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Errecart, Ana interview

Mary Cusick

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Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

by Sally Miller

ERRECART, Ana (Basque)

August 8, 1980

Interviewed by Mary Cusick

Transcribed by Robert Siess

[TAPE 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape.]

MARY CUSICK: Okay Mrs. Errecart, I'm gonna begin by asking you a lot of different questions, and you can just go on in a normal conversational tone.

ANA ERRECART: Yeah. Well, I tell you what I know, see.

CUSICK: Sure, yeah. I'm going to ask you questions about when you came to the United States, but even before that, your life in the old country, and then when you did travel to the United States, and your experiences here with the people and the school and job and life and bringing up your children.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. My brothers and sisters here before I came.

CUSICK: Yeah. Well first of all, can you tell me about your early life, before you came to the United States?

ERRECART: Oh. Well, you ask me when I was born, huh?

CUSICK: Yeah.

ERRECART: 1892. I born in 1892. February the 1st.

CUSICK: And you grew up in the Basque Country.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. We grew up there with the animals, you know. Well, you know what I mean.

CUSICK: You mean your family had animals and you were living in the country?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. We poor people, and we have to work so hard over there, you know.

CUSICK: Did everybody in your family work? Your father and your mother and all the children?

ERRECART: Oh sure. They work hard. Boy, yeah.

CUSICK: What were they working at?

ERRECART: In the fields, you know.

CUSICK: With the animals?

ERRECART: Well, with the crop, you know. You have to work with the animals, travel the ground.

CUSICK: Yeah. What kind of crops did they grow?

ERRECART: Oh, they do the hay and grain and thing like that. Corn.

CUSICK: Which side of the border were you living on? Towards France or towards Spain?

ERRECART: No. Towards France. Pyrenees, Basque, that's between Spain and France lines, see.

CUSICK: And as I understand, the border between Spain and France goes right through the Pyrenees.

ERRECART: Yeah, that's it.

CUSICK: And so some are on one side and some are one the other side.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: So you were on the side toward France.

ERRECART: France. Uh huh.

CUSICK: Yeah.

ERRECART: And I went to school in France.

CUSICK: In the town or in a city? Or just in the country?

ERRECART: Well, you know, my place, it was a very small place. Pyrenees, what they call Basque Pyrenees. My folks, they didn't have no education. My father, he can read little bit. My mother didn't read or anything, you know. They're poor people, you know.

CUSICK: They worked hard.

ERRECART: Oh, you bet.

CUSICK: Do you feel like they didn't have time to go to school because they were working?

ERRECART: Oh, no. It was kind of a... I don't know. They have to raise their family and they have to work for them, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah. How many kids were in your family? How many brothers and sisters do you have?

ERRECART: We were about nine, but then all died but two.

CUSICK: Did only two reach adulthood then?

ERRECART: My sister and I, we living here, see. That's all. They all dead.

CUSICK: I'm sorry to hear that.

ERRECART: Yeah, well I have a brother been killed in the army, you know. In First World War.

CUSICK: But most of them grew up with you in the Pyrenees?

ERRECART: Well, yes. My brothers and sisters much older than me, you know. So they did that a long time ago.

CUSICK: But they also grew up, and they were young. They were living in the Pyrenees too.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. We lived about the same places, you know.

CUSICK: Did they help your father and your mother working in the fields?

ERRECART: Oh, sure. But then they have to go to work for themselves too, because you know, we were too many to raise all together.

CUSICK: About what age would they leave their household and then go live on their own and work on their own?

ERRECART: Oh, I don't know. Well, they were old enough to work, you know. And I don't know the age.

CUSICK: I wonder how old that is.

ERRECART: I don't know how old they were, you know.

CUSICK: But you were a lot younger than most of them.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I got pictures here too.

CUSICK: Oh yeah? Pictures of all your family?

ERRECART: Well, yes. Well, I came here kind of young too. My little brother and sister, they were here, and we wanna come down here too, see.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. That's why you wanted to come to the United States?

ERRECART: That's it.

CUSICK: Why did your brother and sister come over here in the first place?

ERRECART: Well, like the rest, because they think they wanted to work here and have some more money here, and you know.

CUSICK: A lot of the other Basque people thought that? They thought they could make a lot more money here?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Lot of Basque people come down here.

CUSICK: What year did your brother and your sister come over?

ERRECART: I really don't remember that.

CUSICK: Were they very young at that time?

ERRECART: Well, they were about teenagers, you know.

CUSICK: Teenagers or early twenties?

ERRECART: Yeah, well that's it. Twenties or something like that. They came over, and they went to work, you know. My brother went to work at sheep camp, you know. In those days, over here, there weren't so much of a like now neither, the time we came.

CUSICK: Stockton was really different.

ERRECART: Oh, God!

CUSICK: Did they come first to Stockton when they came over from the Basque Country?

ERRECART: Yeah. They come from Stockton.

CUSICK: They came right to Stockton?

ERRECART: Right. In Stockton. I did too.

CUSICK: Why was Stockton so essential?

ERRECART: Well, because Stockton... I guess they knew somebody.

CUSICK: You think they knew somebody who had already been here, and were they getting a job from them? Did they find a place to live through this other person?

ERRECART: Well, they stay in hotel, you know, until they get the job, see.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. They'd stay in a hotel in town, and then find a job and a place to live.

ERRECART: Yeah, that's it.

CUSICK: Well first of all, you said you went to school in the Pyrenees?

ERRECART: Oh, I went to school in Pyrenees, yeah. I went to school when I was six years old. Only not too much of a school, because we didn't have time to go to school.

CUSICK: What time did you start working? Or were you always working?

ERRECART: Before I go to school, I start to working.

CUSICK: Really? And so you went to school for about how many years did you say?

ERRECART: I don't remember how many years I went, but then I start to school six years old, and then when I was ten years old, I had to go to work. Leave the school, see.

CUSICK: Did you work for your parents again?

ERRECART: No. For somebody else, you know.

CUSICK: What did you do?

ERRECART: Work sometimes babysitter, or work in the field, or anything, you know.

CUSICK: Was this another family that was hiring you to help out?

ERRECART: Yeah, that's it.

CUSICK: Like with their children or their household or outside? Did you enjoy that?

ERRECART: We had to. We didn't know any better then.

CUSICK: Did most other young girls do the same thing as you did?

ERRECART: Yeah, they did. See, it's very hard to 'splain what it was before, you know. Now, this is another world compared where we used to live.

CUSICK: Yeah? Tell me about it.

ERRECART: Well, like over there, everybody have to work for a little bit, and over here, there's so much to eat, see.

CUSICK: You feel that people had to work a lot harder over in the Pyrenees?

ERRECART: Oh sure.

CUSICK: Do you think they still have to live that way now?

ERRECART: Well, I don't think they work so hard as they used to, you know. Everything is different over there too. I heard that everybody has TVs, and everybody has a car, and it's altogether different. I got cousins there, you know. In Pyrenees, that tell me. I send letters.

CUSICK: Oh, good. Then you're still in contact with them.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I contact them all the time.

CUSICK: That's good. Do you enjoy that?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Well, that's the only thing we have to do. That's all we have over there.

CUSICK: That's your family over there.

ERRECART: You know, my son and Dominic and I, we went to France one time. Let's see, we went 1937 I think, we went to visit, you know. So my mother and father, we saw them in the cemetery, you know.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. Because they stayed there.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: And your other family was still living there too.

ERRECART: Yeah, they were living. But then we were here, you know.

CUSICK: And you traveled over there? What did you expect to find when you went back to the Basque Country? Did you expect things to change?

ERRECART: Well, change a little bit, but not too much. But then after I come back, I understood everything has changed over there too. People, bad people, and they're stealing, just like here.

CUSICK: In the Basque Country you mean?

ERRECART: All over. All over France, you know.

CUSICK: And you didn't see that before?

ERRECART: Oh, no, no. Before I came here, there was nothing like that. No, no. Like I said, everything is different. You understand, don't you?

CUSICK: Yeah. Places change all the time.

ERRECART: All the time.

CUSICK: But were you shocked or surprised or pleased with some changes that you saw in the Basque Country when you went back?

ERRECART: Well, my sister was here before I came, and then we came to my sister. And my brother and sister, they were here before I came. I came with one of my sisters. Both together.

CUSICK: How old were you when you came?

ERRECART: Let's see, I don't remember. I think... Oh, maybe I was sixteen or fifteen or something like that.

CUSICK: That's young. How did you decide to just leave your home and your family?

ERRECART: Well, we have to.

CUSICK: Because you wanted to find work also, like everybody else was doing?

ERRECART: Sure. They took us to the train, you know, my father and then my sisters, and they took us to train. And we all cry because we didn't like to... We like to come over here in a way, but then we don't like to leave father and mother there.

CUSICK: Sure. Well how did your parents feel when they saw you leaving?

ERRECART: Well, poor things, they were so poor that just...

CUSICK: Did they think it would be better for you to come over and try to find work?

ERRECART: They didn't think anything of it. Just do the best they can, and we have to do the best we can.

CUSICK: Sure. I was wondering, was it your decision to come over here? Or did your parents suggest it to you?

ERRECART: No. My brothers and sisters there that tell us. If we want to come down, they help us to come over here, see.

CUSICK: Did they help you pay for the way?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Well, the way, it was very cheap those days. Very cheap.

CUSICK: Of course, compared to today.

ERRECART: And then we came in the boats, they weren't so good neither, you know. We were sick in the boat.

CUSICK: Yeah, I've heard that a lot of the time the passages are not very comfortable.

ERRECART: No, we were sick. The boats over there... Of course then they weren't like this, you know, but the steam or whatever, we used to get sick, you know. Very sick. But then we got here.

CUSICK: How did you feel on the way over when you didn't know what to expect in the United States? What were you thinking of?

ERRECART: Well, we were strangers, you know. And when we get off the Santa Fe Depot, and I have some other company too. I have some friends, you know. But my sister was here, and then I have two more friends...

CUSICK: That you knew, that came from the Basque Country and came over here?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: Were they in Stockton?

ERRECART: Yeah. They all stop in Stockton. And then, when we get off in Santa Fe...

CUSICK: Where's Santa Fe?

ERRECART: We have a card, you know, but then nobody knew about this card there. They didn't know where we had to go. So we walk with our suitcases, walking the street, you know, and finally I says, "Well, I'm not going to walk any longer." So we stop. It was a milkman in one place. Milkman. So we stop, and I guess that milkman told this lady, some strangers, they were there. We were there. So this lady, "Oh, come on! Come on in!" she says, you know. We were so happy. It was a hotel, you know. We just stop in the right spot.

CUSICK: That's great! You mean you were walking around, you really didn't know where to go at first?

ERRECART: No, we didn't know where to go. Every place we give them the card, some people passing, they didn't know where we were.

CUSICK: What was this card that you had? Did they give this to you on your trip?

ERRECART: Just a card, you know. You know, the address, you know. But they didn't know that place, see. We have address. But they didn't know that address.

CUSICK: Oh my gosh. So fortunately, you found this hotel and stayed there?

ERRECART: Yeah. And it was my luck, I guess. I just stop right there. And I didn't want to walk anymore, because we were so tired.

CUSICK: Oh yeah. Well this was your sister, and you...

ERRECART: And two other guys from friends. Same place we came.

CUSICK: Oh. You all came in a group then.

ERRECART: Yeah, that's it.

CUSICK: Where was the place you first stopped off? Santa Fe?

ERRECART: Yeah, we stopped at Santa Fe.

CUSICK: Where is that?

ERRECART: Stockton in Santa Fe. You know where that is.

CUSICK: Wait. You took a boat from France.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: And where did it land?

ERRECART: New York.

CUSICK: In New York?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: What did you do from New York?

ERRECART: Well, they took us right away.

CUSICK: Did you get on a train?

ERRECART: In the train.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. You picked up a train, and you took the train all the way to Stockton.

ERRECART: Yeah, and then Stockton Santa Fe depot, you know.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. Okay. And then you got this hotel. Where was the hotel? Which hotel was it? Can you remember?

ERRECART: Oh, that hotel, it's disappeared now. It was in Hunter Street, you know.

CUSICK: Was it the old Basque hotel?

ERRECART: Yeah, there were some Basque people.

CUSICK: How did you feel when you saw them?

ERRECART: Oh, we feel good. Boy, my sister, the one that was there before, my sister was there waiting for us. But we didn't know! Nobody knew where we wanna stop. But then on the other...

CUSICK: That was the address. Was that your sister's address?

ERRECART: No. They expecting us to go in that hotel. And they wanted me to ask over there.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. Yeah. They were gonna pick you up there and meet you. Did your sister and your brother already have their own homes at that time?

ERRECART: Yeah, my sister had it. And my brother was working at the sheep camp, you know, outside.

CUSICK: Was your sister working too?

ERRECART: Well, here husband was herding sheep, you know.

CUSICK: Oh, she was married.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: So you came over, and you were in the hotel for a while. Did you ever live with your sister's family or your brother's family?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. And then my sister took us to her place, and then we stayed there a few days until we get a jobs, you know.

CUSICK: Where did you get a job?

ERRECART: Stockton. I get a job of... Let's see, what I was doing. Well, just housework.

CUSICK: You worked for a family then, in their household.

ERRECART: That's it.

CUSICK: Did you like then?

ERRECART: We have to like it. Oh yeah. Well. But then we have hard time to get used to, too, you know. We couldn't talk English.

CUSICK: That's right.

ERRECART: Very hard.

CUSICK: So what things really were hard...

ERRECART: I can't talk English right now, but then those days, we can talk French and Basque and... Not Spanish. We have Spanish, so they talk Spanish too, but oh, it was hard. It was very hard for us.

CUSICK: Well, tell me what kinds of things were really hard when you couldn't speak English and you couldn't communicate.

ERRECART: Well, I speak English, you know. I learn a little English. I went to some family. Doctor. And then he took just one word or two French, you know, and I pick it up that way. And

he talk to me in English, and I pick it up and then have a kids, you know. And I learned that way a little bit.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. So that's how you started learning English?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: By picking it up from other people, and then when you had your own children, they learned English because they were growing up in it. Did you mean your children helped you to learn to speak more English?

ERRECART: No, no. Before my children came, I could talk little bit, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah, you were learning then.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: Did you want to learn English?

ERRECART: Well, I went to school, you know. I learn, all the Constitution I learn. And then, you know, I have my citizen paper. When I learn everything, when last day for my examination, they didn't ask me nothing. I was so mad!

CUSICK: You're kidding! I thought you had to take a test and you had to study.

ERRECART: Yeah, well, see, I tell you. I have a picture with me, and then she had my record on a piece of paper. The judge knew I knew everything, see. So that way, he didn't want to lose no [bank?], they ask me what form of government we have. Well sure, anybody knew that.

CUSICK: And so you just had it like that.

ERRECART: Yeah. I pass very easy. But then for me, it was hard for me to learn all those.

CUSICK: Why was that? Because it was a lot to study and things to learn?

ERRECART: Oh, it was a lot of thing to learn.

CUSICK: What year did you become a citizen?

ERRECART: You know, I'm going to tell you. You remember when Roosevelt died? That's the day I...

CUSICK: Really? That was in the '40s. Was it in the '40s?

ERRECART: Well, you oughta know. Roosevelt died. I don't know what year he died.

CUSICK: You probably know better than I do.

ERRECART: That's the day I passed my examination.

CUSICK: It just happened to be the same day, and that's how you remember it?

ERRECART: That's it. That's how I remember.

CUSICK: How did you decide to become a citizen? Why did you want to?

ERRECART: Well, I tell you. Some people always help, try to tell me, you know, "Oh, you better get citizen" and this and that.

CUSICK: What kind of people were telling you this?

ERRECART: Some French people too.

CUSICK: Some friends of yours?

ERRECART: My friends, you know. They'd been already citizen, and insist, "Ana, you better started to learn how to..." And I says, "Oh, I could never learn," I says to them, you know. But then I started it. But then I did my own study, you know.

CUSICK: You had to do it on your own?

ERRECART: Well, then I had a nice lady teacher. She was teaching, and she took me to school, you know.

CUSICK: For citizenship you mean?

ERRECART: Yeah. She helped me lots, you know.

CUSICK: How did you find this lady to help you?

ERRECART: Gosh.

CUSICK: Was she somebody that helped a lot of people do this

ERRECART: Oh yeah. She helped a lot of other people too. She was teaching... I don't know what kind of teacher she was, but then she teach me alright.

CUSICK: So she helped you to learn.

ERRECART: Take me to the school and certain hours, you know.

CUSICK: I don't know understand. Was it a certain school for trying to become a citizen?

ERRECART: Yeah, well it was one school... Gosh, I forget now. But anyway, this school. And then I was working then, you know. And when my work was done, she took me to school, see.

CUSICK: When you were told that you should become a citizen, when your friends said, "You better do this," why did they say it would be a good idea to do it? What would be better for it?

ERRECART: I guess somebody else, they have their ideas too. They got the same reason, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah, they did it already. Did they find that it helped them when they were living here?

ERRECART: Well, they thought it was the best thing that everybody else doing it, so you know.

CUSICK: I was wondering, what would be good about it?

ERRECART: Well, now I think about it myself, you know, didn't help us too much. But then I think it's a good idea to be citizen. Don't you think so?

CUSICK: Uh huh. Because you're living here.

ERRECART: That's it.

CUSICK: And you've lived here quite a while.

ERRECART: Yeah. I think that's the best way. I guess everybody pick it up that way, you know.

CUSICK: How did you feel about the United States at that time?

ERRECART: We went back to France, my boy and I, let's see, 1937 I think. But we like this place better than over there.

CUSICK: What do you think are some of the good things about this country for Basque people who are living here in Stockton?

ERRECART: Well, the Basque people, you know, they claim the Basque people, they have no education, but then they do taking the education, learning. They learn, see. We learn. I learn hard way.

CUSICK: You proved that yourself. I mean, you did it.

ERRECART: I learn hard way, yeah. But then I was glad I have my citizen papers, because you know, I think that's the best way to have it. Citizen paper.

CUSICK: Yeah. So you feel it's going to help you.

ERRECART: Well, as long as you're going to stay in this paper, you have to have citizen papers.

CUSICK: That is a good idea.

ERRECART: I think so too.

CUSICK: When you first came to live here, were there a lot of other Basque people that were living in the area?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Different places, you know, they have houses, and some of them have sheep. Some of them go to sheep camp and working.

CUSICK: Did you make friends with a lot of them?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Well a lot of them died too.

CUSICK: But when you first came over here, you knew them.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I knew them.

CUSICK: Did you do a lot of different activities with them?

ERRECART: Yeah. We visit each other, and then you know.

CUSICK: Of course, you were working. Did that take a lot of time?

ERRECART: I go to work, and when we go to work, we didn't have to go to day work. We just stay where we go.

CUSICK: You just lived where you worked.

ERRECART: That's it. You and the other kids, you know.

CUSICK: Did you meet your husband soon after?

ERRECART: No, I met my husband... You know, he was here long time ago before, you know.

CUSICK: Was he from the Basque Country?

ERRECART: Yeah, he came from Basque Country.

CUSICK: But he came before you did.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I didn't even knew him, but my sister and them, they knew him, you know. So you know how you met the people, you know, and that's how I met him.

CUSICK: How did I met him?

ERRECART: He was staying in that hotel too. Same hotel.

CUSICK: Is that when you met him? When you first came here?

ERRECART: Yeah, you know, just see him, and then you know how it is.

CUSICK: Well can you tell me about the courtship? How you started going out and when you got married?

ERRECART: We didn't go out. We didn't have no... There was no going out those days. It was different.

CUSICK: Tell me how it was different. How was it?

ERRECART: Well, sometime I guess you gotta show, you know. That's about all, you know. And then even when I didn't want to get married.

CUSICK: Oh. Why?

ERRECART: Oh, I wanted to learn English, and then I want to make a little bit money before, you know. That was my idea.

CUSICK: So how did that change?

ERRECART: So that's about all I can tell you about my Basque place.

CUSICK: When did you decide to get married?

ERRECART: Oh, I don't know. Long time ago after.

CUSICK: Okay, you met your husband because he was living in the same hotel?

ERRECART: Yeah. He had a sheep too. He was sheep man, you know.

CUSICK: Did he have a lot of land he was working on you mean? He worked with the sheep?

ERRECART: Yeah. They rent the land, you know, for the sheep. For the feed, see.

CUSICK: So he had the sheep and he rented the land.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: What year did you get married in?

ERRECART: In August, let's see... I think I got married August the 30th, 19... I don't remember now. I have my papers, but then I don't know where they are.

CUSICK: It's hard to remember dates sometimes. Do you remember how old you were at that time?

ERRECART: Well, I don't think I was too old. I think I was about 22.

CUSICK: Were most people about that age when they got married? Most of the girls that you knew?

ERRECART: They didn't get married those days, they didn't get married young like here, you know, 17 and 18. They never do that. They wait until they get older.

CUSICK: About how old usually? About 22 like you?

ERRECART: Yeah. Like I say.

CUSICK: So your husband had a job that was similar to a lot of other Basque men in Stockton. A lot of men were doing that. They were working with the sheep.

ERRECART: Oh yeah, well most of them had a sheep those days, you know.

CUSICK: Most of the men that you knew, or most of the Basque men?

ERRECART: That's it, yeah. They had a sheep, see, and they work on them.

CUSICK: So did he do that most of his life?

ERRECART: I think so. When he came over here, I think he stay working with the sheep man, you know.

CUSICK: Even when you were married.

ERRECART: And then he make a little bit money and he bought the sheep, you know, and that's how they do, see.

CUSICK: And he kept working with the sheep through your marriage?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Uh huh.

CUSICK: Did you keep working when you got married?

ERRECART: Well sure.

CUSICK: You wanted to work?

ERRECART: Oh yeah, work. You know, there's a lot of work to do in those days. Sheep, you know, we didn't make any money.

CUSICK: It was hard to make money?

ERRECART: Oh boy, yeah.

CUSICK: Did you feel like a lot of jobs were available for you?

ERRECART: Well, there were always housework, you know. And babysitters, or you know. Washing and ironing and all those things, you know.

CUSICK: So you were still helping families once in a while.

ERRECART: Why sure. I used to send a little bit money to my people, you know, if I have.

CUSICK: Back in the '30s?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: To your parents?

ERRECART: They were poor. They were very poor.

CUSICK: Did you want to do that to help them out?

ERRECART: Oh sure. But then they die, you know, and they didn't need no money, see. Well, those things pass a long time ago. Boy, you already asked how many years?

CUSICK: Well, sounds like you've had a rich and full life, and there's a lot to talk about. I would like to hear more. Can you tell me, how many children did you have?

ERRECART: I had three. But one of them died. I think she was about 39. She had a cancer, my daughter. She died a long time ago.

CUSICK: And you had a son?

ERRECART: I have son, Dominic, and then daughter. She lives in Lodi.

CUSICK: So they all stayed in this area.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I was in Lodi the other day, and I went to the dentist there, and my daughter got a beautiful place there, and she want me to stay there one day or so. And I, "No, no, no. I wanted to come down in the shop here." You know, she's got so much, my daughter. Oh, she got a house. I'm telling you, she had a kind of big house. One corner is empty there. Everything full, you know. Terrible. I don't like that way, you know.

CUSICK: Why is that terrible?

ERRECART: Well, it's too much of a work, and then too much of a commotion. Oh, she got so many things!

CUSICK: You mean a lot of things around in the house?

ERRECART: Baths, dishes all over, and their cupboard's all full, and she likes it that way, you know, my daughter. Oh my gosh. She put up so many fruit and jelly. She put up fruit for me and jellies too. I don't make anything here. They give it to me.

CUSICK: Boy, that's nice. Did your daughter and your son marry somebody that was Basque also?

ERRECART: No, no. My daughter marry with the American man, you know. And then Dominic, you met the other day? She's born here. She's Spanish. She's born here. And then her father and mother live in Fresno. They're Spanish too. They come from Spain. The stranger people here, they all came from the old country. Most of them.

CUSICK: In Stockton you mean?

ERRECART: Not Stockton exactly. All over. Lodi or any place, you know.

CUSICK: In California you mean?

ERRECART: In California, yeah.

CUSICK: It seems like most people come from the old country?

ERRECART: Yeah. In California.

CUSICK: Do you find a lot of Basque people?

ERRECART: Well, I met quite a few, you know, but then the time pass and you forget them, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah. Well, you run across a lot of people.

ERRECART: Well I did.

CUSICK: When you were bringing up your children, did you bring them up the same way that your mother brought you and your sisters up?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. We sent them to school. We were Catholic, you know. Go to church, you know.

CUSICK: Your parents were Catholic too?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: And you were Catholic? And you still went to church?

ERRECART: Oh yeah, we do go. And my kids, we send them to the Catholic school.

CUSICK: In Stockton?

ERRECART: Oh yeah.

CUSICK: Which one? Was it St. Mary's here?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. St. Mary's.

CUSICK: And then was that a Catholic high school?

ERRECART: Well, no. They went to public school. They went to public school, but then to go to church, you have to go to Catholic church, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah. They got baptized and confirmed and all that.

ERRECART: Yeah, baptized, and yeah. Learn the catechism. And it was a lot of things to be done too those days, but then a lot of them don't do that. A lot of them don't teach the kids that way, see. They let them go, see. But we didn't. I take care of those kids, you know.

CUSICK: That was important to you?

ERRECART: Sure. I think so.

CUSICK: Did your children have to have jobs when they were growing up? Did they help you out in the household, in your house?

ERRECART: Well sure.

CUSICK: With chores and stuff?

ERRECART: Oh yeah, sure. In the garden too sometime, you know. And I work hard in the garden myself, in the field too.

CUSICK: Did you have a lot of land?

ERRECART: No. Not too much of a land, but then you know.

CUSICK: But you were working on it.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: So you had a job with another family? And did you have that for very long? Throughout your marriage did you have it?

ERRECART: Well, I don't remember how long, but then you know.

CUSICK: For some years at least.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: Did you have your job when your children were going to school?

ERRECART: Well, I was working my place, making a garden and chickens and you know how it works.

CUSICK: Yeah. Do you feel that your children were very demanding on you?

ERRECART: What?

CUSICK: Did they demand a lot of time out of you and energy?

ERRECART: Oh no. They knew I was busy, you know.

CUSICK: And your husband was busy too.

ERRECART: Oh, sure.

CUSICK: How did you and your husband make your decisions about the children? Or how did you divide the responsibilities of your household between you and your husband?

ERRECART: Oh, oh. Well, we got along understanding each other, you know, and do. He's got a job and I have my job and the children go to school, see.

CUSICK: And the kids, they go to school, and did they get jobs themselves?

ERRECART: Well, they have to go to school. They're young, you know.

CUSICK: Well yes. When they were going to school, did they ever work part time?

ERRECART: No, no. It wasn't that kind of a job then.

CUSICK: They got a job after they were out of school?

ERRECART: Yeah. They had a job home when they come home from school.

CUSICK: Oh, they did? What kind of jobs?

ERRECART: Sure. Milk the cows and...

CUSICK: Oh yeah. Take care of all the little things?

ERRECART: Sure.

CUSICK: What other kinds of things did they do?

ERRECART: They didn't have too much time to do after school, you know.

CUSICK: They were busy? Did you sometimes help your children with the problems they had at school?

ERRECART: Well, no, no. I didn't know anything about it. They have to learn their own.

CUSICK: I see. But you were happy they were going?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Sure. It was altogether different school those days too.

CUSICK: How do you mean?

ERRECART: They got a big books. And over there we have just one of these. And then we have to fill up, learning and what we learn and what we put it in, see.

CUSICK: This is when you went to school in the Basque Country?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: But you say it's changed, huh? Do you like the difference now? When your children were going to school?

ERRECART: Well, I don't know. That's a long time ago.

CUSICK: Yeah. Did you expect your children to go to school for so many years?

ERRECART: Well, we tried to, yeah. They got promoted, you know, and in time, they got their book to show what they did in school.

CUSICK: Did they go to college?

ERRECART: College, no, no. No college.

CUSICK: What was your greatest satisfaction as a mother? What made you feel best?

ERRECART: Best? Well, go to work and do the best you can. Best living you can. That's all.

CUSICK: And can you tell me what were your greatest concerns as a mother? What would you be most worried about for your children?

ERRECART: Well, sometimes they get sick, you know, and kinda worries, you know. When you have family, you worry anyway.

CUSICK: What kinds of things did you worry about when your children were growing up?

ERRECART: Depends what kind of a sickness they get. Sometimes they got a sore ears or a thing like that, you know

CUSICK: Yeah. Kids get those all the time.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Sure.

CUSICK: Were there other things besides sicknesses that made you worry about your children?

ERRECART: No, I didn't really have anything too much about to worry my children. They all come up pretty good.

CUSICK: You felt happy with what they were doing? That's fortunate.

ERRECART: Yeah. They come out pretty good, you know. They try.

CUSICK: Yeah. So can you tell me, what were you especially proud of in running your home?

ERRECART: Just get along making living, that's all.

CUSICK: That was one of your biggest concerns? Working and getting along?

ERRECART: And living and do the best you can. That's really the best thing I can tell you.

CUSICK: When did your children start becoming independent?

ERRECART: You mean to get married or something?

CUSICK: Yeah. Or moving out of the house and getting married and getting their own job.

ERRECART: They never did that. When there was time for them to get married, I guess they figured out they want to get marriage, you know, and he says, "Alright, you go ahead. That's all."

CUSICK: Did they live in your house until they got married?

ERRECART: Oh yeah.

CUSICK: They all did that?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. They all stayed there.

CUSICK: Did you ever have any influence on who they would marry?

ERRECART: No. I have no resort, nothing, you know. They got married, and they got along with their husbands, and so they did their living, and that's all.

CUSICK: Did you hope they would marry somebody of Basque origin also?

ERRECART: No, I didn't have no particular preference. No, no.

CUSICK: What were your concerns when they started to move out and live on their own?

ERRECART: Well, we do the best we can too, you know. And they have to make their living. So we have to do it. Everybody have to try to get along, make a living. That's all.

CUSICK: So your son got a job when he got married? Let's see. They all lived in your house until they got married. And so then they'd go out and they got married, and then do they always get jobs right after that?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Well, they have to have jobs. They have to make a living.

CUSICK: Even your daughters got a job too?

ERRECART: Oh yeah.

CUSICK: Along with their husbands.

ERRECART: Mmhmm.

CUSICK: Do you feel that there maybe aren't as many jobs available for women in Stockton?

ERRECART: Well, it wasn't like this where there was a jobs, you know, like washing and ironing and those things, you know.

CUSICK: Did your daughters do that kind of thing when they got married?

ERRECART: I don't know. One of them, he had a dairy place, and she keep up the garden and the chickens and that way.

CUSICK: Well do you feel like, when you were looking for a job, was there ever any trouble getting a job because of your origin? Or did you ever have any problems getting a job at all?

ERRECART: No, no. I always have a job, you know. I have a good name for working.

CUSICK: Good for you. And that's always good in case you want to get a job. Let's see. Well, did your children's activities sometimes get you involved in some things that were going on in the

community? Like when they were going to school, did they get involved in things that sometimes you would be involved in also?

ERRECART: No, I don't think I remember anything. They never had no trouble, I don't think.

CUSICK: Did you ever meet any people from their school, like their friends or maybe some other parents?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. We do, you know. But then that's a long time ago.

CUSICK: Oh yeah. How often do you get together with your children now?

ERRECART: I remember I did Sunday. My son's birthday, and his daughter birthday, about one day apart, you know. So I am invited, so I have to go, but you know, I get so much invitation and this and that.

CUSICK: How do you feel about that?

ERRECART: Yeah, but then you have to have a little bit money. You have to buy little presents or something. You know how it is.

CUSICK: Yeah. Yeah. So you feel like every time you go over there, you have to have a little gift.

ERRECART: Yeah. I don't know what to get for my son, and my daughter-in-law. No, not daughter-in-law, but then my son's daughter.

CUSICK: Your granddaughter?

ERRECART: Granddaughter, that's it. So you don't know what to get even. There's so many [juts?] nowadays, you know. Oh boy.

CUSICK: But still, do you like seeing your family a lot? Your son, your daughters?

ERRECART: Oh, we get together all the time.

CUSICK: You like that?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. They take me some Sundays. Dominic takes me for supper over at their house Sunday nights, you know.

CUSICK: That's really fortunate that you all live so close by.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I get along fine. You know, I'm old, but then so far I get along fine.

CUSICK: Looks like you're doing just fine.

ERRECART: Well anyway, that's the best thing I can tell you.

CUSICK: When you think of your family overall, how do you think it compares with other families here in Stockton?

ERRECART: Well, the other families, I don't know. You can't read the other families. You have to read your own.

CUSICK: Yeah, that's true. I guess it depends how much you knew other families.

ERRECART: I knew quite a few, but then I don't want to repeat somebody else news. We got enough to ourselves.

CUSICK: How do you think your family compared with other Basque people? In Stockton?

ERRECART: Well, a lot of them died. I have friends here, but three, four friends died recently, in a short time.

CUSICK: That's sad.

ERRECART: Yeah, very sad. I have a friend, he went to Europe. His wife died last year. I used to take care of her. She had a cancer. And then he had sisters in France, and he had a house too, and he come over here, he left his sister with the house. He wanted to go back. So finally he decide to go back. He's in there for two months now. I was expecting what kind of a news he's gonna bring.

CUSICK: Oh wow. When you were first married and you had a lot of other friends, and you were bringing up your children, do you think that your family was pretty much the same as other Basque families?

ERRECART: Yeah, pretty much the same, uh huh. Oh yeah. Because you know, you can't compare everybody's ideas. You have to just judge that they're pretty good, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah. I was wondering if you have the same kind of habits and customs as most other people from the Basque country.

ERRECART: More or less, yeah.

CUSICK: Will you explain to me, are you pretty happy or very happy or not too happy with the way your marriage turned out?

ERRECART: Marriage? Oh yeah, I was happy, sure. You know, those days I was young and happy, but then now I'm old. I do feel things, but I can't tell you everything, you know. Here I am now. That's the place here. And I just live here.

CUSICK: Well, when you were young. Think of when you were young and you were first married. What kind of expectations did you have for your life?

ERRECART: When I was young?

CUSICK: You first got married to your husband, and you were starting a brand new life.

ERRECART: Yeah, well, started work right away. Sure.

CUSICK: Is that what you expected?

ERRECART: Sure. It wasn't any honeymooning or anything like that. Nobody had any honeymoon, you know. Those days, they pass. Those days, they're dead, you know. Are you married?

CUSICK: No, I'm not married.

ERRECART: You're a young girl.

CUSICK: I'm still quite young. I have a few years to go.

ERRECART: You go to school now?

CUSICK: Uh huh.

ERRECART: In college, huh?

CUSICK: Yeah. At the University of the Pacific.

ERRECART: Let's see now. My daughter and granddaughter, she went, but she's finished. She was learning Spanish.

CUSICK: Was she? So am I.

ERRECART: Oh yeah?

CUSICK: Yeah. How old is your granddaughter?

ERRECART: Maybe you were same class.

CUSICK: I wonder. Let's see, how old is your granddaughter?

ERRECART: How old? Oh, she's not a young girl. She's about 30s or something.

[End of Tape]

[TAPE 1, Side B]
[Begin Tape.]

ERRECART: My granddaughter...

CUSICK: Your granddaughter? One teaches in Tracy and one teaches in Galt? That's cool.

ERRECART: But this one, she teach in Galt. She's kind of young, you know. But so far, they have work.

CUSICK: I was going to ask you if your goals that you had for your family were different from the ones your parents had when you were growing up. The goals you had, the expectations and the hopes for your family.

ERRECART: I don't understand that too much.

CUSICK: I'll reword it. Were the hopes and expectations that you had for your family, your husband and your children, the same or were they different from the hopes and expectations your parents had when you were growing up with your brothers and sisters in the Basque Country?

ERRECART: Well, that's long years ago, you know.

CUSICK: But from what you can remember, how do you feel about that?

ERRECART: I don't remember too much. So many years went past.

CUSICK: Yeah. Sometimes it's hard to think of your feelings back then.

ERRECART: Well what you do is you go in France now, and you don't understand nothing. You'd do the same thing, wouldn't you?

CUSICK: There you go. That's what I'd like to know. So when you came to Stockton, of course, what else did you know except what your parents had taught you?

ERRECART: Nothing. We knew how to work our way, you know, but then talking? Oh boy.

CUSICK: And you had to learn that.

ERRECART: That language, when you go strange place, that's hard, you know.

CUSICK: Is that one of the biggest problems you had when you came here?

ERRECART: Oh, you bet your life.

CUSICK: And that's why you thought, "I'd better learn English."

ERRECART: Well, you gotta know, if you gonna go Spain now, you gotta learn how to talk Spanish. And there's a lot of different people when you go Spain. Like there's American people there too, you know?

People mix it up. Now, when we went to Europe, my son and I, do you ever hear Lourdes? We went Lourdes.

CUSICK: Did you like it?

ERRECART: Oh, that's a big place, you know. And see, over there, we met American people too. Lourdes, you know. French people. And then, oh, I was so sick that day, I'll never forget that. I had such a headache. Oh boy.

CUSICK: I thought the moon was supposed to heal you from the water.

ERRECART: When you go to Lourdes, you do go to something to relieve your sickness or headaches or whatever, you know. And then they can, that place, cure you. And do you know something? They sure cure my headache.

CUSICK: Did it really?

ERRECART: Never had a headache ever since.

CUSICK: You're kidding.

ERRECART: And sometimes if you might say that to some people, they won't believe me. But that's very, very true. Very true.

CUSICK: That's the truth as far as you know it.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: That's amazing.

ERRECART: So that's other people have a different things, you know. They think they cure, you know. Of course, you don't see everybody, but I knew my own.

CUSICK: Do you feel close to the Basque Country still?

ERRECART: Well, I know all the Basque places now or then, but then I don't think I want to go back.

CUSICK: Why?

ERRECART: Well, if I go back over there, it'll be the same thing. Very same thing. I can see their lands, I can see their houses and everything, you know.

CUSICK: Well have your attitudes toward the old country changed over time since you've been living in Stockton?

ERRECART: Oh, changed terrible.

CUSICK: Really? For the better or worse?

ERRECART: But the work, for them it didn't change, because they have to do the same over and over, you know. Fix the land, you know, and put the corn and put this and put that for making living, see.

CUSICK: Yeah. Well how about the way you feel about the old country? Has that changed?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Boy, sure changed to me. But then didn't change too much. It didn't change too much, but then little bit change, you know.

CUSICK: What kind of changes do you see mostly?

ERRECART: Oh boy. Living, one thing. Living about the same thing, you know. But after we visit after a while, a few years after everything changed different, you know, good.

CUSICK: What kind of things were good?

ERRECART: Gosh, they have TVs there. Machines, and they have tools to work the land, and that's changing, you know.

CUSICK: Do you think you're affected by what happens in the old country?

ERRECART: Oh no, I'm not. I wasn't surprised, because we born that way. We raised that way, see. Is that talk enough for you?

CUSICK: Pardon me?

ERRECART: Talk good enough?

CUSICK: Oh yeah. I can understand you fine. No problems, Mrs. Errecart.

ERRECART: Well, anyway.

CUSICK: At least you're in contact with your relatives over there, huh? Your cousins...

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I contact and we send the letters and they answer me and things how they are there, the weather and raining or dry or thing like that.

CUSICK: So you're interested to know what's going on over there too?

ERRECART: Yeah. Oh yeah. My sister too. My sister live here in Stockton.

CUSICK: And so she's in contact also?

ERRECART: Yeah. We talk every day. She call me every day, and I call her if she don't call. Oh, I got a lot of friends here in Stockton, you know, but then some of them die. And then the kids growing up, you know, well, you don't own them anymore, see. That's it.

CUSICK: But when you were young, you knew a lot of them, didn't you? Did most of the Basque people that you know tend to live in one neighborhood? And they were all kind of close together in Stockton?

ERRECART: No. Not typically, no. Some of them have a ranch, some of them have a different places, you know. Renting houses or anything like that.

CUSICK: You know, when you first came to the United States, you had just come from the old country. But after you'd been here for a few years, did you consider yourself American, or Basque American, or just Basque?

ERRECART: No. I just stay here and living here and making little bit money, you know. Everybody comes for the money, you know, making little bit money. But then I make a little bit money, and then I sent to my parents. They were living yet, you know. And for myself, I buy something to wear, and that's all. Well, you know, now I'm different too. Boy, I didn't separate from anything, you know. I'm alright.

CUSICK: So you're very fortunate?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. I have plenty clothes, and gosh. Plenty clothes, plenty everything.

CUSICK: Do you feel that your children are around to help you whenever you need it?

ERRECART: Well they don't have to help me, you know.

CUSICK: Because you're doing fine?

ERRECART: Yeah. Like sewing. I can sew myself too.

CUSICK: That's great. Do you make a lot of your own clothes?

ERRECART: Yeah. I used to make the kids' clothes and everything.

CUSICK: You did? All your kids' clothes?

ERRECART: Yeah. I used to make nice coats, you know. For the one color one, and the other one another color.

CUSICK: Did you learn to sew in the Basque Country?

ERRECART: I learned right here. And then crochet, you know. We didn't know nothing when we came, but then I try to learn, see. I learn myself. I've been doing some slippers, you know.

CUSICK: Oh! Who are you making this for?

ERRECART: Oh, any people. I make about the same size, you know.

CUSICK: Oh, how nice. That's great.

ERRECART: I learned myself.

CUSICK: You taught yourself?

ERRECART: Well, if I see somebody doing it, I pick up right away.

CUSICK: That's great.

ERRECART: So I'm so smart! [laughs] No, no. That's not.

CUSICK: Well, if you decided you want to learn it, and you just pick it up.

ERRECART: I used to crochet. We didn't know how to crochet nothing, but then I learned here. We used to make fancy crochet, you know, but I don't do anymore because these kids nowadays, they get everything. Nowadays you get everything.

CUSICK: Like what?

ERRECART: You go in the store, whatever you want you got it.

CUSICK: Don't you have to have the money first?

ERRECART: Oh yeah, sure.

CUSICK: So it's just like you say. Everybody's got to work a little to make a little money.

ERRECART: That's it.

CUSICK: And then you can get the things you want.

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: Were there any things in Stockton that you think weren't very good for Basque people?

ERRECART: What do you mean? Let's see.

CUSICK: I don't know. Just some kinds of things that weren't very good for Basque people. What kind of things did you run into?

ERRECART: Well, there is a few things, few people, but then I don't want to talk about it, you know.

CUSICK: Oh yeah. Maybe not the people, but other things that make it sort of difficult for you when you were living here.

ERRECART: Oh yeah, well, I tell you. We didn't have very much clothes in it. When my sister died here, I remember, I bought a suit, and that suit last me years and years and years. And that's all I can afford.

CUSICK: So are you saying one of your big concerns was just to make enough money to have enough to live by?

ERRECART: Enough just to go by, see, yeah. Shoes and stockings and everything else. You know how much we pay for stockings?

CUSICK: I hate to ask. What?

ERRECART: Ten cents.

CUSICK: You're kidding.

ERRECART: Well sure, I'm not kidding you. I'm just telling you. Ten cents. Then when I got married, I bought white stockings, you know. I don't remember how much I paid, but now, if we go to church or... We didn't wear stockings every day, don't worry. We go without stockings. Barefoot lots of time. But ten cents a piece. And they're all black, you know. Black stockings. There was no pigment.

CUSICK: But can you imagine? Look at it today.

ERRECART: Ten cents! Well, I'm not lying you, I'm just telling you the truth.

CUSICK: I believe it. That's how much it changes.

ERRECART: Oh! And now they don't make too many cotton stockings. No, not easy. Some Italian people wear a lot of...

CUSICK: Is that what you see?

ERRECART: Well, they work in the garden and everything. I think they wear. If they can get it, you know. I don't think they make too many cotton stockings anymore. Nylon and yarn and all that stuff.

CUSICK: Oh. Synthetics?

ERRECART: A lot of them don't wear. My daughter and them, they don't wear them either.

CUSICK: It's more comfortable.

ERRECART: Sure.

CUSICK: Do you think that things were pretty expensive when you were living in Stockton? Was it hard for you to afford things?

ERRECART: Well, they were expensive because we didn't have any money.

CUSICK: Yeah. There's a way to look at it.

ERRECART: And then one time I buy blouse. First time I buy blouse. White blouse, you know. You know how much I pay? You believe me?

CUSICK: I'll believe you.

ERRECART: Twenty-five cents.

CUSICK: You're kidding. [laughs] I know you're not kidding!

ERRECART: I'm not kidding you!

CUSICK: Wow. In Stockton?

ERRECART: In Stockton. It was pretty though. They were cheap, you know. Nobody had money to buy, and there wasn't too many things neither. Twenty-five cents a blouse. And that last me quite a bit too. I have a girlfriend here, we go together, you know. She was working too. And she buy blouse. But I think she pay fifty cents or something like that, but me, I buy twenty-five cents.

CUSICK: And now it's twenty-five dollars for a blouse.

ERRECART: Yeah. Oh boy, yeah. Now, it's hard to believe, isn't it? I don't think you believe me...

CUSICK: No, I believe you, but that's how much it's changed. I'm sure of it.

ERRECART: Terrible, terrible.

CUSICK: And it's hard. You're just trying to get enough to go by.

ERRECART: Yeah. And then I remember my girlfriend, she had a sweater. A red sweater. And I always wanted to have a sweater too. I couldn't get a sweater. I didn't have no money to buy, see. That's it.

CUSICK: Did you have enough when you were bringing up your children, do you think? Was there enough money to get them ready for school and get them clothes?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. In those days I had plenty, yeah.

CUSICK: It was just when you first came and you first started working?

ERRECART: Yeah. That's when I first came here.

CUSICK: Yeah, that's hard. Mrs. Errecart, what aspects of the old country and the customs from your home have you kept in your own house? Like what kind of customs?

ERRECART: What kind of clothes you mean? No.

CUSICK: Or customs. What kinds of customs, and what parts of the culture of the old country have you kept for your own family? Like are there certain things you do on certain days, and other little special things and special foods and special celebrations?

ERRECART: Well, Sunday, we have the best day. We go to church twice on Sundays. And then sometime girlfriends, we get together and we make our own... We play, you know, after church little bit.

CUSICK: This was you and your girlfriends?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: Was this when you were younger? Was this in the old country?

ERRECART: Yeah, old country.

CUSICK: Oh, I see. What kind of things did you play?

ERRECART: Those what you call them...

CUSICK: Pelota?

ERRECART: No, no. Not pelota, no. The boys played pelota, yeah. But then the girls, we had one called... You know, you throw those what you call...

CUSICK: Like jacks?

ERRECART: No. Well, I can't remember. Anyway, and then sometime we go, one of the girlfriend inside, and we dance. We weren't allowed to dance, you know.

CUSICK: Why?

ERRECART: Well, the priest didn't want us to dance at all. But we make our own. We play the [guitar?] you know. Play together for a little while, see.

CUSICK: Because that was the only day you didn't have to work?

ERRECART: That's the only recreation we have in the old country.

CUSICK: Wow. Was that that only day you had off?

ERRECART: For sure. Only day. It was no holiday, it was no Labor Day or anything like that.

CUSICK: Oh yeah. What kind of recreation did you enjoy when you came to Stockton?

ERRECART: Well, I tell you, in these hotels, they used to do the dance Sunday nights.

CUSICK: Yeah. Did they have a lot of dances for you?

ERRECART: Yeah. We danced, and I used to love to dance, you know. And then we go over to the hotel, and they give us supper, and then we stay there and dance, and someone to help us home, you know. We didn't have no machine. We have to walk quite a while.

CUSICK: Was this... Were all the people who went to the dances mostly Basque people?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Mmhmm. All the Basque people.

CUSICK: And that's how you all met.

ERRECART: Yeah. All together, and they had musicians, you know.

CUSICK: That sounds like so much fun.

ERRECART: Oh, it was lots of fun. And those musician, you know, they play whatever we want. Whatever dance we want, they used to play. I used to know how to dance, you know, my way.

CUSICK: I'm sure you still know how to dance.

ERRECART: Oh, I used to love to dance.

CUSICK: Is that where you met your husband?

ERRECART: Well, he was there, but they didn't learn how to dance.

CUSICK: Why not? The men didn't or he didn't?

ERRECART: I don't know. I just, they didn't do it. You have to fill up all those things?

CUSICK: Well these are a lot of things that I want to remember to be sure to ask about, because this fills in the whole story. Are there certain kinds of things that you did in your home with your children and your husband that you used to do in the old country too? When you were home with your family?

ERRECART: Well you know, over here is altogether different.

CUSICK: But what kind of things did you do that would make it the same? Did you cook the same? Did you celebrate some of the same things?

ERRECART: Well, we learn cook over here. I learn over here. I knew a little bit in France, but then I learned myself cooking. We used to have hotel here too. We used to rent hotel.

CUSICK: You owned a hotel?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: You and your husband?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: Which hotel was that?

ERRECART: Oh, that hotel has disappeared now. They're tearing it down and then put the parking lot.

CUSICK: Yeah. They do that. But which one was this? What was it called?

ERRECART: That used to call Royal Hotel.

CUSICK: And you owned it?

ERRECART: Well no, we rented. But then we ran it. We ran it for I don't know how long. So I used to cook over there, and then night time, everybody comes over there dancing, you know, had a lot of fun, see. I used to cook over there myself.

CUSICK: For all those people you mean?

ERRECART: Oh yeah.

CUSICK: What kind of special foods would you cook?

ERRECART: Well let's see. Sundays or any days, you know. Now I make all this nice vegetable soup. That's the first. And then we have some kind of meat.

CUSICK: Did you eat a lot of lamb?

ERRECART: Yeah, lambs and steak, you know, and quite a few things different. I bet, do you like everything?

CUSICK: [laughs] Just about!

ERRECART: Do you like pig's feet?

CUSICK: Pig feet? I never had them.

ERRECART: Oh boy. There's a hotel here, they cook pig's feet once a week. The people go crazy for them. Well, they cook them, you know.

CUSICK: They probably make it very tasty, yeah.

ERRECART: And they cook them, and then...

CUSICK: I don't know if I could eat those!

ERRECART: Oh, the people go crazy.

CUSICK: Everybody? Or do the Basque people like them a lot?

ERRECART: Well, Basque, or American people. They crazy for them. Really. See, the way they cook, I know those cooks, what they do, how they do everything. I used to cook, you know, and I knew everything cooking.

CUSICK: Did you cook a lot of special things for your family? For your husband, for your children?

ERRECART: Well, nothing special. We used to go out Sunday sometime, go to the hotel, eat, you know.

CUSICK: Do your children have some of the same habits that you had?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. They eat like we do.

CUSICK: In their homes now with their family? They eat kind of the same way?

ERRECART: Well, they different, you know. So many things you can buy now. You can buy, I don't know, you name it.

CUSICK: Processed.

ERRECART: But they like everything, you know. They like.

CUSICK: Do they celebrate some of the same holidays that you're used to?

ERRECART: Well, mostly they do some of them. But then they go out or they have been invited or something. I'm talking about pig feets. I have a little party here not too long ago. I have my son-in-law and my daughter and her kids. I have pig feets. They're crazy about it. Really!

CUSICK: So you knew how to cook it very well, sure.

ERRECART: Well yeah. Those pig feets, you know, use the pig feets, you see the pigs' feets. It's not the way they're supposed to be. You have to boil them and trim them and make it nice out of it, see.

CUSICK: [laughing] I'm sorry! I just can't imagine!

ERRECART: Isn't that something? Well, I knew you never. But a lot of people don't know what a pig feets are. They know what they are, but then they don't know how to fix them, or a lot of people don't know how to eat.

CUSICK: Yeah. You've gotta know how to do it. What other kind of things? Like pig feet and other things that you used to do?

ERRECART: Oh, we used to cook tripe. Tripe too.

CUSICK: Did you make a soup with that?

ERRECART: No, no, no. Tripe, you have to boil it twice, you know. And then you have to drain it and cut them. Frying, and then you fry that again, you know. And then you kind of a juice out of it. But I can't explain to you cooking, because I know a lot of the things cooking.

CUSICK: Yeah. I was wondering what kind of things were your specialty items that were really typical of Basque people.

ERRECART: And then we make stew, you know. We make lamb stew, we make a lot of things.

CUSICK: Do your daughters cook the same way? Do they like to cook a lot of things that you knew how to cook?

ERRECART: My daughter, she's a good cook too. Her house is just full of stuff to cook. Oh yeah. Everything is different, you know. It's hard to 'splain to you what it is.

CUSICK: I can see what you're saying, because over any number of years, things really change. So how do these changes affect you? How do you feel about the way these things are different?

ERRECART: Well, you know, we make soup every day once. Vegetable soup. Maybe in noontime we have vegetable soup. And then night time, I make vermicelli, you know, thin soup for the night time. Those two things we change every day. And Sundays, I have just one kind of a soup. Vermicelli soup. And then we cook big veal roast.

CUSICK: And you'd have them with your family often, don't you? Your daughter's family or your son's family, and your sister's too.

ERRECART: I used to cook a bunch and I invite them, you know. Come on over for eat supper, and they all come, and we all eat.

CUSICK: This is all your whole family?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: And they bring their children too?

ERRECART: Oh yeah.

CUSICK: How do you feel about them having friends other than your nationality? You know, the people who aren't Basque?

ERRECART: Well, you know, like these people over here, they're not Basque. But I just talk to them, and you don't get together. If you know anybody, you say hello.

CUSICK: How do they feel about it? Your children.

ERRECART: I don't know that they have any children.

CUSICK: Your children.

ERRECART: Oh, my children. They know how to do it now.

CUSICK: Yeah. They're married to people who aren't Basque, is that right?

ERRECART: They got friends. They got a lot of friends too.

CUSICK: Well when you were younger, did you associate with other people? Other than Basque people rather?

ERRECART: Well, I used to mix it up like you do. Have to mix it up with the neighbors, you know.

CUSICK: Because there were a lot of different types or people.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Sure. You know, my mother used to teach us always be good with the neighbors. My mother used to tell us. Always get along with them. Say hello. That's very true, isn't it?

CUSICK: Why would you say that's true?

ERRECART: Well, you know, it's true. You have to get along. Neighbors, they're the best thing you can have. If you need anything, neighbors are the first, don't you think so?

CUSICK: Yeah. Because they're close by. And you're living right near them, and you do want to get along with your neighbors.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Neighbors. I think that's what my mother means. Neighbors are the best thing. Where else you go if you need anybody else?

CUSICK: What about your family?

ERRECART: But if you have some trouble with the neighbors, the first thing, you know.

CUSICK: Mrs. Errecart, think of the kinds of lives your children are leading right now. What are some of the best things about their lives that you can see?

ERRECART: They have everything in the world.

CUSICK: You feel they're very fortunate?

ERRECART: Yeah. They have work . They all work. But then they do different, like they do their own way.

CUSICK: And how do you feel about it?

ERRECART: I feel that's good. Let them do the way they want it. That's what I let them do, see. I never talk to them, you know, "Don't do this and don't do that." I just let them alone. That's their life.

CUSICK: That's wise.

ERRECART: Sure.

CUSICK: Well what are some of the less desirable things? What are some of the things that you're not really very happy to see in their lives? Although you may or may not tell them that.

ERRECART: Well, I don't know. I don't remember what trouble thing I have. I don't think I know anything so terrible.

CUSICK: Anything in your children's lives either? That maybe was not as good? Not terrible, but not something you were happy with?

ERRECART: Well, they're pretty good to me, so that's all I can say.

CUSICK: That's good. What was life like here in Stockton for people who were from the Basque Country?

ERRECART: Well, I don't know. That's long time ago. The people, you know, when they came, if he come here long time ago, well, they have to raise their family, and then they all go away, and that's different things, you know.

CUSICK: But when they were raising their family, and you were raising yours too, what were some of the good things for Basque people in Stockton?

ERRECART: I don't know if there's any good things. That's my life, this way, see. That's all I can say. I don't know.

CUSICK: What were some of the good things for you in Stockton?

ERRECART: I don't go hunting anybody news, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah. Okay, then we'll talk about for yourself. Can you tell me what some of the good things were for you in Stockton when you were bringing up your family?

ERRECART: About the same thing it is now. You have to judge what kind of work you have to do and how you make your living.

CUSICK: And did things turn out very well for you?

ERRECART: Oh yeah, well sure. You have to make up a good, see. That's it.

CUSICK: Did you feel happy about the way things turned out?

ERRECART: Oh yeah, sure.

CUSICK: Yeah, because I can understand, you were concerned about making sure you had enough for your family. And so you worked, and your husband worked to keep up the household. And so do you think you did pretty much all you could to help your family?

ERRECART: Yeah. We tried to get along fine, that's all. You know, this is not a who have life this way or that way, but you or me, we have to do the best the way we want it, see. That's it.

CUSICK: Yeah. I can see that. Have you ever gotten involved in any organizations or groups here in Stockton?

ERRECART: No. I don't talk that good, and I don't get it anything.

CUSICK: You haven't really gotten involved in stuff. So you go to church.

ERRECART: I go to church.

CUSICK: Do you see a lot of your friends from church?

ERRECART: Yeah. That's it.

CUSICK: Are most of them Basque?

ERRECART: Oh, no. Not all of them.

CUSICK: So you still see some other people who are from different areas?

ERRECART: Yeah. I met people, you know, say hello and come on over and this and that.

CUSICK: Do you ever get a chance to speak Basque with other people?

ERRECART: Sure. We talk Basque, yeah.

CUSICK: You wouldn't want to lose that.

ERRECART: Basque, it's a very hard language.

CUSICK: I've heard it's totally different from French or Spanish. It's a language all its own.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. Spanish is very easy to learn, but then you have to know the other language too to keep up.

CUSICK: Gosh, Spanish is really easy compared to French or Basque.

ERRECART: French is easier than Basque I think.

CUSICK: Yeah, probably. So you speak French also, don't you?

ERRECART: Yeah, I speak French. And then like I said, Spanish I learned talking some people, that's all.

CUSICK: That's how you learned English, huh? Do your children speak Basque?

ERRECART: They don't speak nothing.

CUSICK: They learned all English?

ERRECART: Oh yeah. They learned, they know how to talk Basque. They talk too. Dominic, my son, he knows how to talk Basque. And then Mary, my daughter-in-law, she knows how to talk too.

CUSICK: Your daughter? Or your daughter-in-law.

ERRECART: No, my daughter-in-law. They know how to talk Basque. She knows how to talk Basque. But the kids, they don't teach the kids Basque.

CUSICK: So the grandchildren don't know it?

ERRECART: No, no, no, no.

CUSICK: Do you wish they did?

ERRECART: Yeah, but then it's hard to teach them.

CUSICK: It is hard to learn.

ERRECART: Sure.

CUSICK: I guess you've got to get it when you're young, when you're in love with it.

ERRECART: Oh yeah. You have to start it when you're born, you know. That's it.

CUSICK: Do your son and your daughter speak French too?

ERRECART: No. They understand, but then they didn't try to learn, you know.

CUSICK: Let's see. What kind of things that happened in Stockton affected you and your family the most? Like were there any big events that really affected you? Well, first of all, you became a citizen. Did that affect your life in any way?

ERRECART: No, no. I was glad to get through because I have a hard time to learn. You have a hard time do learn all those, gosh, I don't know how many pages I have. And then I learned everything. Oh! I learned it again. And then when they didn't ask you, you look kind of mad, because I've been working hard, you know.

CUSICK: Yeah, you feel like, "At least ask me something! I learned so much."

ERRECART: Gosh! Something. They should have asked me just a little bit more, you know.

CUSICK: So when you consider your life right now, can you tell me what age is the best to be in your opinion?

ERRECART: [laughs] Not mine! Like mine, like my own, because I'm old and I live this way, and what else you can say?

CUSICK: You do like yours? Is that what you're saying?

ERRECART: Well, I have to like it, sure.

CUSICK: What makes it the best?

ERRECART: You enjoy your life, because you have to just control yourself. That's all.

CUSICK: What makes it the best age to be in your opinion?

ERRECART: Oh, you mean like young people?

CUSICK: Not necessarily young people. But okay, first instance, you're saying now that you've passed through some years...

ERRECART: Maybe forties, fifties.

CUSICK: That was a good time for you?

ERRECART: I think so.

CUSICK: Why was that?

ERRECART: Well, because you're younger and you can do things different, you know.

CUSICK: That's how it was for you then, huh? What kind of things could you do then that you can't do anymore?

ERRECART: What kind of things? Same thing as we had to work hard, see. That's all.

CUSICK: And you enjoy that?

ERRECART: We can work harder then than now. You know what I mean.

CUSICK: Yeah, you were working more then than you do now. But is that something you wanted to do then? You wish you could do it now? Or do you like being able to sit back and relax?

ERRECART: Well, still it's the same life, you know. You have to just go on with your life.

CUSICK: Depending on what you're doing with your life at that time, I'm wondering what makes it good or what makes it less good.

ERRECART: Well, because I was stronger, I can work more hard.

CUSICK: Oh yeah. I understand that. And for that reason, did you like it better then? Or you're just as happy with it now?

ERRECART: Oh yes. People have to take your own age the way it comes, you know. You can't change it. You are who you are. You're a young girl, see, you don't know the life yet. You'll learn, hard way.

CUSICK: Everybody has to learn. Well Mrs. Errecart, again, think about your own life. Can you tell me what you think is the worst age to be?

ERRECART: I don't know. I can't...

CUSICK: Just in your opinion. When you look at your own life. What would make it a hard age to be at any certain point in your life?

ERRECART: Well, hard age, you get stiff and hard. You can't walk like you used to and went together, you know.

CUSICK: As you get a little bit older you mean? Well, is this one age for you that's a little bit more difficult to handle than it was when you were younger?

ERRECART: Oh, well naturally, when you were younger, you were just younger and stronger and more lively, and when you get old, you know what you get. You're old and that's all.

CUSICK: Well when you were younger and more lively like you say, do you think that you were happier then?

ERRECART: I'm just as happy as today. You know what I mean. When you get old, you do the best you can. That's what I do.

CUSICK: Yeah, you've been doing that all your life. You've done the best you can. How did the Depression affect you then?

ERRECART: Depression? Well, we take like the other people too.

CUSICK: How do they do that?

ERRECART: Depression? Well, I forget that now, but then it might be another Depression now pretty soon. The people don't realize yet, but then they're coming, you know. You watch.

CUSICK: So what did you do when you were going through the Depression? How did you handle it?

ERRECART: We'll eat in Depression. We know how to live, you know. We know how to do things.

CUSICK: When it happened before, in the twenties and the thirties, what did you do then?

ERRECART: Well, we do the best thing we can do too.

CUSICK: Yeah. It was hard for everybody at that time. I mean, everybody was hard times with the money.

ERRECART: We get a real depression here pretty soon. It'll be hard too.

CUSICK: So what kind of things do you prepare for when you think it's gonna be hard?

ERRECART: We'll do the best we can like the other people. That's all.

CUSICK: How do you go about doing the best you can? What things do you make sure you take care of?

ERRECART: Well, you have to do the best you can. Like I says, well, you can't cry, you can't be in misery. You have to do the best you can.

CUSICK: You take it how you can deal with it best.

ERRECART: Sure.

CUSICK: So when you're doing just the best you can, do you look ahead into the future a lot and try to plan in advance, or do you just take it as it comes?

ERRECART: No, not me. No, I don't do that, because if we get it, somebody else gonna get it, so we all gonna get it, see.

CUSICK: You're all gonna be affected by it you mean?

ERRECART: Oh yeah.

CUSICK: So you'll just take it when it comes?

ERRECART: That's it. I think that's the best way, don't you?

CUSICK: Well I'm not sure, you see? I'm still young, and I have to learn these things. How did World War II affect you and your family?

ERRECART: You know, those days, like eggs and stuff. They weren't high those days. Now the eggs, they're not high neither, but then those days, nothing was too high. There wasn't enough food or anything to change, you know, see.

CUSICK: There was not enough food?

ERRECART: No.

CUSICK: You mean there was not enough food for everybody? Not enough food to eat?

ERRECART: Not enough because World War II, you know. They had a lot of miseries too.

CUSICK: How did it affect you and your family then? Because the whole country was going through this.

ERRECART: Well, not me only. Whole country, sure. Everybody.

CUSICK: So everybody was, and I wonder how it affected you and your family specifically.

ERRECART: It didn't affect us, you know, because, well...

CUSICK: Did you have friends or relatives who had to go in the war?

ERRECART: Yeah, my brother died. He's been killed. My brother, he always write to me from the war. He says after they finish the war, he's gonna come down here too. But then he died in the last day. Armistice Day, he died. And then he had a medal. They send me a medal too. He died in the beach, like they tell you how he died, where he died. They killed him in the last minute.

CUSICK: How does that make you feel?

ERRECART: Well, that make me feel bad, yeah. But then he died. What you gonna do?

CUSICK: That's hard.

ERRECART: Terrible things happened. Well, you're young, you didn't know too much about it yet, see.

CUSICK: Right. Yeah. But that's why I'd like to know.

ERRECART: One of my brother, he's been in the army too, and they kept him in the prison, you know. And when they let loose, he was skin and bone, hungry.

CUSICK: Where was that? What country?

ERRECART: In France. And then they give him old bread, you know, just dark bread and water and just like that. That's how they treat the soldiers. It wasn't enough to eat, you know.

CUSICK: What did you think of that?

ERRECART: What else we can think? We just hear and that's all.

CUSICK: Doesn't make you feel very good though.

ERRECART: I know. But then, well, we just have to take it, that's all.

CUSICK: Are there any government programs that you enjoy having here in Stockton, that affect you?

ERRECART: Well, I hear the TV, but sometimes they don't sound too good. I understand new things, you know. What do you think about the president?

CUSICK: Oh boy.

ERRECART: Now you oughtta know that.

CUSICK: I'm not so politically aware, but I don't feel too happy about it. How do you feel about it?

ERRECART: Well, I tell you, President Carter make a speech the other day, seem like he says a lot of truth, you know? But then I don't understand everything. But now Reagan, I don't know. We vote for him. Everybody vote for him. I don't know how he's gonna turn.

CUSICK: Are you going to vote in November?

ERRECART: I already vote.

CUSICK: Are you going to vote at the next election?

ERRECART: Well, I guess so. I don't know.

CUSICK: Just a couple more questions. Are there any events in Stockton that have really affected you and your family?

ERRECART: When?

CUSICK: Any time through your whole lifetime here in Stockton.

ERRECART: I don't know.

CUSICK: Nothing really big you can think of?

ERRECART: No, no, I don't think so.

CUSICK: How about anything for your children or your grandchildren?

ERRECART: My children now, they're out doing their own, and they know what to do and how it is.

CUSICK: Do you feel confident that they know how to take care of themselves?

ERRECART: Yeah. I'm glad they're doing good for their own. And so that's the best I think about it. Gee, you have pretty hair.

CUSICK: Thank you.

ERRECART: It's very pretty.

CUSICK: I was thinking I need a haircut.

ERRECART: Oh boy. I was supposed to wash my hair, but I have to do it tomorrow I guess.

CUSICK: I hope I didn't keep you from that.

ERRECART: No, no, no. I wash my own. Sometime my daughter in law, like she went and wash the hair yesterday, and the girl [is all nice?]. I said, "Well, I don't want to [put along with it?]." She does. My daughter in Lodi, she's very good hairdresser. She never learned. She got her own way.

CUSICK: She does it on her own though?

ERRECART: Yeah.

CUSICK: That's fun to have somebody play with your hair. Put your own curlers in and wash it for you.

ERRECART: You did it yourself?

CUSICK: Yeah. Well mine's naturally curly.

ERRECART: Is it? Oh boy. You're lucky.

CUSICK: That's what people say.

ERRECART: Sure.

CUSICK: I think we've about covered everything we want to go over right now. I think I've asked you plenty of questions, don't you think?

ERRECART: I don't think I can tell you anything else.

CUSICK: Well you've told me so much already, and it's been really interesting to hear about your life.

ERRECART: All I say, they all true. Everything.

CUSICK: Of course. And like I say, gosh, I appreciate it. It was very interesting.

[End of Tape]