

Farmworker Folklife

A Compilation of Documentary Works by 1999

Student Action with Farmworkers' Into the Fields Interns



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Student Action with Farmworkers' Mission

Student Action with Farmworkers (SAF) is a non-profit organization created to build a network of campus-based projects focusing on farmworker issues. These projects include both summer internships and year-round opportunities for direct service, community education, advocacy and community organizing work. SAF serves students who need assistance developing quality service-learning programs, farmworkers, one of the hardest working yet most marginalized populations in our society, and agencies and community groups serving farmworking families themselves.

The Into the Fields Internship and Leadership Development Program

Each summer students from universities in North and South Carolina, as well as from the College Assistance Migrant Programs in California, Idaho, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Texas, participate in SAF's Into the Fields Summer Internship and Leadership Development Program. Approximately one-third to one-half of the interns are from farmworking families.

The SAF Interns work full-time in health centers, legal services, organizations, migrant education programs, Migrant Head Start Centers, policy groups and community organizing groups. Interns organize community health fairs, inform farmworkers of their rights and responsibilities regarding employment law, coordinate education presentations about pesticides, teach driver's education classes, and work with Junior High and High School farmworker students in a school dropout prevention program. The Interns work in rural counties in the Carolinas with high concentrations of farmworkers.

Documentary Projects

Each Into the Fields Intern completes a documentary project as a way to reflect on their internship experience. SAF uses students' documentary projects to educate communities about the unique backgrounds of farmworkers and their cultural practices.

The pieces in this publication include Interns' work from the summer of 1999. Interns took photographs, conducted interviews, and wrote short stories based on their interaction with farmworkers and their families. Interns focused their documentary projects on "Folklife Traditions of Farmworkers" in order to learn how farmworkers maintain their folklife traditions in the Carolinas.

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Important Notice

Student Action with Farmworkers' (SAF) 1999 "Into the Fields" Interns completed this collection of poetry, oral histories, interviews, photographs, and stories to explore folklife traditions of farmworkers in the Carolinas.

Some of the names included in this publication have been changed to protect the identities of the people interviewed.

Noticia Importante

Internos estudiantes del programa "Adentro de los Campos" de Acción Estudiantil con Trabajadores Agrícolas (SAF) en 1999 completaron esta colección de poesía, historia oral, entrevistas, fotos y cuentos para explorar la vida cultural de trabajadores agrícolas en los Carolinas.

Algunos de los nombres incluidos en esta publicación han sido cambiados para proteger las identidades personales de gente participando en las entrevistas y historias.

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Danielle E. Davis

La Comida de Lorena

Danielle: This is Danielle Davis. It is July 29, 1999. The interviewee is Lorena Ramirez. She is 29 years old and lives in Ehrhardt, South Carolina.

La Entrevista

Danielle: Bueno. ¿Cómo aprendió Ud. cocinar?

Lorena: Bueno. Pues por medio de mi abuelita, de mi mamá, mi bisabuela. Ellas me enseñaron a mí. Desde tenía yo como siete o ocho años, me enseñaron a... Bueno.

Nosotros somos de una familia humilde. Verdad. A nosotros nos enseñan que la mujer, tanta la mujer como el hombre, debe de saber de hacer los quehaceres de la casa. Pero la responsabilidad es más de la mujer para hacer las comidas. Me enseñaron desde muy chiquita, seis o siete años, a lavarle la ropa de mi hermano, que me tenían que enseñar a lavar, hacer tortillas. Que me fijara; no me dejaban sola. Estaban ellas conmigo pero así, así se cocen los frijoles, así se hacen las tortillas, así se cocc la carne, se ocupa esto. Por medio de ellas, me enseñaron a cocinar.

Danielle: Y, ¿Qué comidas eran las primeras que aprendió cocinar?

Lorena: Las tortillas. Sí, las tortillas. A cocer el mistamal, el maiz, pues, se cocc el maiz, a molerlo y a hacer la tortilla en la máquina.

Danielle: ¿Cuáles son las comidas más comunes?

Lorena: Bueno. En la casa, bueno. En el estado de donde somos. La casa, o sea, lo que nosotros nunca falta los frijoles, la tortilla y el chile, la salsa. La salsa, pero, pues, las

comidas así; tamales, tostadas, casoles, sopas, tacos, carne con chile, frijoles de la hoja o frijoles fritos. Eso es, o sea, hay más comidas pero eso es lo más común.

Danielle: Y, en la región, ¿hay comidas típicas?

Lorena: Bien haciendo lo que es la carne asada con frijoles de la hoja o frijoles charros, les llaman. Es frijol cocido y le ponen cebolla cambrí, chiles, salchicha y tocino. Eso viene haciendo platillo.

Danielle: Pero, ¿Hacen las mismas comidas en las diferentes regiones pero con diferente manera?

Lorena: Sí. Cada estado tiene diferente manera de hacerlo. Hay gente, como en el estado de donde somos, el menudo, lo que comemos es carnita cocida en caldo. Y en otros estados se come con granos de maíz, el menudo. Para nosotros, eso no es menudo; es pasole. O sea hay diferente, en cada estado su manera diferente de hacer las cosas.

Danielle: ¿De qué carne es el menudo?

Lorena: De res, es res, es res.

Danielle: Y, ¿Qué tipo de comida se come más que todos?

Lorena: Tacos, tacos. Y el frijol y la tortilla.

Danielle: ¿Comen mucha carne?

Lorena: Sí. Bueno, no mucha. Pero para decir, tres veces por semana o más. La gente que puede. La gente que no la come una vez por semana. Caldos también- los de res, de pollo con verduras.

Danielle: ¿Comen muchas verduras?

Lorena: Sí.

Danielle: ¿Como qué?

Lorena: Verdura. Que es el challote, papa, zanahoria, calabazas, ejotes.

Danielle: ¿Y fruta?

Lorena: Fruta de todo. Naranja, manzana, uva, plátano, melón, papaya, piña, peras.

Danielle: ¿Y tienen diferentes frutas allá que las que tenemos nosotros aquí?

Lorena: Allá hay de todo la fruta. Como por ejemplo, aquí lo que yo no he visto, nunca he visto guayaba. La guayaba es algo que yo nunca he visto. Guayabas.

Danielle: ¿Y, hay un dulce de guayaba también, no?

Lorena: Guayabate, se llama.

Danielle: ¿Y la comen con queso o cómo se come?

Lorena: El guayabate es para comerse con leche. Es como un dulce. Si no hay pan para acompañarlo con leche o con cereal. Una revenada de guayaba es dulce.

Danielle: ¿Cómo se llama la región de donde son Uds.?

Lorena: Nayarit.

Danielle: ¿Y Uds. tienen comidas de diferentes días festivos, por ejemplo, en la Navidad comen algo diferente que no comen durante todo el año?

Lorena: Como en las Navidades que la gente acostumbra a hacer pavo, guajalote o pollos rellenos. Son comidas más especiales, o sea, se puede decir especiales porque no las come uno durante el año como lo que es guajalote, los pollos rellenos grandes, los que son grandes rellenos. El como lo que es el cuaresma, lo que es la semana santa, esos días, pues, allá en México la mayoría de la gente, somos católicos. Entonces lo que es la cuaresma todos los viernes no se come carne, los que somos católicos.

Danielle: ¿Solamente en la semana santa?

Lorena: No. Los cuarenta días, o sea, la cuaresma, los cuarenta días. En estos cuarenta días, los viernes no se come carne. Los que somos católicos guardamos el día de no comer carne.

Danielle: Y, ¿Qué significa “la carne”- carne de res, pollo, pescado?

Lorena: Pescado puede comer uno y pollo. Lo que es carnes blancas. Pero carne de res, carne de puerco, jamón, o sea, todo eso no. La gente, o sea, la mayoría somos católicos y guardamos los días de no comer carne. Los viernes. Lo que es la semana santa, jueves santo, viernes santo, y sábado de gloria, esos días tampoco se come carne.

Danielle: ¿Y Ud. come mucho pan?

Lorena: Sí.

Danielle: ¿Y dulce?

Lorena: Sí, sí, mucho pan- el birote. No sé se lo conozca. Es pan, no es dulce. Es como para hacer tortas o lonches. Aquí no sé que le llaman. Allá, le llamamos tortas. Son pan largo. Lo parte en la mitad y lo pone los jamones, carne, lechuga, salsa, y si no hay más, frijoles y queso. El birote, pan dulce, ya. Pues, hay pan en la mañana, en la tarde y en la noche recién hecho, el pan.

Danielle: ¿Su comida ha cambiado mucho aquí?

Lorena: El sabor. La comida yo hago lo mismo que cocinaba en México; lo malo es el sabor. El sabor porque sabe muy diferente la comida y utilizo lo mismo aquí pero el sabor es muy, muy diferente. Tanto de la carne como del agua, de la tortilla, el frijol, el queso, todo. Yo cuando yo llegué aquí no me gustaba nada. Ya ahorita ya me gusta el sabor, pero yo cocino lo mismo.

Danielle: Dígame una experiencia como con su abuela o con su mamá en que aprendió algo o como hacer algo o algo chistoso o algo muy típico.

Lorena: Pues. ¿Qué será? Allá en México cuando alguien se va a casar, acostumbran a hacer un arroz, le llaman arroz de boda y es un arroz que mi abuela lo hace muy bueno y eso lo coce uno no sé si conozcas unos casos de cobre. Son casos muy grandes pero son hechos de cobre; nosotros le llamamos cobres. Es una cosa redonda como caso normal pero es así para decirlo así de alta, redonda. Y allá se coce el arroz. Le echa un poquito de tomate, pollo demenuzado, cebolla. Lo que sea que estar es menee, menee para que no se pegue el arroz. Y lo que dice mi abuelita es la que empieza menear el arroz tiene que terminarlo de menear porque si yo lo empiezo menear y lo suelto y alguien más sigue meneando el arroz, no sale bueno. Y a mí no me gustaba ayudarle porque dura uno mucho para que salga bueno y lo pone uno a cocinar en leña, coce en leña allá pero que esté el fuego bajito. Y es de todo está todo bien meneando y meneando el arroz que no se pegue, o sea, va echando ingredientes de poco a poco y del último ya hornean.

Danielle: ¿Y dura uno mucho?

Lorena: Sí, sí porque se pega como está la, está hirviendo y tiene lo meneado uno con un... Es como un palo caro tipo carriso de madera pero está lisito. Tengo que darle menearlo despacio porque si lo meneo rápido, se desbarate el arroz y despacio, despacio. Se calienta uno mucho y está allá todo el día, lo mínimo. Los satoles y el satol también ocupa uno estar meneando, meneando.

Danielle: ¿Comen arroz todo el año o solamente en ocasiones especiales?

Lorena: No, es todo el año, pero esa es una comida especial para bodas, ese tipo de arroz.

Danielle: Y, ¿Hay comidas especiales, por ejemplo, para la primera comunión?

Lorena: No. Ya es, ya. Cada quien hace lo que es lomos rellenos, lomo de puerco o virrian, sopas frías, ensaladas, lo regular. Pero esa sopa, sí, sopa de boda le llama. La puede hacer cualquier otro día en su casa, ¿no?, pero por lo regular casi siempre es cuando alguien se casa y se hace la sopa de boda. Sabe muy buena. Dura todo el día haciendola, pero sabe muy buena.

Danielle: De todas esas comidas, ¿Qué le gusta más a Ud.?

Lorena: El arroz. A mí me gusta mucho el arroz.

Danielle: ¿Siempre se prepara igualmente?

Lorena: No. No, el arroz ya como lo prepara uno por lo regular cuando cocina uno ya sea blanco con verduras o rojo. Dora uno el arroz, bien dorado, y liqua uno con tomate y cebolla y se lo, el caldillo, se lo echa hasta que se cosa el arroz y sale rojo o arroz blanco y se lo pone poquito de leche y verdura y sale bueno.

Danielle: ¿Comen más en la mañana, a medio día o en la noche?

Lorena: A medio día. En la mañana, por lo regular, es un vaso de leche con cereal, pan, un jugo, fruta, un taco con frijol con un vaso de leche o té. A medio día, sí, ya come uno ya su comida bien, bien servido ese plato, fruta o algo, un postre, agua fresca ya. Toma uno mucho el agua fresca de frutas, pues, naturales. Y en la noche, un vaso de leche, una canela, un té, cualquier cosa.

Danielle: Bueno, pero no una comida.

Lorena: No, o sea, hay gente, verdad, que, sí, está acostumbrada y que las tres veces cada día come bastante, pero por lo regular, así a medio día, es cuando come uno ya bien.

Danielle: ¿Uds. comen merienda?

Lorena: No, nosotros no.

Danielle: Pero, ¿Hay gente que sí?

Lorena: Oh, sí, la gente que ya es de otra clase más alta. Eso depende de la sociedad en que Ud. viva, con quien viva. Sí lo que es el desayuno, viene haciendo jugo, una taza de café, su fruta. El almuerzo ya es huevos o frijol o ya un plato ya bien servido. La comida ya lo que tenga en su casa- su carne, su verdura, sopa, su agua, tortilla. En cada comida hay tortilla. Y en la tarde o media tarde, la merienda que viene haciendo frutas, un café con galletas. Y en la noche, la cena.

Danielle: Explíqueme cómo se hacen los tacos porque aquí tenemos comidas que se llaman tacos.

Lorena: Pero no son tacos.

Danielle: Sí.

Lorena: Bueno. Los tacos allá con nosotros es tortilla blandita. Hace uno la tortilla, bueno. Cocce uno el maiz, verdad, ya cocido el maiz, muele uno el maiz y hace la masa. Y de la masa, hace uno la tortilla. Tiene uno por llamarla una máquina de tortilla. Es una cosa redonda , cuadrada y allá hace uno la tortilla. La cocce uno; la tortilla ya cocida, la dora uno en aceite poquito pero que quede dorada. Nada más a pasarla para que garre el sabor del aceite y pica uno carne de res. Bien picadita la carne, le eche a la tortilla, le eche uno carne, cebolla, lechuga, cilantro y la salsa. Y ese es el taco. Hay tacos que son dorados también. Ese ya la hace uno como la tortilla pero antes de que se cosa la tortilla, la saca uno y la raspa uno en el mitate para que se le caiga la capa de encima y queda muy delgadita. Y allí mismo, cocce uno papas y le pone en la tortilla esa blandita y queda delgadita. Le pone uno papa o de picadillo la carne molida lo que quiera hacerla y

doblalos que quedan como flautas y los dora en aceite. Y esos son tacos dorados. Y encima, arriba del taco dorado, se le pone lechuga y sus salsa.

Danielle: ¿Sabe hacer también tamales?

Lorena: No. Yo no sé. Mi abuelita, sí, sabe hacerlos. Y para el tamal también utiliza la masa. Coce uno el maiz, muele uno el maiz y allá le echa manteca de puerco, le echa bicarbonato y sal. Es una masa que queda bien, bien amasadita con las manos y las hojas del maiz pero que estén secas. Secas, que estén bien secas las pone uno a remojar en agua y que estén aguaditas las hojas allí le pone uno la masa que ya no es un... Y allá le pone carne o pollo o lo que de lo que va a hacer el tamal y la enreda y la pone a cocer; en un baño María se coce. Y sale muy bueno.

Danielle: ¿Qué cree que es la comida más difícil hacer que sabe Ud.?

Lorena: Bueno. No más difícil pero más entretenido, los tamales. Sí, los tamales.

Danielle: ¿Le gustan mucho los postres?

Lorena: Sí, sí.

Danielle: ¿Los postres de allá son muy diferentes que los de acá?

Lorena: Pues, sí, hay de lo que hay allá, hay aquí pero la diferencia le digo es el sabor. Que uno muchas veces dice “Quiero un flan” y “Esto no es flan.” Pero es lo que pasa uno con las comidas también. La diferencia es el sabor, pero, sí.

Danielle: ¿Allá donde vivía Ud., hay supermercados y todo como aquí o tiene que preparar los ingredientes de una manera diferente?

Lorena: No. Sí, hay tiendas. Bueno, le llama uno mercado y allá hay de todo desde como para hacer pasteles, fruta, verdura, para todo. Allá, sí, hay fresco todos los días. Y todo el año, lo que aquí no.

Danielle: ¿Va uno todos los días a comprar las cosas para el día?

Lorena: Si uno quiere diario, ají, tomate o que voy a hacer un pastel o un postre o para la comida, simplemente la carne allá, la carne es fresca. Allá diario matan puerco y matan vaca. Ud. va y al mismo carnicero le digo,

-“Quiero carne”.

-“Es de ayer o te esperas hasta que llegue la de ahora”.

Me espero. Y fresco, todo. Y todo el año, todos los días allí- fruta, carne, de todo fresco.

Danielle: ¿Tienen la carne allá colgada?

Lorena: Colgada en refrigeradores, sí. Son grandes, refrigeradores grandes. Allí mismo colgada, y van sacando de poco a poco. Afuera están ellos con su mostrador y van sacando poco a poco pero diario. Allí, allí hay carne fresca.

Danielle: ¿Y cada quien tiene su especialidad o todo está en una tienda?

Lorena: No. Es que el mercado es que Ud. entra y hay varios cuartos. Llega, es una pura carnicería hacia alrededor y allá en medio hay fruterías y lo que es la verdura. Y afuera hay más tiendas. Hay carnicerías particulares. También hay unos que son del gobierno. Hay varios. Otras que son particulares afuera de allí que están en otras colonias. Pero todos en el mercado, Ud. entra y hay puras carnicerías alrededor. Los cuartos son para las carnicerías y en medio, para la fruta y verdura.

Danielle: ¿Todas las tiendas son así o solamente en el pueblo?

Lorena: La mayoría, sí, es así. En los mercados, pues. Ya si va a una ciudad ya vea Ud. supermercados ya como los de aquí, verdad. Y hay que encontrar, pues, desde tomates hasta un calcetín, verdad. Y allí hay ropa, hay de todo. Pero como donde nosotros es

pueblo, las tiendas de ropa son separadas de lo que es la comida. Pero en ciudades grandes, hay tiendas como aquí.

Danielle: ¿Y todo es fresco allá, o sea, no hay en paquetes como aquí?

Lorena: Como en las ciudades grandes ya si Ud. va a una tienda ya lo que son supermercados grandes, sí, hay carnes enpaquetadas. Si hay verduras también, fruta, todo. Pero como habiendo fresco, o sea, en las ciudades hay carnicerías y todo. Pero como hay gente que trabaja y no tiene tiempo de comprar para diario, o ir diario a la tienda, verdad, compra su mandado, su carne ya refrigerada.

Danielle: Además de que durante la semana santa, ¿hay comidas que no se pueden comer a causa de su religión?

Lorena: No, nada más digo los viernes y acostumbramos en la cuaresma allá es cuando comemos más camarón, pescado, o sea, como no come uno carnes rojas, cuando consume uno más el marisco. O sea, que todo el año como si Ud. quiere, puede comerlo cuando quiera, pero es cuando más consumimos el marisco y es cuando hace uno le llama capirotada. Es pan dulce con natolito revuelto, se lo hace mucho bueno. Y eso es otro también de las tradiciones que hay allí en México, pues, la capirotada que es para la cuaresma.

Danielle: Bueno. Solamente tengo una pregunta más. ¿Cree Ud. que la comida es muy importante en la vida diariamente en México, en la vida latina, porque se nota que por ejemplo, cuando una persona entra en una casa mexicana, le ofrecen agua o comida o algo. Entonces, la pregunta es que si la comida es muy importante en la cultura mexicana o más o menos, más que aquí, menos que aquí...?

Lorena: Bueno. No sé, o sea, uno ofrece. A uno le enseñan en su casa. Es por, para empezar educación. Por educación. Y en segunda, por buenos modales que le enseñan a uno en su casa que debe uno de si lo viene uno a visitar,

-“Pase, siéntese, ¿Gusta un vaso de agua, un refresco?

Si no tiene uno más, un vaso de agua. Si Ud. llega y están comiendo,

-“Véngase a sentar, ¿Gusta un taco?”

o de lo que está uno comiendo. Es porque a uno desde chico lo enseñan así, que cuando uno llega, llega a una gente aunque no la conozca uno, se saluda uno,

-“Pasa, siéntese, está en su casa, ¿Gusta algo?”

Eso es.

Danielle: O sea, es por educación.

Lorena: Sí.

Danielle: Bueno. Muchas gracias.

Lorena: De nada.

Silvia Zaragoza is famous in Lee County, South Carolina for her tamales. She is shown here growing the vegetables in her garden, picking crops with her son, Daniel, and the final preparation of the tamales.

Silvia says, "This dish is important to me, because I can cook tamales very well. I learned how to cook them from watching other people in Mexico. Nobody taught me how to do it, I just learned on my own. My mother and Grandmother also make tamales, but I learned how to make mine larger and tastier. My husband is from the coast and he likes them also. I cook tamales for parties and I invite my friends to eat with me. Maybe someday I will sell them, but people need to try them first and see how good they are before they will buy them. I think \$1.00/tamales is reasonable."

Silvia's Recipe

*Vegetarians can substitute beans for the meat and cook the same. Silvia's husband likes them with tuna instead of pork.

- 1) Boil the meat.
- 2) De-bone the boiled meat and slice into thin strips.
- 3) Heat the oil.
- 4) Cook the meat with the chile and all the spices.
- 5) Beat/mix the masa with the manteca (pork lard, not Crisco).
- 6) Roll out the ball of masa into a circle like a flat tortilla.
- 7) Roll up the meat, chile, and spices in the masa.
- 8) Wrap the entire tamale in dried out corn husks.
- 9) Stack the tamales in a tall, iron stew pot.
- 10) Cook for "more or less" two hours.

La Receta de Silvia

*Los vegetarianos pueden sustituir frijoles por la carne, y seguir la receta igual. El esposo de Silvia le gusta el atún en vez de la carne.

- 1) Coser la carne.
- 2) Deshuesar y desebrar la carne.
- 3) Calentar el aceite.
- 4) Freir la carne con los chiles y las otras especias.
- 5) Mexclar la masa con manteca de puerco - no usar Crisco.
- 6) Palotear bolitas de masa como en hacer tortillas.
- 7) Envolver la carne, chile, y especias en las tortillas de masa.
- 8) Envolver la masa en las hojas secas de maiz.
- 9) Apilar los tamales en una olla grande de hierro.
- 10) Cocer por más o menos dos horas.



Daniel Xaca

"Helping in the Garden"

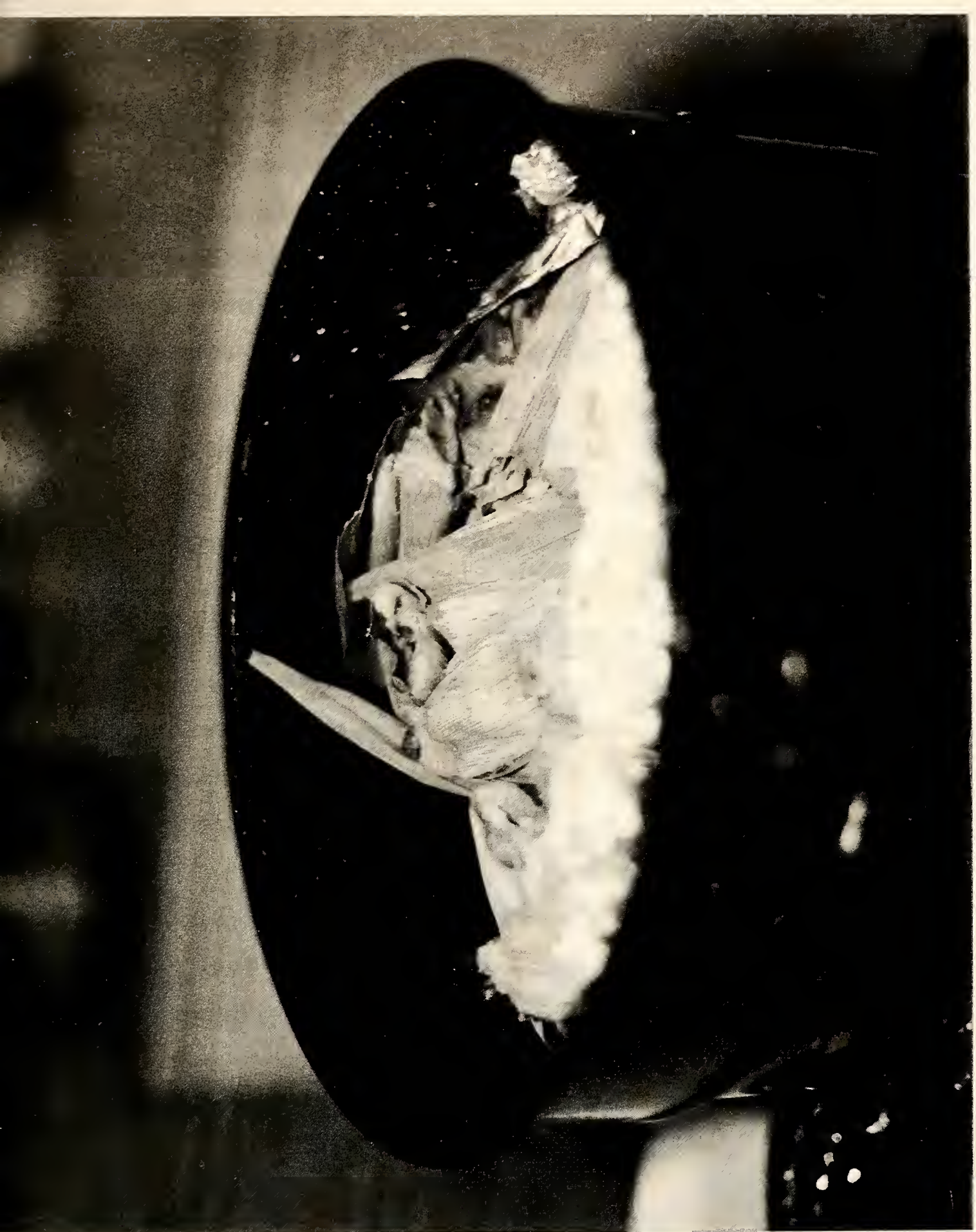
Photo by Wendy Sellers Campbell



Silvia Zaragoza

"Working in the Garden"

Wendy Sellers Campbell



"Tamales"

Photo by Wendy Sellers Campbell

Introduction

Siler City, North Carolina, home to two SAF interns for the summer of 1999. A place where a Mexican boy from California can come to learn to make goat's milk cheese on the Celebrity Dairy, where goats by the name of Lynn Redgrave and Marol Thomas provide the milk twice a day to their loving owners, Flemming and Britt. Siler City is a place where a white girl from Canada can come to learn the cumbia, salsa, and dance the tango with a true professional folkloric dancer from Columbia, South America. It is a place rich in culture, where new traditional practices infiltrate the old southern style, creating endless learning opportunities, and countless battles of conflict.

Siler City, North Carolina, a place where buzzards circle overhead grazing pasture, waiting to eat animals suffering in the overwhelming heat and humidity. Siler City, a place where Mexican tiendas are nuzzled in small streets next to Evangelical bookstores and ACE hardware stores. Here, retired school teachers and farmers trade their chalk board brushes and tractors for fine antiques which they attempt to pass on to tourists. While other locals turn to massage therapy or animal communication as their means of living, providing relaxation for humankind and better understanding amongst the animal kingdom.

Siler City, a place where African American descendents aren't welcome at the home of the best hamburger in North Carolina, Johnson's restaurant. This is a spot frequented by North Carolina Senator's aids, known to purchase one hundred hamburgers at a time to feed hungry lawmakers. It's good to know that our elected officials choose to support their people. Siler City is also home to, what was voted, the best enchilada in the

Triangle, Tienda Gabrielle's. Where hot soccer players come after their Sunday game and Mexican cooks come to get authentic tortilla pressers made of wood, not metal.

Siler City, North Carolina, a place where the stench of hot meat lingers in the armpits of the chicken plants. Husbands and wives wait at the gates to pick up someone getting off the third shift. Hairnets and large yellow plastic aprons disguise the employees, turning them into Spanish speaking drones. Over worked Mothers and Fathers make their way home after chopping chicken carcasses for eight hour shifts, to continue working. Family responsibilities take over in the home; hungry kids want diner – looks like chicken...yummy.

Siler City, North Carolina, a place where some workers return to a doublewide trailer occupied by twenty people or so. Living together in shifts, rotating rooms of sleepers, eaters, while others are off at work. Often families living in these situations have children; these families are labeled "homeless", and warrant a visit from the local social worker. When the visit occurs any sign of "mistreatment" will cause Sally the social worker to contact the local police, *children ten years of age babysitting their younger siblings – not in America...they say.*

Siler City, North Carolina, a place where women like Dolsa lives in Snipes Trailer Park. Grilling a cow's head outside, Dolsa prepares cabeza tacos for many people. She makes a living from cooking, mostly tamales, but I was warned (without explanation) not to eat anything. Looks as though there may be twenty people inside her trailer at the moment, mostly men, staring outside to see who the hell is standing at the door with paper and pens asking questions about their children. The children flock around her home in curiosity, wondering if it's the 4H camp back again to take them on field trips

every day. Dolsa knows all of the children; she is the den mother in a run down, overprized den. She is a surrogate mother to so many, keeping track of “things”, she is the liaison for Gloria the Latino social worker, and confident. When it comes time for summer school registration Dolsa distributes and collects the necessary information, making sure everyone has been contacted and knows where to catch the bus in the morning.

Dolsa is a one-stop shop for the children of Snipes Trailer Park, she can tell you were to find someone, and she knows who is up to what. She knows Snipes is a place where prostitutes wait for lonely truck drivers, and lonely truck drivers come to find illegal substances that keep them jacked for days. It’s a place where young black girls stick their heads out their door to ask you, “who you look’n fer...ya don’t know? Well ya best find ‘em ‘cause ya aint want’a be out here alone”. These words are said with a slight chuckle that reminds Dorothy she’s not in Kansas any more. As you step over the fly covered dung heap the aroma trash warming in the sun reminds you that nobody wants to here, where rent is high and trailers are disintegrating as the day passes by. Supposedly things are supposed to improve around here now that the old owner has died, but nothing has happened yet- Dolsa remains optimistic.

Just then a goggle of young boys come whirling around the corner on bikes that are too short for their growing legs – but their smiling. “Do you want to come to summer school”, we ask? “Can we play soccer”, they ask? They have a mature air about them, a little guy, no older than five, rests his small hands calmly inside his pockets, patiently waiting to see what’s going on. He looks like a man wiser then his age and probably is, Snipes Trailer Park is a great spot to witness crimes of inhumanity, and this boy seems to

well seasoned. We ask the others if they know where we can find the rest of the children, and they eagerly bolt to another trailer, yelling urgently in Spanish to come outside the maestra is here. We thank them and hang around waiting to see if they could be of any service any more. "I hope we see you on Monday", I say to heads aloofly nodding yes (it's still not cool to demonstrate too much excitement).

Finally Dolsa is found once again, smiling she comes to the car with registration forms, she isn't sure she got everyone, but she assures us the rest will get on the bus come Monday morning. Her energy is amazing, she remains a pillar in her community, and children know where to come to for assistance. Once she learned about the rampant spread of chlymidia in Snipes, Dolsa single handedly organized a group of teenagers to visit the local health clinic to be checked for any sexually transmitted diseases. Although no one likes the thought of eleven-year-olds engaging in sex she was realistic about life at Snipes and brought the younger children as well.

As I looked around Snipes Trailer park I thought of Bob Marley's song - Concrete Jungle, where inside the city walls urban guerrillas fight new dimensions of warfare. Within a socially constructed fighting grounds we are all, inevitably self defeated. Perhaps Dolsa's song would be similar, fighting for survival in an aluminum siding niche, resting on concrete slabs and surrounded by accumulations of daily trash. She is a warrior, with great courage she struggles against the great intangible force of an oppressive environment. She links arms with the services available, making sure that all resources are tapped, hopping to keep one more child innocent in a place tainted by mans murderous ways towards man.

Men sitting on the steps enjoyed a beer in the heat of the late afternoon, as Gloria and I pulled up to Dolsa's home. Corona bottles left beside the entrance to the trailer lined the doorway where children kept running in and out. The sun didn't seem to slow them down, nor did the absence of shoes over rocky ground. The smell of burning propane swept out of the aluminum trash can turned BBQ, burnt around the edges from its frequent use.

As I walked into Dolsa's trailer a refreshing cool breeze surprised me. Her trailer was fully furnished, and full of children watching Spanish speaking television. I took a seat at the kitchen table in front of some very hot looking salsa, blood red and thick. Pots and pans covered the kitchen counters and stovetop and fly tape hung in front of the windows threatening the pesky insects as they continued to buzz around my ankles. A large freezer in the corner was covered in bags of corn tortillas and green banana leaves. Eating and cooking was an all day event in Dolsa's trailer, she fed all the people who came to see her; if they were hungry they knew where to come. During the interview her cousin came in and Dolsa prepared tortillas with chicken, cheese and a red chili smelling sauce for him. Her daughter, Alondra, brought in tamales from the grill and Dolsa fed Gloria and I, reminding us these do not have chili. Her intense grocery demand seemed to be subsidized, as two men delivered three bags of tortillas and two fresh rounds of fresh white cheese. She proceeded to grate delicately as the interview went on. Dolsa was soft in her movements; she was gentle and constant as she crumbled her cheese, giving a pause to think before every answer.

The Interview

Brady “Where is Dolsa from?”

Gloria “She’s saying she’s from a town that’s very poor and women cannot find employment there, it’s very difficult. You have to make decisions whether you want to feed your children or whether you want to clothe your children because it’s too difficult to do both, you just cannot afford it; especially with women not being able to work. The male has to be the sole provider.”

Brady “How and why did she come here?”

Gloria “She came because she wanted to make more money and provide better for her kids. So they can get an education and she can provide for them – so she doesn’t have to make those decisions, should I feed them today or not be able to feed them, or get them clothing. She says, she came “Mohala”, you know a lot of people say “wet backs”, she came illegally. Wet back is a derogatory term but she came illegally, she jumped the fence.”

Brady “Did she have her kids with her?”

Gloria “She said um, the oldest one she jumped with her but the others came in a different manner. She came alone the first time with Alondra which is the oldest child and she couldn’t afford ...because usually you have to pay someone to help you get across she couldn’t afford to do that, so later on she sent for her kids. She sent money to have them brought over.”

Brady “Did she come right to North Carolina?”

Gloria “California, she came to North Carolina, headed here because her family if here. She says um, her family members who came here came because in California it’s very expensive there so they came here looking for an area that was much cheaper, where they could afford the rent and where they had good employment and after searching this is where they found, they found North Carolina. And they came to Siler City because that’s where the jobs were and the housing – affordable housing.”

Brady “Jobs doing what?”

Gloria “In the chicken plant, mainly they worked in the chicken plant. She said her sister had um...she came over with her sister and this is where they came because they knew people where and her family was and work was.”

Brady “Ask her why she stays in Snipes Trailer Park because I’ve heard it was expensive here, and the rent is high?”

Gloria “ Her sister is saying that rent isn’t high, and Dolsa came here because her sister told her that rent wasn’t high. She says it’s mostly her family lives her, their a resource for one another, they utilize that. You know if she needs something, her sister is gone, her sister is willing to get it. If they need a babysitter, they can baby sit for one another. She says between the women, the family members they take care of each other, they watch out for each other, watch out for each other’s kids. It’s a network, a family?”

Brady “So she’d say it’s the women who are holding every body together here?”

Gloria “ She said you mean the prettiest? She says that yea the women take care of each other, they know where the other family members are they always, you know keep track of who’s who, where have they gone They are the ones who take care of everyone else.”

Brady “ How did she come to be the community resource, how do all the kids know where to come and she can help them out?”

Gloria “ She says at times she’s not sure why but she thinks it’s because she’ll never turn anyone away, she’ll always have an ear for them to hear what every they have to say, um and she said that’s just how it’s been and they’ll call her the mother of the trailer park because she’ll go and she’ll reprimand kids if their drinking, even if they’re not her kids, she’ll go and tell them to straighten up. And she’ll council any body, she’ll listen to what any one has to say. And I have to say personally, knowing Dolsa, she’s very resourceful, she has no problem calling, she calls me all the time and says listen, you know this lady in the trailer here needs help with... and she’ll tell me. You know so she’s very resourceful.”

Brady “ How did she get to know all the resources available and the services that can be provided?”

Gloria “ She started with a group “apriendo con ma ma”, which is a parent group given by um, Child care network, which holds a group for women, parenting classes. She said that’s where she started to know Florence and to know Maria Lapanina, you know, lots of Latino leaders in the community, who went to the group and assisted with the group and that’s where she got to know everyone, and from there that s where she just started utilizing them and she started calling them, she knew who they were and it was just a matter of calling everyone and utilizing them, telling them what’s going on.”

Brady “What are some of the things she calls them for?”

Gloria “ She says um, well in the trailers with the living conditions so, if one things not broken it’s another, something’s always broken, something is always wrong. ...and to add to that a lot of the families complain that you know a lot of the landlords will do nothing, they don’t care. But a lot of families can move in as many people as they want in the trailer, which is good for them, especially if they’ve got families who can afford to have another trailer. But with that also comes, you know with the landlord saying well you’ve got a lot of people in there you know, I’ll report you and so you back

off because you don't want to be reported, your undocumented. You know you try to make due the best you can, if your fridge isn't working you try to work something out. She also thinks that for the young people there's no where to go and have fun, pass time, do something constructive and so a lot of them turn to drinking, um just listening to music and drinking and that's what they do. She saying there has to be something else structured for them to do."

Brady "Was she happy with the summer program available?"

Gloria " She says it was a good program, she's very happy with it. She said she's very disappointed she couldn't make the fiesta. She really wanted to and she felt horrible about it but her faith is Catholic and at her church they were going to have the Virgin of Guatelupea which is to Catholic is a very important. She felt that is where she has to be and so that is where she went."

Brady "What happens on that day, the virgin of Guatelupea?"

Gloria " Its like a statue or a picture of her that's very famous and it travels all around the United States, so it was time for it to come to Siler City to her church and she probably would not have had the chance to see it again."

Brady "Her church is strength for her."

Gloria " She is saying that she thinks her God, her religion being there for her, that it pulls her through and she can get through things a lot easier. With that she thinks God has provided food for her, and shelter and to be able to live here because in Mexico she could never do that. She says that you can make, maybe \$40, if you have a really good job, to maybe \$50 per week in Mexico. Then when you go to buy groceries you buy meat it could be \$38 or so and there goes your whole paycheck. So your just making enough money to pay for that no rent, no clothes, you can't afford anything else. She says that there are kids over there that are very poor, they don't have clothes, and maybe they have underwear, it's barefooted and very dirty running around. And that scares her, she lives here now and she's very happy about that but it's very hard living in Mexico. And you know, with tears in her eyes she says she does not want to get sent back it would be too difficult for her and her children, she wouldn't be able to make it."

Brady "Why does she think there are such disparity between poor and rich in Mexico?"

Gloria " She says the president which they have she believes is stealing from it's own people, his own nation. There using the money of the nation, you know they've got beautiful homes and all these estates and all this property but there not seeing what they're doing to Mexico, what there doing to the cities. How poor and run down it is."

Brady "What kind of work did she do in Mexico, or what was available?"

Gloria “ She says she had to work in the fields, the “Campos” picking pineapples, peppers, what ever there was to pick. She says when she was picking the pineapples there was a lot of labor that goes into that. She also said she fertilized the pineapples which is very dangerous, she was explaining that when she would take her tacos at lunch she had all these fertilizers, chemicals on her she began getting very ill because she was poisoning herself. Even when she would try to pick up her tacos with her napkin she would still get very sick, very ill from those chemicals.”

Brady “Has anyone in her family continued to do that type of work over here?”

Gloria “ Yes in tobacco.”

Brady “Has anyone in her family got sick from that?”

Gloria “ She says when they start to pick tobacco some of them will vomit and get sick, but she says the farm owners take them to the doctor, she says it’s there responsibility to do that.”

Brady “Coming to America has enabled her to provide food and shelter and the basic necessities for her kids but are there things that she can’t get in America, are there parts of life lost in Mexico that she cannot get here that she misses?”

Gloria “ Dolsa’s saying that Alondra came over when she was very young so it’s hard for her to know the difference between the hardship in Mexico and what it’s like here, what’s the difference.”

Brady “But Alondra has lived here now, and I’ve heard about some crazy stuff that goes on here.”

Gloria “ She says in Mexico you can only go up to elementary school and further than that you have to pay for your education. You have to pay for uniforms, supplies; you have to pay for school. She says even in elementary they charge you for supplies, books etc. To apply to the school they even charge, they charge like \$80 to apply. And for families over there that’s almost impossible. She said her teachers in elementary school told her she was very smart, that she applied her self well, but she couldn’t afford to go on – to high school even if she wanted to.”

Brady “So it looks like she’s got some massive food production going on, who is all this for?”

Gloria “ Family, Dolsa feeds every body in this lot pretty much. She has a lot of family, a lot of cousins, so who ever comes over eats. She sells tamales on the side and she’s telling her son to go and offer them to see if anyone wants to buy any because that’s how she makes extra money. She says that she can’t make tamales anymore because it gets so hot in this trailer and she gets asphyxia so she’s had to stop doing that. She made some without chili but she has to put it in some or else they won’t buy it.” Dolsa served Gloria

and I two beef tamales, from the grill outside. *"Normally, you see how it's in foil, she says she doesn't usually do that."*

Brady "So why the foil, because it's outside?"

Gloria " *She says it's very expensive to buy the corn husks, she put leaves of bananas to add flavor to it. She says there is a missionary church that helps them a lot you know with giving her rugs and different stuff like that. I asked her if they provided for other people in the community and she said she thought so she said sometimes offering furniture or food or clothing or whatever they needed. But sometimes she says she feels embarrassed to have to go and ask for that, it's very difficult. And she says um...she sometimes has problem with depression and she's saying that this week she went and she was really sad and depressed because she looked in her purse and she didn't have money in order to get food. And she's been helped by the missionary before, but she's very embarrassed to go back.*"

Brady "Does she just go there and tell them what she needs?"

Gloria " *Yes and that is very difficult for her.*"

Brady "What were you saying about medicine? I thought I heard something about it."

Gloria " *She's on medication. She said her cousin came and he's hungry so she's going to make him something to eat. But um, Dolsa is on medication for depression, but she's done incredible with it, just amazing and the doctor was giving it to her for free 'cause she couldn't afford it, but it's gotten to the point where she couldn't but it on her own. It's very expensive and he couldn't provide her with any and for a month and a half she has been off of it. But she just recently went back to see if he'll give her any more and he did give her the medication. I tried to assist her with that and it's very difficult to find any agency who will pay for medication.*"

Brady "For mental health, or just any medication?"

Gloria " *For mental health, anything actually, but mental health especially.*"

Brady "What about Medicare or something like that?"

Gloria " *She's undocumented so she can't go.*"

Brady "What about Alondra?"

Gloria " *She says her youngest daughter, she said to her lets go to Mexico, and she (the daughter) almost starts crying and says no, I know I wont be able to eat like I do here because other people have told her how hard it its.*"

Brady "So, Alondra, you came with your Mom when you where a little kid?"

Alondra “um hum”, shaking her head yes.

Brady “Where you able to get papers?”

Alondra “um um”, shaking her head no.

Brady “What happened when you went to school, you don’t have to have a social security number?”

Alondra “I don’t know”

Gloria “Dolsa is saying that they ended up doing something to get her into school back at that time, but what I understand all they need is an ID number.”

Brady “Have you tried to get a job, has that been a problem?”

Alondra “I’ve been working with another name, and I went to work at Taco Bell, but somebody told them that wasn’t my name. They told me I don’t have a job.”

Brady “Is it hard to get fake papers?”

Alondra “Um hum, because sometimes the number is not right, it’s not valid. If they go and check computers they will find out.”

Brady “So you have to switch jobs a lot, before they check or after they find out it’s not alright?”

Gloria “Well sometimes the social security number is right, it’s another person and your just not telling that person your using it, your borrowing their identity.”

Brady “Is there a national link up the federal government has that allows them to check if one person in Siler City is using the same ID as someone in California?”

No one knew the correct answer, shrugging their shoulders to let me know they weren’t sure.

We thanked her for the tamales she made, and she told us she usually serves them with mole sauce, but ours where without.

“Ask her if there is anything about Mexico that she misses?”

Gloria “Most important and the people she misses the most are her parents. The kind of food she used to make over there you just can’t make here. She said um, the tamales are the American meat tamales because there’s not the right ingredients. They usually use fresh herbs what ever this is here.

Brady “You could grow it though couldn’t you?”

Alondra "No, you would have to get the root and you can't bring anything over from Mexico, no livestock, nothing."

Gloria "Alondra, do you want to say anything about school, because I know what it's like there? Some people are very resistant there."

Brady "Resistent how?"

Gloria " She says you know if they get in an argument or a fight the teacher may take the American or the Anglo's side over theirs and it's just not fair, it's just that whole treatment."

Brady "Do you think it would be better in school if there were more Hispanic teachers?"

Alondra "Um hum", shaking her head yes.

Brady "What did you think about the summer school program?"

Gloria "She said that it was a pretty good program and I just asked her for more detail and she said that you know you can't go if your not passing that grade. And she can't go next year, and I said well, if you were able to go would you and she said yea."

Brady "So if you don't mind me asking, where do you think you'll be after high school?"

Alondra "Work to help her, anywhere as long as they pay well."



Luis Velasco

"Quinceñera"

Photo by: Luis Velasco



"Monica Segunda"

Photo by: Luis Velasco



Photo by: Luis Velasco

Laura McFarland

La Reina Del Pueblo

SAF Documentary 1999

Many holidays in Mexico celebrate the country's pride and culture in an array of colorful and festive ways. In the United States, the population of Mexican-Americans is growing at a rapid pace and to our fortune many Mexican festivals have spilled over into our own country's melting pot of celebrations. In particular, some celebrations of Mexican independence and revolution have become part of the annual festivities of several major U.S. cities. Mexican Independence Day (September 16th) and el Cinco de Mayo (May 5th) are examples. Los Angeles hosted tens of thousands of people for parades and celebrations for both holidays. El Cinco de Mayo has been celebrated in such places as Washington D.C., Portland, New York, San Francisco, Austin, and Santa Fe (http://sddt.com/files/librarywire/96wireheadlines/09_96/DN96_09_09cv.html).

The roots of these celebrations are unquestionable within the boundaries of their original culture, however, in the United States, many people are unfamiliar with the histories of these dates and the meanings of the celebrations. My work here is to outline and differentiate the histories behind three significant celebrations of Mexican pride and independence, Mexican Independence Day (September 16), El Cinco de Mayo (May 5), and a date celebrating the Mexican Revolution (November 20). Then I will focus on an

the peasants defeat the insurmountable odds (<http://www.atevo.com/guides/fotd/0,1310,2774,00.html>).

November 20 celebrates yet a third significant date in Mexico's history of revolutions. November 20, 1910 was the day that a major revolt was called for by Francisco Madero. Although the revolt failed, it was the first battle of a war that would become the Great Revolution of Mexico and would span the first quarter of the twentieth century. Madero's call for revolt was in response to the dictatorship of Diaz, who had corrupted election results to keep himself in power. Madero's plan was known as the Plan of San Luis Potosi and called for a variety of political reforms and the return of usurped land to the peasants (www.geocities.com/capitolhill/lobby/99801PAPER.HTML).

Starting about a month and a half before the holiday, the people of each town begin the process of choosing La Reina del Pueblo (The Queen of the City). Three girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are chosen by teachers and parents on the basis of their thoughts, goals, and overall character. These girls then sell tickets throughout the school and community in which they live. Each ticket the girl sells counts as one vote. The girl with the most votes (and the most money) will be La Reina del Pueblo. The other two girls will be her princesses.

Beto: They need to go to the schools and ...like...the students need to give them money and the girl who has more money, she is the queen.

Laura: Does her family give her money or is it people in the school?

Beto: The people in the schools, teacher and the students.

interview with a family from near Mexico City who describes how their hometown celebrates Mexican Independence Day.

Mexican Independence Day celebrates the day in 1810, when the impoverished priest, Father Miguel Hidalgo, led a revolt of Mexican Indians against the Spanish colonial plantation owners in Mexico City. Among their grievances were a need for a new government and for redistribution of lands from the wealthy minority to the starving majority. This group of men fought with weapons they fashioned themselves from farm tools. Hidalgo's call to arms was "El Grito de Dolores" (The Cry of Sorrows). Unfortunately, Hidalgo's army was defeated in 1811 and Hidalgo was executed. Another priest, Jose Morelos, had begun to raise revolts in Southern Mexico and continued Hidalgo's struggle.

El Cinco de Mayo is sometimes confused with Mexican Independence Day. The Fifth of May celebrates an impossible battle won by Mexican peasants against the French army in the year 1862. The French had landed and occupied the Mexican city of Veracruz and Napoleon III was attempting to conquer Mexico. Mexico, who had just ended the Mexican American War, was financially bankrupt and unable to protect itself. In a battle of the city of Puebla, the Zapotec Indians fought amidst tremendous obstacles to defeat the French army. Although, the French army returned a year later to occupy the city of Puebla, el Cinco de Mayo celebrates the tremendous pride and spirit that helped

The festivities of the 16th of September begin with an early afternoon parade. The children of the local school dress up as different characters of the revolution. Miguel Hidalgo costumes consist of a black shirt, white pants, a paper pistol and belt, and perhaps a cape. Those that dress like Jose Morelos wear white pants and a white shirt, in addition to parting their hair like Morelos' hair. The first car of the parade is reserved for La Reina del Pueblo, who dresses in a beautifully decorated dress and wears her crown. The parents, family members, and other adults watch anxiously at the edges of the road as their children parade by.

After the excitement of the parade, the celebration moves to the town plaza where the president of the town has helped to prepare a festive dinner. At the dinner, the president and others give speeches, eat, and enjoy the festivities. At the dinner, there are a variety of traditional dishes including mole (chicken with chile peppers and crackers), barbacoa (chicken with chile peppers and vinegar), and carnitas (fried pork). The dinner in the plaza eventually becomes the dance in the plaza. The Queen of the City sits on a throne and overlooks her dancers. In the part of Mexico City where the Ramos' are from, the dancing consists of several types of dancing including Mariachi dancing.

The finale of the evening rings in the ears of all who are proud of Mexican Independence. Following a colorful display of fireworks, midnight brings the ringing of the town bell and three cheers to Mexico.

Beto: The person go rings ...um a bell, yeah a bell. They call all the people in there. Y he say two times, Viva Mexico.

Laura: Only two times?

Beto: No, three times.

Laura: Oh, three times. Okay and what do the people do?

Beto: They do it too.

Laura: Do he yell the names of the revolutionaries like Hidalgo or Morelos?

Beto: No, only just Viva Mexico...

Independence Day of Mexico has many similar features as the United States'

Independence Day -- including fireworks, celebration, enjoyment of family, friends and community members. Customs in the United States include a family cookout rather than a town dinner, and maybe a day at the lake rather than a City Queen, yet we share a common pride in the Independence our countries earned.

Araseli, Ruth, and Beto Ramo
Dialogue
August 9, 1999

L: La Reina del Pueblo

A: Los Ninos que vuelen a la escuela

B: We too would like a part of kids going to school. The teachers...hm...like....I don't know how to say that.

A: (can't hear)

B: They dress like they do in the revolution, they do the people standing in the roads.

L: Okay, I'll ask more in just a minute.

L: Just ask them how they celebrate the revolution?

A: El Pueblo de papa, a mi esposo, celebran con un desfile...un desfile...

L: File is parade, right?

B: It's kinda like... what's in the roads...

A: La gente....lost ninos que fueron en la escuela que distrajan como la revolucion.

B: The kids of the schools dress like the revolutionaries.

L: Okay. When do they choose the queen of the city?

B: Cuando escogen la reina del pueblo?

A: A el 16 de septiembre.

B: On the 16th of Oeptember.

L: That's Independance Day, too?

B: Uh, yeah.

L: When do you choose the queen? and how? Cuando y como?

A: Este hay estes custombre de que cuando dicen thres candidatas.

B: They choose three girls.

A: Este ellas tienen que conarsier..... un dinero.

B: They need to go to the schools andlike....the students need to give them money and the girl who has more money, she is the queen.

L: Does her family give her money or is it people in the school?

B: The people in the schools, teachers and the students.

L: Okay

A: Ellasactividades como bailes se van a las

B: They do like things and they go to other cities and do that and they tell them that if they can get money to.... vote for them.

L: Okay...how much of this happens before the 16th? How many weeks ahead of time?

B: Cuanto semanas se empieza?

A: Un mez y media.

B: A month and a half.

L: What does the queen wear?

B: La reina.... que viste?

A: Comparnos ...la ropa de una reina. La reina...su corona.

B: They dress like a queen. She dress like a queen.

A: Laprimera, segunda de lugar son las princesses de la reina.

B: Second and third place, they are the princesses.

L: Me entiendo, pero.... still keep translating just in case.... (everyone laughs).... is there any normal dress?

B: Esta.... un vestido normal?

L: Una vestida blanca or...

A: No...

L: What does the queen do?

B: Que hace la reina?
A: Nada mas especial... de partir.... Ella es la reina para 15 dias despues el 16 de septiembre.... no era espeical hace la reina.
B: Be queen for 15 days...yeah, but she don't have anything special to do.
L: Does she dance at the desfile?
B: Bailo en desfile?
A: Hacen en carro para la desfile.
B: She have a car or something like that.... and she have a chair and she sits there and she's going in the road.
A: Ella es la primera carro....la primera....
B: She is in the first car that goes in front of all the people in the road.
L: What do the princesses do?
B: Las prinesses que hacen?
A: El mismo de la reina.
L: How old are the queen and the princesses?
B: Cuantos anos tienen?
L: And then how do they choose the top three?
B: Y como les escogen?
A: este Ponen este dicen a las escuelas que quieren candidatas y alles hacen una runion en el pueblo y llaman bueno depende la muchacha come se expresa al hablar.
B: Okay...they ask all the people to other people and then they tell all schools and they they go and choose three , but they choose like when she talks if she's intelligent and stuff like that.
A: Cuales su forma de pensar en el futuro
B: How she thinks and what she's going to be in the future.
L: Oh, great... how old?
B: 15 to 19 years old.
L: Is it the 15th and the 16th that they celebrate or just the 16th?
B: Only the 16th.
L: So the parade is on the 16th? what else do they do?
B: Que mas hacen celebratar?
A: Lo que hace el presidente de el pueblo es una cena donde invita a toda loas personas porque participan gente de diferentes pueblos y desfiles....
B: A dinner for all the people in the city there are....then they are people who come from other places...yeah, and they come.... from other places.....to do other things and ...like to dance or something like that....
A: Parece que son todos los estudiantes que participan.
B: There are always student who stay in the road.
L: What does everyone else do?
B: Que hacen los otros personos?
L: In the desfile, the students are in there and there is a car that drives the queen...
B: yeah, but some students are walking and doing other things....
B: Just that.... hmmmwalking
L: and the people on the edges are just the parents and other adult people?
B: Yeah, and they selling foods, you know? In the afternnon, they selling foods.
L: So do they do fireworks?
B: Lo hacen cuetes?
A: Si
B: yeah.
L: Do they do anything else at midnight? I interviewed another guy who said that someone would call out the names of the revolutionaries...
B: yeah they do that.
L: and Viva Mexico....
B: Yeah, they do that.
L: Can you ask your mom about that?

B: Como le hacen cuando dicen viva mexico y todos eso.

A: Serna la compana y en el gardin del pueblo...

B: The person go rings ...um a bell, yeah a bell. They call all the people in there. Y he say two times, Viva Mexico.

L: Only two times?

B: No three times.

L: oh, three times. Okay, and what do the people do?

B: They do it too.

L: Do he yell the names of the revolutionaries like Hidalgo or Zapato?

B: No only just Viva Mexico....



Photo by Juana Salinas



Photo by Juana Salinas

Wendy M. Daniels

SAF Intern 1999

The Virgin of Guadalupe: Know Her!

The past 10 weeks has been an experience that I will always remember. What I have learned about the Virgin of Guadalupe makes me feel that finally I know the people with whom I am working. During the summer I have had a few interviews with people who know the most about the Virgin, the migrant people that have come from Mexico to Granville and Vance counties in North Carolina. The purpose of my study was to observe the altars and paintings that some people have in their houses although they are so far from their homeland. The study consists of a combination of single men and families. For those of you who do not know, the Virgin of Guadalupe is the same as the Virgin Mary. I wanted to see how the people could bring something so valuable to a strange new land.

First off, I want everyone to know that the Virgin of Guadalupe is the truth and it is not an invention by the people. Every region has its own ways of celebrating the day that the Virgin appeared in Mexico. The history that everyone knows is that century's ago; the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to Juan Diego when he was going to the temple to confession. Suddenly he looked up and the Virgin was there. She told him to go to the high priest and tell him that she wanted a church built exactly where she had appeared to him in Tepeyac. The priest did not believe him and sent him away to his home. After some days, the Virgin appeared to him again and asked Juan Diego what happened when he went to the priest. He told the Virgin what happened and again she sent him to the priest. When the priest told him no for the second time, he decided to go home by

another way but the Virgin also came again. When Juan Diego told her that the priest said no again, she told him that it was better if he came back the next morning to go again to see the priest. Juan Diego did not want to go but he knew that it was urgent that he did it. The next day he went to where the Virgin appeared on another occasion and she told him to go to a certain place to get roses from there. Afterwards he was to take them to the priest as a test so that they would believe him. Juan Diego knew that there were no flowers in that part of the country but he went anyway without thinking twice. Right where the Virgin directed him, there the roses were waiting for Juan Diego. Juan Diego went to pick them and put them in his tilma—a shawl like cloth. The flowers stayed in the tilma until Juan Diego arrived to the temple. When the priest saw Juan Diego again, they did not even want to pay attention to him but Juan Diego opened his shawl. When the priest looked at the tilma there they saw the image of the Virgin. From that moment on, they believed him, deciding now to build a temple where the Virgin directed. Today the tilma of Juan Diego is in the Basilica in Mexico City, Mexico.

In addition to celebrating the 12 of December, the people of Durango have another history to add to that which is written above. According to them, the 12 of May at noon the Virgin appeared in the Sierra de Gamón, Durango. One day a man was watching his sheep when one of the sheep got lost. He went to look for it and suddenly he looked up. On the side of a huge rock, he saw the Virgin. The Virgin's dress was full of stars. The man that was in the countryside went to the entire town to advise them of what had just happened. From that day on, there has always been the celebration on the 12 of May. Every year anyone can see the colors of the dress on one cloud in the

middle of the day. Sometimes, the colors of her dress can be seen in water or other water fountains just as they were seen 500 years ago.

The people that were interviewed had a dedication to the Virgin that some people could not even believe. The men said that the Virgin is the Mother, queen and Señora of all Mexican. The Virgin is miraculous for those that have faith and furthermore she is the hope of all the life. The people have a confidence in her for work and they lay their problems on her. She came because there was some much poverty and to help the indigenous people if they had faith.

The people that participated in the study said that they had grown up with the beliefs in the Virgin from their childhood from their parents and other kinsmen. Although some of those that participated in the study have never lived in Mexico, they too have the same faith that those who have lived in Mexico for their entire life. For example, Veronica went just last year for the first time to Mexico. Although she has never lived in Mexico she has always believed in the Virgin (listen to the tape). People that have lived in Mexico have more details of how the celebration is on the 12 of December but all that participated in the study had similar answers to the questions.

In Mexico, there are many ways to celebrate the 12 of December of every year. Every pueblo has its own celebrations and it is a national celebration where no one goes to work. The day begins with mass and the Mañanitas. Everybody in town goes to mass. Afterwards, there are parties that have bands, dances, other music and a lot of wonderful food. The sonajas are played and fireworks are shot off. There are two Mañanitas written below:

1- “Desde el cielo una hermosa mañana,
Desde el cielo una hermosa mañana
La Guadalupana,
La Guadalupana,
La Guadalupana bajo al Tepeyac.”

2. “Del cielo bajo
Del cielo bajo
Triunfante y ufana
A favor hacernos
A favor hacernos la Guadalupana.

(Second Verse)
“Dichoso Juan Diego
Dichoso Juan Diego
Aquella mañana
A Juan Diego hablo la Guadalupana.” (Escucha a la sinta)

There are many other songs but the people from the study very well knew these two songs.

Although many people have come from Mexico to the United States. Forgetting a devotion that one has had from his childhood does not exist. The people in the study have brought large paintings and other versions of the Virgin so far from their homelands. Many people from other churches can not imagine believing in something such as this and sometimes they ask the people to forget or deny their past. How could someone ask another person to forget his or her heritage? As one woman commented, “one day a minister came to my house and say that I had a painting of the Virgin. I told him that I had believed in the Virgin for many years and that I am going to keep on believing as well. He told me that I should throw it away and I told him no. My husband was very upset

as well. Until this day, I have not return to that church because of what that minister said to me.” For the person doing a study like this, this means that the person is never going to give up his/her beliefs in the Virgin.

The study of the Virgin has been very important for me as the interviewer. Never have I known or thought about who was this Virgin of Guadalupe. Now I understand more of the Catholic religion as well because some of the men thought it necessary to teach me. The people involved in the study taught me the prayer of sanctification according to them. The prayer is to be said in the morning upon waking up and the last thing said before you go to bed at night. The prayer goes, ¹By the sign of the Sanctified Cross, ² Of our enemies, ³ Give us freedom Our Holy God, ⁴ In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. AMEN. (Kiss the cross). When the people being interviewed share all that has been shared the interviewer, the interviewer feels that finally they are getting to know and understand the subjects. The study has been excellent and informative for me as a student and a future worker with migrant people.

Carmen Tomás

July 26, 1999

Hospital

Caren is from Chiran, Michoacan, Mexico.

We celebrate the appearance of the Virgen of Guadalupe on December 12 of each year. We have fireworks, mass with wine and bread, and Mañanitas. We have a lot of food in the house like tamales and sweets. I don't remember all of the foods but I do remember the celebration. The celebration starts with the images of the Virgen in the procession in the streets and continues until the church.

I believe in the santes because whenever I have true faith, they give me miracles. The Virgen has helped me a lot.

I have gone to many churches including the Baptist Church. One time the preacher came to my house and asked me why did I have the pictures that I have of the Virgen. I told himm that I have believed in the Virgen for many years and I will continue to believe in her. He told me that I should throw it in the trash but I told him NO. My husband was very upset at what he had said to me. Up until this day, I have never returned to that church because of what he said to me.

Memories

A huge celebration where everyone is there. We go to the church for mass. We see the Mañanitas. There is a lot of music and bands that play all day long. There are many sonajes and fireworks in the celebration.

The Mañanitas sing:

“Desde el cielo una hermosa mañana

Desde el cielo una hermosa mañana

La Guadalupana,

La Guadalupana,

La Guadalupana bajo al Tepeyac.”

Here I have 2 paintings of the Virgen but in Mexico I have 2 HUGE ones in my house.

Interview July 29, 1999

Doc Project

<u>Participants</u>	<u>Years in US</u>	<u>Where are you from?</u>
Martin Aldaba	5	Durango
Alejandro Aldaba	2	Durango
Don Bernardo	9	Durango
Francisco Javier	7	Durango
Paulino	3	Durango
Enrique Aldaba	6	Durango
Trino Aldaba	2	Durango
Geraldo	6	Durango

Who taught you all about the Virgen?

- Mother
- Father

What does the Virgen mean for you all?

- Patron of Mexico
- Queen of Mexico
- Force and voluntad for work
- Mother of all Mexicans
- Hope of life
- We have confidence in her for work and we also give her our problems
- Miraculous

When do you celebrate the appearance?

- December 12 of every year with Mañanitas (songs) and dances

Celebration of centuries

- May 12 in Durango because she appeared there

When we celebrate seeing here in the Gamón Dessert about 500 years ago

On the 12 of May at 12 o'clock noon, She appeared in the Sierra de Gamón, Durango.

The history of when she appeared: one day a Indian man was taking care of his sheep.

One of his sheep got lost. The Indian went to look for it and suddenly he looked up. On the side of a huge rock, the image of the Virgen appeared. She was filled with stars. The man went to tell all of his people that he had seen the Virgen. From that moment until today, there has been this devotion to the Virgen. Every year you can see the colors of her dress in one cloud. Sometimes the image can be seen in water and fountains.

The 12 of December is when the Virgen came to Juan Diego in Tepeyac. The Tilma or Ayate—a shawl like piece of clothing—today is in the Basilica (a Temple that holds about 10,000 people) in Mexico City, Mexico.

How does it work?

Faith—If you need something you only have to ask and you will see the miracle.

Candles—You ask for something and promise to do something in return.

Guadalupe for the Indigenous people=Mary the Mother of Christ

Who is the Virgen?

- Señora
- Queen
- Mother

Why did the Virgen come?

-Because of the poverty level in Mexico and to help the Indigenous people in their lives if they have faith.

-Devotion not a tradition

Prayer of Sanctification

1. For the signal of the Sanctified Cross
2. Of our enemies
3. Give us freedom our Holy God
4. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

KISS THE CROSS—AMEN.

The numbers here correspond to the number in the cross on the body. See diagram.

Always cross yourself from left to right.

How do you celebrate the honor?

Mass

Mañanitas

Parties

No one does anything but party

Bands

Dances

Music

Lots of food

The Mexican flag in every house/home

Veronica Miranda

Aug 3, 1999

Veronica is the interpreter in the Stovall clinic. She has lived her entire life in the United States. She was boorn in Texan and has lived the majority of her life in Florida. She has only been to Mexico once or twice. Her family is from Coahuila, Mexico. Although Veronica has lived in the United States for her entire life, she too knows about the Virgen.

She knew about the Virgen from her the moment she can remember because her family and other kinsmen taught her. Her children also know the history of the Virgen.

For Veronica, the Virgen is miraculous and if you ask her for something with faith, you will receive it. In her house, her family has always had candles lit because they want the Virgen to know that they always have faith in her. The miracles of the Virgen are always present in one's life. In her house on December 12, they always have the candles lit, flowers for the altar, and a lot of food. The Virgen is very important for her.



"The Catch of the Day"

Photo by Ellen Szedon



"The First Steps (A
Gluey Mess)"

Photo by Ellen Szedon

ORAL HISTORY

JOSE JUAN ZUNIGA

Description

Name: Jose Juan Zuniga
Place of Birth: Honduras
Age: 25
Marital Status: Married with two daughters

Jose Juan was born and raised in Honduras. When he was living there he always had the desire to come to the United States to work and earn money. Jose talks about the type of work that he did in Honduras and how difficult it was to make a living there. He describes a type of work that he did where he would hunt exotic birds and snakes to sell them in the black market. He further talks about the living condition in Honduras and how one day they forced him to decide to give up everything and to risk it all to come to the United States for a better way of life. He was 18 years old the first time that he came to the U.S. in search of work.

Jose Juan narrates his long journey across Guatemala and Mexico and the struggles he had to face when he crossed the border to the U.S. Jose Juan talks about the type of work that he does here in North Carolina. He compares his past lifestyle in Honduras to his lifestyle here in the U.S. He finishes the interview by talking about the future of his family and how he wishes the best for his two little girls.

ORAL HISTORY

JOSE JUAN ZUNIGA

FIELD NOTES

I met Jose Juan Zuniga when a co-worker, who had been a farmworker himself, introduced me to him. I had asked my co-worker to take me around the Sampson County area to find someone who was willing to do and interview with me on oral history. When I arrived at the house of Jose Juan I was very overwhelmed by the conditions in which his house was. From the outside the house looked in very bad conditions, almost unlivable. Most of the windows were broken and were covered with plywood. The house seemed very small and deteriorated. The area around the house looked almost as terrifying. The house was hidden behind tobacco fields and behind some woods.

When I got there I saw some little kids running and playing around. I could not imagine how those kids could play around that tobacco that was probably infected with pesticides and other harmful chemicals. After knocking on the door, Jose Juan and another man by the name of Manuel came out. Manuel came out with his wife. My co-worker actually knew them because he had worked and lived together with them. He began talking with Manuel and his wife. I was standing behind a car and began introducing myself to Jose Juan. I told him whom I was, what I was doing, and the reason why I was there.

I explained to him the best I could my purpose for the interview. I showed him some examples of other interviews done on oral history and allowed him some time to read them. He seemed interested in the interview and said that he was willing to do it, but not at that time. We made arrangements and I decided that I would return in two days late in the afternoon prepared to do the interview.

The day that I returned I found him and Manuel outside of the house relaxing and drinking some beers. They had been expecting us. Jose Juan immediately said that we could go inside of the house and sit to do the interview. I wanted to stay outside because it was very hot and I knew that inside would be even hotter. When I walked inside of the house I saw some of Manuel's kids playing video games. I thought that the only one that lived in that house was Jose Juan, but it turned out that he was living with Manuel and he was married and had

six children. Also to my surprise I found that Jose Juan was also married and had two little girls. I couldn't imagine how difficult it must have been to live in that same house with 12 people. Clearly the house was not meant to house 12 people.

Jose Juan walked me into what seemed was the living room of the house. There were two sofas and some chairs. I also got the impression that the living room was being used as a bedroom because there were some blankets hanging from the ceiling that extended across the living room from one wall to the other. My guess was that Manuel and his wife were sharing one side of the living room and Jose Juan and his wife were on the other side. Dividing them both, and with no means of privacy was a thin blanket. It was unbelievable.

The inside of the house was like an inferno. There was no air conditioning and I thought it must have been horrible for the kids to live in such a way. We both sat down for the interview and I explained Jose Juan his rights as an interviewee. Then his wife came into the living room with both her girls. She had in her arms a beautiful two-month-old baby. She sat next to the both of us and was listening to the interview.

Jose Juan felt very comfortable with the interview and didn't have a problem answering any of the questions. The interview went real well. It was clear by what Jose Juan said that he preferred living here in the U.S. than in Honduras. He knew he had a lot more opportunities and benefits here than he had over there. He was also very concerned with the well being of his wife and daughters. He said he wanted nothing but the best for them. I clearly saw that he was very happy living here in North Carolina and working. His harsh work as a farmworker didn't seem to bother him. He treated it as any other type of work and liked it. Not many people can say that. At the end of the interview he seemed very happy with sharing his life history and because someone actually cared about it.

As I left the site I couldn't stop thinking about all the people that lived in that house. That same day I interviewed Manuel and his interview was also very interesting. Anyone, no matter from what background that would have been there and understood, would of clearly seen the necessity that those poor people had to have a better way of life. They were all sharing the same house to spend less but the living conditions looked inhumane. I wondered what the future would hold for Jose Juan and for his friend Manuel. I just wished them the best of the

world and hopefully they can accomplish what they want best for their families. The life of a farmworkers, and especially migrant farmworkers is one full of determination, struggle, suffering, and hard work. A lot of times we think that our ordinary life situations are bad and intolerable but they are by no means compared to those experienced by these people.

ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTION IN SPANISH

JOSE JUAN ZUNIGA

COUNTER #

040 **JCV:** Apoyaba su papá a Ud. cuando era chico?

JJZ: Si. El quiso que yo estudiara, pero a mi nunca me gusto el estudio.

JCV: Por que no le gusto el estudio?

JJZ: No, este, se me hacía muy aburrido y por que eramos pobres. Todos los demás chavalos llevaban dinero en la bolsa y yo no. Entoncés se me hacía muy, muy penoso. Todos llevaban de perdido para hecharse una soda y yo no. Cuando estuve en la escuela, como en el cuarto grado ve, hasta entoncés fue como comencé a usar zapatos y todo eso. Me daba pena ir sin zapatos.

56 **JCV:** ¿Vivía la gente muy pobre en su país?

JJZ: Si

JCV: ¿Me podría hablar un poco más sobre eso?

JJZ: Por lo general ahí, pués, este los niños desde que nacen hasta que tienen seis o ocho años andan desnudos. Las mujeres allá no usan pañales desechables que hay aquí. Nomas usan unos trapitos, se los ponen al niño y cuando los ensucian entonces ellas los quitan y los lavan, los secan y los vuelven a poner.

79 **JCV:** ¿En que trabaja la gente?

JJZ: En ganaderías, este, limpiando asi milpas, frijoleras, arrozales. Y este hay una compañía que es de aquí de Estados Unidos, creo por que el nombre lo

tiene que se llama la Standard Free Company que planta banano.

87 **JCV:** ¿Alguna vez trabajaste tu como niño en la agricultura?

JJZ: Si hombre, como que no. Desde doce años yo empecé a trabajar en eso. Ha y también este, también este, también nosotros, ahí donde yo mero me críe había un negocio de agarrar víboras. Yo agarraba víboras ve, para venderlas. Se las vendía a un vato, a un señor que las vendía ahí, y ese señor se las vendía a otro, y el otro se las vendía a un bolillo aquí en los Estados Unidos. No, pero eso nos convenía mejor a nosotros.

JCV: Hableme un poco más de como atrapaban o como agarraban las víboras?

JJZ: Este, mire, como los corales, que en México les dicen coralillos, hay siete clases como teníamos entendido nosotros. Pero, este nosotros que agarrabamos las víboras sabemos las que tienen veneno y las que no tiene veneno. . .También la boa, que les dcimos allá, las agarramos allá. No importa, la agarramos, nomas que se deje. La agarramos y aunque nos muerda no importa ve por que no nos vamos a morir. También compraban los cotorros y todo animal que allamos. Nos salía mucho mejor ve. Si agarramos un animal de esos, mire como un coral la pagan a 36 lempiras y en ese tiempo por un día de trabajo yo me voy a ganar 6 lempiras. Entoncés agarrabamos lo de, seis por cinco treinta, lo de siete días. Lo de siete días de trabajo con una víbora nomas. Era bastante dinero para nosotros. Hubieron muchos que se murieron ve por que se equivocaron. Como se parecen, este, hubieron muchos que murieron por eso.

155 **JCV:** Si las cosas eran difíciles en su país y la gente vivía pobre, ¿por que cree Ud. que las cosas eran difíciles. Piensa Ud. que el gobierno tenía algo que ver con eso?

JJZ: La verdad esas cosas e, yo pienso que el gobierno tiene una parte y la gente otra parte por que es muy huevona tambien la gente. Es lo que yo pienso pues. Que la gente pudiera hacer un poco más de

esfuerzo, por que yo como le digo era de una familia muy pobre pero hecho un esfuerzo y gracias a Dios salieron bien.

170 **JCV:** ¿Por que decidió venir Ud. a los Estados Unidos. Como le hiso para venir aquí?

JJZ: Mire, ¿por que decidí? Por que desde chiquillo era mi ilusión venirme para acá para superarme y para ayudar a mi padre por que era muy pobre el también.

178 **JCV:** ¿Oía Ud. historias de los Estados Unidos?

JJZ: Si lo que oía que aquí se ganaba bastante dinero y que, pues no solo oía yo miraba que todos los que venían aquí llevaban bastante dinero y pues ya vivia la familia mejor.

JCV: ¿Se ilusionaba Ud. con eso?

JJZ: Si. Decía yo no pues, si yo llego alla pues también yo puedo ahorrar dinero. Allá ganaba sies lempiras al día, que venía siendo un dolar. Oséa, eso ganaba yo pero no podía ahorrrar por que allá tenía que comer y todo. Y yo decía, si yo llego a los Estados Unidos y gano 20 dolares, entoncés voy a ganar lo de 20 días de aquí.

363 **JJZ:** Yo si quiero ir alla (Honduras) aunque vuelva a sufrir lo mismo pero si quiero ir por mis parientes.

JCV: ¿Cual fue la diferencia mas grande que Ud. miró en la cultura de este país y que fue lo que le sorprendió mas al llegar aca?

JJZ: No, lo que mas me sorprende de este país es que tiene de todo, de todo tiene. Mi país también si tubiera maquinaria como tiene este país también fuera un país muy desarrollado ve. Pero, es un país muy pobre. Lo que me sorprende de aquí es que todo esta bien adelantado.

JCV: ¿Como miras tu la gente aquí?

JJZ: Lo mas bueno que puede ser.

JCV: ¿Piensa Ud. que la gente es muy racista o que ayuda mucho?

JJZ: No. La gente le ayuda a uno, no es racista.

JCV: ¿Alguna vez te has encontrado con una persona que te a ayudado mucho?

JJZ: Si. . .Como trabaje con un bolillo allá en Wilson ve. El este, yo le decía, no sabe que presteme mil o dos mil dolares ve. El me los prestaba para que yo ayudara a mi familia. Y hací fue como yo fui haciendo mis cosas alla en Honduras. . .Como cuando tuve también enferma una hermana del corazón, yo necesitaba cinco mil dolares y yo le dije a él que si podía prestarmelo. El me dijo que si. Que si era para eso si me los prestaba. Y pues yo le agradezco al señor por que si no mi hermana estuviera muerta.

190

JCV: Que tipo de trabajo a hecho en este país y cual es la diferencia a otros trabajos que a hecho?

JJZ: Yo e trabajado, y jole, varias cosas mire. E trabajado en el tabaco, en el camote, en el tomate, este en la raiz limpiando files de raiz, este en la construccion poniendo esa fregadera arriba que le llaman roofing, e trabajado limpinado llardas, este en la naranja, este en que mas e trabajado, en la blueberry. Yo creo que solo eso.

JCV: ¿Platiqueme más afondo lo que es ser un trabajador agrícola o trabajador del campo en este país?

JJZ: Pues, aunque sea un trabajador agrícola ve, lo que yo pienso que como quiera, este es mejor tratado que, este en el país de uno. Un trabajador agrícola, en el país de uno lo miran como una basura asi. Allá si un trabajador que ande trabajando para otro asi agrícola ese no tiene nada. Y aquí como quiera nadien lo discrimina a uno ni nada. Aunque sea agrícola y ande todo cochino como quiera y todo, como quiera Ud. esta ganando su dinero y tiene como comer y como comprase una ropa o un carro. Yo e trabajado en la

agricultura y nunca me a faltado un carro como moverme. Allá en mi país cuando voy a comprar un carro yo trabajando asi, cuando. Si muy apenas compro un pantalon de segunda.

JCV: ¿Me podria platicar un poco más de como es un día en su vida como trabajador agrícola?

JJZ: Mire, yo e trabajado semanas que me levanto a las sies de la manana, entro a las seis y media y este paro hasta que ya se esta oscureciendo, como en la naranja. Eso es lo que haciamos allá, pero también yo agarraba mis cheques de \$450 de \$500, libras afuera de lo que me quitan del seguro.

286 **JCV:** ¿Cree Ud. que le valió la pena venir a los Estados Unidos?

JJZ: O si.

JCV: ¿Por que?

JJZ: Hecho muchas cosas yo en mi país. Hecho mi casa e ayudado a mi familia en Honduras. Tengo más niñas acá también.

JCV: ¿Cuántas hijas tiene Ud.?

JJZ: Tengo dos niñas.

JCV: ¿Como se llaman ellas?

JJZ: Ella se llama Erika y la otra se llama Jenifer.

296 **JCV:** ¿Como mira Ud. el futuro sullo y el de su familia?

JJZ: Estando en este país yo me puedo superar mucho. . . Tienen mas oportunidades aquí en este país.

JCV: ¿Apoyaría Ud. a sus hijas a que siguieran el estudio y algun día fueran a la universidad o al colegio?

JJZ: Si las apoyaría si. Claro que si. . .Yo las apoyaría para que fueran algien, y es lo que yo quiero.

JCV: ¿Como le gustaria vivir dentro de unos veinte o treinta anos?

JJZ: ¿Como me gustaria vivir? Tener mi casa, tener mi carro como salir y este un trabajo estable para que no ande para arriba y para abajo.

Life on Easy Street

a documentary project by Rachel LaCour

"My mother got a certain age and she told us: she said, 'boys, I'm gonna have to quit y'all. Y'all well old enough to take care of me.' She sat down, she quit, and we had to take care of her."

-Robert Lee Faison

With his deep, sandblasted voice, Robert Lee Faison tells me about his life on Easy Street, just between Dunn and Newton Grove, North Carolina. His front teeth are gone, and his lower-lip protrudes memorably as he pauses to think about his story--one of the many he offers.

Robert, a 65 year-old African-American farmworker, bares the physical memories of a life of labor--a slouched, contorted spine from years of bending low in green-yellow leaves, cavernous grooves around the eyes, gifts of squinting and sun, one lost pinkie finger, and a toothless smile that reveals contagious contentment and graceful strength. His scars are truth; his smile, divine; his stories, treasures.

Robert Lee Faison was born in 1933 in Dunn ("Dunns as he calls it) and moved to a house off Easy Street when he was 5 years-old. He stills lives on the same plot of land, the land on which his mother's house was built, on which he, his brothers and sisters were born, on which he raised his own family, and on which he has worked since he was 12 years-old.

Today, the family is gone and the old home has gone through various stages of identity. Once, a home for Robert and his family, then, a labor camp for migrant farmworkers, and now, a dilapidated relic of an evolutionary shift in American agriculture. "Keep Out" signs bar the doors, boards criss-cross the broken window panes, and paint falls from each wooden-plank wall. But Robert remembers sounds of children's voices echoing through the 2 large rooms inside crude wood frames.

Now, he lives in a labor camp, only 10 feet from the old home, with Mexican H2A (guest) workers who gently call him "El Negro" and smile with every step he takes. He is a character in his own right and his mannerisms transcend language barriers. He is well-liked by his neighbors.

Although tempered by a lifetime of hard work in tobacco fields, Robert remains tender hearted--a genuinely sweet man.

His home, an old aluminum trailer, is stark but welcoming. His front door is always open when he's home, and when I pull up in my car late in the summer evening twilight, I can just make out his distinct form silhouetted and illuminated by the screen-door and the orange glow from the sun. He is waiting patiently to greet his guest.

As distinct as the weather-worn eyes and protruding lower-lip, Robert's life is one of monumental routine--the monumental in the mundane. His roots run deep, and he is the only member of his family remaining on the land. Surrounded by tobacco

fields and the voices of another language, Robert works hard in the only life he has ever known: tobacco farming.

He is an ironic mix of rooted-routine and willing adaptability. He has lived on the same land for over sixty years, but is learning Spanish from the Mexican workers he lives and labors with.

"I know everything there is to know 'bout 'bacca," Robert's molasses slow slang sticks in my ears for ten minutes after he completes a sentence. That's his life too--slow and steady; a cycle of planting, priming, worming, cropping, harvesting, sorting, hauling, barning, and curing tobacco. He is a breathing history book of tobacco farming in North Carolina.

Now, too old to do the work he once did, Robert drives a tractor during harvest months, hauling flatbed loads of cut tobacco leaves picked by migrant workers who live with him at the camp.

He remembers the days when all the farmworkers were African-American and the plows were horse-drawn. He is a man of stories and life-learned wisdom who has spent his life working in the fields of North Carolina.

In many ways, Robert is a forgotten hero. He moves quietly, lives simply, and does his work with incredible dignity. He has so much to offer, but doesn't advertise his life in a way that anyone would notice. He is the silent shadow, dancing quietly below our busy schedules and hectic lives. He has peace to give and stories to share. He is a constant in the changing equation of American agriculture.

He is standing patiently at his screen door, illuminated by the summer twilight, waiting for any visitor who seeks his company. All they need to do is knock.



Q. La Cour ©97



Jan 20 1999

Personal Statement
Angeline Echeverría

For my documentary project, I decided to interview my co-worker Vicente Rosales, because I feel like he has a very captivating way of speaking and telling stories. Everyday at the office, when we reported about our activities the day before, he would take his time and include significant details that the rest of us would probably have overlooked or forgotten in the re-telling. But the stories that he tells that have the greatest impression on me are not work-related. Instead, they have to do with experiences he has had in Mexico and the United States that reveal something about him as a person and an individual. So, for my project, I asked him to let me record my two favorite stories and transcribe them, so that people who have never met him can also learn from his experiences.

The first story he tells on the tape is about the dog he had in Mexico who used to follow him around wherever he went. The dog's name was Mango, and after he finishes with the story of the dog's life and death, he says, "Este es la historia de Mango. Esta es parte de, de nuestras debilidades como seres humanos, o también esta es parte de nuestra cultura, que nos encariñamos de un caballo, de un burro, de un perro, o de una rez, de una vaca o de un toro. Y, pues, esta es parte de nuestra cultura, es parte de nuestra vida." "This is the story of Mango. This is part of our weaknesses as human beings, or, also, this is part of our culture, that we grow to care about a horse, a donkey, a dog, or a cow or a bull. And this is part of our culture, it's part of our lives." This story revealed to me a lot of Vicente's sensitivity and capacity for caring, and when he adds this part at the end, it really makes me see the reason why he tells stories like these: to display something not just about himself, but about people in general.

The second story that he tells on the tape also reveals something about him as a person. The story has to do with when he was picking strawberries in Florida, and a grower was trying to make him pick extra strawberries without receiving extra pay. In standing up to the grower, he reveals a feeling that he often has that he has been fortunate enough to have the courage to confront injustice where he finds it. He says, "Tal parece que hay algo que me empuja a esos lugares donde hay algún injusticia....tal parece que yo soy escogido para enfrentar a esos problemas y. Pues,

gracias a Dios, siempre he tenido valor para, para enfrentar a problemas....me ha tocado siempre estar batallando con personas que no entienden, con personas que, pues, que hay que explicarles para que entiendan.” “It always seems like there’s something that pushes me to those places where there is some sort of injustice. It always seems like I am chosen to confront those problems. And, thanks to God, I have always had the will to confront problems. It has always been up to me to battle with people who don’t understand, with people that you have to explain things to so that they can understand.” As you can tell from his own words, he is a special human being, and I think he has a special gift for story-telling. That is why I wanted to record his experiences and his talent.

Angeline Echeverría: Proyecto Documental

Entrevista con Vicente Rosales

20 de Julio 1999

A.E.: Soy una estudiante con SAF. Hoy, voy a hablar con, este, Vicente Rosales, quien tiene un gran talento para narrar historias...que...y va a compartir su talento con nosotros hoy. Um...antes de que empecemos, Vicente, ¿le gustaría...um...decirnos al-algo sobre su vida, como de que-ah- de donde es y porqué está aquí ahora?

V.R.: Bueno, antes de nada, mi nombre es Vicente Rosales. Ah, soy del estado de Guanajuato, México. Ah, soy de una comunidad, de un rancho, de una aldea, de un lugar, ah, llamado Ejido San José la Grande. Y vine a este país como viene cualquier otro mexicano, o cualquier otra persona, no importa de donde. Siempre con el, el sueño o la intención de tener una mejor forma de vida para uno y para su familia.

A.E.: Okay....

V.R.: Ah, cuando llegué a este país, tuve que trabajar muy fuerte. Tuve que trabajar bajo las inclemencias del tiempo, al intemperie, bajo cualquier condición del tiempo, haciendo mucho frío. Aunque estuviera lloviendo, ah, aunque la calor estuviera a alta temperatura, tenía que andar yo trabajando. Piscando tomate, piscando pepino, ah, piscando lechuga, sembrando caña: trabajos bien pesados, trabajos bien crueles, casi trabajos inhumano. Y, pues, ahora, al partir de...de que he conocido algunas uniones, he tratado de buscar una forma más cómoda de trabajar y de vivir. ¿Tienes algo que preguntar, Angeline?

A.E.: Um...¿Puede explicar un poquito de...anda trabajando ahora con FLOC?

V.R.: Bueno, ahora estoy trabajando de voluntario con FLOC, porque he conocido de la unión, he conocido su causa, he conocido cual es su meta, cual es el propósito de la unión. He querido darme trabajador voluntario para estar más cerca de la gente del campo para darme cuenta de tanta

necesidad que tiene la gente en el campo, en sus casas, en sus viviendas, en su trabajo, como es que sus patrones lo tratan, como es ahora el campo, despues de haber pasado 18 años que yo llegué a este pais.

A.E.: Okay...Um, la razon porque quise entrevistarle es porque Ud. tiene (creo yo) un gran talento para narrar historias y...por eso, me gustaría mucho si, ah, nos narrara, ah, el-el cuento de Mango.

V.R.: O, el cuento de Mango.

A.E.: Sí.

V.R.: Sí...al...En el año 1982 que a decidir para México para visitar a mis padres, ah, cuando yo me vine de la casa, había, pues, unos perros ahí, verdad, que ya estaban viejos. Y para reponer estos perros viejos, ah, este, se hicieron...aquirieron unos, unos perritos más juvenes, unos perritos más chiquitos, verdad, para que siguieron cuidando la casa y cuidando los animales lo que había en la casa. Entonces, cuando yo lleguee, pues, mi familia se alegró mucho de que yo había llegado. Todos mis hermanos, les dió mucho gusto que yo había regresado a casa despues de haber pasado una aventura aca en Estados Unidos. Y me causó mucha...a...curiosidad al ver que llegué y, pues, todos me querían menos un perro que [A.E. riéndose], un perro, un cachorro; tendría unos ocho meses de vida el perro y, como, pues, era de una raza, pues, más o menos fina, estaba algo crecido, y...y, este era el único que no me quería. Era mi único enemigo y de todas formas, andaba buscando la manera de morderme. Y, pues, aunque estuviera yo con mi familia, no acababa de convencerse al perro de que yo también era parte de esa familia. Siempre andaba tratando de, de morderme. Ya despues, al día siguiente de que dormí yo en mi casa, todavía tenía que andarme yo cuidando al Mango, y, pues, mi familia tenía que cuidarme del perro, porque él estaba con la idea de morderme. No se acostumbraba que yo estuviera en casa. Para él, yo era un extraño. Y empecé a llamarle por su nombre. Le pusieron el mango por teener un color amarillo o entre amarillo y colorado. Le empezaron a decir el “mango”. Y yo le empecé a llamar por su nombre, Mango. Mango.....Y, pues, no, no me ganaba su, su amistad de este perro, y....Yo andaba tranquilo en la casa hasta que este perro ya se iba con mi hermanoa que

cuidaba, cuidaba chivas. Cuidaba chivas en el campo. Era el hermano más chico de mi familia. Entonces, ya cuando pasó el tiempo, verdad, pues, mi hermano empezó a hacerle travesuras a este perro. Lo agarraba y lo bañaba, lo aventaba a un canal, lo...Le hacía travesuras al perro. Y, como yo, pues, ya no pensaba venir para Estados Unidos, o no tenía planes de venir inmediatos, empecé a trabajar con mi papá, a trabajar en el campo, a trabajar, am, como se trabaja allá. No se usan tractores. Andaba yo con un tiro de caballo; andaba yo cultivando la milpa, cultivando el-el trigo, el maíz, el-el-la huerta de jitomates...ah...o lo que había en el campo: sebollla, lechuga...lo que estaba sembrado en la parcel de mi papá. Entonces, este perro me empezó a agarrar con confianza. Me empezó a agarrar cariño y empezó a seguirme y yo empecé a carizar a este perro. Entonces, este perro, pues, ya despues a donde quiera que yo iba, me seguía, y, pues, siempre. El perro se hizo mi amigo, se hizo mi compañero y para dondequiera andabanos juntos. Ah, ya despues que duré más tiempo en la casa, verdad, pues, yo ya sentí que me había ganado, pues, el amor de Mango. Y empecé yo a, pues, también a faltar el respeto al perro. Empecé a...a jugar con él. Y, pues, este perro se encariñó mucho de mí, como se encariña cualquier ser humano de otra persona o de un amigo o de una amiga. Entonces, cierta ocasión, ah, un hermano mío que tengo en la capital de México me invitó a, al Distrito Federal y, pues, este, yo le dije que sí iba a ir, que en unos ocho días más iba para allá, para la Ciudad México. Pero, pues, antes de irme, anduve yo visitando a algunos parientes que tenían sus esterios y, pues, oía música, oía en casa de ellos. Y el perro siempre andaba conmigo, siempre me andaba sigiendo. Fui a visitar a, a un primo hermano, a un pariente de otro rancho cercano al mío. Anduve yo visitando a mis parientes y el perro siempre conmigo. Entonces, el día que me fui a la capital de México, ese día, pues, el perro me empezó a extrañar. Aullaba por las noches y empezó a no querer comer. Ya no salía de la casa. Entonces, nos fui para la capital y pensaba durar ocho días allá, pero, pues, a los tres días me mandó decirme mi mamá que porqué no me regresaba, que, porque el perro no estaba comiendo y ya estaba allei como, como si estuviera con huelga de hambre. Que no, no quería, no quería comer y no quería salir a ninguna parte y estaba bien triste. Y me andaba iendo a buscar a los lugares en donde yo antes había ido a visitar a mis parientes que iba y me buscaba allá a ver si estaba yo allá con ellos y no me encontraba y se

regresaba para la casa y luego a buscar otro lugar. Y, pues, que andaba el perro desesperado, verdad. Entonces, me regresé de la capital de México y cuando llegué a la casa, pues, ya otra vez el perro, este, empezó a comer. Le dió mucho gusto cuando llegué. Le dió mucho gusto cuando volví y empezó a comer, empezó a, pues, otra vez a, a tener ganas de vivir porque, pues, si el perrito hubiera sido un ser humano, tal vez se hubiera pensado en suicidarse al no verme a mí, verdad. Pero ya lo que me vió, otra vez empezó con deseos de vivir. Y por esos días, me enfermé de tifoidea. Al regreso--al regresar de México, me enfermé de tifoidea. [tos] Y estuve...tuve que ir al doctor. Estuve encamado y todo el tiempo que estuve yo guardando reposo en la casa...este, pues, no podía salir yo. Estaba en la cama allí y todo el tiempo el perro estuvo esperándome que saliera yo del cuarto, esperándome allí en las, en la puerta, verdad, de la casa. Y siempre, ah, pasaba mi mamá o mis hermanos y lo encaminaban de allí y se iba, pero luego regresó otra vez allí. Y cuando abría la puerta se paraba y se asomaba para adentro, a ver si me miraba que estaba yo allí. Y cuando dejaban la puetra abierta, el perro se metía y, pues, el—se, se echaba allí en donde yo estaba, o también, este, allí se dormía. Y ya despues, no se quería salir, no lo podían echar fuera del cuarto. Allí quería estar conmigo. Entonces, llegó el día en que me alivié y salí y fuí a jugar con él. Anduve, anduve agusto con él, pues, aduvo agusto conmigo, y yo con él. Anduvimos un tiempo muy juntos, verdad, y, pues, entonces se me presentó la oportunidad de venir a los Estados Unidos. Y, pues, sí, yo me quería venir, pero me daba lástima, me daba lástima con el perro, que, pues, que, que él no entendería. Él no entendería, pues, porque yo me venía para acá. Y, pues, me daba lástima también con mi mamá. Me daba lástima con mi mamá que me decía, pues que, pues que, ya no me viniera que ella no quería que anduviera yo para acá. Pero, pues, francamente, a mí me daba más lástima con el perro que con mi mamá, porque mi mamá, pues, ella entendía el porque me venía yo. Ella, pues, razonaba y decía, pues—

Tienes razon en irse. Porque a lo mejor, él quiere tener un dinero en el banco o simplemente quiere que vivamos mejor nosotros—

Y, pues, ella eso lo entendía y yo me daba cuenta de lo que entendía y yo decía—

No, pues, ella sabe porque yo me voy—

pero lo que me daba más lástima era el perro. Me daba lástima con el perro, que, pues, que él no entendería porque me venía yo, porque lo dejaba solo. Y tuve miedo que el perro se fuera a morir despues de que yo me viniera. [tos] Entonces, decidí mejor no venirme . Decidí quedarme allá. [tos] Y así viví como dos meses con, con el perro muy agusto y ya no pensaba yo en irme. El perro me quitó la intención de venirme yo para Estados Unidos. Entonces, por esos días, uno de mi vecinas tenía, tenía un, tenía un pavo, o más bien dicha, tenía una pava. Ah, tenía una pava incubando a unos, unos huevos, verdad, para que nacieran, pues, polluelos. Pero, ah, fue un perro y se comió los huevos que estaba incubando esta, esta pava, y la vecina echó la culpa a Mango. Dijo que Mango había sido él que se había ido a comerse los huevos y no era cierto. Mi perro no era, no tenía esta costumbre de, de comerse los, los huevos de, de los animales, de las gallinas o de las pavas. Y mi vecina, disgustada, un día que vió a mi perro por allí, le, le dió a comer veneno y el perro, sin saber, se comió lo que se dieron a comer y, y se envenenó. Yo no estaba en ese momento en la casa cuando el perro se envenenó. Y...llegué ya cuando el perro se estaba muriendo. De cualquier forma, fui a un veterinario a ver si conseguía una, una medicina para contrarrestar el veneno, pero no, ya no pude hacer nada. Ya no le puse ni la inyección, porque el perro ya estaba muerto. Entonces, un compadre mío que sabía como quería yo a ese perro, dijo

Compadre—dijo—pues, ni modo, pues que, hay que sepultar a Mango.

Y—Sí—le dije—sí compadre—le digo—pues, pobre de mi perro, hombre, se me murió.

--Entonces—dijo—vengase—dijo—traigaselo—dijo.

--No—dije—yo no me lo llevo.

Dijo—Entonces me lo llevo.

Y él se lo llevó arrastrando y con una pala cavó un, un hoyo bien profundo y allí se sepultó a mi Mango. Y lo llenó de...le sepultó con tierra y con piedras. Y me veía a mí, mi compadre, pues, me veía triste y dijo—

--Pues, ya, compadres—dijo—ahora sí ya cuando haiga chance, se ve a Estados Unidos comoquiera, ya su Mango ya se murió. Ya no hay nada que le detenga aquí.

Y, pues, sí, agarré, y como alas dos meses me vine para acá. Entonces, pues, este es la historia de Mango. Esta, [tos] esta es parte de...de nuestras debilidades como seres humanos o también, esta es parte de nuestra cultura,

que nos encariñamos de un caballo, de un burro, de un perro o de una rez, de una vaca o un toro. Y, pues, este es parte de nuestra cultura, es parte de nuestra vida. Y, pues, aquí estoy otra vez en Estados Unidos. Estoy trabajando, y, pues, siempre acordándome de mi Mango, acordándome de ese perro.

A.E.: ¿Vicente, nos quiere contar ahora de algo que le haya ocurrido en los files de trabajo aquí en los Estados Unidos?

V.R.: Bueno, sí, tengo, tengo muchas historias. Tengo muchos casos que me han pasado, ah, con los rancheros, pero, pues, ya desde México, tal parece que, que hay algo que me empuja a esos lugares donde hay algún injusticia. Tal parece, tal parece que yo soy escogido para enfrentar a esos problemas y. [tos] Pues, gracias a Dios, siempre he tenido valor para, para enfrentar a problemas. Y a parte de eso que, pues, me...de ese que no sé ingles, me he desenvuelto en algunos programas bien importantes como Santuario, ah, como la unión de Cesar Chavez, y ahora esta unión de FLOC. Ah...me ha tocado siempre [tos] ah, estar batallando con personas que no entienden, con personas que, pues, que hay que explicarles para, para que entiendan. Ah, me sucedió un caso en, en Florida, ah, en el cual andaba, andaba yo piscando, andaba piscando fresas. Entonces, en este ocasión, pues, ah...nos dijeron por la tarde que ya las fresas se habían terminado, que ya lo único que había era que teníamos que piscar, ah, fresa, pero para jugo. Ya no iba a ser en...en, en *flats*. Ya no iba a ser en cajas. Ahora iba a ser en unos baños de plástico. Y estos baños de plástico tenían que llevar como límite 17 libras. [tos] Y, y, pues, sí, empezamos a trabajar por la mañana piscando los, piscando la fresa para, para jugo. Era primera vez que yo hacía ests trabajo. Ah...entonces, cuando empezamos a piscar, pues, y yo procuraba no regalar mi trabajo al, al ranchero. De por sí que ya el, el pago del, de la pesca era barato y no iba yo a regalar, pues, libras de más. No iba yo a regalar mi trabajo. Yo quería piscar lo que era justo. Quería entregar la, en la báscula lo que era justo, porque teníamos una báscula, ah, en sobre la plataforma de un camión en donde, pues, allí llegábanos y depositábanos la, el, el *flat* o la, el balde de fresa. Y allí, pues, ya, este, se sabía cuantas libras llevaba uno. Ah...estuve entregando siempre arriba de 17 libras. Siempre estuve entregando 18 libras, 18 y

media, 19 libras. Procuraba de no pasarme de allí, de, de 18 para abajo. Siempre regalando, pues, por temor de que no fuera completo el peo, siempre regalando media libra o una libra. No más de 19 libras, siempre 17, 18 libras o poquito más, pero, pues, siempre llevando el peso. Y, una ocasión, estaba el...había dos socios. Había dos rancheros que eran socios, se llamaba Edward Laton y el otro se llamaba, no sé pronunciarlo bien, pero tenía also así como pato. Se llamaba Doug Donald Williams. Entonces, ya estaba este ranchero que era, pues, de los bien malos, verdad. Estaba allí presente, y cuando él vió que yo llegué con, con el balde de fresa, les preguntó a los mayordomos—¿Cuántos, cuántas libras trae este hombre en el balde?

Y le dijeron—No, pues, él trae, este, ahorita, nos está entregando aqui, como 16 libras.

Y dijo él, dijo—A ver—dijo—Avienten el *flat* allí al...

Y ya aventaron el *flat* al, o la, o el balde, aventaron sobre la, la báscula, y no, pues, llevaba yo 17 libras y media. No alcancé a llegar a las 18. Y me dijo—Sabes que, necesito que me pisques, ah, más fresa en el balde.

Le dije no, le digo—Pues, yo ya traigo el peso que es de 17 libras pasado, ya traigo 17 y media, casi 18 libras traigo.

Dijo—No, necesito que me traigas como los demas.

Y andaban allí otras personas que, pues, que querían quedar bien con el ranchero y le estaban piscando, ah, 19, 20, 21, hasta 22 libras le ponían en cada balde. Y, pues, sí, se miraba la caja aqui va muy llena, se miraba el balde muy lleno. Entonces, ya el ranchero me dijo—Míra, este, sí no me piscas como me traen ellos en la caja, pues, entonces, te voy a despedir.

Ledije—Pues, no tienes derecho de despedirme así de fácil. Ah, necesitas darme un papel por escrito para ir yo a la oficina del, ah, del desempleo, para que me den desempleo.

Y dijo—No—dijo—no, no te voy a dar pa- ningun papel—dijo—además—dijo—eres mojado—dijo—y no te van a hacer aprecio allí. Te van a pedir número social.

Y, pues, sí, esto fue en el año, fue en el año 86, yo no traía mis documentos todavía. Y, pues, de pronto me sentí, pues, me había amenazado por el ranchero y ya despues me dijo—Míra, este, si no me traes como todos los demas, te voy a correr. Te tienes que ir caminando para tu casa.

Entonces, pues, como no tuve miedo, verdad, me, me quedé allí. Y, fueron llegando mis amigos, los que andaban también allí piscando y preguntaron que, que era el problema, que porque discutíamos. Y ya le dijeron. Se arrió también una muchacha con una grabadora, una grabadora pequeña. Y ya también, ah, puso a trabajar la grabadora, sin que se diera cuenta el rancho. Entonces, ya llamé yo a un intérprete porque yo no podía comunicarme bien con el rancho. Y ya llamé a un intérprete. Vino un muchacho llamado Silvestre, que le decían “el gato.” Y ya le dije yo a Silvestre el problema y ya estuvo él diciendo al rancho lo que yo pensaba y lo que yo decía. Y todos mis amigos empezaron a aventar también el balde de, de, am, de fresa. Ya agarraban el balde como para irse a piscar y adelante el rancho lo, lo asolaba en el suelo. Decía—No, est, si estás pidiendo así de, de cantidad de fresa, ya no vamos a piscar. Y así empezaron a salirse los demas, y, y ya yo en español les estuve diciendo—Míren, nos está pidiendo que pisquemos mucha fresa en los baldes. Por eso, mejor hay que dejar de piscar. Y así todos empezamos a aventar el balde. Y todos los demas, las mujeres y hombres empezaron a aventar el balde que, que ya no querían piscar, por el problema que [tos] que estábamos viendo. Entonces ya, dijo—Míra—dijo—le... voy a llamar inmigración para que te arresten. Le dije—No me importa. Llámela. No me importa. Llámala. Este, si me lleva para México, que al cabo, me lleva para mi país. Llámala, no tengo miedo que la llames. Dice—Voy a llamar a-al policía para que te arreste. Le dije—Llámala. No tengo miedo de que me arreste la policía. Si quieres, llámala. Entonces, ya, pues, este, se fue el rancho al pueblo, y pues sí le, en ese tiempo todavía no había celular, [A.E. riéndose] no había, pues, casi no había *CB's* para comunicarse al pueblo. Y ya fue y le dijo a un policía que viniera a arrestarme. Entonces, estábamos en el fil de, de fresa y en eso llegó, llegó un-un-un policía. Y ya llegó al fil y me dijo—¿A quien es el que voy a arrestar? Y le dije—Yo. Es a mí. Y me empecé a querer subir a la patrula, y ya me dijo—Espérate, espérate, [tos] necesito saber cual es la razón por la cual te voy a arrestar. Le dije—La razón es que—[tos]

Ah, o más bien le dijo el intérprete—La razón es que este hombre está trayendo lo que se pide de fresa, pero este ranchero está pidiendo de más, y por eso, este, lo llamó a Ud. para que lo arrestara.

Entonces, ya en eso, iba pasando por la carretera el socio de, de Doug Donald Williams. Iba pasando Edward Laton con una *pick-up* blanca, y vio la policía en sus files y dijo—Pues, voy a ver.

Se regresó, dijo—Voy a ver que problema hay en el fil.

Y cuando llegó al fil, ah, encontró que, pues, luego su socio le dió la queja que yo no estaba haciendo mi trabajo. Y ya me dijo el, el Edward Laton, dijo—Si no estás haciendo tu trabajo—dice—pues, entonces, que se vaya—dice-- ¿Cómo empezó todo?

Y ya le dijo el ranchero—Mira—dijo—allí está su *flat* de fresa—dijo—que esa todavía su *flat* de fresa que no han estibado con las demás cajas, porque no tiene el peso.

Y sí tenía el peso mi *flat*. Entonces, el ranchero lo que estaba haciendo el, el Doug Donald Williams, lo que estaba haciendo era que, a todo a las cajas de, de fresas que llevaban de más, les vaciaba en otra caja y, y esas cajas que él estaba llenando a parte, él las estaba llevando por su cuenta a la marqueta. Y de eso, no le estaba dando cuenta a, al socio. Entonces, ya dijo el, el Edward Laton, dijo—A ver—dijo—pongan el *flat* en la báscula. Y cuando lo pusieron, ah, dió que tenía 17 libras y media. Y dijo—Bueno, si pasa 17 libras, entonces ¿qué es lo que quieres?

Le dijo a su socio, dijo—No—dijo—es que todos me están trayendo más de 17 libras—dijo—y, este, solamente él me está trayendo menos. Y hay que me están trayendo hasta 22 libras, y él me está trayendo bien poco.

Y entonces le dijo, dijo—Bueno—dijo—pero si te trae 17 libras—dijo—pues, es lo que estamos pidiendo—dijo—¿Qué más quieres? Dijo—Ya me remó la caja—dijo—por, por el tiempo que duró aquí—dijo pero, pues, este todavía sigue con las 17 libras, pues.

Dijo—Bueno—dijo—y ¿dónde están las cajas de los demás que tienen, que tienen más de las 17 libras?

Dijo—No—dijo—pues, allá las estoy apartando.

Dijo—Bueno—dijo—pero tú me estás entregando nada más esta cantidad de cajas que están aquí—dijo—y aquella cantidad no me la estás reportando—dijo—¿Qué está pasando con eso?

Y dijo—No—dijo—pues—[tos] dijo—también te la reporto.

Dijo—No—dijo—nunca me la has reportado—[tos, tos] dice—Me estás chiteando esas, esas libras en, en aquellas cajas—dijo—tú las estás llevando a parte a vender.

Y, entonces, ya lo que se había descubierto, el ranchero agarró su camioneta y se fue. Y ya le dijo el otro ranchero, le dijo el Edward Laton, le dijo al policía—¿Sabes que? Síguelo a él, a él es al que tienes que arrestar, no a Vicente.

Y, no, pues, el policía no lo fuera a arrestar a él. Y ya me dijo el Edward Laton, dijo—Ten tu, ten tu balde de, de, ten tu balde—dijo—y véte a pisar fresa—dijo—véte a hacer tu trabajo—dice—este, traénos 17 libras y no nos traigas más de eso.

A.E.: Gracias.

The stories that I have to tell, individually, may hold very little significance. But, when told together, they share a common theme. I want it to be understood before I begin that the experiences I will share are my own, and, biases, there will be. However insignificant the individual incidents may seem, each one has influenced my life and taught me many things, amongst them patience. The folk life tradition that I present, as a witness, will seem common place to some, and it is for that reason that it is folk life to me.

To begin, I would like to tell you the stories of my experiences, and then share with you how each is related. I invite you to see through my eyes for a few brief moments, and can only hope that perhaps we share an experience.

A year in Ecuador; it was a year of waiting, of hoping, and of being disappointed. Bags packed, faces painted, plans made, only to be off to bed early and late to rise. Expectant sleep cluttered with salsa rhythms and sandy Salinas to be my only reality. Once-it was frustration. Twice-I stopped trusting. Three time's a charm-I resigned and was no longer

hopeful. Better to be surprised than disappointed. And, ahhh...Patience.

A gift from the Gods, or was it the Ecuadorians. So basic yet so hard to learn. In a place where nothing worked and one's word evaporated into thick, humid air, I learned patience.

This summer-déjà vu-I was whisked back to another place, another time-only to find the accents altered. When I first noticed it, I cannot say, but it was (and is) there-ever prevalent. However, this time I expected it.

Whether it was weeks of organizing, talking with workers, planning, expecting, depending, that they would come-work called. Now it was my coworkers. "Si, a las tres," dicen. Only to arrive a las seis. A deep breath and a sigh, it passes. Now a trip is in the making. Some 800 miles to come and go. The money will come, he said; if you raise it, it will come. By the grace of not god, but a priest, we went. The money never came.

Borrowing, we arrived; begging, we returned. We expected it. We accepted it. So, when the curandera couldn't be found on that day, at that time-I moved on. Spiritual healing wasn't the answer, so I looked to music. (Music-a passion.) 5 songs-Música norteña. More than just words:

sounds, emotions that sing the realities of tomato pickers and union organizers. The ultimate integration of folk life and work-lost in the system (or in the folk life itself). (Dolores-me duele.)

So it was a summer of broken promises and expectations. The difference was myself-myself and the expectations. So I am not surprised, nor angry that the folk life I choose to document is the very thing that infiltrated my summer- that exercised my patience. So, I leave you with these thoughts, and thank you for your patience.

La hora ecautoriana

Nosotros llegamos a las tres;
ellos, a las seis.
Iré, y no voy.
Broken promises.

Sin la limpieza se quedó
(puerco).
Y con calma (ésta vez),
la tema, cambio.

De fondos, los levantamos,
y esperamos.
El cheque no llegó.
Con Dinero Prestado-donaciones de apoyo,
¿donaciones de piedad?
we go.

¡¿Lo puedo hacer yo?!
¿Uds creen que no?
Ancelmo trabaja. Y duro.
!Qué trabajan!

De las doce hasta la una,
Y les contamos su fortuna.
A la una viene el ranchero.
Y Mañana vino.

Fed-Ex me lo mandó.
Y corriendo, no lo alcanzo.

This is my story. My documentary and a people's way of life. With a bitter-sweet irony the summer ends, as Ramiro stutters ~~and spits out~~ his final exit-interview comment: "Pues, ¿si tengo recomendaciones de como pueden mejorar sus hábitos...del trabajo...en el futuro? Ahhh...yo, bueno, yo diría tres cosas: Necesitan tener más comunicación, más coordinación, y...más paciencia." Ahhh...así es la vida, ¿no?



Angel Rodolfo Garcia Soto "La Criatura Da la Bienvenida"

Maria Garcia Campos

PREFERERIA NO
HABERTE CONOCIDO
PUES NO MERESCO
NI SIQUIERA IMAGINARTE
A DONDE VOY TE LLEVO
AQUI CON MIGO
TU ERES LA ROSA
QUE ME INSPIRA
PACANTARTE...
SI TU ME ACEPTAS
SIQUIERA COMO AMIGO
PARA MIRARTE Y
TENERTE CONMIGO
NO DEJARIA NI UN
MOMENTO DE
ADORARTE TU ERES
LA ROSA QUE YO SIEMPRE
HE QUERIDO
DEJA QUERERTE PA DEMOSTRARTE
LO MUCHO QUE TE QUIERO...
YO HA TI TE ESPERO
CON TODA MI PACIENCIA
PARA ENTREGARTE TODO
MI AMOR SINCERO.



"Sonia Takes Control"

Photo by:

Maria Garcia Campos



"El Campo de los 12

Apostoles"

Photo by:

Maria Garcia Campos

*The Rancheras and Románticas of
Humberto Zapata Alvizo*

08/03/99

Humberto Zapata Alvizo has been a faithful carrier of Mexican folklife tradition as long as he can remember. He has been singing rancheras and románticas since childhood. The 22-year-old Potosino (a native of the eastern Mexican state of San Luis Potosí) was more than willing to share the lolling love ballads and longing recollections of home of these songs. I met Zapata when he expressed an interest in participating in a singing contest in a festival sponsored by my clinic.

From the tiny town of Norias del Refugio, Zapata is a farmworker in Nash County, North Carolina. The interview (or more accurately the concert) took place in his small, plain room in the JB Rose camp. A few friends sat on the bed across the room from him as Humberto sat and performed on his bed. Far from home, the dynamic young man is accustomed to singing for his friends and comrades at the camp, to ease their longing for the familiar—for home, family, and loved ones. He was quite pleased to find an outsider interested in his music, and shared his songs and ideas with gusto.

The six songs Zapata sang were all soothing and simple, consisting of his lyrics and guitar. The round, steady strumming of his guitar and peaking voice combined for a nostalgic effect, and he carefully explained the songs one by one. The songs were (in order) “Triste Corazón” (Sad Heart), “Indita Mia” (My Little Indian Woman), “Tu Hipocracia” (Your Hypocrisy), “Sabíendo Quien era Yo” (Knowing Who I Used to Be), “Eres un Sueno (You’re a Dream), and “Rifaré mi Suerte” (I’ll Raffle My Luck).

Zapata explained to me that in a ranchera, the 4th and 5th chords are bass (of a low note), while in a romántica, most chords are bass. The first song he played, “Triste Corazón,” was a sentimental, weeping story of lost love:

Today is a bit sad

Today I awoke thinking of you

I wish this were all a dream

I just can't explain how I lost you

When my heart

Destroys the soul, and happiness

This time, this time, it was my turn

To fall in love with the woman I met

She left me, she left me, with no explanation

Leaving only the lamentation of a saddened heart

This time, this time, it was my turn

To fall in love with the woman I met

She left me, she left me, with no explanation

Leaving only the lamentation of a saddened heart. *

*Editor's Note: These lyrics sounded *way* better in Spanish.

Continuing the theme of lovesickness and female-induced woes, the third song, "Tu Hipocracia," was my personal favorite, a witty and biting criticism of a fickle love's hypocrisy. How many love songs, after all, call old lovers hypocrites? Of women, and the attention men give them, Zapata reflected, "sometimes they're bad, but at least they're pretty."

"I love you," you told me that day,
And I trusted your words, I believed
I was foolish to love you, my life
Because it was pure hypocrisy.

I didn't doubt the love you used show me
Because always, you kissed me with such passion
When you were with me, you never cried
With care and love I hugged you.

You went away and left me forever
With a man who appeared all of a sudden
If you forget, oh you, what bad luck
If you come looking for me, keep on walking.

(2 times)

Rifaré mi Suerte

Ahora que me encuentro lejos
De la tierra en que nací
Ay, de mis padres queridos
Cuanto han sufrido por mí

Pobrecita de mi madre
Cuantos consejos me dio
Con lagrimas en sus ojos
Sus bendiciones me dio

Ya no llores madrecita,
Esté bien, que ya no sufrir
Dejáme rifar me suerte
Por buscando el porvenir

También deje mi amorcito
Que le prometí volver
Yo sé bien que ella me espera
Díós me lo ha de conceder

Quisiera ser cuales aves
Y volar dónde tú estás
Cruzar valles y montañas
Y a míos querencias llegar

Virgencita Milagrosa
Sabes bien mi padecer
De rodillas iré a verte
Si me concedes volver

The last song Zapata sang, “Rifaré mi Suerte” was the most telling and introspective of all, and had a more honest, tragic message than the others. Zapata sang, and then discussed the prospect of leaving Mexico to “raffle his luck.”

Now that I'm so far
From the land where I was born
Oh, my beloved parents
How much you have suffered for me

My poor old mother
Who gave me so much advice
With tears in her eyes
She gave me her blessing

Don't cry any more, mother
Be well, don't suffer
Let me raffle my luck
By seeking my fortune

I also left my love
Whom I promised I'd return
I know damn well she'll wait for me
Surely God has to concede me this.

I would like to be those birds
And fly to where you are

Crossing valleys and mountains

And get to my loved ones

Miraculous Virgin Mary

You know my suffering well

On my knees, I'll go to see you

If you let me return home.

This last song illuminates three important aspects of Mexican (and Mexican migrant) culture: the promise of leaving one's life in Mexico in order to earn money for the family, the value placed on familial over personal well-being, and a strong base of Catholic faith. Said Zapata, "One knows that God guides us on earth and blesses our parents, our brothers and sisters, and blesses us. One is never alone, you know? And this song show a lot... about our feelings, about our families more than anything... about our struggles to come out okay, you know?"

Zapata explained that a friend in San Luis Potosí taught him to sing and play the guitar, and that he's a hopeless romantic, so he enthusiastically learned these songs to serenade young ladies. He relates that these are not modern or popular songs, but traditional, more obscure *ranchera* and *romántica* ballads. These are tales of memories, of home, of loved ones, of the past. Zapata (and others like him) serve the double purpose of both providing soothing entertainment and relaying the words of earlier Mexican musicians.

The Rancheras and Románticas of Humberto Zapata Alvizo

Triste Corazón

Hoy el día es un poco triste
Hoy amanecí pensando en tí
Quisiera que todo de esto fuera un sueño
No me explico como te perdí
Cuando el corazón, lo envuelven por completo
Sin enamorara, sin pensar su falsedad
Y el carino que alimenta un sentimiento
Destroza el alma, y la felicidad
Esta vez, esta vez, me tocó a mí
Enamorarme de eas que un día conocí
Se fue de mí, se fue de mí sin dar ninguna explicación
Solo dejando el llanto de un triste corazón
Esta vez, esta vez, me tocó a mí
Enamorarme de esa que un día conocí
Se fue de mí, se fue de mí, sin dar ninguna explicación
Solo dejando el llanto de un triste corazón

Indíta Mía

Indita mía, si no me quieres
Si no me quieres, ten compasión
Mira aquél hombre que te idolatra
Se encuentra herido del corazón
Sone que un angel su amor me daba
Pero yo, en cambio, mi amor le dí
El me juraba que a mí me adoraba
Yo, con el alma, se lo creí
Toda mi vida, yo he sido un gran col (?) *Franco*
Y siempre he andado con la verdad
Y de este juego, que no hay motivo
Para que pierdamos la amistad?
Bajo la sombra de aquella noche
Mi sentimiento pude ocultar
Para nadie sepa que te amo,
Cuando de amores, me oigas cantar

DOCUMENTARY INTERVIEW-transcription

Las Rancheras y las Románticas de Humberto Zapata Alvizo, 08/03/99
w. Joe Bagby

Joe: The date is August 3, 1999. It's 6:35 p.m. We are at the JB Rose Camp in Nashville, North Carolina. I'm getting ready to interview Humberto Zapata Alvizo, y nos va a cantar unas canciones y explicarnos cómo las aprendió. (guitar strumming in background) A ver. Para empezar, cómo se llama usted?

Humberto: Yo me llamo Humberto Zapata Alvizo.

Joe: Okay... y cuando nació usted?

Humberto: Eh... el 17 de diciembre de 1976.

J: Entonces, cuántos años tiene, 23? (mistake)

H: Sí.

J: Y de dónde es usted?

H: Yo soy del estado de San Luis Potosí.

J: Y el nombre del pueblo?

H: Sí, mi rancho... es un rancho allí.

J: Un rancho?

H: Sí. Este, se llama Nórías del Refugio, Sitio Alcazar, San Luis Potosí.

J: Cómo se llama, otra vez?

H: El rancho? Norias del Refugio, San Luis Potosí.

J: Norias del Refugio?

H: Sí. Este, vamos a cantar este tema. Este tema se llama "Tu Triste Corazón."

Es que este tema se siente y... (strums guitar, can't hear words) el hombre es muy... en el aire. Dice así:

Hoy el día es un poco triste
Hoy amanecí pensando en tí
Quisiera que todo de este fuera un sueño

No me explico yo como te perdí
Cuando el corazón, lo envuelven por completo
Sin enamorara, sin pensar su falsedad
Y el cariño que alimenta un sentimiento
Destroza el alma, y la felicidad
Esta vez, esta vez, me tocó a mí
Enamorarme de esa que un día conocí
Se fue de mi, se fue de mi, sin dar ninguna explicación.
Solo dejando el llanto de un triste corazón.
Esta vez, esta vez, me tocó a mí
Enamorarme de esa que un día conocí
Se fue de mi, se fue de mi, sin dar ninguna explicación.
Solo dejando el llanto de un triste corazón.

Bueno, este, fue muy inesperado de un amor. Este, ahorita vamos a cantar otra
ea. Es una rancherita. Se llama "Indita Mia." Esta es rancherita, y dice así:

Indita Mia, si no me quieres
Si no me quieres, ten compasión.
Mira aquél hombre que te idolatra
Se encuentra herido del corazón.

Soñe que un angel su amor me daba
Pero yo, en cambio, mi amor le dí.
El me juraba que a mí me adoraba.
Yo, con el alma, se lo creí.

El
Porque se esconden mis así
Cual es el crimen que tu has metido?
Y a ver

Toda mi vida, yo he sido un gran col
Y siempre he hablado con la verdad.
Y de este juego, que no hay motivo
Para que pierdamos la amistad?

Bajo la sombra de aquella noche
Mi sentimiento pude ocultar
Para que nadie sepa que te amo,
Cuando de amores me oigas cantar.

Bueno, esta cabeza desesperada en que las mujeres siempre son las causantes de todo. No quieren y todo esta, muy inesperado en ellas. Y, pués, vamos a cantar otra, otra tema. Este se llama “Tu Hipocracía.” También, inesperado en ella, verdad? Dice:

Te quiero, me dijiste aquél día,
Y confiaba en tus palabras, me creía.
Fui muy tonto al creerte, vida mía,
Porque todo era pura hipocracía.

No dudaba del amor que me mostrabas,
Porque siempre, con pasión, me besabas.
Cuando estabas tú conmigo no llorabas
Con cariño y con amor yo te abrazaba.

Te fuiste y me dejaste para siempre
Con un hombre que apareció de repente
Si te olvida, ay de tí, que mala suerte
Si me vienes a buscar sigue de frente.

(2 times)

Allí tenemos una que se llama “Tu Hipocracía.” Ahora vamos a seguir con una, una que dice, esta dice “Sabiedo Quien era Yo.” Y dice así:

Sabiendo quien era yo
De mí, tú te enamoraste
Yo no cometí el error
Tú sola te equivocaste
Sabiendo quien era yo,
Aceptaste ser mi amante
Ahora andas asustada
Por la sombra de tu cuerpo
Que estás bien arrepentida
Y echaste a perder tu tiempo
Y me quisiste adeñuarte
Escojiste mal momento
Hoy te alejas, ya de mí
Porque estoy comprometido
La que se quedó la quiero
Y la que se va la olvido
Por el transcurso del tiempo
Mi amor le brinda un suspiro

Bueno, esa tema se llama “Sabiendo Quien era Yo.” Este, vamos a cambiar de tema. Vamos a poner una romantiquita. Esa dice “Eres un Sueño.” Y esa, la voy a dejar allí, pero las mujeres—a veces son malas, pero son bonitas, pues, y por ellas dice

De repente llegaste a mi vida
Inocente, y me enamoré tal vez
Por tu forma de ser, y tus ojos de miel
Y tu cara de angel

Todavía, no sé que pasó
Solo sé que te amo yo
Cuando por mi culpa
Tú estás sufriendo
Quiero regresar atrás
Me arrepiento oooo
Y el dolor que te causo
Lo siento yo oooo

Eres un sueño bello,
Eres mi alegría
La dueña de mi amor

Que haría yo, si alguna vez
Dejaras de pensar en mí
Vivir así, no, no es vivir
Que haría yo si alguna vez
Dejaras de pensar en mí
Mi soledad, no quiero
Imaginar sin tu amor
No sé que haría yo.

Bueno, esta fue una baladita, verdad? Esa es romanticona, y dice “Eres un Sueño.” Es para las mujeres—todo para las mujeres. Y esta, vamos a dar de trazo, esta canción que sigue se llama “Rifaré mi Suerte.” Es una idea, empieza de que las personas que salen de ranchos y pueblos para buscar algo, un día venir por aca, algo por sus padres, sus

familiares—para ayudarles en algo. Ellos nos ayudaron desde chicos, y ahora les tenemos que considerar, de ganarnos en algo, y por eso dice esta canción así:

Ahora que me encuentro lejos
De la tierra en que nací
Ay, de mis padres queridos
Cuanto han sufrido por mí.

Pobrecita de mi madre
Cuantos consejos me dió
Con lagrimas en sus ojos
Sus bendiciones me dió

Ya no llores madrecita,
Esté bien, que ya no sufrir
Déjame rifar mi suerte
Por buscando un porvenir

También deje a mi amorcito
Que le prometí volver
Yo sé bien que ella me espera
Díos me lo ha de conceder.

Quisiera ser cuales aves
Y volar dónde tú estás
Cruzar valles y montañas
Y a mis querencias llegar

Virgencita Milagrosa
Sabes bien mi padecer
De rodillas iré a verte
Si me concedes volver.

Bueno, esta... la melodía se llama “Rifaré mi Suerte.” De personas de una familia, y de nuestro pueblo también
Díos

J: Y... okay, bueno. Ahorita le voy a hacer unas preguntas sobre las canciones. Para empezar, este, que me puede decir de esta canción que acaba de cantar, de “Rifaré mi Suerte?”

H: “Rifaré mi Suerte?” Bueno, este, es pensando en que uno sale de su pueblo, verdad? Con la misión de ganar dinero, con la misión de _____, no?

Que sale, no sabe si algún día va a regresar allá.

No sabe si va a regresar bien. _____ Y esta canción, pues, muestra los sentimientos, verdad? Muestra que nuestros padres fueron de allá hasta acá. Pero bien sabe uno que Diós, Diós nos guía por la tierra y nos bendice a los padres, y a los hermanos, y a nosotros. Uno nunca anda solo, verdad? Y esta canción muestra mucho, digo... de nuestros sentimientos, de nuestras familias más que nada... de nuestras luchas por salir adelante, no?

J: Y la aprendió usted aquí o allá en San Luis Potosí?

H: Bueno, fue allá donde la aprendí. Allá en San Luis. Allí es dónde la aprendí, este, también la saben mis hermanos allá, porque esta también la aprendí, y la puede cantar a la madre _____ a las madres allí.

A cantar allí donde _____ y también en México _____ las madrecitas

J: Entonces, antes de que venía usted, ya conocía a mucha gente que había venido por acá, no?

H: Sí. Ya tiene tres años viniendo aquí, ya. Y todos tienen a ... su gente aquí.

J: Y cuantos son de su pueblo, aquí?

H: De mi pueblo, ahorita, aquí, en este (campo) están como unos ocho, de San Luis Potosí. De mi rancho, yo vengo solo. Aquí, solo soy yo de mi rancho.

J: Entonces, como las aprendió? Cómo aprendió estas canciones?

H: Estas canciones, este, bueno, siempre me ha gustado del romántico, verdad, de aprender del romántico. Siempre he andado castigado... siempre del ranchero o del romántico, así, y yo aprendí de un amigo que sabía bien cantar.



"I Pledge Allegiance..."

Photo by Jennifer Sugg



"Oh, Jefferson!"

Photo by Jennifer Sugg



"La Educación es Poder"

Photo by Jennifer Sugg

Organizing: Past & Present

Introduction

Lori Khamala/Mendi Drayton

"Folklore is: learned informally - is creative or expressive- exists in versions."

"Folklore can encompass cultural, occupational, or socio-economic groups." "It filters through every aspect of life." "Everything from what we draw"... "To how we play"... "To the food we eat"... "To how we fight our battles".

"This summer we learned that people have many ways of struggling against oppression, and we recognized that this, too is folklife." "Some people write letters"... "Some people use art"... "Some use symbols"... "And some organize." "All organizers have their own story, their own styles which reflects their unique experience."

Barbara Prear: "I don't care what nobody say, you hear about people getting trained. Nobody learns how to organize, you do it. It ain't nothing but talking and encouraging people because if you had any people out here that were such great organizers, they'd be then organized the whole damn thing. And so I think that there are all different types and styles in organizing. I think it has a lot to do with that person."

"This project brings a few stories together to show that what we are doing today has a tradition and history which needs to be told."

Armando Carbajal, Organizer with NCOSH (NC Occupational Safety and Health Project) and ASTLANC (Asociacion de Trabajadores Latinos de Carolina del Norte)
August, 1999

"Mi nombre es Jose Armando Carbajal, y soy nativo de Honduras. En mi pais fui organizador de sindicatos, y ya tengo algun tiempo viviendo aqui en este pais y estoy haciendo algo parecido, pues ahora me siento feliz diria yo--por primera vez recibo un salario por el trabajo que me gusta hacer."

(My name is Jose Armando Carbajal, and I am from Honduras. En my country I was an organizer of unions, and I have been living here in this country for some time now and I am doing something similar; now I feel happy, I'd say, because for the first time I am recieving a salary for the work that I like to do.)

"... En el '83 se me presento la oportunidad de envolverme... Me envolvi en el sindicato de trabajadores donde yo trabajaba... Me envolvi porque pense que fue la unica forma de obtener mejores condiciones de vida, mejores salarios, y historicamente esta comprobado, con el movimiento de la Gran Huelga de 1954..."

(... It was in 1983 when I got the opportunity to get involved... I got involved in the workers' union where I worked... I got involved because I thought it was the only way to obtain better living conditions, better salary, and historically this has been proved with the movement of the Great Strike of 1954...)

"... Y atraves de este movimiento, fue hasta entonces que pudo crear una ley, y se tuvo que obtener que el estado, que las leyes permitieran la creacion de sindicatos en mi pais..."

(... It was through this movement, it was then that a law was created which permitted the creation of unions in my country...)

"Escuchaba a mucha gente comentar de la Gran Huelga bananera, que le llama, que

empezo en el dia 3 de mayo del 1954 y duro hasta dos meses despues . . . Hubo gente que estuvo trabajando para organizar esto desde aproximadamente el 1928 . . . Para mi es algo fantastico porque hasta entonces el trabajador no pudo ser reconocido tal como trabajador, y que tenia derechos en mi pais, y que hasta entonces no hubo una regulacion de horas, de otro tipo de beneficios, que hasta entonces no existia, pues tenia que trabajar el limite de horas que dijera el patron . . .”

(I heard people talk about the Great Banana Strike, as it was called, which began on May 3rd, 1954 and lasted until 2 months later . . . There were people that were working to organize it since around 1928 . . . For me, it is amazing, becuase until then, workers were not recognized as workers and that they had rights en my country, and until then there was no regulation of hours or other benefits--until then it just didn't exist--the worker had to work as many hours as the boss demanded . . .)

“Bueno, con la Casa Multicultural, casi no estoy activo, pero con ASTLANC [Asociacion de Trabajadores Latinos de Carolina de Norte], si . . . Estoy orgulloso de estar trabajando para establecer una organizacion de trabajadores Latinos aqui en Carolina de Norte . . . Vimos que era necesario que existiera una organizacion que bregara como los asuntos de los trabajadores Latinos . . .”

(Well, I'm not really active anymore with the Casa Multicultural, but with ASTLANC [the Latino workers association], I am . . . I am proud to be working to establish an organization of Latino workers here in North Carolina. We saw that it was necessary that an organization exist which dealt with issues of Latino workers . . .)

“ . . . Eso va a ser uno de nuestros trabajos: la educacion de los trabajadores en cuanto a sus derechos, en cuanto a las leyes, pero tambien la conciencia que solo atraves de esto, la organizacion de trabajadores, es donde puede tener mas respeto de los otros grupos, mas que todos el grupo de poder.”

(This is going to be one of our jobs [as an organization]: worker education about their rights, about the laws, but also to raise the consciousness that only through this, worker organizing, will workers be able to gain more respect from other groups, more than anyone, the group in power.)

“Bueno, mi--la esperanza es que, mi esperanza es continuar el trabajo que yo hago, pero con la vision de que realmente en el futuro no muy lejano, este proyecto, esta organizacion, pueda--diga--que podemos estar parte de la historia en este estado para cambiar las condiciones.”

(Well, for me--the hope is that, my hope is to continue the work that I am doing, but with the vision that truly, in the not-so-distant future, that, well, that we could be part of the history in this state to change the conditions.)

Ramiro Sarabia, Jr.
FLOC Organizer
July 1999

“We are trying to figure all of the farmers and grading stations that sell to Mt. Olive. Then find out all of the farmers and then all find out of the camps. And then last, organize all of

the people that work in/ for those camps. As soon as we do all that...then we should do all that...it should fall. Mt. Olive should fall.”

“This is going to be like the domino effect to all industries. Sooner or later Mt. Olive is going to have to raise their prices. They are going to have to have better housing and better wages and better like, insurnace. And not only Mt. Olive, everybody’s, even the industries’. If they see that they can make more money in the fields, then they are going to have to raise theirs to keep the people in there.”

**Barbara Prear
Pres. Of. UE150
UNC Housekeeper
August 99**

“I am Barbara Prear and I am now president of UE 150 for the state of NC (NC public service workers). I was elected as the president Saturday. I work at the UNC as a housekeeper and I started there in 1990 after working 18 years in textiles.”

“When I got over there, I saw all of the stuff that was going on.” “I had seen things that just wasn’t right. I had never worked anywhere where some of the things happening and just have continued since then, you know. And then the disrespect I have seen towards workers really because of the work that they do from management basically.”

“Some of the wokers were already beginning to organize when I got there. This was the summer of 98 and it was a freeze, a freeze on/ the state had a freeze on, so they had a lot of vacancies and it was hot and they didn’t have enough workers. Workers were working too hard and it was hot and people’s tempers started, and people started talking out loud what’s wrong. And it just kicked off from there.”

“When we first started, well... How we got to get at the table with our director and vice chancelor was because we filed a class action suit against the University.”

“They are sneaky. They are slick, but I enjoy fighting. I honestly do because they do some crazy, stupid... Maybe if they’d do the right things, people wouldn’t even organize.”

“I like to have a good battle and I don’t think we’ve had a good battle with the University yet. That’s why I’m enthused with the union because you know. We’re not going to change the systme just on our campus if we don’t have all of the campuses pulling together.”

“I think one thing, it was a totally different type of organizing that was done in the past- especially around here. Even though there were struggles about labor, but the struggles around here had been over civil rights-had been the biggest movement around here.”

“We have a whole different society from what we had before. We got kids now that don’t even know about the civil rights struggle. So its hard to instill in people if they hadn’t had at the history.”

“I’ve seen some changes, but not nearly enough. Money and respect go hand in hand. How can you say you respect me if you don’t give me enough money to live?”

“I imagine in our world there will always be some type of organizing. Someone’s always going to have to fight something. Sometimes you see little changes and don’t realize what a large effect they have on people.”

**Testimonials from Ergonomics Rally
State Legislature Building, Raleigh, NC
June 1999**

“Hello, my name is Ernestine Dimry. I worked at Purdue [Chicken Plant] for thirteen years and ten months.”

“Purdue does not respect people, people’s feelings- it hurts-people get hurt everyday-injuries everyday-people get hurt everyday. And when they finish you up, they check you out the door.” (Unknown)

“My name is Shirley Cofield, and I worked at Purdue for 14 years. And they talking about ‘justice’, yes we want justice, cause we are tired of what Purdue is doing to our people. We are sick and tired of how they treat us. We’re sick and tired of how they close the door on us.” (Shirley Cofield)

“I’ve got Carpel Tunel in both hands, and through out that body, not just part, but the body. I have muscle pains in my eyes. You just don’t know pains. I have machines that keep my body muscles functioning like they should and sometimes, when the pain is so unbearable, the machine don’t even do no good.” (Shirley Cofield)

“While I was working in Purdue for those eleven years, I was made to go in there and work everyday. The only time I could stay home and cope with my problem is that I made myself and I told myself that, I said, I wasn’t going to take this anymore.” (Marian Granger)

“...and we want to know what we can do, we can talk to the legislators and let them know that we are tired of this stuff.”(Shirley Cofield)

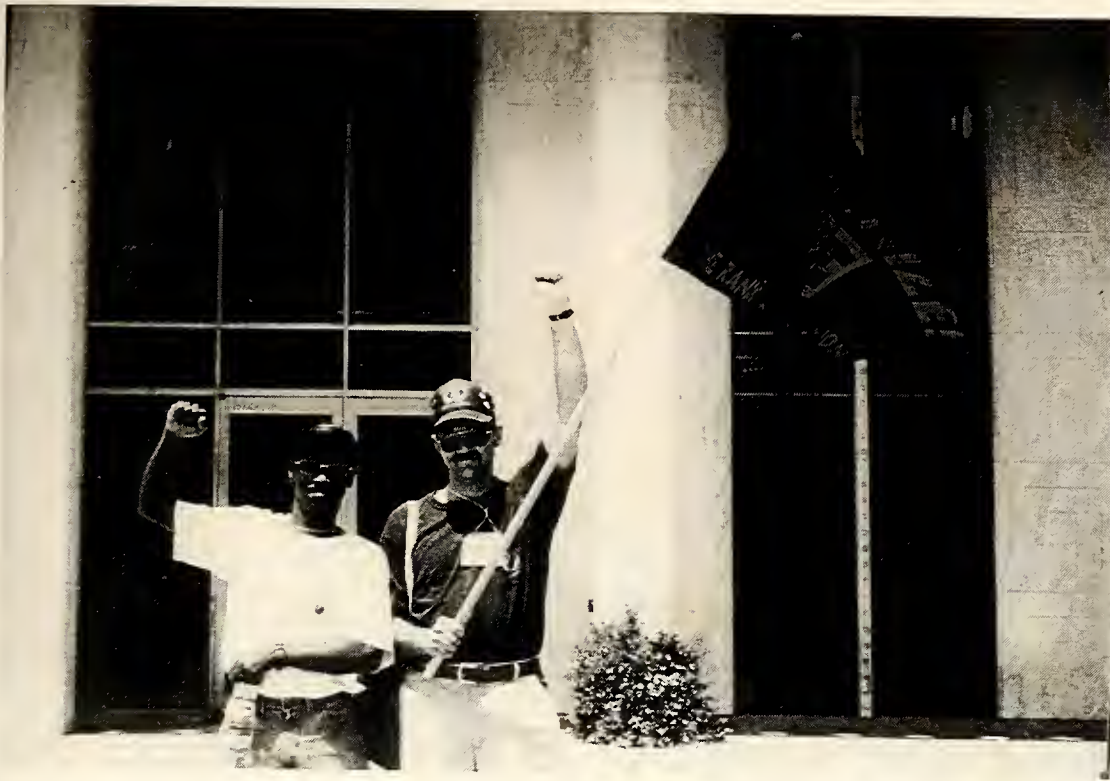
“...this is a real problem and that it calls for action. It calls for employers taking some action to protecte people.” (Tom O’Connor)

“Its not just poultry workers. Its people in the furniture plants, the UPS package delivery people. Its secretarie, typists, data entry people. Its people in all kinds of jobs, all around the state and we need this protection.” (Tom O’Connor)

“As you look at Damia today, I want you to ask yourself, ‘what type of future does Damia have, if her mom goes to the plant and becomes totally injured, what happens to Damia?’ Not only Damia, but other children whose parents are suffering from these problems. We want our legislators to know that if we don’t get any justice, they won’t get any peace. That we are sick and tired of being sick and tired. And we are standing up and we are fighting for our own rights. We want them to know that maybe they should be on the processing line and then we can do the job, if they refuse to do the job. NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE! NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE! NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE!” (Liz Sessoms)

Closing

“But it is a long process, a lot of time. So much to do and so little time. But it’ll be done. It’ll get done.” (Ramiro Sarabia Jr.)



"Organize"

Photo by: Mendi Drayton &

Lori Fernald Khamala



"Workers Demand Respect"

Photo by: Mendi Drayton &

Lori Fernald Khamala



Ramiro Sarabia Jr.

"¡Hasta La Victoria!"

Photo by Lori Fernald Khamala &

Mendi Drayton

"SAF Interns March
for FLOC"

Photo by: Mendi Drayton

& Lori Fernald Khamala



