give it to Felipe because he was the baby, and he never worked on the farm, really. He got out of the farm early since he got married and then he came to California, actually, he lived all his life in Calexico. He didn't live on the farm that long...--

Q: -- What did he do?

A: He worked for the city.

Q: There was a footbridge that linked the west side of the canal where the farming and the corral was with the east side, where you lived.

A: It was one bridge across the...canal.

Q: Which was what, a couple of planks of wood? And that was a main place to cross.--

A: --Uh-huh.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That's it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I think the one - tía Julia? I think they had like a big bridge with the cars [that] would go through, but we didn't have nothing [for] theirs - our cars were down, and we had to go down there.

Q: So your cars were on the west side (inaudible)...--

A: -- By the corral.

Q: Near the corral.

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: (Slurping noise)

Q: And, uh, the bridge. You guys ever [fall him]?

A: Richard did all the time. He was always drowning on that bridge. We used to call him "patas chuecas" (laughing)...

Q: So they would call Richard "P-A-T-A-S", new word, "C-H" --

A: "U"

Q: "U"

A: "E"

Q: "E"

A: "A-S"

Q: "A-S"

A: "chuecas".

Q: Oh, no, "C-H-U-E-S-A-S" and...--

A: y "C". chuecas- this is a "C".

Q: Oh, so "C-H-U-E-C-A-S"

A: Ah-ha.

Q: And it means...

A: "Crooked feet".

Q: Crooked feet.

A: (Slurping Noise)

Q: Because he was always following him.

A: Uh-huh. Always, too. [The casa is] jumping and getting out -- he...I don't know why he always took the one that because it wasn't built very big -- very good, you know.

Q: The -- the bridge.

A: The bridge, and he'd always used to -- (inaudible), and then, "Boom" he goes in. And they always used to take him out because he almost drowned.

Q: How old was he?

A: He must have been about (pause) 6? 5, 6, I don't know.
(pause) (inaudible)

Q: What was the winters like, when you lived at La Gallera--

A: -- Hard. Very hard, because we -- you know, there's no heater or anything there or except our blankets and cuddling all together so we wouldn't, you know, [go through the same ???] because it was really cold all the time.

Q: You had a stove - a wood stove.

A: A stove, but it was mainly cooking. My mom would put it on sometimes but it wouldn't warm -- it's a big huge hall and a little stove, it wouldn't really and you get close by it, yeah, it was warm, but it wouldn't warm the whole house.

[Like?] I tell you we had those big doors that (pause) all the draft would come in -- there were real big doors like those they use[d] in the forts. (inaudible) That kind of doors.

Q: Big, heavy, wooden, plank doors.

A: Yeah. They use them in the -- in all the farms.

Q: Uh-huh. Because it had been a storage house.

A: Yes, it was storage house, so they didn't put no little doors like this, you know? [There's?] such big doors with a big board, and how they put the board through to lock them.

Q: The cold would come in easy.

A: Oh, my. Very easy, because it was old already.

Q: And it would get to -- in the 20s?

A: Oh, very, very cold - and we had to go to school stepping on the s...-- on the (pause) stepping on the ice, we had to go to school all the way, sometimes.

Q: There were chores that the kids had.

A: Lot of chores we had...--

Q: -- During any season.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Um, and...--

A: -- mainly summer, because winter we didn't have too many chores, but summer we had a lot of chores.

Q: Spring, summer...--

A: -- and Spring and Summer. Fall. That winter, winter -- we didn't have too many chores in the winter.

Q: What were some of the chores? Like w...-- there were different chores for you and for your brothers.

A: The boys would then mainly like, carry the milk, go feed the horse, and the cow, and make -- water them and all that. Me, I did all the cooking, the laundry, the ironing, and collect[ed] eggs and the boys would collect eggs, too -- from the chickens and in the summer, we used to help my mom bathe the eggs when the chickens were hatched. She had to go bathe the eggs so that, well, the chickens won't die, so we bathed the eggs and we'd leave them there until they were ready.

Q: What would you do to the eggs?

A: We'd bathed them, in a big bucket of water, we'd get the eggs from the chickens that was hatched. Bathed them all water and put them back, and then she would lay on them again.

Q: So they would hatch and you'd have more chickens.

A: Yeah, and it won't be -- they wouldn't die with the heat. So, we did that and we did, you know, different chores like, cleaning and, if there was anything to clean like -- some of the trees that were around there, you know, they'd drop the leaves, we had to break the leaves and stuff like that.

Q: Chopping wood for the fires? That was the boys.

A: Ah, that was the boys and my mom. My mom and the boys did all that. That's where the little wagon came in handy, because they would put it all -- because my dad would -- my dad couldn't come and do the, you know, the wood, that fire. He had -- he was too busy at his own farm. So it had to be my mom to do all that. She was so good at doing wood. Ah, I can remember, it was so amazing. We should have -- well, we never had any money to take pictures - if we would have taken pictures that would have been wonderful pictures there at this time, of this one we're talking about. She used to do real good wood and she was strong, I mean.

Q: She [has to chop] it in the kindling, to fit in the stove?

A: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.

Q: Did the kids have to be nagged to do their chores?

A: Not really. They knew we had to do it - and one word from dad, that's all. My mom did sometimes - do more yelling at

us, but not my dad. My dad talk once and we knew that he meant business. That was it, but not too much. She would call us [all of sudden?], I remember being in the swings and they would call us to go to someplace, "Ahí voy" - you know, "I'll be there", "I'll be there". She'd finally come out, "I'm call...-- I'm talking to you" - "OK, here I come." It's -- not all the time, but most of the time, yeah. I know I was one of them. I would say, "Ahí voy" and I never did, because I was playing with the dolls or something.

Q: Ahí voy meaning...

A: I'm coming.

Q: I'm coming, OK. Um, clothes. The clothes you wore. What was that like when you were living at the homestead?

A: The boys wore nothing but... the suspenders --

Q: -- Overalls.

A: Overalls.

Q: Denim overalls.

A: And my dad -- my mom made all their articles for us -- us girls. She made all our clothes for us.

Q: So during the summers -- spring, summer, they didn't wear shirts.

A: It was too hot, no.

Q: Just the overalls.

A: Just the overalls.

Q: And how many pairs of overalls would they have?

A: One or two. They were lucky if they had two, if not, they had one. And some old ones - when they come from school, we had to change clothes right away and put [on] our old clothes to work around the farm.

Q: So they'd wear the overalls to school, too.

A: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.

Q: What about shoes?

A: We had shoes. We had shoes. Good shoes.

Q: So, they didn't go...-- they always wore shoes to school. What about when they were at the homestead?

A: Sometimes they would take them off in the summer, we would go barefooted. We always walked barefooted, because it was so hot.

Q: So your feet would get pretty tough.

A: Tough and dirty. Dirty, dirty. I remember that. But that was the canal -- we would sit on the bridge, putting our feet in the canal (laughing). It was fun. (slurping noise)

Q: When the spring came, that was a good time.

A: Spring was very good, because it wasn't too hot and it wasn't cold anymore.

Q: And, how would your life change? How would things change for the kids?

A: When? When the weather changed, what would change?

Q: Uh-huh. When it got warmer.

A: Yeah. Well, we would have to have -- my dad would buy -- well, "the ice man", we used to call "the ice man", would come by the farm and we'd buy the big blocks of ice. My dad had like a cave underneath the house, actually not the house, but the Gallera, and then [hid?] gunny sacks around it, and then he put the big block of ice. It was like a refrigerator, and that's where had our milk and our tea, because we had a lot of iced tea and lemonade -- fresh lemonade, and iced tea, and my mom even used to make Jello - it was really good, you know. It was just covered, and it was -- that was our refrigerator. That was our refrigerator. That was our refrigerator. (slurping noise)

Q: And you would eat the fruit of the Mesquite tree.

A: Oh, we'd love to have...--

Q: -- it was pods...--

A: --...fruits and...--

Q: -- Richard said they looked like string beans and...--

A: -- Yeah, they did...--

Q: -- They were yellow in color.

A: -- Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: And, you'd chew the pods, and suck the sweet juice, and spit out the pulp, is that how it worked?

A: Yeah, yeah, that's the way it works.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But they're so good - mmm! I feel like going and having some. (laughing) And I've been to Arizona in the summer and I haven't been able to go get some.

Q: Uh-huh. Richard described how, on the hill just south of the house, sometimes the boys would get in an -- or everybody would get in an inner tube and roll it down the hill? Going over...--

A: -- Oh yeah, it would get (multiple conversations, inaudible)...--

Q: -- Tell me about that.

A: It was like a tire, really, and we'd get in there and...--

Q: All of you?

A: I never did it because I was afraid, but the boys did, and the cousins, and everybody. They were getting, you know, how the tires -- so they opened it up because there's no inner tube in it, and they would sit in it with their feet, and they would roll, and roll, and roll until they come down to the flat part of the place. They used to have to a lot of fun.

Q: There weren't a lot of store bought toys, you couldn't afford them.

A: Na-uh, nothing.

Q: So, you'd -- would you make toys, or...?--

A: -- But my mom used to -- my mom did do a lot sewing, you know the spools of thread?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: OK. The boys would make cars with the little spools of thread. They would make...--

Q: -- What would they be made out of? (multiple conversations)--

A: -- (multiple conversations) They would make two at the front. Two spools in the front, those were the tires and for in the back, and they would put either pieces of cardboard, or wood if they had enough wood, and then a little string to pull it and that was the car, like a little wagon, or something. --

Q: -- And the spools were made out of wood?

A: Yeah, you know, when finish the thread after you sew it? And we used to make dolls from a stick like this - and then we'd get a piece of material so big, and make a hole in it, put it in there, then tie it around here. That was the lady, and then for the man, we'd just [was] tie something here like that. It was the man. So...--

Q: -- You made dolls out of sticks.

A: -- and then...--

Q: -- Pieces of string, or...--

A: -- Uh-huh. Pieces of string, but my mom always had a lot of...---

Q: -- Yarn.

A: ...pieces of material that she would [??], and then...(multiple conversations, inaudible)

Q: -- She had little dresses.

A: ...for our little doll houses, any cotton, you know, that came from the grocery store, whatever, and then we'd put in there -- they were old cans and their little pieces and we found a plate that was broken or something, we'd put it in, it was like a table, and put pieces of broken dishes, and those were our dishes. And then, you know, the little thing that was our stove, and make it like a stove, and put a little -- just tiny things that we'd make -- "this is the stove with the pot", "this is the table with the table and chairs", and...--

Q: -- Using a lot of imagination.

A: A lot of imagination. And we all did it. Not only us. All our cousins, "Oh, I got a new doll.", "Oh, I got a new doll, too.", "Oh, I got a new dress for my doll.", "Oh, I did, too", because my mom did a lot of sewing, so we always had a lot of material. --

Q: -- Left over.

A: To do doll dresses.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: (Slurping noise)

Q: Richard said that boys made slingshots.

A: They used to make sling shots, too - and try and kill birds
(laughing).

Q: Or hung lizards.

A: Ay, the lizards. They [were] all over the front yard, the
lizards.

Q: Richard and César were pretty close.

A: They were always close.

Q: They were close in age and they were, kind of, inseparable.

A: They were always together - we were all together, really.
(pause) (break in audio) [??] was something -- I don't, you
know? We had never seen nothing like that.

Q: And this is about, how far aw...-- this is near the
homestead?

A: Not too close. I think it must have been at least two
miles, if I can imagine now. Of course, I never knew
nothing in that -- we'd just wha, bup, bup on the hills,
you know, until we get to there and, not too close because
they would tell us, you know, not to get close - the
engineers or whoever they were...--

Q: -- And this was the digging of the...--

A: -- Yep. The All-American Canal.

Q: ...All-American Canal.

A: Uh-huh. And we were all excited, and we never saw it until...--

Q: -- What were you -- what did you see?

A: We'd just see them digging the dirt and making the canal, but we never saw it with water. We left before they did the water on it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But we were all excited, because we [see] a little big machine digging the dirt and us, "look at all the dirt that's coming from there! Look at the big hole, and..." We were all excited about all that, because we never went to town, really.

Q: The summer was also pretty harsh, very hot.

A: Yeah, very hot, but we were in canal all the time. Day and night, morning and evening, and ever we were in the canal - all the time, because it was so hot. We were under a -- we had a big tree...--

Q: So, it wasn't just the boys who spent much of the summer in the canal?

A: No, all of us. Even my dad and my mom, because it was so hot - and then cousins come from one [end], they came wading, you know -- wade on the canal and come and meet us. We never went far, my mother never let us go far, "You[s]

just stay at the front of the canal where I can keep an --
(laughing) keep an eye on you." But our other cousins
would come and, "Hey, let's go." We'd go like, keep a race
like maybe, not even a quarter of a mile and that way,
like, where the Indian people live - and then come back,
because she wouldn't let us go far.

Q: The canal water would carry you?

A: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Q: But it moved pretty slow, though.

A: Oh, yeah, it moved slow. It wasn't nothing very big. If
it was, it was -- they used to call it La corriente, if
they see that that corriente was coming, I don't know what
meant, but they used to call it corriente, it was a
current, and if it was very heavy, like pushing the [??],
they wouldn't let us -- my mom wouldn't let us go in the
canal with the corriente, with the current.

Q: La corriente, or the current, is spelled "L-A", and a new
word, "C-O-R-I-E-N-T-E". So, if it was too fast...--

A: -- They wouldn't let us in...--

Q: -- They wouldn't let you in.

A: Ah, it would take us, and we didn't know really how to swim
very well...--

Q: -- But if it was slow...

A: Yeah, we were always in there and very, very seldom we had the corriente, mainly in the winter when all the rains...--

Q: -- And you weren't swimming, then, anyway.

A: Not too much.

Q: Uh-huh. OK. Richard said that on the side of the canal there were branches of cachanilla...

A: Cachanilla.

Q: Uh, a kind of sage brush.

A: I think so. I never knew, I think it must be sage.

Q: And he said the boys would use it to pull themselves out of the water.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: They were this -- you know, they boys, they were pretty...describe them, I mean, they were pretty skinny, um...--

A: -- [yeah?] not too skinny, and not too big, just -- you know, they never got fat or real skinny, but they were a pretty good size.

Q: And they were, moreno, you know, dark (inaudible)...

A: Oh, yeah, yeah...especially César. He was darker than Richard.

Q: Uh-huh. Jet black hair.

A: Jet black hair. All of us had jet black hair.

Q: Right, and of course, brown eyes, and...

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Indian features. Perhaps from your grandmother and Mamatea.

A: Probably.

Q: She was a full-blooded Tarahumara.

A: Tarahumari - Tarahumara Indian.

Q: In the summer, they got even darker.

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah - we got dark in the summer because it -- we never had, you know, screen thing -- you know, none of that. We never knew none of that stuff. My mom would go, [You just scream and dead?], We were like, (laughing) "You had something to eat, now go to sleep." (laughing)

Q: In the summer time, people often slept outside?

A: All the time.

Q: Where, in the breezeway?

A: In the patio.

Q: In -- where...?

A: In the patio -- my mom had to take all the beds out and we would sleep [in] on the patio. She put all the beds -- and the boys would sleep in the -- in the, pool table -- in the corredor.

Q: In the breezeway.

A: Yeah.

Q: Richard said that sometimes the brothers would lay out old fruit boxes under a piece of cardboard -- put a piece of cardboard on fruit boxes and then sleep on top. Do you remember that?

A: Yeah, sometimes they would do that.

Q: And he said they'd look up at the sky and stars.

A: We'd count the stars and [???] - "I saw one", "No, I saw - that one is blinking.", "Oh, no", we used to...you know --

Q: -- See shooting stars sometimes.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And he said that, they learned to identify some of the constellations.

A: Some of them, I think they did pretty good. I never did too much on stars -- or maybe the moon. And, there were too mu...-- you know we didn't have any, like, entertainment that we'd go here, go...-- we never went to the movies - never went to the movies.

Q: You never saw a movie...--

A: -- never saw...--

Q: -- Until when, you went to California?

A: Until we came to California. The first movie -- we came to California and Manuela, Gonzalo's wife - I went with her nieces to the movies, and it was "King Kong", could you believe it? I thought I was going to die -- I see that big

King Kong coming on the screen -- Oh, my God. I didn't want to say nothing, because you know, I knew they were going to make fun of me because I was from "the hills", you know? I didn't know nothing, but I almost -- I thought I was going to die, I kept going "Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord." Then -- I didn't enjoy it. I didn't enjoy it at all. They were all, "Whoa, look at..." (inaudible) They were used to going to the movies. I'd never been to the movies in my life and I go, (gasp!) "Lord. Oh my God." I thought that King Kong was going to come on top of me and - oh! I was so scared, that I didn't say nothing, I just get -- (groaning!) After we got home, I told the girls, "I was too scared.", "How come?". I never told them I had never been to a movie, because, you know. They were all from the city, so they got a movie every weekend. I never went to the movies. Never until we came to California. I -- I was afraid of the lights -- the red and the green and...I knew what the red and green meant [right?], but, actually being right there and trying to cross the street when the lights went green, and red, and yellow -- oh! My God.

Q: Didn't know what to do.

A: Didn't know what to do. Phones? I never knew how to get a phone until we went to Delano in nineteen forty - whatever, because we never need[ed] to use phones. You know? And

then we went live Delano with Manuela and Gonzalo - she had a phone, and she told my dad, "Call my cousin." She had ordered some furniture -- she says, "Call the furniture store. Tell them I'm going to be over there to pick up the furniture, or to take so they can bring it..." or something. [He] says, "What am I going to do? You know I don't know how to use the phone." She said, "Just dial this number, or tell the operator the number." And, "Oh - I don't know." I was so scared, I said, "Don't you ever tell me to do it." She said, "You better learn! Because you're going to live here, you're going to get a phone." But we never got a phone until -- I didn't get a phone until I got married -- when we came to live in San José.

Q: Now, of course, there was no television then. There as radio.

A: Radio.

Q: And, I understand, you did have a radio later...--

A: -- Later (multiple conversations, inaudible)

Q: --...shortly before you left and it would be powered by a car battery...--

A: -- By a car battery, but...--

Q: --...but that wasn't until later though.

A: Yeah, almost about year or so before we left. Finally, my dad could afford a radio and then we had to buy the car

battery. Oh, we were all in love with that radio. All day and part of the night. My mom got up at 5 in the morning and put -- it was called, the program was called, "Los madrugadores", because you know, the ones that get up early are called, madrugadores? And she had that on all day, and...(pause)

Q: Las - "L-A-S", new...-- Los -- "L-O-S", and then new word, "M-A-D-R..."--

A: "U"

Q: "U", "G-A-D-O-R-E-S", and that was a name of a radio program early in the morning, and it meant what?

A: It meant, the "early to rise", you know? The people get up early in the morning, they raise up early.

Q: What kind of show was it?

A: It was a musical, yeah. It's just nothing, but...--

Q: -- play music.

A: Yeah. Spanish music.

Q: But your mom liked to listen to [it].

A: Oh, yes, it was real pretty. They still play those songs now and then. The ones that she used to listen in those days.

Q: And what other kind of programs did...--

A: -- Oh, my dad used to get the fights all the time. Ohhh! Boxing.

Q: Boxing.

A: He'd get the boxing all the time. When the boxing was on, we couldn't use that radio, but boxing, Joe Louis and [only?], you know in those days, he had to -- and ball games.

Q: Baseball.

A: Oh, baseball, he used to...--

Q: He liked baseball.

A: Yeah, we did, too. We used to listen to baseball.

Q: What kind of -- what teams?

A: I can't remember the teams.

Q: Or, major league teams?

A: Yeah, major league teams.

Q: From some of the big cities.

A: Oh, yeah, from all over, I guess, we used to see, you know, all the big, big...--

Q: -- But again, you didn't even have the radio until shortly before you left.

A: Just shortly before we left, got the radio and it was run by -- well, of course we didn't have any electricity or nothing, so it went with the big -- it was a big car battery, like the ones used in the cars.

Q: Uh-huh. But before the radio, especially, Richard said the main mode of entertainment was storytelling.

A: Yeah. That was it...(multiple conversations, inaudible)--

Q: --and often around the patio.

A: The patio with all the aunts and uncles - and uncles and aunts, yeah.

Q: Richard said that the -- you had kind of a natural form of mosquito repellent using the dried cow "turds" -- tell me about that.

A: Yeah -- the, the -- what's it called? [The one?] that he has here. (laughing)

Q: Cow dung.

A: Yeah, but -- Ay, what's it called. It has a name. (pause) We used to call it pasojo -- in Spanish, but it -- manure!

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Manure. Yeah.

Q: So these were -- the -- you'd go into the pastures where the cows were and...--

A: -- and pick it all up, and just put it...--

Q: -- collect it.--

A: -- put it in big cans, and then put fire in it.

Q: So, it would light and it would smoke, but not light on fire.

A: No, just smoke. Just smoke.

Q: And the mosquitoes didn't like this.

A: No, and they went away, because in the summer you had to do it, because those beetles, you know, especially that far, -
- I mean the canal, and everything else...--

Q: -- Tracking mosquitoes.

A: Yeah, irrigation areas and everything - so, and they were really bad, the mosquitoes - oh my God.

Q: And you had to m...-- you would put the, the cow -- the manure in, usually buckets.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And then, sometimes if the wind shifts it, you'd have to move it around.

A: You'd have to move over -- the shift -- when the shift...--

Q: Was that the kids' job?

A: Yeah.

Q: To watch the...--

A: I did too, but most of us did it. My dad would say, "Come on, move that can." He goes, "The mosquitoes are biting us over here." So it was...--

Q: -- So, when the storytelling was going on, you know, some of the elders would be telling stories or, your mother or your father would make food, or -- what would they serve their guests?

A: Oh. Whatever we had there. We put the big pumpkins in there and the firewood underneath the hole -- the pit, and

my mom would put -- it was overnight for next day. My mom put a big can with beans, and they would cook in there.

Q: Inside the pumpkin?

A: Inside the pot -- no, not the pumpkin, but the pot.

Q: Oh, the pot.

A: The pumpkin and then the corn -- took just a little bit of the husk and we put it in with all the husk, the green? It was the most delicious corn...--

Q: -- (multiple conversations, inaudible) understand. So, the corn you would -- the pumpkins, what would you do with that?

A: Just put them in like that. (multiple conversations, inaudible)

Q: Into the ca...-- into the pots.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Of boiling water, or...--

A: -- No, no. Just like that.

Q: Oh, just in the pots.

A: Just in the...--

Q: --and then they would make the inside of the pumpkin, it would be edi...-- you could eat it.

A: Oh, it come out, and then, by then you'd take the seeds out. You know, we didn't take nothing out. My mom cooked

the beans, and then the meat - if there was any meat, but the corn. Oh, the corn.

Q: You'd put it in with its husks.

A: Well, yeah. (multiple conversations, inaudible)

Q: In the pots?

A: No, just in the fire?

Q: On the fire.

A: Fire - and then cover it with a big pot and then a lot of dirt.

Q: Cover it with what [dirt?]

A: Very covered with a -- my dad had a big metal thing that he would cover the hole, and then put a lot of dirt on it and next morning (finger snap), they would take off, and [it was?] the most delicious food - oh my God.

Q: And this they would serve to the people who would gather [with the family?]

A: Yeah, they would come, yeah they would come.

Q: And also, the -- you know, season there'd be watermelon, or cantaloupe, or...--

A: -- that was in the summer (time?). --

Q: -- (incomprehensible).

A: Watermelon, cantaloupe - and my mother, we had this -- my mother used to bake a lot. She used to bake from scratch. She used to have this little -- these little berries that

are called "squawberries". In Spanish they're called -- we used to call them "cuaveries"...--

Q: -- That's "Q-U-A-V-I-R-I-S" and it's pronounced...--

A: -- It's the "squaw" -- "squaw" "berry".

Q: And what were they like?

A: They were a little berry. Really good.

Q: Like the black berries, or?

A: No, like red.

Q: Red raspberry, or?

A: Like real brown, you know? And she'd make pies. She would make...(multiple conversations, inaudible)--

Q: -- She'd make the crust from scratch, or?

A: No. She'd make turnovers and fill the turnovers with a -- you know, the thing -- the filling. And she would make a beautiful pie - oh, delicious.--

Q: -- What kind of pies? Out of the same berries?

A: Out of the same. Uh-huh.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: She'd make her own yeast bread. She would make her own doughnuts. She would make all kinds of baking. She was such a good baker.

Q: She learned how to bake and cook working for, um...

A: She worked with the -- this -- from Arizona State University, or Arizona the state --

Q: The University of Arizona.

A: The University of Arizona.

Q: In Tucson.

A: She was a maid.

Q: For one of the deans.

A: For one of the deans, or the Pance...-- Chancellor -- one of them - the big one. And, uh...

Q: So she worked in a home.

A: Yeah, she...--

Q: A large house.

A: Yeah, she -- yeah, she was a maid there. And then also she used to wash, iron, and sew for the Coeds. And so, she learned a lot of cooking. They still have that famous sweet stuffing and I make it every year for our Thanksgiving. She -- it's a French recipe, but it's sweet. It has sweet in it. Very delicious.

Q: And you mother learned this when she was...--

A: She learned a lot -- a lot to cook from them. They were, you know, were well-to-do, of course. So much money. And they treat[ed] her very good, she said. They treat her really good. They used to...--

Q: -- Again, the rule was that kids were allowed to go play, but out of earshot. They couldn't disturb the grownups.

A: Not really...--

Q: -- Who were (multiple conversations, inaudible) --

A: --...Unless there was something necessary.

Q: Right. But if they were [in?] to listen to the stories, then...?

A: Well, no. The stories were for us.

Q: Right.

A: This is just when they were talking about, like, pregnancy...--

Q: Right. But other than that...--

A: -- Somebody eloped, and [somebody would], you know stuff like that.

Q: ...[what if?] when they were talking about the Old West or the history, or the history of the family...--

A: -- Yeah - that! We were there. We could listen to all that.

Q: That was pretty interesting stuff.

A: Oh, yeah, it was - it was for us because, you know. What else? We didn't have no TV, we never went to the movies so, telling stories was something big for us, you know that was...--

Q: -- And some people were pretty good storytellers.

A: Mmm - my tío Quintero Alejandro -- he was the best!

Q: Alejandro Quintero.

A: Tío.

Q: Your mom wasn't bad?

A: My mom, too.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My dad had some, too. But my tío Alejandro he was [the one?] that did the best ones. He had -- I don't know where he got some stories - I mean they were good stories. I can't remember any of them, but I remember they were really good.

Q: He would tell the story of a thousand and one nights in Spanish.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Do you remember that?

A: Oh, my Dad used to have one that was called, uh...something about pears. I can't remember! It was a very good one.

(pause) Solteritos y perones y ustedes con

(incomprehensible)...or something like that -- ¿anum? (lip smacking) - I should have remembered before he died, but --

ha -- I thought he was going to live forever (laughing) and

I never asked him. I just remember asking him about the

cuaveries he says, "Es -- Those were called "squawberries""

Over there, I never knew they were squawberries until we

came back, they were talking about the squaw -veries, [he?]

said, "Papa, what was the name of...--what was the cuavery

in English?" He goes, "Oh, they were called

"squawberries", because they're Indian fruit, and they were called "squawberries".

Q: When you were young, you would hear stories about your family in the Old West...--

A: -- In the Old West.

Q: Tell me about what were some of those stories.

A: Well, I remember my dad telling me -- I guess he worked for Wells Fargo, you know, carrying the mail.

Q: Doing what?

A: Uh, carrying the mail.

Q: So he drove a stagecoach.

A: (multiple conversations, inaudible) Uh-huh. He took the mail all over the mines in Arizona and all over, you know, different places. And we used to ask him, "Did you have a gun?" He said, "No - I just had a blackjack." You know, "whip" -- they used to call a "blackjack". [I] said, "Did you ever hit anybody? Did you [slap?] them?" He says, "No."

Q: Who would rob you.

A: Rob you. He said, "No". Nobody ever did. He says, "Once somebody wanted a so..." -- I don't remember [what] he said, but he said, "I took the blackjack - I didn't even have to hit him. They went away." There were some people who...--

Q: -- Doesn't want to [cross him?].

A: Uh-huh. But, they said he never had to really
[listen?]...--

Q: -- He would carry passengers, too? In the stagecoach?

A: Uh, not very many. Just one, maybe, at that time, but he
had to...--

Q: -- Mostly, it was how the mail got delivered.

A: Mail. A lot of money.

Q: Or payroll.

A: A lot of money, yeah. A lot of payroll and a lot of...--

Q: -- For the miners and...--

A: -- Uh-huh, and then, um, merchandise that he would deliver
to different stores. So, he did a lot. So, I have
[outside there?], when he was -- when he turned 80, we made
a cake for him with the Wells Fargo truck. I get it, I...-
-

Q: -- Stagecoach.

A: The stagecoach. It was fun, and then...--

Q: -- I mean, you guys had heard that this is kind of like,
out of the Old West, so...--

A: -- Uh-huh. --

Q: --...you thought that was a big deal...--

A: -- Oh, yeah...--

Q: -- He drove a stagecoach...--

A: We did (inaudible), and then -- then he became, of course, Mr. Olson, at the store, when we had the store over there. So, then he worked for the railroad, and it was, uh -- we were all excited, [he?] said, "and how..."--

Q: -- Where did he work? What did he do -- your dad do for the railroad?

A: Uh, I don't know exactly what he worked on the railroad, but it was something to do with...--

Q: -- Here at the Gila River Valley, or...? --

A: -- Ah, no, I think it was in Gila Bend, or some of those places...--

Q: -- Right. Well, the family spent time there.

A: Yeah.

Q: What about your grandfather? He had a business...--

A: -- A woodcutter. He had the business of wood. He had a lot of old people working with him - the woodcutters, and he would deliver the wood to the different mines and towns.--

Q: -- How would he deliver the wood?

A: They had their own trucks -- uh, not trucks, they were...--

Q: -- Wagons.

A: ...carretelas, wagons. Yeah. Carretelas - what they were called. (inaudible)

Q: That's "C-A-R-R-E-T-E-L-A-S", and that meant...

A: Wagon. The wagons like the -- you know, the wagons that they used to [do?], but...--

Q: -- They were pretty big wagons...--

A: -- Very big wagons according to my dad, and then...--

Q: -- And how were -- big were...--

A: -- A team of horses.

Q: Horses or mules?

A: Both. Horses and mules. Them both, and they would carry them.

Q: And they would cut them in the hills, or...

A: In the forest, I guess, (multiple conversations, inaudible)...--

Q: -- When they would drive them.

A: Yeah. A lot of them were mesquite, mesquite woods...--

Q: Mesquite woods. And he would sell the wood to...--

A: -- Oh yeah. To all the grow...-- to the stores, or to the people that owned a little work there at the mines...--

Q: -- Or railroad.

A: Or the railroad. He had a good business, my dad says.

Q: And this was about when, would you think?

A: Oh, I don't know what year.

Q: Before they settled in...--

A: Oh, yeah, before they settled in Yuma, yeah.

Q: So this is the 1880s or '90s?

A: (pause) No. Because they came across the border [in] 1888. And they lived in El Paso for a while and then they lived in New Mexico, and then they liv...-- just for a little while, and then they moved to Gila Bend, and then to all those mining camps. I don't know, maybe that -- '09, '03, '09 - something like that.

Q: Early 1900s.

A: I think so.

Q: So it was after they -- that your dad, your grandfather homesteaded the land, because, you know, we believe that was probably around 1900, because they -- when they first came to Yuma to visit Andrés Arias...--

A: (inaudible noise) They, uh...(lip smacking)...I guess, I could not know for sure. I know he became a [an] American citizen in 19...- what did my dad said? - I don't know, but he became an American citizen right away, and he made all the family. We were all -- they were under him, so they want to marry, so they all became American citizens.

Q: Why?

A: Because he wanted to make the family, so they became, OK? So they were all made -- they were voting and everything. And in 1940, I think it was -- no. '39? When did that Carran, Carran Act...?

Q: Uh, late '40s, yeah.

A: Carran Act -- Carran Act.

Q: Walter McCarran Act --

A: McCarran Act?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They told him he was not a citizen, because he was over 21.
And he had to become on his own.

Q: He had to be naturalized.

A: He had to become his own American citizen because he was
already over 21 when...--

Q: That was your dad...--

A: Papá Chayo did all the...-- everybody, not only my dad.
Except my tío Felipe was born in El Paso. So they all had
to become individual American citizens.

Q: All over again.

A: All over. Because they were all over 21.

Q: So, they had to - study, and take the test, and...--

A: -- Yeah, and all that.

Q: Your dad did that, though.

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So...

Q: (coughing)

A: ...you know, it was just, um (slapping noise) --
unbelievable because he used to vote and everything, and

then [when?] did they come and tell him, "You can't do that no more. You're not an American citizen."

Q: Well not only that, but your dad was active in local politics.

A: Oh, yeah. He was real active. My dad was real active.

Q: In what way?

A: He -- In every way that he could. He'd -- He'd run campaigns -- not run, but he'd have campaigns in Yuma, like for the Sheriff's Department and the...--

Q: So when a politician wanted the vote of the people in the North Gila River Valley, they would go to your father.

A: Uh-huh. And some of the cousins were active, too.

Q: And he would, what, have little events, gatherings...?

A: Or, or just maybe -- just go to the house and tell them and "get 'gethers", because I -- I used to go vote with him because I wa...-- I was all active and wanted to see what was going on. I've always been that way...(inaudible)--

Q: -- There was a polling place there on (inaudible)...?

A: Uh-huh. In the school.

Q: At the school.

A: At our school, yeah. Yeah, there was a polling place for all the valley.

Q: But because the store wh...- and the -- later the pool hall were kind of a hub of that community, it was natural that people would come to your dad, too.

A: Yeah. Yeah, they would come to ask him questions and stuff (inaudible) -- because some of them didn't -- you know, all of my cousins, they went to school and didn't learn anything, like I tell you. They were, "Do this for me", and "Do my homework" (pause) (inaudible) "Do my homework.", because they didn't -- I said, "Well, you got to learn. You've got to do it yourself", "I don't know how. Do I -- I don't understand this." --

Q: -- But you (multiple conversations, inaudible)

A: -- older than me. --

Q: Your Dad was -- I mean, he spoke English.

A: And he wrote...--

Q: -- And he read and wrote.

A: Yeah.

Q: He was literate in both English and Spanish.

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, he was. Uh-huh. My mom didn't know English, or Spanish either, too much. She would understand...--

Q: -- (inaudible), but she...--

A: She would understand a lot of English, you know.

Q: Richard said that she -- that once he discovered her talking in English to someone -- to a visitor, when you all didn't know the kids were around.

A: Yeah. If she had to, she would. But other than that, she wouldn't and she understood everything.

Q: Your dad knew -- he would meet the governor and...-- when they would come and campaign and...-- you know, he was pretty well known...--

A: -- Yeah, he was very...-- all the Chávez were know there. Especially from my grandpa and my grandma. See, when César and I were going to do our first communion, our first holy communion, we couldn't go to town to get the classes, you know, how pe...-- how they go now. So...

Q: Catechism.

A: Catechism. So my mom...-- my grandma taught us, Mamatea. She taught us everything - all the prayers and e...-- because she was raised with -- with priests. She was with a company with priests...-- not company, it was a priest home...anyway, my mom took us to town and talked to the priest and he says, "well they haven't come to classes", she says, "no, but you know Mamatea?" Everybody used to call her "Mamatea". [She] says, "Mamatea taught her everything." "Oh, OK! So, that's good. They can come." That's the way -- that's the way we, César and I, did our

communion because we never went -- who was going to take us every week, you know? They couldn't take us every week. But we were getting old, I was 8 and César was 6, so - we had to do the communion. But you can see those pictures, there I feel like somebody hit me in my head (laughing). I was scared, and um...-- no, Richard, and [Geek?], and them, no, we were already giving [enough?] smart, so they were going to Catholic school, so they had no problem. But César and I, we were taught by my Grandma. She taught a lot of us, not only Richard -- I mean, César and me, she -- a lot of the grandkids and they all went to Yuma and they - - that stuck with them because they knew that she knew every...-- she knew how to speak Latin, and read it. My grandma. Because she -- I tell you, she was raised with priests, in a priest home. They were not nuns -- it was in a company, it was a priest home. So she learned Latin, she knew how to read, and how to speak Latin, and everything.

Q: And she also was literate in both English and Spanish, and...

A: No, she didn't know [English].

Q: Just [spoke?] Spanish.

A: Just Spanish.

Q: So life on the farm was pretty good for a kid.

A: Oh, yeah. It was fun for us. It was hard, too, but you know. But it was fun at the same time, I think. I felt, I -- it was kind of fun because we could run and do all over want to do and -- again, go hay rides with the rest of the cousins with the mules. I used to get hold of the mules -- I was -- I'm afraid of horses now. I don't go by the horses, and in those days, every...--everybody did horses. We all knew, as young as we were, we knew how to handle horses.

Q: So you would hook up the mules to a wagon?

A: I didn't hook them up, because I didn't know that much...--

Q: Right.

A: --, but I would, I would carry them [???], we would go someplace...--

Q: -- and you'd drive the...--

A: Yeah, César of course...(multiple conversations, inaudible)--

Q: -- and there were hay on the back, and all the kids would jump on...--

A: Uh-huh. We would jump and we would, chrikt!...--

Q: -- drive around where?

A: ...drive around...the farm. The same farm, you know. And some of our cousins would come over and have a hay ride, and it was fun for us. It was, you know. A lot of fun.

Q: A lot of exploring, and...

A: A lot of fun, and it...--

Q: -- for the boys, it even made more.

A: Oh! It was more for the boys because they more -- they would go and do more than we did -- us girls, we didn't do too much. My mother wouldn't let us, she kept us in the kitchen (laughing), but it was, um -- it was kind of fun, because we were free, in a way. We didn't have to worry about anybody doing anything to us, you know, like in town, well you can't cross the street, or it's too late to...--

Q: -- Don't have to worry about traffic, or street lights.

A: Oh, traffic or street lights. I tell you, I was afraid of the street light. I had my li...-- little, my little great-granddaughter, we went to a -- a baptism Saturday, Lita (inaudible), Lita's granddaughter, and she was saying, "Nana - Great Nana, the red - you can go." Because we were coming to a stop light. "Ah, no. The red you have to stop." Saying, "The green, you can go." "And what about the yellow?" "You have to be careful." She's only 2 and a half, and she knows, the red, the green and the yellow.

Q: You didn't know that until you were how old?

A: I didn't -- I knew that red, you know, but I had never seen a light, really, like -- you know, when you don't see nothing, you just hear or read about it? It's not the same

like when you -- I was 13, I saw the first light to cross here in San José (inaudible) - Oh! I thought I was going to -- I said, "Oh, my God. What -- where do I go?" and, you know? It was terrible. We went like, because my mother never let us go experience, or go the town, or nothing. We were just in the farm all the time.

Q: But still, for a kid, it was...--

A: -- No, it was, yeah...--

Q: --...it was a great life.

A: To me, I think it was a great life, because we had a lot.

Q: You didn't want for -- no one was hungry. You had plenty of fresh...

A: Especially in the summer, oh -- we used to love to go over the -- we used to call it the milpa when my dad had all those -- the watermelons and then...yep! --

Q: "M-I-L-P-A", milpa?

A: Just like Milpitas, but milpa? And we'd cut the...--

Q: -- and that means what?

A: When you grow -- everything toge...-- like a little garden, your little garden is called a milpa, because you have a lot of little things on it. It's a milpa, they used to call them that in those days anyway. And we'd go and cut the watermelon, and head to [school?], and then we'd eat it, and we left the rest there. We, you know -- it was

just, fun - it was right there for us to eat, whatever we wanted eat. We didn't have to -- you buy watermelon now you got to be careful because if you cut you don't throw too much away. (laughing) So, it's -- it's a...--

Q: Because they were so plentiful.

A: Yeah. A lot of -- (inaudible) plentiful -- we didn't, uh - - for that part, we didn't suffer. We suffered because we didn't have, um, you know, electricity. We did our, our lights like this, you know?

Q: You had a -- kerosene lamps.

A: Kerosene lamps, and I hated them. I still do. A lot of people, "Ooh! Decorations." And no, no -- don't talk to me no decorations. I said, "I want (inaudible) with those." Every night I had to - because they -- they would get black, you know, with the wick...

Q: You had to clean them?

A: Every night I had to clean them, you know, we could study. We could do our homework. You know, that's only light we had.

Q: And the light wasn't always that good.

A: No, it wasn't always that good, so it was kind of -- we struggle to do the homework, but we did it, you know? And then also, another thing that I -- I was so tired of it, it

was -- the ironing. We had a lot of irons, you know...(inaudible) --

Q: -- Now how do you iron? Because you didn't -- they weren't electrical.

A: No, we had a lot of irons. They're irons - you still them sometimes in - way in the antique stores, and then there was a handle, and you'd squeeze the handle and grab the iron, and you'd put it on the stove to get real hot - and you'd bring it, when you're ironing. Ooh! I hated that, and I had to (inaudible) iron everything - I still don't like to iron. (lip smacking) And, um, that was iron. Well, there were a few vendors would go to the farm -- a lot of vendors would go sell different things, so we never bought anything, but this vendor came in one day -- it was just about three years before we left the farm, and he had an iron with briquettes inside.

Q: With what in...?

A: Briquettes, you know? Briquettes?

Q: Bri-quetts. Uh-huh.

A: Bri-quetts. And he showed us, so he says, "You pay a dollar or month, or a dollar a week and you can buy it." I told my mom, "Buy it!" Because once those were lit -- that's it, you'd just kept ironing, and ironing, and ironing...

Q: Until it burned out.

A: It burned out, and then it was going out, you put another one in. I said, "You better buy it." I buy it because I'm not...-- I'm sick of ironing. I had to do a lot of ironing...--

Q: -- because it meant that you had to keep going back and changing the -- the stone. --

A: -- the iron. And this one, you only -- you see, because it had like a little window, and then you'd see that the briquettes were getting low, you'd put another one in there and, you never -- you know, we just kept ironing all day, we didn't have to worry about it. So, that was like, oh my God! That was heaven that came in for me, because I was the one who had to do all the ironing, because my mom had to help my dad on the farm a lot, so I had to do all the cooking, the washing, the ironing - everything! So I...--

Q: -- So, you -- you didn't get out as much as the boys.

A: No, I did...-- couldn't. I had -- I was busy in the kitchen (laughing) --

Q: -- And since you were the only girl who was older, well, Vicky was pretty young and...--

A: -- Yeah. Vicky was just a little kid. She didn't -- she didn't go through what I did for her. I tell her, "I did a lot of work" because I know, I know. She laughs.

Q: (coughing)

A: I says, "You came late." I said, "You were already..." She never worked in the fields either, not that much.

Q: And you said something about birthdays.

A: Oh, the birthdays, my mom would get -- you know those big, uh, clay pots? Big oyas? And she'd fill them in with candy or...--

Q: Oya is spelled...(pause)

A: "O", yeah. "O-Y-A".

Q: "O-Y-A", it means a big pot.

A: Yeah, a big pot. And, um, there was, you know -- [you heard a boy get in?], and then the candy came down and one year, for Lenny's birthday...--

Q: Oh, like a, uh...--

A: Piñata.

Q: Piñata. P-I-N...

A: It was a piñata, really, but it a -- it was made of a -- sometimes we'd decorate it if we had anything, you know, to...--

Q: -- What did you make it out of? A clay -- old clay pot?

A: Yeah. And, uh, and one year for Lenny's birthday -- our last birthday we spent in Arizona, in the farm, it was Lenny's birthday...-

Q: And you'd hang it from a tree limb?

A: Uh-huh, and then you'd start pulling it.

Q: And someone had a stick - blindfolded?

A: Yeah. Uh-huh. So, instead she took two doves, white doves, real pretty - and everybody was waiting for candy and the doves flew out. Real pretty.-- (inaudible)

Q: -- Were you disappointed?

A: I knew, I knew, because I had helped her - but the kids, yeah. But she had candy on the side to give the kids, but it was really a surprise, she wanted to do that, and there was -- that was Lenny's birthday.

Q: How old was he?

A: He turned 4. He was to turn 4 that day. [In that heyday(inaudible)?] It was really -- it was really nice, and she had candy and (inaudible) and all -- she would whatever different things to make it, uh,...--

Q: Festive.

A: Festive, and so we could enjoy it, and the cousins that came over and friends that came over. So, it was nice, it was very...--

Q: -- What were other special occasions?

A: Christmas.

Q: What was that like?

A: (inaudible) Christmas was always tamales. Always tamales. We always had to have tamales. And New Year's we had

menudo. And for Easter, we -- we colored eggs and we had a lot of fun [on] Easter. We...--

Q: -- You'd do a...--

A: -- We'd go out in the meadow and hid all the eggs for little ones, and then...--

Q: -- An Easter egg...--

A: Yeah, Easter egg hunt.

Q: ...hunt.

A: That was a really -- it was a lot of fun. Easter egg hunt, because you know. I didn't do Easter egg hunt too much, because when I was older, I would help my mom [knew where the Easter hunt?] But all the cousins, and the little ones, Vicky and Lenny, and even Richard. They'd do the -- the hunt. It was fun.

Q: You and César would help hide the eggs?

A: Uh-huh. César and I would hi...-- hide eggs. Sometimes Richard...Ri...Ri...-- I mean, César, but he started getting older so he said, "That's for little kids." I needed to help my mom, so I did. [We did, really?] And we had, you know, our dinner, our Easter dinner. Usually we had chicken, because we had so many chickens (laughing). Usually we had chicken. Now and then, um, we'd have a roast or something like that.

Q: But not red meat, much.

A: Not that lot of red meat. We never ate a lot of red meat.
[Inaudible] mainly because we didn't have the money to buy
it. And then...

Q: But you didn't have cows -- cows for slaughter, it was
just...--

A: No. No. My grandpa did that. My dad said that my grandpa
would kill a cow and make all the, you know, like he did
the corn and everything else, and then make a big fiesta,
and a lot drinking. He used to drink a lot, my grandpa.

Q: Césarío.

A: But, Papa Chayo, yeah, but this -- none of his sons drank.
None of my uncles (inaudible)...--

Q: -- Including your dad.

A: None of them drank. Or smoked. I think only my tío Loreno
smoked, but...--

Q: -- They all had a big mustache?

A: Except my tío Aureliano, my tío Julio had mustache. My dad
and my tío Felipe they never did.

Q: They were clean shaven.

A: Yeah, but then, too, they wore the big mustache like Papa
Chayo, you know. The picture? His big mustache.

Q: Rita, how old were you when you left?

A: Uh, 13.

Q: And that was in what year?

A: 1938.

Q: When you left to California.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And César was...

A: 11.

Q: And Richard...

A: 9, and Vicky was 6, and Lenny was 4.

Q: But you and -- especially you, and César, and Richard had spent enough time in Arizona, at the homestead. Wh -- What do you think -- how did you think that affected you?

Especiallly when you became migrants in California?

A: It was -- it was very strange, it was very sad, really. Because when you come to work, there was da...-- different people, you know, like the -- when you [we] used to work with the -- the, um, contractors? That...--

Q: -- Farm labor contractors.

A: ...the farm labor contractors. It was sad because the first thing we experienced was that we were working at a [an] apricot farm here in San José, and he goes, uh, "I'm going to take so much money out of it - box that you cut - and at the end of the season, you can get it back. And if you leave - you don't get don't nothing." So you have [had] to stay until the last apricot, and we had to do that. There was nothing in the field - one apricot here,

one apricot there. We wasted all those days. He said, "Until everything's clear, we can't get your money." So, then...--

Q: -- So you were taken advantage of a lot.

A: Taken advantage, and we were "green", like they say, we didn't know too much, but César - he always paid attention to everything, he always knew what was going on, you know, and [if?] he didn't like, of course. Because, like you say, we were free in the farm, we didn't work for nobody, for my Dad only.

Q: In Arizona.

A: In Arizona, in the farm - (lip smacking) and you come here and work for strangers and they tell you what to do, and...--

Q: -- they cheat you.

A: Yeah, they take, you know advantage of you because you [look?] young, and you don't know nothing exactly - and so, it was - it was hard.

Q: But also, the living conditions...--

A: -- Yeah, the living conditions, you know, were, very, very bad, too, because we lived in the -- out in the farm without -- sometimes in tents and then, there's not even a tent, or under a tree. We lived a lot of times under a tree, with just cardboard or whatever you could get...--

Q: -- Sometimes there wasn't enough food?

A: No. And sometimes, we'd work on a -- like a piece, of side of a corral with the cows here, and the horses, and we would be on the side - and, you know, we lived in a lot of, lot of different places there, you know. We had to, because we were migrant workers and that the only -- the only way of leaving at that time.

Q: It was very different than the life you had known in Arizona.

A: A lot, a lot different. A lot different.

Q: And what do you think, then, having been spent the first thirteen years of your life on the homestead, and César 11 -- what do you think -- how do you think that affected, and how do you think it influenced them?

A: [Ah?] I think because of, like I say, we were over there free, we were just doing whatever -- we did work hard and everything, but it was just, on our own. We didn't -- you know. You did, of course, what you had to do, your mom and dad would tell you what to do, but it was different than coming to work with strangers and in strange place, really. California was like a strange country, in a way, for us.

Q: It was very different kind of agriculture.

A: Yeah, very different.

Q: Huge farms.

A: Very big farms.

Q: You'd never seen that before.

A: Uh-Uh. Not that big. You know, our farm was big, but I mean -- it was just. Some with lettuce, some with cotton, some -- you know, different things, but you come here and get into this huge -- and then you got to run around working...--

Q: -- were acres and acres of the same crop.

A: Acres, and acres, and -- it was a lot of difference, [really?]

Q: So, do you think that the years that you spent in Arizona made it so that you didn't accept the life you had to live in California?

A: I think so, yes.

Q: And you think César felt that way?

A: I believe so. Especially him, because he was more like -- up, gather -- out to go, and learn, and do more. I was more timid, he wasn't -- he was all, go for it, you know. To us it was different.

Q: California was different.

A: California was different, all the way, you know, it wasn't like our little farm (laughing), we were there - it was our own little land in a way.

Q: In the val-- in the North Gila River Valley.

A: In the valley.

Q: Uh-huh, and it was very different in California.

A: Very, very different.

Q: So, you think that, maybe that's why he never accepted the kind of treatment...--

A: -- I'm sure that was it. I'm sure, because even though when we still were here for a few years, he would say, "Somebody's got to do about the farm workers here" [I want?] "Somebody's got to do something about it. This is no life." Oh! He used to get so mad whenever they -- you know, they take away -- they cheat us, they take away money, or tak[ing] away -- like, we had so many boxes and comes in, "No you only get so many." And we knew we had...-
-

Q: -- More. --

A: --... like they say we had 100 and they say, "You only have 90-something, or 80, or something". We knew that that wasn't [right?]

Q: They were cheating you.

A: They were, uh-huh. They were, and - ah! - they were counting, and that's it -- they were just, there was no other way you could say, "Well, then, you know - prove it!" Because they had already done everything they wanted to do, and that would really -- I'm pretty sure that really more

like, as years went by, I think César kept thinking and thinking -- he went to the Navy, and he kept thinking more about it, [it's like?] I used to write a letter everyday, and I used to tell him, "This is what happened today, this is what we did, this is how much we made," I used to tell him everything what happened that day - everyday. And he...(telephone ringing)

Q: (telephone ringing, inaudible) Including, including the (mystery)?

A: [Yes, eight years of mine?]

Q: You had a sister, Elena.

A: Elena. Uh-huh.

Q: H-E-L-E-N-A.

A: Actually, she -- my mom just wrote, " E-L-E-N..."--

Q: -- "E-L-E-N-A"

A: No, no "H", yeah.

Q: And what -- she was born when?

A: 1931. But [she had?] in September of 1931.

Q: And she lived to be about a year?

A: A year. She died October of 1932.

Q: Your mother was a -- had a reputation as a faith healer, as a healer. You know, used folk remedies, herbs. Talk to be about that for a moment.

A: People believe that I'm my mom, because she had a lot of remedies that really came you know? They really cure whatever she was doing, so everybody used to come and take her, el ojo, you know? The "evil eye" -- you never heard of -- heard about el ojo.

Q: "O-J-O"

A: Uh-huh. And then about, um, when they have a lot of gas, the kids -- babies, most are born with gas, she used take care of the belly button and put a little, uh, raisin with olive oil, and go in there and tie it up, and they'd help, you know, the kids' gas, and they believe[d] in her, so they would come -- come and [??] pujón, they used to call her pujón. The kid was pujón.

Q: Spell that...(break in audio)

A: (inaudible)

Q: They would say that a baby had está pujón - "E-S-T-A" and a new word, "P-U-G-O-N" - isn't that "colic"?

A: Colic, yeah.

Q: And so they would bring the child to your mother.

A: Uh-huh, and then she would give them chamomile.

Q: Chamomile tea.

A: Chamomile tea, and they'd get well, you know, so they believed in it. And then she did, you know, the soft spot [and the pulse on the kid?]...

Q: -- the baby?

A: She did that too, on the babies. And so...--

Q: -- What did she do on the soft spot?

A: She would put -- it was preferred the baby -- the mother's milk, on the soft spot, and then, she'd get some (pause) from the pallet, go up and do that and she'd put it up, and then put - cumin, I think it was -- I forgot. I used to do it to -- for Vicky's kids. I think it's cumin with olive oil, and ptuk - pick it up like that. Anyway, the soft spot.

Q: She -- didn't César have a nickname?

A: César is Manzi, because of the Manzanillas...--

Q: "M-A-N-Z-I"

A: Manzi.

Q: And that came from Manzanilla.

A: The Manzanilla -- she used to call him The Manzanilla because he was a colored baby, and [teething?], oh! He was still colored, my mom used to [really?] so bad, used to call him Manzi, because he was always drinking Manzanilla - that was the (inaudible).

Q: And she would prescribe that as a remedy for whatever ailed him.

A: Well, not only for gas or, or -- babies had diarrhea, or things like this, you know? So, ay, she -- this was her favorite.

Q: [In that particular case?] that was César's nickname as a small boy?

A: Uh-huh. Manzanilla - Manzi.

Q: (coughing)

A: And they still call him Manzi in Arizona, they all really [??], too.

Q: So when your little sister, Elena, became sick, became ill, with what?

A: She had a fever. Ah, they don't really -- they don't -- my mom said they used to call it the, uh...-- the doctor told her she had uh - what was it called, a fever? - a strange fever, I never heard and I never heard any more about it. (pause) I can't remember the name of the fever, so -- she just didn't get well, they couldn't cure it, it was a new fever coming, and she got it, and she passed away, she didn't -- they couldn't do anything about it, they used to give all kinds of remedies for other fevers, but that one - oh, what was it called, Oh, God.

Q: Yellow fever, or...

A: No. (pause)

Q: Scarlet fever.

A: No. It wasn't -- César had that - Scarlet Fever. No, it was another fever and I can't remember the name of it. Oh, God -- I used to -- it was in my mind. To me, I think it was like the [Deli?] fever? Something like that, but I can't remember it any...-- they used to call it another name, so the doctors told her that, you know, it was a fever that came in like a new, a new, um, disease or air -- what they call it? I can't even -- she was so young. She just couldn't take it. She died at a year and, a week.

Q: She died during a storm, there was a big storm.

A: Very bad storm. That's another thing I'll never forget...-

-

Q: -- Tell me what was that like.

A: -- Really bad storm. It flooded. It flooded the whole area, the whole valley. Our canal? It broke. It just - the levy went wild.

Q: Flooded some of the fields?

A: Oh, a lot of fields. My Dad lost all of the farming things. All my mom's chickens were rolling in the flood, and it was really, really bad. It didn't stop raining. When she died, nobody could go bury her except my dad her Nino, you know, her gods...father --

Q: -- godfather. Who was who?

A: His name was Fidencio Morales. He was family. He was a friend, and they took her to the cemetery raining, and mule, and in a little sled made out of wood. That's it, nobody could go. No cars could get in [no more?], they had trouble getting the, the mule to the cemetery because it was a little ways. You know where [the] farm is and then where the cemetery?

Q: It's about a half a mile.

A: And then the floods, you know? Running and running. My dad said they almost lost the coffin, because it was so bad, but they had to bury her because, you know it was -- she didn't go to the...(lip smacking)

Q: Mortuary.

A: Mortuary because it was -- you couldn't. It was just too -- that flood was very bad, no, you couldn't do nothing. So, she had to be buried.

Q: And what did the kids feel -- think -- know about that, I mean -- they couldn't -- no one could go, out...--

A: -- Not even grownups could go - and my mom had just been bitten by rattlesnake, and she was expecting Vicky...--

Q: She was already pregnant when (inaudible)...

A: This big with Vicky, her foot was about -- I'll never forget, about that big...--

Q: -- Big, swollen a lot.

A: Yeah, and then to bring the doctor was -- she had gotten bit by a rattlesnake about a week before my sister died, I think. It was before she died. They brought the doctor, it wasn't raining. So, before they brought the doctor, my aunt Josefa, my other dead sister, she put all her foot in kerosene oil. They say kerosene oil is good for poison, and then she gave her a...-- I remember all that very well, because we were there, you know, trying to help. Me being the oldest, and they gave her a glass of milk. (slap!)

Q: To drink.

A: To drink, because they say...--

Q: -- Your mom.

A: ...milk takes care of the poison. So, when the doctor came, she said that he -- it was -- if they hadn't done that, she wouldn't have probably made it. Plus she was pregnant. So, she's -- that helped her, because she was pregnant. That's what the doctor said.

Q: What did the doctor do now?

A: Oh, [she] gave her more, uh, other little, you know, medicine to contract the poison, but it was really sad, then my mom couldn't even, you know, couldn't even go -- and then the rosary...--

Q: -- to the funeral.--

A: Yeah, and the rosary. She was sitting there with her foot, you know...

Q: You held the rosary inside the house.

A: Yeah, and then her being pregnant, and then her big foot, and the baby dead - oh, it was sad. I used to cry...-

Q: -- It was a hard time.

A: ...so much, very hard. I cried a lot, because I wanted a sister. I says, "Oh - my sister died. I don't have no more sisters." Two months later, Vicky came - about three months, because she was -- she died in October, Vicky was born in December.

Q: So your mom was about six months pregnant.

A: Actually, like, yeah. Eh, six or seven. She died in October - November, December - yeah. Six months, no?

Q: César would say later on that he didn't know why no one went to the funeral. He didn't understand.

A: No, he didn't understand, I guess, but I did. Because we -
- I saw the mule, when my dad brought the mule and they took -- and he couldn't bring the mule to the house. They had to take the little coffin through the bridge -- that bridge that was [?] and on the other side so it could get the mule to go over there to the -- to the cemetery. Because nothing could cross over here, unless you went all the way to Arias. Arias had something for cars.

Q: [Inaudible] bridge.

A: Yeah. And wide. But the boys -- you know, they had more older boys, my dad couldn't do much of that, but that was a very, very sad time, too. In my life, because, you know, being that my mom was so sick, she was expecting Vicky, and my sister had died, and that storm that really - that flood, it was a real -- I think it was a hurricane, but in those days I didn't know, but now that I think back, it must have been a hurricane. They used to say it was a culebra. That's what the Spanish people say. (break in audio)

Q: So in...-- that's La "L-A", a new word, "C-U-L-E-B-R-A", and it means...

A: Snake.

Q: And that was because the storm looked how -- looked what?

A: The -- all the clouds look as snake [for all?] and, like, we used to call it -- the Spanish people, you know, people from years ago they said it was a culebra, but now that I look back, I'm pretty sure that it was a hurricane, because it was really bad. We were up, up in the -- in the hill, and we in the up, up in [bed?] and we looked down, and we could see the chickens rolling and all this [with my bed thing?]

Q: So, you got out of the storm's way by going up on hill?

A: No, in the house.

Q: Oh, the house.

A: Yeah, house.

Q: Oh, all right. Uh-huh.

A: Way up on the top of the bed, because, you know, the floods where water was running all over the patio, running in the house and the canal - forget it. The canal broke completely. The levies? They broke.

Q: Uh-huh. (pause) OK. Um, so when Vicky was born -- how did -- did that change thing?

A: Oh, my God, I was so happy - [a scrawny thing?] - I have a sister! I have a sister! Because I -- we lived [???] and I didn't have no sister. "Now my sister died, and I only have two brothers," I would say that. And, I was just 7, you know? I was just little, and then I get Vicky - she was doll. Oh, I used to love my doll, I used to get her and, you know and, she had really pretty curly hair, you know -- dark, dark, so she was my Shirley Temple, and Shirley Temple was in those days a big star, you know. And so she -- Vicky was my Shirley Temple. (slapping noise).

Q: (pause) Now, Lenny was born in 1934?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: What was that like?

A: Oh, well, we were excited because we had another little baby, but I wanted another sister (laughing), but we got another brother, but the boys were happy because they got another brother.

Q: Did you tell the stork story? The story about the stork coming?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: What was that?

A: You know, there was this [???] that the kids were born. The stork. You know, when I had my first kid, it did -- there was no stork! (laughing) No stork! Anyway, they used to us, "Oh, the stork -- the stork's coming, you'd better go to your tía Carmen - Quinteros'. You go over there until the stork brings the baby and then we'll bring you back.

Q: This is Richard and César.

A: And me, they sent us all over.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: To my tía Carmen. So we went, and Vicky -- we took Vicky. So, my Dad was there, and then the doctor, and then another lady was helping my mom and so forth, so after Lenny was born, they brought us back to the house and came to see the new baby - says, "How come we didn't see the stork?", said, "No, the stork flies all over [it goes places?] It drops

the baby and leave." For a long, long time, we thought the stork really bring the babies. (pause) There was, they used to have us believing in a lot of -- not telling us the truth, you know, they didn't -- in those days, they didn't want to say nothing, you know, like sex, or pregnancy, or nothing, nothing. It was just "shhhh!". So we didn't know anything.

Q: There was a big drought in 1933.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: What do you remember about it?

A: Oh, I remember -- it was sad because we didn't have any water -- we didn't -- I don't remember where we got water from [except to this day?]

Q: Did the canal dry up?

A: Completely. You could see the cracks, like, you know, "checkered-criss", like this -- and dried -- completely.

Q: Crops failed.

A: Forget it. Crops, and it was like the end of spring or the beginning of summer when you really needed water. It was really bad.

Q: Trees wilted.

A: Uh-huh. Everything.

Q: And, how...--

A: -- There was no water for the animals either, you know, for the cows the horses...--

Q: -- How did you get water?--

A: -- I don't remember that, you know?

Q: Mayb...They had to bring it in some...-

A: I know he did the pump, in those days. He did the pump. It was a lot of pumping, because they get a lot of water for the horses, and the cow, and for us. I remember we got water from another place, I'm not too sure. I don't remember that much.

Q: Did that set back your dad's efforts to make money to try to pay the taxes?

A: Oh, yes, because, you know, he -- all the crops went dry...they, they -- you could see all the crops, like, scorched - they were so dry, with the sun. And then it was the beginning of summer, and by that time, Arizona's burning, you know. They would go trap gophers.

Q: Who?

A: César and Richard, and they would get a nickel for each tail, because they cut the tail and just show the tail.

Q: From -- who would pay the money?

A: I don't remember...--

Q: The irrigation district?

A: Probably, yes.

Q: And why was that necessary? Because the gophers...--

A: -- Because the goats [sic] were doing a lot of damage to all the...--

Q: -- to the canal walls?

A: To the canal, and to the -- and to the growers, too. My dad and everybody else. It was a -- an influence of gophers at that year. A lot of them! So they used to do that, they'd trap them and then they'd cut the tail, and that's all they'd turn in -- the tail and they got a nickel for each tail.

Q: So they made pretty good money for a while.

A: They did for a while, uh-huh.

Q: What do you remember about your dad trying to deal with paying the taxes?

A: (Sigh!) All I remember is that he was worried about it. I think he...--

Q: -- [inaudible] had papers that he would...-

A: -- Yeah, I would see him, but I -- it must have been the bill -- the bill from...--

Q: -- tax.

A: ...the state, uh-huh. From the state. Those tax bill and just seeing him, "I can't do it, I can't do it." And I think at that time he knew he was going to lose the farm. I think, because the taxes were getting higher, and higher,

and they used to him -- I think. I don't remember that well, but I remember him saying, "I can't do it, I can't do it, and it's bad. I don't know how we're going to do."

And finally, it came the day when we had to get out.

Q: What ha...-- In 1938, there was a break in the canal?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And it flooded your property and others, I guess.

A: And others, yeah.

Q: And, so that was another setback?

A: Another setback for my dad.

Q: Lost money.

A: Lost a lot of money. Lost all the crops that were ready to harvest.

Q: What time of the year was it?

A: I think, (sigh).

Q: Around harvest time?

A: It was around harvest time, but I can't remember. It must have been the beginning -- either the beginning of [ush]...the end of spring or the beginning of...of, uh, not in the summer, I don't think so. I think the beginning of, uh, fall?

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Maybe. I'm not too sure of that. I can't remember that far. I remember the canal and my dad got the team of mules, and horses, and helped prepare the canal. (pause)

END OF AUDIO