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Garcia, Rose Interview

Mary Cusick

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Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

by Sally Miller

GARCIA, Rose (Spanish)

July 17, 1980

Interviewed by Mary Cusick

Transcribed by Robert Siess

[Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape.]

ROSE GARCIA: I mean, it pays for [garbled] And we have to farm. But I really worked. My dad would get socks and day old bread, you know. And he plants his own wheat. [] and things like that, but Heaven forbid. He'd never. I think he would've starved rather than to go [].

MARY CUSICK: Is that something he brought over from Spain when he came over?

GARCIA: Yeah, they were very, very poor in Spain. That's why they came to this country. Because the Spreckels ship company went around. They were farm workers from all the different countries. See, they came around the Horn, and they would pick up people in different parts.

CUSICK: Were your parents in Spain at this time when they were picked up?

GARCIA: Yeah. I think they ended up in Gibraltar. That's where they picked them up over there. So he lived in a real tiny town, and my mother was from the same town. And he was a peddler. He raised a few vegetables, and [I've seen the patch?]. It wasn't any bigger than this living room.

CUSICK: You went to Spain and you saw the area where you grew up?

GARCIA: Yeah. When was it? '70 I think, or '75?

UNIDENTIFIED VOICES: I don't know. I don't remember.

CUSICK: Did you go with your family?

GARCIA: '75. And I found some of my family.

CUSICK: How did you feel when you first saw this area where your dad had grown up?

GARCIA: I still don't believe that I went there. My mother was still living at the time.

CUSICK: Did she go with you?

GARCIA: No. She couldn't go. But I'm glad I went, because I was able to tell her things.

CUSICK: How did it make you feel when you saw the area?

GARCIA: I just couldn't believe it that they were born in such a place. There's no streets. It's still like that..

CUSICK: It's still very small. Is it just a farming community?

GARCIA: Not really. I think they go out to the other little towns. But houses are not painted outside. My mother simply used to just whitewashing. And there's no streets, and there was no toilets in the house. No water in the house. They go down to a well near the river and go get the water and bring it and wash in the river.

CUSICK: So it was very primitive.

GARCIA: Yeah. But since, I understand that they have toilets in the house. And when I came home and told my mother, I guess she was just reliving her [].

CUSICK: How did she feel when she heard about what you had seen?

GARCIA: Oh, all she did was cry.

CUSICK: Was she happy or sad?

GARCIA: Oh, I mean happy. Because she didn't want me to go. She begged and begged and cried and cried and darnit tried to hold me from going.

CUSICK: Why?

GARCIA: She was scared to death for me to go. Because see, it took them three months to get over here.

CUSICK: On the sugar company?

GARCIA: And they came around the Horn on the ships. It was such a bad passage for them. They suffered so much. But she just couldn't get it into her hear that I was gonna go there on a plane and get there in such a short time, and I would be back in just a few days.

CUSICK: So she was thinking that you had to do the same hardship?

GARCIA: I don't know what was in her mind, but I think she just thought, "I know. I've gone through that. I know what that ocean looks like. That's impossible. Why are you trying to do that?" But I wasn't going by boat. And oh, I don't know. One thing that I'll always remember is that when the people found out I was in town, they came over to see me. They asked about my mother, and see, they'd known my mother when she was a teenager.

CUSICK: Because they had grown up there in Spain.

GARCIA: Yeah. And they wanted to know about the life here. And then some young girl came over and asked me if I wanted to see... Oh, let's see, what do they call it? It's a mantilla. Do you know what it is? One of those big ones.

CUSICK: Like a drape thing?

GARCIA: No, you know that the women use around them?

CUSICK: Yeah, yeah. They kind of drape it around like a big blanket almost.

GARCIA: Yeah. But this is of silk, all embroidery with a fringe, you know. And I had heard my mother talk about this, and I thought, "What? Somebody has that?" So she said, "Yeah. I'll go see my grandma." Her grandma had it in the trunk, so they brought it and showed it to me. And then I remember because my mother had told me about that, she said that my dad had just given it to her before leaving for this country. And they needed the money, because see, they needed money to eat on the boat. So she sold it to this lady, and this lady, her nieces used it to go to dances and stuff.

CUSICK: They still have it and they showed it to you?

GARCIA: Yeah. Yeah. And so round the neck here, I remember that it was kinda oily, and this woman said, "Well you know, that's your mother's perspiration," she kept saying. So when I came home, I told my mother and my mother says, "No, it couldn't have been. Because I only wore it twice, and it was brand new. It must have been from her." And he says they went to the dances. I understand that lady was a little bit, you know, off, but I didn't know whether I wanted it. But I was afraid to insult the lady by offering money. So then later they told me, the other people, "Why don't you ask her to sell it to you?" I says, "Well, I don't feel right about it." Because the granddaughter took it right away and she put it in her trunk that she had, and she closed the trunk and she put it away. I felt like she didn't want to sell it. If she wanted to, she would have asked, "Well, do you want to buy it or something?" But later, after I came home and I thought about it, I thought, "I should've." I should've at least made an effort. Because that would have been such a thing for my mother.

CUSICK: Something to pass down to your own children too.

GARCIA: I don't have any children. But I mean, just the idea of seeing my mother's face when I came back and gave her that. It'd have been too much of a shock I bet. Oh, it was beautiful. It was out of gold with a gold embroidery and a fringe all the way around like that. Oh, I guess it about like this before squared and folded.

CUSICK: Did your mother sew a lot of things? Was it something that she made money by normally, or did a lot of women happen to sell separate things?

GARCIA: No, no, no, no. This was something my dad had given her as a gift. And then she sold it because they didn't have any money.

CUSICK: Tell me how your parents came over. They got picked up by the Spreckels boat because I understand they would arrange to have farmers come over to Hawaii, and they could work on the plantations there.

GARCIA: That's right.

CUSICK: What year was that?

GARCIA: That was in 1913.

CUSICK: And so they took the passage all the way around to Hawaii, and they settled down there. Did they have a house set up for them by the company?

GARCIA: Yeah. They had housing, and I guess they got all the utilities. And then what was it my dad told me? I know that in Spain my mother used to work – I'm going back now – my mother

used to work for some rich people in town as a servant, cleaning and stuff. Whitewash the walls and help with the cooking.

CUSICK: Was that when she was married too?

GARCIA: I think after too. Before she was married mostly, but I imagine after, because then they came. They didn't stay there very long after they got married. Because I was born in June that same year. So they must have got married in 1912. So you see it wasn't too long until they left. And I know she said that one month she worked for a pair of shoes and the next month for a pair of stockings, and that's all they had left.

CUSICK: This was a huge thing.

GARCIA: I just can't imagine. I got to see my grandfather's home. It was still standing. I understand my mother was born there, all my aunts were born there, my grandfather, my grandmother... No, my great-aunt was born there. I don't know if my great-great-grandfather was born in that same house. And it was still standing.

CUSICK: Are there people in your family still living there?

GARCIA: No. This lady that bought it is using it as a warehouse. When this lady found out I was in town, she wanted to know if I wanted to keep the house. Because see, when I went to Spain, I was looking for something that I could bring back to my mother and my father. I couldn't believe it. I still get chills thinking about it. Here comes this lady with this key. I'll show you it. I'll bring the key in and show it to you. It's over a hundred years old.

GARCIA: I just couldn't believe it. So we came, my husband and I, we []. That's the key.

CUSICK: What is this other key to?

GARCIA: Now this is another key from another town that I went, and that's the key to the [], my cousin's home, and then they changed locks, so they gave me their old key. And see, this lady had changed locks, and she kept that key.

CUSICK: Oh wow. Look at that key. It's large.

GARCIA: And my mother said that's the keys they had there at the house. When they'd leave the house, they'd carry the key on them.

CUSICK: Are they like adobe houses?

GARCIA: Yeah, they're all adobe houses. Real thick walls.

CUSICK: And can you imagine? You brought this back, and at least your mother saw it.

GARCIA: Yeah. She couldn't believe it. Then I took it to my aunt and showed it to my aunt, because my aunt was in a convalescent hospital, and she got to see before she died. I was so proud. But anyhow, at least I brought something. Especially the key. When my cousin saw it, oh, she wanted the key. She was gonna take it. I said, "You're not about to take that key." She says, "Well, I lived in that house and you didn't." And I says, "I'm sorry, but you should've went to Spain." But anyway, when they came to Hawaii... Oh, they worked real hard in the sugar cane. My mother didn't work in Hawaii, but my dad. Because she had three children before she came to California.

CUSICK: Did she have other children after she got here too?

GARCIA: That's where she had her children, in Hawaii. The youngest one that was born in Hawaii was Dolores's husband. So you have the youngest brother, and then there's another brother here, and then I had another brother and a sister that were born here in Castro Valley. My other brother is gone now. He died in [an accident?] in Stockton. But I tell you, I went to Hawaii about three years ago? I can't remember.

CUSICK: You visited Hawaii too?

GARCIA: Hawaii. So I had to go to Hawaii to find out where I was born. Those camps, it was Camp 1 they used to say, because they called them camps.

CUSICK: Oh, what do they mean by camps? Like a little group of houses?

GARCIA: Yeah. Like for instance, there'd be Camp 1 and maybe be plantation of sugar cane, and another one of pineapple or something like that. So we went looking for this town and they told us it wasn't there anymore. It was big fields. I couldn't find it. But I have friends that have gone afterwards and I guess they knew where to look, and they said they found the old church, but I never found it. Because it was in Spreckelville. See, there was a town in Spreckelville where I was baptized, and evidently it was named after Spreckel Sugar Company. But I was in the town that I was born. The camp was there somewheres, but I didn't know the exact site. We just saw one little store, and then an old beat-up sugar mill that I don't think was even used anymore.

CUSICK: Did you remember anything at all when you went back there?

GARCIA: No, because see I was only about three.

CUSICK: That's true. Do you remember coming over from the United States?

GARCIA: No.

CUSICK: It's all a blur to you. And you're the oldest child?

GARCIA: Yes.

CUSICK: Why did your parents decide to come to the United States?

GARCIA: Because they heard that you could make a better living, and there was no work. There was no work over there in Spain. You know, they're little towns. And even now, when I went back and I asked how come so many other people were not working in Spain, they leave. You go to Switzerland and other countries, and then maybe you'll be gone for a year and then you go back, and that's what they do. Then you stay home one year, then go back for another year to another country and work where they make more money. But it's surprising how the younger generation have taken advantage of this.

CUSICK: The Spanish?

GARCIA: Yeah. Over there they'll buy what they call a floor. Over here you buy a whole house or you buy a whole apartment. Well over there the houses are together, and maybe somebody does the first floor, second floor, third floor. And they buy them that way. And each floor naturally is an apartment.

CUSICK: They buy pisos.

GARCIA: Yeah. I call them floor because I've never called them pisos, but that's what they are. They're floors. And they don't make enough money and they buy themselves one, then they buy another one.

CUSICK: That's their investment in other words.

GARCIA: That's their investment. That's the money they saved. When you've worked hard and you know it's hard to make a living, you take advantage of it.

CUSICK: So that's why your parents decided, let's go to Hawaii. Because there was gonna be more work there.

GARCIA: Yeah. And my dad, he was more the []. He wasn't afraid...

CUSICK: How did your mother feel when she was coming over here? Your dad apparently wanted to do that.

GARCIA: Yeah, he was all excited. He liked Hawaii. He liked the weather. He loved it over there. And my mother didn't care too much for it.

CUSICK: Is that why they decided to come to California?

GARCIA: Yeah, I guess. Well, you see, there was a cousin of ours that was living in California, and so naturally they write to each other, "Come to California. There's more jobs." But my understanding, when they went to Hawaii, they had to stay a certain length of time. They couldn't leave. Then after that, you were free to go. In other words, they bring you over there, want you to do a certain amount of...

CUSICK: A contract.

GARCIA: Yeah, a contract. A contract. After that you're free to go.

CUSICK: And so was it just your dad, or did your parents decide together that they'd come over?

GARCIA: My dad, my mother, and my mother's step-mother, and let's see... Another uncle, and the other one, he must have been about 4. There was a whole bunch of them that came together.

CUSICK: All your relatives?

GARCIA: Yeah, a lot of relatives came together.

CUSICK: Did you all plan to go to the same are? Did you know where you were going to?

GARCIA: They didn't know. When they left Spain, I sometimes think they were the bravest people.

CUSICK: Not know what you're going to expect.

GARCIA: No. Especially in 1913. I mean, it was still pretty rough then to come over, and the boat didn't come straight. It went around the Horn, through the Straits of Magellan and the Cross, over to Hawaii. Some of them got off in South America. Wherever the ship would stop, some of them would get off. They'd say, "Oh, I don't want to go any further. This is enough for me."

CUSICK: But your parents went all the way. Well let's see. You had cousins that wrote to them and said, "Why don't you come to California? There's more jobs." Where were they living?

GARCIA: They were living here in Hayward I think.

CUSICK: They were in Castro Valley?

GARCIA: Yeah.

CUSICK: That's how your parents came to settle there?

GARCIA: So then they decided they'd come too. And then he went back to Spain!

CUSICK: Who? The cousin?

GARCIA: Yeah. He had a son. I'll tell you, he had a son, and he was only 17, and he says, "I'm not going back." He stayed. And my dad just kinda watched him. And then my dad brought another nephew with him. He was young. He came with him too.

CUSICK: This is part of the big group that came to Hawaii?

GARCIA: Yeah.

CUSICK: Did you all settle down in Hayward, around that area?

GARCIA: Yeah, and then they started scattering. Then my dad, he heard about Stockton. They were selling property here in Stockton and that there was other Spanish people settled here. So he comes to Stockton.

CUSICK: Oh, he wanted to settle down where he could get some land and work on because he was still into farming?

GARCIA: Yeah. He just had this idea that he wanted to own a piece of land. Because in Spain there was a little tiny piece there that he had, and I don't quite know the story about that, because I think my great-grandfather at one time owned this little piece of land. And you wouldn't believe it. It was a river [bottom?]. It was right on the river. And I couldn't understand why anybody would want that land. But evidently, right on that river they made a living. And I still have third cousins and second cousins that are working that same piece of land and are raising enough vegetables to make a living. I mean, for their own use. But see, my grandfather, my dad's father, he married twice. And then he had family from both sides, so when he divided this land, he gave my dad a little piece and he gave the other one to the other children, so they each have their little... I call it postage stamp. So he had an advantage when we come over here, and if that's the last thing he ever do, he's gonna get himself some property. But first he went all over. He went, and this I don't remember, when he went up to Sun Creek, he used to work in the gold mines.

CUSICK: Was this your grandfather?

GARCIA: My dad.

CUSICK: Oh, okay. Was this with his family? With you and his wife?

GARCIA: My mother, yeah, and us.

CUSICK: Was that after he had gotten land in Stockton?

GARCIA: No no, this was before Stockton, before you decide to settle.

CUSICK: I see. Oh.

GARCIA: Yeah. He left Hayward. He went up there and he worked in the mines. He took my husband up there one day and he showed him where the miners used to work. And then he heard some big company was selling land cheap up above Indao there some place in the desert. This was desert country. My uncle was telling me. The one that stayed that was 17 years old? He lives in Sunnyvale. He was telling me one day. He says at the time, he bought himself a motorcycle. And he went with his motorcycle, drove his motorcycle all the way up there. And I says, "I seen that part of the country." Because you know my husband came from the service. He was over there in India. Of all places for me to be based there. And I went through that country, like Riverside and in there, and gosh, that was desert country. But at that time, it was even worse than that. But my uncle was telling us, not too long ago, the story. He says, "You know, if we had listened to your dad, we'd all be billionaires today."

CUSICK: What did your dad say?

GARCIA: Because they sold them each a piece of land, and they gave them a little shack where they lived. Well my mother couldn't stand it. It was so hot. And little by little, all the people left. And my dad wouldn't leave. He was the last one to leave. He wasn't about to leave. Because he said that anything you threw on that ground would grow. All they needed was water because they were short of water. But they were next to some big river. I don't really know what river it was. And then they used to bring this water in and irrigate. Now today it's so, uh...

CUSICK: So fertile?

GARCIA: So fertile, then they brought in the water into the desert, and then they'd have all these orange trees and lemon trees and what's the other sweet things? Dates and all that stuff. So my dad says, "Well, I guess I better go. I'm the last one." My mother kept wanting to leave. She says there's nobody there. I guess for miles and miles there was nobody.

CUSICK: Wait. How old were you when this was going on?

GARCIA: I guess I must have been 3 or 4.

CUSICK: Do you remember anything of that?

GARCIA: No, I don't remember. They mustn't have stayed too long! My uncle says, though, that they gave them the money back. They gave them the money back. They said, "Okay, you want the land," so they refunded the money. Then he came back to Hayward, and I think they live in Bratwurt for a while too. I don't know. He just was looking all over. And then finally he settled

here. But in Castro Valley, he ran it for quite a few years. And then he decided he wanted his own piece of land. So we moved over here. My mother rode the buggy all the way from Hayward. Can you imagine from Castro Valley all the way to Stockton? They used to go so far, stop, feed the horse, you know. But I remember when they had buggies in Hayward and went down to the mill. One time my mother was going down the road, and that's when we were getting a lot of cars, and the horse got scared and she just dumped us all over the ditch. All three of us, I remember. The horse got away from her and one of them fell here, another one fell there. I remember that part! We fell in the ditch.

CUSICK: Who all came to Stockton?

GARCIA: Just my dad and his family. And then later on, my uncle Barney came.

CUSICK: Did he come to live near you too?

GARCIA: Yeah, he lived there for a while, and then he bought the piece of land that's the park.

CUSICK: Which park?

GARCIA: Out by Otto Sandman Park, that park right there next to the creek. Have you seen that park?

CUSICK: No.

GARCIA: You'll have to see that.

CUSICK: A lot of land?

GARCIA: 17 acres.

CUSICK: Wow. So he sold that?

GARCIA: It's a big park. So he had that there for a few years, and then he decided he didn't want to farm anymore. So my dad bought it and gave it to one of my brothers, who then later died, and they sold it to somebody else, then the city bought it. No, the doctor. My doctor bought it for speculation. Things didn't work out so good, so he sold it to the city. So now it became the park.

CUSICK: This land that you have right now, that was originally your father's?

GARCIA: 65 acres.

CUSICK: Do you still have that same land?

GARCIA: No. When my mother died, we had to sell it. We couldn't keep it. My mother had it for sale before she died, but wanted quite a lot to sell it. Because the taxes are so high, we couldn't produce enough to pay for the taxes. And she was three years in the convalescent hospital. So we ended up selling home. The home that she built is the home next door. Of course they've added onto it. And we had to sell that land to keep her, but she didn't last too long after that. She ran out of money in the convalescent hospital. But my dad said he would never sell the property, and my mother was scared to death to sell it. I don't know, she just had that feeling. Dad didn't wanna sell the farm, she didn't wanna sell it, and then she got to a point where she had to put it up for sale. So I'm the one that ended up selling it. So I think really in the long run it was better, because she felt so bad about selling it.

CUSICK: So you took care of that business.

GARCIA: We had to. After she was gone, we had to, because there's no way we could keep it.

CUSICK: Was this house on the property before, or did you later build it?

GARCIA: No, I built this. When my dad was dying, I told him that I was gonna. I thought maybe he would get better, but he never did. But I promised him. I used to live in Manteca. I lived there for two years. So I promised him I would build here, and we were looking for a home at the time he was in the hospital, and he didn't like that very well.

CUSICK: He didn't want you to build the house here?

GARCIA: He didn't want me to buy a house in Stockton. He wanted me to build the house here. He says why was I gonna go and get a house someplace else when I could built [sic]. Still had that in his head, and he was sick!

CUSICK: He was thinking this is your land. Use it.

GARCIA: Yeah. He says, "You built a house over there and I'll give you a lot to built the house on." And he says, "And you'll be improving the ranch, and then someday it's gonna be worth more money for you." For us. He was thinking about us. But see, he didn't want me to built this house.

CUSICK: He liked that you weren't staying there.

GARCIA: Yeah, and then he made sure in the livingature that each one of the children got a lot.

CUSICK: Got a lot; a piece of land.

GARCIA: Yeah. A piece of land. My brought built his house when I did, but the old homestead is where my brother – one of my brothers took it. So the old homestead is still there. So what he's gonna do with that lot, I don't know, but anyhow.

CUSICK: That's where you grew up, with your brothers and sisters?

GARCIA: Yeah. Yeah, it's way down at the end of the road. It's still standing, and it seems kind of odd, all these new homes climbing up. I don't think they like it too well, but...

CUSICK: God, I hope they don't go and tear it down.

GARCIA: Yeah, well, not as long as my brother owns it, I don't think.

CUSICK: Do you have more than two brothers?

GARCIA: I had three brothers and my sister. There was five of us in the family.

CUSICK: Oh, so your brother and your sister were born in Castro Valley?

GARCIA: Yeah.

CUSICK: And the rest of them in Stockton too?

GARCIA: My sister is, but my other brother died. His family is the one that had where the park is. And then she didn't like it, so they moved to town. Then after that, he got killed. But one of the boys is a policeman in the Stockton Police Department. What amazes me is, with all the opportunities there are in the States, I don't understand why there has to be so many poor people. I think a lot of it is they just don't try hard enough.

CUSICK: You feel like they're not getting new opportunities or they're not finding them and they're not using them?

GARCIA: They're not using their head, period. They got a lot of brains that God gave them. They've got their hands to work with. And they just don't care. People you find where people have gone on welfare – the families continue on welfare and they keep going and going. I can see some of them, but there's some young people that have no business being on welfare.

CUSICK: You feel like they could find a job somewhere if they tried?

GARCIA: Oh, they could. Because the disadvantages that the older people had, and every single one of them, they made it. I haven't heard of one Spanish person that came from Spain that didn't make a living. He's not on welfare. He's not depending on the government. They're supporting the people that are living on welfare when you come right down to it.

CUSICK: So you feel like they don't make good use of whatever talents they have?

GARCIA: And they work hard! I mean, gee, well I know some of my nephews and nieces have different ideas than we had I guess. The younger generation have, "Why should I work? For what? I'm gonna have fun while I can. I'm gonna take a vacation every week." Our vacation time came, we didn't go to vacation. We had to paint the house, or we had something to do to keep home. We fixed this house, we sold it til finally we ended up over here. First home I ever bought, of the payment that we used to make, only three dollars used to go to the principal! And then in the middle of it, my husband went into the service. But I continued working.

CUSICK: Where were you working?

GARCIA: I was working in the office for the cannery.

CUSICK: Were you working from the time you got married? Or before that?

GARCIA: Yeah, I always worked, even when I was married. And when he went into the service, []. But there's so many things that these young kids can do... I don't know. Maybe some of it is the government's fault. I think they concentrate too much in giving things away instead of creating jobs for them so they can have a little respect and work. I think that they could have more jobs if the government – they spend so many millions and billions and they give them away. Why don't they spend all this money to create jobs for people?

CUSICK: So they'll be out there making their own living?

GARCIA: Yeah, and they'd feel better about it. But you find these poor families that are on welfare. The next one will go on welfare, the next one, and the next one. And they never get out of welfare. They seem to be stuck in their one hole and they can't get up! And a lot is, naturally, when you're on welfare and can't get a job, I guess you just don't know what to do. I've heard a lot of "They owe it to me." See? So naturally, if a young kid hears that, why should I work? My dad didn't work. But see, with us, we were taught differently. That's why I talk the way I talk, because of how I was brought up.

CUSICK: Did your mother and father come out and say that, or was it just your attitude that made you feel like... Well, your mother worked in Spain, and she didn't work in Hawaii though because she had the children.

GARCIA: But then over here, when my dad got the farm, she worked out in the field. By 11 o'clock, she was out in the field. She raised five children. By 11 o'clock, she was out in the field, and then she'd come in. And we had to earn our breakfast before we would have breakfast.

CUSICK: They had chores for you to do, didn't they?

GARCIA: Chores? I remember when my dad used to plant dried beans, we'd have to get up by 5 o'clock in the morning, before the sun would come out, because then the beans would break and we'd have to go out with the pitchforks and turn them over – oh, I forget. He had a saying. In the summertime, he'd come and of course naturally we'd be asleep. He'd shake the bed and he'd say, "The neighbors have their lights lit." That was his saying. We'd say, "We don't care! Let them light their light!"

CUSICK: [laughing] He was trying to get you up?

GARCIA: That's right. He meant the neighbor's are up; what are you guys doing in bed? That's what he meant.

CUSICK: And you'd have to get out there and work in the fields before school.

GARCIA: Sure, then we'd have to get up and go before we go to school... Right. A lot of times you can imagine we must have fell asleep in school, we were so tired.

CUSICK: You went to the Elkhorn School you said.

GARCIA: Uh-huh.

CUSICK: And that was sort of a one-room classroom for all the grades at once?

GARCIA: Yeah, it was one room.

CUSICK: How many kids were in the school during the time you were there? Maybe a dozen? You have a picture?

GARCIA: [away from microphone] The other day, I found a picture. See, we founded a Spanish club. And I'm gonna tell you, this is really something.

CUSICK: El Circulo Espanol.

GARCIA: At one time, that's all there was in.

CUSICK: Oh wow.

GARCIA: You know, this is the first permanents that came out. See, over there? Like they have it now. Oh, I'll never forget her.

CUSICK: [counts] Yeah, there's a dozen of you. And two girls in this picture. I mean, I'm assuming all of them are little boys with their caps on.

GARCIA: Yeah, the little caps.

CUSICK: Were there just not that many girls, or did girls not go to school for very long?

GARCIA: I guess there just wasn't, because see, this house would be here, and then for miles and miles and then for miles and miles, and there'd be another house, and miles and miles, there'd be another house.

CUSICK: All the little farm kids. Which one are you? The tall one?

GARCIA: This one here.

CUSICK: Is that your sister with you?

GARCIA: No, I don't think she...

CUSICK: How old were you there?

GARCIA: Oh, probably 15, 14, something like that. My sister isn't here because she wasn't going to school. She's 8 years younger than I am.

CUSICK: She wasn't going to school yet you mean.

GARCIA: No, she didn't go to school yet. But this girl is in the club, and he's in the club, and this is one of my brothers. This is Dolores's husband. And this is my other brother; he's down below. I don't know what ever happened to the rest of them.

CUSICK: Which club are you in?

GARCIA: El Circulo Espanol of Stockton.

CUSICK: Yeah. Okay.

GARCIA: So she comes all the way from the Bay Area just to attend the meetings. And one day when I showed her this picture, and showed it to all of them, they didn't know there was such a country. Because see, I'm surprised my mother bought us a picture because I think we were the only ones that had a picture. From the ones that I've talked to of that group, they didn't have a picture.

CUSICK: This is great to have though, to remember. How long ago did you go to that Elkhorn school?

GARCIA: Well, I guess since from 12. From age 12 til I graduated from grammar school, because there was from 8 to 9. 8th grade, it was only 8th grade.

CUSICK: It was from 8th grade on up?

GARCIA: No, no, it just went up to the 8th grade. Now it's different. Now I think they go up to the 9th grade or something like that. I don't know how it is now.

CUSICK: So you started when you were 5 or 6 or so, and you went until you were out of 8th grade.

GARCIA: Yeah, I went in Castro Valley before I came here, but I was 12 when I moved to Stockton.

CUSICK: Okay. You started here when you were 12.

GARCIA: Yeah, I went from when I was 12 til I guess I was 15 or 16. I don't know.

CUSICK: And that was 8th grade when you finished it. Oh, I see. You were there a few years at least. Did you go to school after that?

GARCIA: Then, after that, my dad wouldn't let me go to high school. He didn't believe in high school.

CUSICK: Did he want you to work?

GARCIA: No, he didn't want me to work. He wanted me to work on the farm. He didn't want me to go to high school because when he used to go uptown and he'd go down California Street, he'd see the girls in shorts playing across the street, you know, [] used to be for years. Of course, you don't remember that. Across the street. It seemed like all he said every time he went by, "All they were doing was playing ball!"

CUSICK: He caught them during recess all the time!

GARCIA: So somehow, I don't know how, but it seems to me like if I remember correctly, there was a – he was German. Mr. Heine. They used to live here on Davis Road. And he was a tailor uptown. And he talked my dad into not going to school uptown. How my dad got ahold of Humphreys School, I don't know. That's when it was uptown.

CUSICK: Humphreys School? You went there?

GARCIA: But can you imagine, out of grammar school, going over there?

CUSICK: Why? What kind of school is that?

GARCIA: It was to take a business course. But from grammar school!

CUSICK: Oh. You had not had high school, but you're going here to take these business classes? How old were you then? Was this a little later on?

GARCIA: No, I think right after I got through. I think I was about 16 when I went to Humphreys.

CUSICK: Wow. You were probably one of the younger ones there.

GARCIA: And so, my dad didn't have the money to send me to school. So I remember this very distinctly. My dad borrowed \$500 from the [monthly rent?]. []

CUSICK: He didn't want you to go to high school, but then he did support you in going to the business school.

GARCIA: The business school. Because over there he figured they spend their time with playing around, never mind working. I mean they weren't studying I should say. But it was hard for me because I'd come home and then I'd have to study. I'd have to help him with farming and then study at night, and a lot of times I'd be asleep. My dad would have to wake me and tell me to go to bed. But it was hard. So what happened is, after I graduated – no, I didn't graduate with the graduating class. See, I couldn't've. I must've been behind. Then I would go extra.

CUSICK: At the business school?

GARCIA: Yeah, to the business school. Until finally I guess I made my credits, and then I graduated.

CUSICK: How old were you about that time? When you finally finished at that school? Was this 19 years old or 20 or something?

GARCIA: Well, maybe more. Must've been something, you know. Because then I'd work in the summer and then in winter I'd go back, you know. And he was so nice, Mr. Humphreys' school. Because at the time that I was going to school, the Humphreys that has this school over here, he was going to school there. And I believe his wife was going to school there and he married her. I kind of remember now that I'm thinking back. He's got a real nice school here on Benjamin Holt Drive.

CUSICK: I haven't seen it.

GARCIA: Oh, they've got a beautiful square across from the San Joaquin First Federal Bank there on Benjamin Holt. I always keep saying I'm gonna go see it, I'm gonna go see it. But I never did. I was just curious enough to see if they had any of the old pictures. But I don't know whether he would have them or not. Probably put away.

CUSICK: Mrs. Garcia, let me ask you some more questions about Elkhorn School. There's barely anyone in that class. Were these just all the kids that were going to school that had farms in these different areas, and were really spread out, and they'd all walk to the school?

GARCIA: Some would walk to school. One of them, I can't see her. Annabelle. I think it's this one. I don't know if it's this one or this one back here. They used to come on horseback.

CUSICK: Were a lot of people of your same ethnic background, of Spanish descent?

GARCIA: No, there's just a few there. Spanish descent would be Julia and her brother. I think there's just two of them and then my two brothers. See there's one, two, three, four girls here. You can't see it. I didn't realize until you said that now. It just occurred to me that there weren't very many of us. But then later on. When my brother was older, after I graduated. Then it was full, because they used to have to teach him. He was far behind on his studies. The teacher would let him help the younger kids. But we had one of those potbelly stoves in the center. There'd be big blocks.

CUSICK: Did all the little kids go to school? In other words, there weren't some families who said, "Well, we're not gonna send you to school at all because we need you at home to help on the ranch." Because I know your father would still have you work on the ranch but you still went to school.

GARCIA: There was a lot of them that didn't used to go to school.

CUSICK: These were just the ones that happened to go.

GARCIA: Happened to go. There probably might've been some that maybe that day weren't there, but it wasn't that many. Because like in the summertime, the families had to. Because some of them... Most of this area, they were all Spanish people.

CUSICK: Oh yeah. How did that happen that they all settled in the same area?

GARCIA: Well, one settled and then the other ones gotta ahold of him, and that's how my dad came, because he heard that there were Spanish settlers here.

CUSICK: You mean in this area right nearby?

GARCIA: [Something Heights?] All the way back and across the creek on the other side too. In fact, some of them had to leave because they were starving to death. They couldn't make a living, so they just left their farms and left. But my dad was kind of a, I don't know, a guide, because he was the only one that was here that knew anything about farming. And what he had was experience of raising vegetables in Spain, and then what he had picked up in Hayward. But the rest of them, they didn't know, so they kind of depended on him.

CUSICK: He was the example.

GARCIA: He could tell them when to irrigate, and some of them, they decided they didn't want to irrigate. This is a funny story. Across from the end of the ranch were the...

[End of Tape]

[Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape.]

GARCIA: ...didn't have no way of watering his tomatoes. So he'd tell my dad, "Okay, you go ahead and water." He says, "I don't have to water, because of you. Your tomatoes will come over to my t...

[laughing] That's the way he expected to raise tomatoes. That just goes to show you how little they knew. But the best times I remember in growing up was during in January and February when the frost, the real frost []. Then is when you would do all the butchering. And my dad was the only one that knew how to kill the animals. So first we'd go to one house, and then they'd butcher, and then they'd make their sausage, and then the following week we'd go to another house. And then my dad used to play the guitar and somebody'd sing and dance. That's the most fun we ever had, because that was a big deal.

CUSICK: Was this night time, during the day?

GARCIA: It would be during the day. They'd start early in the morning until dark. They didn't have electricity then.

CUSICK: And this is one of your customs is that your dad would get his guitar and play and...

GARCIA: Yeah, and someone would sing, and then they would dance.

CUSICK: Was this all your relatives together?

GARCIA: No, no. It was all the neighbors in the neighborhood. They would get together. And there are still, let's see... There's still two families here. In fact, I guess there are really more, because the daughter still lives here, so that's three. And then right here on Wadman[?], there's two families. And then there's one in Thorton, so there's three families that still live here. That's why I was so disappointed when they built that park, because they announced on the paper that they wanted people to suggest names for the park. So I wrote a letter to Parks and Recreation and I said they should try to give it a name in memory of the people that developed the area here. Because I remember, this area was not flat. It used to go down like this, you know. And my dad, he was trying to level it, and the tractor kind of went on a slope like that, and it went over this way and all the boiling water went on him, he got burned. All his whole back just peeled right off. And I remember the kids going to school and the things they had to go through, how the white children treated them, you know.

CUSICK: Was this at the same time you were going to school?

GARCIA: Yes.

CUSICK: What kind of discrimination did you face?

GARCIA: That's the only discrimination that I remember. They used to call them names, because some of them used to go to school barefooted because they couldn't afford tennis shoes. And the kind of lunches that they took would be different, although sometimes they would trade. Maybe we would like peanut butter and jelly. Peanut butter, I never saw peanut butter at our house until after we were married. I guess I didn't even know there was such a thing. But they liked the kind of sandwiches we took. I don't remember trading, but I remember the other kids trading, like the sausage. They liked our sausage. But I remember some of the kids here, they couldn't afford to take food. Maybe a piece of that pork fat, and they'd take a piece of bread and that. My mother used to tell me that the working men in Spain, when they worked on the fields, that's what they would have. They would just take a big piece of bread and a piece of that old fat, and I don't see how they could do it.

CUSICK: That's hard living.

GARCIA: Yeah. But that's the only thing. And I remember the kids coming home and me separating them. This guy'd be going on the ditch.

CUSICK: Your younger brothers and sisters? You were always babysitting them?

GARCIA: My younger brothers and the rest of them, and the young little kids from back here, tangling up with the other ones. Because they were called some name.

CUSICK: Oh, so there were problems with that. Well this was in school, huh?

GARCIA: This was grammar school. Other than that, I have never run into anything myself, personally.

CUSICK: Your parents speak Spanish of course. And all you and your brothers and sisters speak Spanish. Do your parents speak English too?

GARCIA: My dad, how he ever learned it, I don't know. He learned enough to make himself understood.

CUSICK: In his business.

GARCIA: Yeah. But my mother, no.

CUSICK: So when you were growing up, did you mainly speak Spanish at home? Of course, because your mother didn't know English.

GARCIA: Yes, and she thought it was terrible if we'd sit at the table and we spoke English. That was a no-no.

CUSICK: Why?

GARCIA: Because she thought it was disrespectful because she didn't understand it. But see, that's where she made a mistake. She might have learned.

CUSICK: So where did you learn English?

GARCIA: At school.

CUSICK: You were going to school and you didn't even know, and then you had to pick it up.

GARCIA: That's right.

CUSICK: But you started going to school at twelve years old, over here at Elkhorn.

GARCIA: But see, I had already gone in Hayward. So I must have learned it over there. In Castro Valley.

CUSICK: Do you remember having any problems in picking up the language? Were there a lot of other children of Spanish descent?

GARCIA: More than here. There was a bigger school over there. I remember going to a bigger school.

CUSICK: Were there a lot of other Spanish kids that were in the same situation?

GARCIA: No, I don't remember them being Spanish. I think it was just kind of a mixture.

CUSICK: Nothing really stood out in particular. There were maybe a lot of kids who had parents as farmers that were working the land.

GARCIA: But over here it was no different, because this was the little community here that was all Spanish, and then over there were all the Dutch, Norsky, from Lodi. You know, German, Dutch...

CUSICK: So they would kind of hassle the kids.

GARCIA: Yeah.

CUSICK: Would they bother just children of Spanish descent, or any kind of ethnic group?

GARCIA: Well see, there wasn't any other ethnic groups that I remember. Well, maybe Italian. It just seems like maybe Spanish kids – when kids are little too. The thing they hated to be called Specks. And any time they said that, I remember, oh, they would just...

CUSICK: Start fighting?

GARCIA: Start fighting.

CUSICK: [] all the time. Well, mostly other kids that weren't English-speaking, if not white. There were a couple other from another ethnic group, but mostly everybody would speak English. And you had learned English by this time of course. And your teacher, did your teacher make any special considerations or allowance for anybody who might not speak English as well?

GARCIA: No, because she was too busy trying to keep track of all of us. Gosh, imagine one teacher having all the different grades. And trying to keep this guy right when the other's second grader, third grader, fourth grader, up to the eighth grade. That was quite a job.

CUSICK: Do you think it was hard for the teacher to handle all the different kids at different ages and the different ethnic groups? Because of course they would get in fights all the time, and how was she able to handle that?

GARCIA: They had some of it at recess, but I think it was mostly coming home. Because then we had three miles to get home. That's where it all happened. We came out and this one had a car...

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE [Still Rose?]: We were all walking.

GARCIA: ...and we had horses.

CUSICK: Can you remember any stories about what might happen when you always walked?

GARCIA: Well I remember there was this one little kid, and across the street from the school, there was a vineyard. And we'd been warned that we weren't supposed to go over there. But she used to go over and lay in the ditch, and when the cars'd go by, she'd throw grapes at them. So one day, it hit the window on one of the cars. I remember that. And she stopped the car and she came and told the teacher. So she grabbed me and she says, "Come on! Let's go hide." But I'd remember, I never threw any grapes. So what we did, we went under the schoolhouse. We hid under the schoolhouse. And she said, "Oh, we'll stay here til school's out []." And the teacher said, "Come on Annabelle, I know you're under there." So then we had to stay after school and write so many times on the blackboard. That's the kind of punishment we'd get. We had to write so many times. I remember that she just loved to []. Or one time, she brought her horse to school, and if we rode on a horse, we used to ride bareback in the saddle. She decided she was gonna teach me how to ride a horse. But she puts on a horse, then she hits the horse. Now the horse is going up on the road and down in the ditch. Oh my God. That was the first and last time I rode a horse.

CUSICK: Didn't like it too much.

GARCIA: I was so sore, I'll never forget it. And then I couldn't hold on to the horse. I kept slipping. I kept going to the dark end of the horse.

CUSICK: Sounds like you kids were running around a lot. What other things did you like about school? Did you like going to school?

GARCIA: Oh, I liked school. I liked school. I didn't like recess. Isn't that terrible?

CUSICK: Because you just wanted to be in there, and you enjoyed the setting? Or what made you stay in?

GARCIA: No, you know what I would do instead, see, that's what happens when it's driven into you. To me it was a waste of time to be out there playing ball and playing marbles. And besides, my brothers wouldn't let me play marbles. They would let Annabelle play marbles, but I couldn't play marbles.

CUSICK: Because you were their sister? Sounds like my brothers!

GARCIA: That's how brothers are. Anyway, I would take crocheting instead. I like to crochet. So I'd take my crochet and crochet while they were playing. Isn't that crazy?

CUSICK: A useful way to spend your time. How did your parents feel about school? All of the kids going to school.

GARCIA: Oh, they wanted us to learn. They wanted us to learn, oh yeah. They pushed us to go to school. And in fact, when the boys graduated from grammar school, they didn't want to go to anymore schooling, so they would go to night school. I know women went to night school enough, but they'd go to night school to learn mechanics at the high school. The old high school, you know? They'd go to high school. But I guess it did them some good because they'd repair their own cars. My brother is the mechanic.

CUSICK: Did your parents ever try to help you when you were going to school with any problems you had?

GARCIA: No.

CUSICK: Because there was a language barrier.

GARCIA: There was a language barrier, and they didn't know what I was doing anyway.

CUSICK: But you were satisfied to go, and your parents were glad to see that you were going to school.

GARCIA: That's one thing my dad believed in, because I remember, now that you mention that, the other neighbors saying that they couldn't understand why my dad would send his daughter to school and not his boys. That that wasn't right. That the daughter wasn't supposed to go to school. She was supposed to stay home.

CUSICK: Do you mean your brothers weren't going to school?

GARCIA: What I mean is after they graduated grammar school. Because see, those were the kids that would be kept home a lot because they had to work. And they couldn't understand why my dad was sending the daughter to school. Because the boys were the ones that would have to make a living. They weren't worried about the girls.

CUSICK: You were supposed to stay at home until you get married.

GARCIA: That's right.

CUSICK: How did you feel about that?

GARCIA: Not me. I felt like I was always more like my dad. I had ideas. My dad always had ideas he was gonna do this, and we used to tell him, "We're not through with this." He had something ready for us already, you know? And I could see ahead, and I'm that way today. Like my husband here, when I start talking to him about something, he can't see it. I've already done it and seen it. So some people are that way, some aren't. So I liked school. I just wish today now that... What I wanted to do is learn languages.

And Mr. Humphreys wanted my dad to let me go to San Francisco to work at the port over there, where all these ships coming in and out, so that I could take advantage of my Spanish. As a translator.

CUSICK: Why didn't he want you to?

GARCIA: Oh no, he would never. Not in those days. They would never let a daughter go by herself.

CUSICK: In what other kinds of ways did your parents let you be more independent? I mean, here's your dad sending you off to business school, and you were the oldest and you were a girl. So part of the time at least, you didn't have to sit home and babysit. Were you kind of in charge of the rest of the kids when you were around?

GARCIA: Yeah, well see, they were kind of grown up then, and there was just the two last ones. The other ones were all grown up already. Because see, my brothers... Let's see, I was born in '13, and then I had a brother who was born in '15... '16.... So you see, we were pretty close together. So those two boys are the ones that I had to watch when they were little. And of course the other two. And then I was the babysitter when they had all these parties. When they were doing all the butchering. I had to watch all of them.

CUSICK: So you had some responsibilities there. How did you feel about that?

GARCIA: It was okay. I liked it. I didn't mind it.

CUSICK: Did you participate in any school activities when you were going to Elkhorn, or even in Hayward?

GARCIA: There wasn't any. There wasn't any that I remember. And then when I went to business college, there really wasn't enough time. I barely could keep my head above water. But then when I went to work, working in the office, I liked that.

CUSICK: That was after you finished business school. And you got a job soon after that? How did your parents feel about you getting a job?

GARCIA: That was fine, because my dad figured that was better for me. That's why they did it instead of working out in the field. Because they knew that was hard work, and it was hard for a woman to work on the fields, so they figured if I got a job, that would be better.

CUSICK: For you. What about your brothers? Was it different for your brothers?

GARCIA: Well, after they got married, they didn't want the farm anymore, neither one of them. After their dad died, he went back into farming and stayed in ever since. But before, after they got married they didn't want nothing to do with the farm. But I liked it because my English... I didn't like English.

CUSICK: You didn't like to speak it?

GARCIA: I liked geography and working with figures. I just love working with figures.

CUSICK: Oh, so you must have done very well in business.

GARCIA: In figures, I'm fine. When I was in the cannery, I used to keep payroll. I had sometimes up to a thousand workers, and I would take care of the payroll. I worked for three years for one company. In fact, I was working for the Stockton Fruit Products. It was under Bundy at the time that they formed the first union. The cannery workers' union.

CUSICK: Were you in the union?

GARCIA: No, I wasn't, but the cannery, they had quite a few problems in going into the union. Because the workers wanted to form their own cannery workers' union, the AFL, but the CIO wanted to take control, so in those days, there was quite a big hassle. But then after, I quit working for the cannery. My husband used to work for the cannery too. At that time, it was 20 cents an hour.

CUSICK: Can you imagine?

GARCIA: 20 cents an hour. They used to work all day long.

CUSICK: Is that where you met your husband?

GARCIA: No. I met him at a dance in Stockton. He was from Brentwood.

CUSICK: Oh. He was working in the cannery here?

GARCIA: No, I guess he just came to the bands. And then come to find out, his folks and my folks came on the boat from Spain.

CUSICK: Oh wow. So what kind of activities did you have over on Tam? There were dances, and what else did you do?

GARCIA: All the time that we were living here at the ranch, the only time – once a week, on Sundays, we would go to the show. My dad would take us to the show. Once a year, we would go to Hayward to visit my aunts and uncles. And it better not rain, because if it did, we would get stuck. Just about here is where we'd get stuck. And then my dad would threaten, "We're not going, we're not going." And we'd all start crying. He says, "Okay." And he'd go back, he'd get the horse, pull us off the highway, take the horse back, then we'd go to Hayward.

CUSICK: Did you have a car or were you going by buggy?

GARCIA: We had a car. Yeah, we had a whole Model A Ford. And we looked forward to that one time a year, but other than that, it was on Sundays. That's all. We'd get to go to the show. And you better not do anything bad, because if you did something that we weren't supposed to do, then no sir.

CUSICK: You'd get your privilege taken away. Did you enjoy doing things with your family that way?

GARCIA: Christmas to me, I don't care. Christmas can come and go. There's no Christmas.

CUSICK: What do you mean?

GARCIA: It's just not Christmas, because to me, Christmas was when we were all home.

CUSICK: Oh, Christmas now you mean?

GARCIA: Yeah. And see, at the time, the last Christmas dinners that we had, there'd be about 25 of the family that would get together. That was after my brothers and my sister all got married. So we'd go over to my mother's. That's where we would spend Christmas.

CUSICK: And all the children too.

GARCIA: And all the children. So being raised with five of us in the family, to me that was Christmas. At the time, my sister and I rebelled, because we figured it was just too much. Because we'd have to come and help my mother, and all we did at that time, we don't buy the chickens that the feathers were off of them and they were clean. We had to go out to the henhouse and clean the chickens and kill them, and well that was a hassle. It took about two days to get ready for Christmas. And then all that baking. And my mother didn't cook a turkey like they cook the turkeys today. She insisted the turkey had to be baste. But it was hot.

CUSICK: Did she have special dishes that she'd always cook for you on holidays? Or special customs that you had, just for your family or something that they brought from Spain?

GARCIA: There's one we don't have here now is during Lent, we couldn't eat meat. Now we don't even think about it anymore, but during Lent, there would be special dishes that they had. Fish, you know.

CUSICK: Were these of Spanish origin?

GARCIA: Mmhmm.

CUSICK: What kind of things did she have that were special?

GARCIA: Well, they had that cod, you know that salt-dried fish? I remember her soaking that for a long time to get all that salt, and then they would take them and beat up eggs. I don't remember exactly how she'd do it, and she'd kind of make a batter and then fry it. And they used to use a lot of eggs, because we had eggs at home, you know. She would make... I'm still trying to figure how to do it, but it won't come out exactly like my mother used to do it. She used to boil the eggs and then take the yellow out of the eggs, and then she would beat up an egg. I'm sure she'd break up all that yellow and then mix that up and put parsley and onion and I don't know what else. And then stuff the eggs back up again, and then fry them in the frying pan upside down. And then it seems to me – I got that far. I tried it one day. But somehow, the egg would turn loose from the rest of the egg, the sides would turn loose, but I kind of remember her making some kind of a sauce and then putting them in there and kind of pot-boiling them a little bit. And I remember because it was so good. I'll have to ask my aunt some time. And then she used to make a flan. You know what flan is. It's a...

CUSICK: Like a pudding.

GARCIA: Yeah. Custard

CUSICK: That's very Spanish, isn't it?

GARCIA: Yeah. And she used to make [] sugar, fresh out of the dish, and make that...

CUSICK: So it was crystalline?

GARCIA: Yeah, where it would crystallize. And then when you put the stuff back in there and then put it in the oven til that thing is all juice and then it was brown. Flan. Other than that, she didn't do too much baking, because I don't think she really knew how. Because you know, in Spain, they don't have those things to make desserts.

CUSICK: But was there any kind of special dish or treat that she had?

GARCIA: Then of course, one thing that we got real tired of, and my brothers love it now, but at the time we were sick of it. Every day at noon, my dad had to have a Spanish bean. Garbanzos. Every single day at noon, he had to have that. And we were so sick of it. Of course, in the morning was different and at night, but at noon he wanted it. Because see, I don't know whether anybody has ever told you how they cook them. They soak them in the night and then put them in this pot. And then naturally you add water and salt pork. I do it with []. I don't put the salt pork anymore because it's too much grease. And then they put a big piece of bone with meat on it. And then you cook that until that's cooked. And then you take the juice out and you cook spaghettis in it. We'd have us like a soupy deal. And then you make what they call la relleno, and that was best part of it. You'd beat up eggs and then you'd put bread crumbs in it. A lot of parsley. Maybe some garlic sauce. And then you fry it in a frying pan. You make it like an omelette, you know, you kind of fold it and then you put it back in the pot in this liquid, on top of the garbanzo, and you let it boil. And then that all swells up. It's all juicy. I remember that.

CUSICK: And she used to make that for you?

GARCIA: Uh huh. She'd make that every day and noon!

CUSICK: No wonder you got tired of it.

GARCIA: And we got tired of that, you know. My dad, he really didn't care about the garbanzo. It was the spaghettis, the frideos that he called them. He had to have that frideos. See, you can find them in the stores. They're the real thin ones. Real thin.

CUSICK: Flat?

GARCIA: No, no, not the flat. They're round, but they're real thin. And they have right on the package, frideo. And so they do fast. And naturally they have a lot of juice and of course they fight[?] too. But that at noon. Of course then later on, when we all left home, my mother used to put a meal. Because then she had high blood pressure and you can't eat all that kind of stuff. But that was the basic meal for the family.

CUSICK: Anything else that you used to have that was very common that you still – do you still have some of the same habits and customs?

GARCIA: Once in a while I'll cook the old, yeah, that's what they used to call it. My mother used to call it olla.

CUSICK: Doesn't that mean pot?

GARCIA: Yeah, it means pot, but that's what they call it. In other parts of Spain they call it something else. I think Dolores calls it puchero.

CUSICK: Yes! She told me about that.

GARCIA: Yeah. It's the same thing.

CUSICK: Okay. And they just love it, yeah.

GARCIA: Now the kids all love it, you know, my husband just loves it, but I don't put not salt pork because I feel without bones and enough grease, and then I skim all the grease that [].

CUSICK: Tell me about some of the other habits that you have that you feel you got from your family that are of Spanish origin and definitely of your background, and that you might still carry on today with your family. Certain days that you observe or certain things that you do or just habit. Certain rituals or sayings or stories or anything like that.

GARCIA: I know that in the beginning, we would never go to church because it was too far to go to church.

CUSICK: Had you been religious before that?

GARCIA: Yes. Oh yeah. Over there in Spain, they have a church [].

CUSICK: Did they emphasize that to you and your brothers and sisters?

GARCIA: One thing, they made sure we were all baptized. We all had our first communion. I had to go all the way to Hayward to get my first communion. We had to go there to talk to the priest and get my little book, and then I had to study and I then I had to go back, stay with my aunt, and then go take my first communion. And she made sure that we all did, because over here, we had to go all the way uptown to go to church, and I guess they felt like trying to raise us was hard enough without taking time out. I don't know. But she still, you know, taught us to pray. The boys didn't know how. I still remember sending my prayers in Spanish.

CUSICK: Would she get you together and show her children how things were done?

GARCIA: No, I don't remember her teaching the boys. I remember her asking while we were making the beds and everything. She'd make me repeat all these prayers until I learned them.

CUSICK: She'd do that with the girls, or just you?

GARCIA: I don't know whether she did it with my sister or not, because she was eight years younger. When she was home, she was little, I would be out in the field, and after I got married. So there wasn't that much communication. But I tell you, when her mother was in a convalescent hospital and she got real sick, I know that she had meant a lot to her. So at the convalescent hospital, they had a Spanish priest would come around, and the whole... Oh, I don't know what variety of the words they would use. They have a mass, and they all gather around in their wheelchairs...

CUSICK: First Fridays. Yeah. Is that maybe First Friday? They did the first Friday of the month?

GARCIA: I can't remember now what day, but anyway, there was a certain day where the priest would come around. So then I'd get her out of bed, put her on the wheelchair, and take her, and I think she kind of enjoyed that. So then when she got real sick and... I've forgotten all my prayers in Spanish. Now what in the world am I gonna do?

CUSICK: Why did you feel like that?

GARCIA: So finally, I started [] and I got a prayer from this person, and then every day I would read them to her. I think she enjoyed that. And I know she told me, she said, "Don't you ever forget your prayers." So on her good days, she'd say all those Spanish prayers, and I took them all down the best way I could in Spanish. Because I taught myself in Spanish.

CUSICK: You knew how to speak it, but writing and reading...

GARCIA: Writing and reading was another story. So when I decided that I was gonna go to Spain, I got busy in a dictionary and I started learning. Teaching myself every night. So I contacted some of my cousins in Spain and I wrote to them, and basically I used the dictionary. I guess they understood me, because they answered me. They were surprised that they had family and I located all these people. So when my mother repeated those prayers, I was able to write these words down, and I'd come home and I'd type them. So I have all the prayers that she kept saying. And I used to know every one of them, but you know, I've forgotten them. But at least I have them down. But I often thought of that. What in the world am I gonna do if my mother gets sick? To my father it wasn't that important.

CUSICK: What, the praying and all that?

GARCIA: Well, because let me put it this way. When he was in Spain, that was hammered into him. Religion, religion. He was the type, I'm gonna believe some but I don't know about the other. I got my ideas about this and I got my ideas about the other. And he had a brother that used to be the one, I don't know what they call them, that goes with the priest and hands the priest the book and all that?

CUSICK: Alter boy?

GARCIA: Alter boy! He was an alter boy. And my dad says, he could repeat the whole sermon I guess you'd call it. He could say it all in Latin! And he couldn't read or write. Can you believe that? And so I

guess he saw so much. He just didn't believe everything. He just got around. He wasn't going to believe in everything that the priest told him. He just wasn't – the Catholic religion, there was a lot of things he wasn't about to believe in.

CUSICK: How about yourself?

GARCIA: He said, well, as long as he believed in God, and as long as he never did anything wrong and he did right by his family, he figured he had his own religion.

CUSICK: And may I ask, how about yourself?

GARCIA: And that's about the way it is with me too. At first after I got married, my husband kind of feels the same way. And it was hard to get him to go to church. Maybe get him to go two, three times a year. And now he doesn't go at all. But as far as believing, I believe. But I don't feel – I've discussed this with other people, and I feel terrible. I don't feel comfortable in church. So I feel, if I'm gonna go to church and not feel comfortable and not understand what they're saying, what do I want to go there for?

CUSICK: You'd have to learn what to do there and how to feel yourself.

GARCIA: Yeah. So I feel the same as my dad. I know that there has to be something, and I know that every time I have prayed that they have been answered. And I know because my mother did all the []. Three years, I used to go every single day. From 11 o'clock to 4 o'clock, she'd stay. Because she didn't understand English and she felt more better, so I'd go up there. She wanted to go home real bad. I tried it, but it didn't work out. She ended up in the hospital, but she didn't know that was her house. But, oh, that's another story. I mean, what we went through, she had cancer. My dad had cancer. They both suffered a lot. So the only thing I regret is that they worked too hard. They worked and they didn't get to travel. They didn't get to see anything. And I hope I don't end up that way.

CUSICK: What, working so hard?

GARCIA: My husband a lot of times, I tell him that I want to go some place, and he doesn't like to travel. He doesn't like to travel. And so I tell him, "Well we're gonna end up just like our folks did."

CUSICK: And you don't wanna see that? You feel they worked too hard?

GARCIA: They worked too hard. They should've taken a little time to rest. My mother would've gone if my dad had taken her, but he was more comfortable at home. But it was funny that once you got him away, he didn't wanna go home. Like for Christmas, we'd have such a hard time to get him to go. And then when you get over there, why he was having a lot of fun. It was just the idea of leaving, you know. So much to do, especially in the farm. So much to do. And he was thinking ahead. And you know, sometimes I complain about the way that younger generation behaves, but sometimes I think they're way ahead of us. I can see that.

CUSICK: How's that?

GARCIA: Well, for instance, let's take a young couple that'll buy a home and you say, "Oh my God, what they've done. Look at the big debt they've gone into. How are they ever gonna pay for that?" Still, that same young couple, when vacation time comes, they take a vacation! You know? Even if they have to go in debt. To me, years ago, that doesn't seem right. Now it seems right. I can see it now that it is right, because you're not gonna live forever. And when you get to the point of retiring, you either get sick and you can't go anyplace anyway. So as long as they're responsible for their own bill, it's nobody's business. I mean, if they want their headache and they're still getting along and they enjoy themselves, more power to them. They should. What's the difference whether they're in debt? As long as they don't go over their head so that – in other words, be dependent on yourself. Take care only of what you can take care of. Don't wait for the government or anybody else to be helping you. Then you're doing wrong.

CUSICK: So in that way, that's how you carry over from what your father was telling you.

GARCIA: Because that's the problem today. They don't care. They go into debt, they go through bankruptcy, they don't care.

CUSICK: I'm gonna ask you some questions about the differences – well, you say you had no children, right? But I want to know what it's like for people of Spanish descent here in the United States compared to maybe how your parents used to speak about Spain. How do you think it is for Spanish people in Stockton? Or this country? Especially if they're originally from Spain.

GARCIA: Well, I'll tell you, every person that has come from a foreign nation to this country has come to this country to better themselves and to work. And I'll bet you any money that anybody that comes from any foreign country is gonna come over here, because they want to make a better living for themselves. They're not coming over here just to bum off the government. There are some, and I hate to say it because I do have some very poor Mexican friends, but from what I have observed, they seem to be the ones that come over here and in no time they're on welfare. And they seem to feel like it's okay. And I feel like if they're coming over here to work, that's fine, but not expect the rest of them to take care of them.

CUSICK: Do you think that people that come from...

GARCIA: But from Spain, I'll tell you. I don't know of anybody. Really. Not because I'm saying it. But I don't know of anybody that's on welfare.

CUSICK: In the Stockton area?

GARCIA: In Stockton area, I mean, that are from Spanish descent. Because I know some people that are Basque. The French Basques don't consider themselves Spanish. I don't know why, but they are Spanish. Now there are other Basques that are Spanish Basques, they come from that province.

CUSICK: What do you mean that the French Basque are Spanish?

GARCIA: They say that they're not Spanish, but they are because they are from Spain.

CUSICK: They're not in the French part of it?

GARCIA: Well, but it still belongs to Spain.

CUSICK: Oh. Because the entire Basque country belongs to Spain?

GARCIA: Yeah. But see, what they're trying to do, they're trying to separate from Spain. They want an independent government of their own. But I have heard from the Basques, because I never was associated with the Basques until we had this club, you know. And then got plenty of them. But I hear the Spanish Basques talk about the French Basques, and they say that the French Basques, they think they're not Spanish. They say they're not Spanish. And why?

CUSICK: Because it should be considered Spanish?

GARCIA: Yeah, if you're Spanish. The Basques are Spanish. They come from Spanish descent. I mean, just like for instance myself. Of course I'm an American. But still I'm Spanish because my mother and father came from Spain. But here they're Basque and they're in Spain and they say they're not Spanish.

CUSICK: Do you feel like people who come from other countries, especially the Spanish, we'll talk about the Spanish, do you think they feel close to the old country, or do they consider themselves definite Americans? Like you just said, you're Spanish because your parents are from Spain.

GARCIA: Yes, but then talk about my country. I mean, this is first. I say I'm Spanish because my mother and father were Spanish, but as far as I'm concerned, I belong here. I don't belong over there.

CUSICK: Do you call yourself American or Spanish American or?

GARCIA: I don't know. I always say I'm Spanish. I never think about it as Spanish American. Yeah. Just like, it was so funny going on the plane going over to Spain, when you fill out some papers and they ask you what part you're from. I says, "Well, I'm from America." "Where are you from, North America?" Well I had to stop and think, am I from North America? And my niece was with me and she says, "What's the matter with you? You are from North America!" I says, "Oh, I am?" Oh, North America just sounds like I was from...

CUSICK: A foreign country!

GARCIA: Really, you know? But it didn't occur to me that, North America, Central America, South America. Naturally I had to be from North America. But even today, it doesn't sound right. But think about it. North America. Oh no, it can't be. It's too hot!

CUSICK: Do you feel that you're affected by things going on in Spain, or that affect Spanish people as a whole? Either over in Spain or around here? Do you feel that your association...

[End of Tape]

[Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape.]

GARCIA: ...Then I felt like, well, I didn't have relatives here, I understand now, when my folks went there. But to me, they didn't mean a thing.

CUSICK: It very much had not been that emphasized when you were growing up, is that what you mean to say?

GARCIA: No, it didn't mean a thing. I'd hear my father say, "Oh, these old potatoes here. They just taste like water." In Spain, he used to say they tasted like butter. Or he'd always say, my husband says he used to have the same problem with his folks. His dad would say, "Oh, the meat here, it isn't the same. It must be the ground."

CUSICK: They'd complain about the differences?

GARCIA: Yeah. It just seems like the flavors weren't the same. To them, things didn't taste the same. My dad would say, the meat, he'd say it was not the same. Or the bread. He was used to the heavier bread than the light bread here. Or little things like that you'd hear. And we'd tell, "Oh, we're tired about that! How come you come to the United States if you..."

CUSICK: [laughing] Didn't like that so much.

GARCIA: We'd tell him that. "Oh, you don't understand." And then we used to tell him, "They used to taste so good 'cause you was hungry!" Which is true. When you're hungry, things taste a little different. So then he would laugh at us. But I could see in even talking to the older senior citizens that are from Spain, once in a while they'll let slip and say something's better over there than here.

CUSICK: They really notice those differences, don't they?

GARCIA: But with us, no. We'll always defend them. We'll say, "How come you're over here? Why aren't you over there?"

CUSICK: You can go back home.

GARCIA: Yeah, you can go back home. But no, I just didn't have any feeling to that country at all until, like I say, because now I know that I have... I pay attention more. Like say for instance I'll read The Record, and maybe I'll see something happened in Spain. Well, let's see where it was. What town or something. See, I get interested in that. I look to see if maybe it affects my family in some way.

CUSICK: Somehow you are in contact with it when it comes to something that you know.

GARCIA: Yeah. It didn't mean a thing to me before. But like now if I hear they had a train wreck for instance, I'll say, "Oh my gosh, I want to know what part of the country it was." Or a plane came down. You think about those things. But before, I didn't think about it.

CUSICK: That was your attitude before when you were growing up. You didn't really think about Spain...

GARCIA: Yeah, to me it didn't mean nothing.

CUSICK: You'd hear about it once in a while from your parents.

GARCIA: Yeah. Because all I heard from them was how much they had suffered in Spain and why they left Spain, because they couldn't make a living.

CUSICK: And that's what shaped your attitude towards it. You weren't concerned with it.

GARCIA: Yeah. I said, "You came here to earn a living, well, this is it. That's why we're here." If he'd of been satisfied, he'd have stayed there. So to me, and I think all the children of that generation that came over feel the same way. This is our country and this is it. We don't know any other country. And I never had any desire to leave this country until I got older and I thought...

CUSICK: Why did you go?

GARCIA: I have a desire because I found out that there's other things in other country that maybe I should see. That I would like to see. Not because I wouldn't want to come back, because I'd want to come back. I wouldn't want to live any other place! But just because I've traveled, I would want to see. I'd love to go back to Spain, because the other time I didn't get to see too much because I was interested in finding out who lived there that I knew, that belonged to me. But I'd like to maybe someday go back. But it was such a hard trip. It's a hard trip to take, to go over there. Oh, that plane trip is so long. And when you go on these tours, if you're gonna go traveling, go when you're young, because when you're old, it's hard. I hated it in the morning when we went on tours, because they get you up real early in the morning. They tell you, "Five o'clock, be up. Here are your suitcases. Save your waiting." It takes them two hours before they get ready to get you on the buses. And then maybe you'll travel most of the day on the bus, don't get to see anything til at one point they're gonna go see. By then you don't much care. I mean you're tired. And everything's real fast. You have to walk with the tour real fast.

CUSICK: You can't take your time and see things you want to.

GARCIA: No. So I noticed that the people of the younger generation that are going to Spain now, and I know every year they make a trip. They take a certain section of it. They go over there and rent a car and they go.

CUSICK: Smart.

GARCIA: That's the way they do it.

CUSICK: So your attitude kind of changed.

GARCIA: They have changes in that way, but I don't think that any country's any better. The only thing I found in Spain, that I'll tell you, when I came back, I was sold on, is that socialized medicine. I was sold on that over there. Because I remember my mother and father saying that they only had a doctor, one doctor in the whole town, that would come when you get sick, comes to the house. And I don't remember how they paid him. Maybe with vegetables. I hope they paid him. But now when I went back, I was surprised, because when they need a doctor, they call a doctor. Doctor comes to the house, and they don't pay for it.

CUSICK: And you like that system better? But then they pay for it in taxes?

GARCIA: No. The people who work, it's taken out of their check. See, in other words the insurance that they have covers everything. Covers their drugs. They go to the drugstore and they get medicine. Because I'll tell you what happened when I was there. I got sick. For some reason, one of my aunts, she used to cook us rock salt. And I don't know why it seemed like that house had everything so salty. And evidently I had a heart and I didn't know it. I found out when I was over there. And all of a sudden, I just swelled something fierce. My legs got swollen and I couldn't urinate anymore. Stopped it completely. So one of my cousins took me to the doctor, and I was very embarrassed because they didn't want me to pay for my doctor. I says, "I can afford to pay for my doctor. I want to pay for my doctor." "No, you're not gonna pay for your doctor. Don't say anything, you'll let us do the talking." I thought, "How in the world is that doctor going to examine me?" And they were right there! This was funny. And imagine he saw my operations, because when I was twelve, I was operated from appendix. Then I had a hysterectomy, and about six months later I had to have a gall bladder. So naturally, I have all these crisscross incisions, and he says, "Oh, you've been operated for this, you've been operated for that," and "Where do you come from?" They were answering the questions! They didn't want him to know that I was from America.

CUSICK: Why?

GARCIA: Because they wanted to pay with their insurance. Can you imagine?

CUSICK: Oh, I see. They needed to get free treatment.

GARCIA: Yeah.

CUSICK: Oh. Well, they were just extending their hospitality, right?

GARCIA: It was very hard for me to say...

CUSICK: You feel like you were just taking free service.

GARCIA: And they'd say I was from another town over there in Spain. I don't even know where that town was.

CUSICK: You'd say, "Well, be quiet!"

GARCIA: Oh boy. Anyhow, he said, "Do you know that you have heart problems?" and I said, "No." He said, "You have now." So anyhow, he gave me a pill so that I could start urinating, get all that water. This must have been a water pill of some kind. The heart pills, I had to throw them away. One of my cousins lived about on the fourth floor, and I couldn't make it to the top. Oh, I was afraid to take it because I felt, well, I'm in a foreign country. I mean I'll take the water pill, but I'm not gonna take the other one. So I flushed them down the toilet.

CUSICK: Oh no!

GARCIA: But do you know that my cousin went to the drugstore, and on her card, she got all my pills for nothing? The drugstore didn't question it, the doctors didn't question it.

CUSICK: All she had was a little prescription with the writing on it?

GARCIA: And still after they get old, they get a little pension. The older people are all on a pension. And I thought, gee whiz.

CUSICK: You'd like to see that system here?

GARCIA: I think it's the doctors that are fighting it, but really, I get letters from Spain now where they'll say, well, this little town is quite a ways. They took him to Madrid. He's in the hospital now and they're gonna do so-and-so to him, and I have to look up the words. I think one of them was a bladder problem. They were gonna operate, and I thought, oh my gosh, I know how much money those people have because they're just on a little pension. They don't have any money. How can they afford the operation? So you stop and think. They took him to Madrid. If not, they take him to Salamanca where there's a big hospital there. They don't pay! Alright now, if we had this in this country, just think the expense.

CUSICK: The expense that people wouldn't have to pay?

GARCIA: The people wouldn't have to pay.

CUSICK: Yeah, but then they're paying it from another way because it's taken out of their paycheck? The people that are working?

GARCIA: The people that are working.

CUSICK: That's a big controversy nowadays, isn't it?

GARCIA: Yeah. But can you imagine just going to a doctor whenever you need a doctor and getting your medication whenever you need medication, and you need a big operation, you don't have to pay. That amount of money pays. Alright. They're taking out of, when you work now, like my husband was working for Lincoln Unified School District, they were taking for Blue Cross. Alright. Then instead of getting a raise, they would get the fringes, which is better. Anybody that's working, they shouldn't ask for more pay, higher pay. They should ask always for fringes. You'll come ahead. Way ahead.

CUSICK: Like what do you get? What kind of benefits?

GARCIA: The benefits that you get is that your boss pays for them instead of giving a raise. Because when you get the money, you have to pay income tax on it. When you get these fringes, you don't pay income tax on it. Alright, then finally the school would pay, but it's bigger money that they have to pay to Blue Cross.

CUSICK: Really? But you do get a lot of that type of service if you're working for a school district in LA. You get maybe dental, medical, and that type of thing.

GARCIA: But here, like right now, I'm finding out myself. Now I'm off of the insurance. He's retired now since April 1st. Now we have Medicare. Medicare, they take 870 out of your Social Security check. But Medicare isn't what you think Medicare is. They only pay 80% of what in Medicare says the doctor's worth or what the hospital is worth. It isn't 80% of what the hospital charges or what the doctor charges. So you end up paying half out of your pocket. So if you go to hospital on the Medicare right now, and it's gone up to \$180, so \$180 deductible. When you first go into the hospital, you pay \$180. And then, I don't remember how it is, but anyway, 80% of this and 80% of that. So if a retired person, let's say a senior citizen right now, only has Medicare and he has to have a big operation, he'll end up at the county hospital. And even going to the county hospital today costs you money. It isn't like it used to be years ago. If you have any profit, they can attach it. Okay, so then the other day I decided, well, I better get what they call a 65 Care Plan, which should take care of what Medicare doesn't take care of. Blue Cross. So I checked into that. They end up paying the 20% that Medicare didn't pay, but 20% of what Medicare considers they should pay. Not what the doctor says. In other words, if the doctor says my visit is worth \$24 and Medicare says it's only worth 16, they're gonna pay 80% of that and Blue Cross is gonna pay the other 20% of the \$16, not of the 24.

CUSICK: Well, you're getting reamed somehow.

GARCIA: Yeah. So I thought, no, I go to the doctor once a month, and my prescriptions, they were maybe \$40 a month. So I figure I'd better get prescription. So I thought, well, I'd better take the 65 Extra Care. So I pay for about three months going back and forth with Blue Cross, and I had to find out when I was off of the school and when I wasn't. Finally, yesterday I got a bill for \$114. They said that I owed for June and July and August and September because you had to pay two months ahead. I didn't know I was insured for June.

CUSICK: Didn't your husband let you know that?

GARCIA: I didn't know I was insured, because I kept calling them and they said, "Well, when the school takes you off..." Here I'm paying that high-price insurance where I'm supposed to have a prescription card where I pay the first \$5 and then they pay 80% or whatever Blue Cross decides. But that got me, because here I have to send them a \$114 check. This morning. It's still in the mailbox. I don't think the mailman picked it up. So when September comes, I have to look for another insurance or do something. But I mean, that's what it's gonna cost me every month now, besides Medicare. 28.50 a month. And it's still not gonna pay everything. Let's say for instance I go to the doctor and he charges \$24. Of those \$24, I'm still gonna be stuck with about \$10. Even with pay notice insurance. That's what I mean. That's why I'm sold on that other insurance.

CUSICK: Socialized?

GARCIA: No. I hope that somebody comes out with a platform or something. Really, I think it's the doctors that are fighting.

CUSICK: Against it you mean?

GARCIA: Because what would happen to them. It seems like in the United States, there's so many smart people here, that they would come up with some kind of insurance plan that would take care of people.

CUSICK: Funny how that's such a problem. Did all your relatives in Spain think this a good idea?

GARCIA: Yes. They couldn't understand it. I told them, and at the time, it was \$100 a day and I thought it was terrible what it cost you to go to the hospital. I don't know what it is now. Probably a couple hundred a day to go to the hospital. They couldn't believe it! They said, "Well now explain this to me." I was having a hard time explaining it myself, why we were having to pay that. He says, "Well how much money do you people earn that you can afford anything like that?" So then I tell him they have insurance at work and I tell him, "Yes. One thing you don't understand about this country" – and I was talking about Spain – "is that over here most people

don't have refrigerators. You don't have cars. And all the luxuries we have, we work all our lives to pay for them. Over here, you don't have that." On Sundays, everybody gets dressed up, they go to church. They have great big wide streets over there. In the evenings, the whole family goes out for a walk. There's more family togetherness over there than here. I couldn't believe it, because I had heard stories from my mother how poor they were. They weren't that poor when I went back there. Everyone that I talked to that were working of the younger generation, like say my age, when vacation time came, they all went to the beaches. They all went on a vacation. I couldn't believe it! I says, "I don't even do that!" See, things are different.

CUSICK: Are you in touch with a lot of Spanish people here in Stockton? At least in your club you are.

GARCIA: Yeah, in the club.

CUSICK: What about before you joined the club?

GARCIA: No, because I was busy, and with us it was all during the period for a few years when my mother was sick. This is the first club I ever joined. I mean, I'm always too busy. I can find something to do all the time, because I love climbing and I'm always out of the apartment. There's always something to do. I can't understand anybody saying they're poor. There's no such a thing to be. There's no such a word.

CUSICK: Do you think that, at least from your experience when you came here and you settled down with your family, do you think a lot of Spanish people were coming and settling around the same area? Together?

GARCIA: When we came here, there was I think one family here, and then other Spanish families came.

CUSICK: Your dad wanted to come around here. He heard that there were Spanish people, didn't he?

GARCIA: And he heard that this land was selling. At that time, it was selling \$180 an acre.

CUSICK: How does that compare to today, I hate to ask?

GARCIA: Today, it's running, from what I hear, \$20,000.

CUSICK: What?

GARCIA: That's right. They're out of land. I know someone that lives on the 8 Mile and Thornton Road, in that area, and they say that they're offering \$25,000. Way out on 8 Mile Road.

CUSICK: And all that land could have been from way back in their family that they've just grown up on, for years and years.

GARCIA: I know, because a lot of the kids that I used to go to the Elkhorn School with, they all used to live on Lower Sacramento Road. There are branches on both sides. They all used to just raise wheat and barley, and during harvest, the little ones used to work the hardest because we had to work...

CUSICK: You kids.

GARCIA: We kids. Because my dad used to raise vegetables. Well then, their parents used to raise just barley and make a harvest. They didn't have to go out in the fields and work. All they did was ride the horses. Well, maybe the other ones, like the ones that had the vineyards back in Lodi, had to work. But from the people that I have talked to, if you're going to say about immigrants whether we were... The Spanish people, I don't think they'd feel any different. I mean, I hear about discrimination here and there, but I haven't felt it. Although I did have a feeling that that's the only time. Now I must admit this, when I first went to work in the office, I had a feeling that the American kids were better than us.

CUSICK: Why did you feel that way?

GARCIA: Because I was Spanish.

CUSICK: Where did you get that idea though?

GARCIA: I don't know where I got that idea. So one day my boss took me aside, and he said, "Listen. Where'd you get that idea that they're better than you? You're better than they are. You see the way they behave? You at least behave." Then is when he made me realize that every one of them here... I thought that I was a foreigner, let's say that. I felt like I was a foreigner in this country.

CUSICK: Did you get that feeling from other kids, or from other people that said something?

GARCIA: Maybe from grammar school I guess. Maybe, I don't know.

CUSICK: Like from your family.

GARCIA: Not from my family, because my family didn't associate just with the Spanish people, because there just was no time to have... My mother never belonged to a club all her life, and dad never belonged to a club. And if you'd get together, like I say, is when you got together for the []. But I did when went to work. I just felt like I wasn't good enough or something. And so then little by little I outgrew it. But I did feel like I had to go out of my way for them, and not them for me.

CUSICK: But then you got over that feeling.

GARCIA: I got over that feeling. Then I realized, when it was explained to me, that that's the way America was formed. That just because they were American or they were English or German or whatever they were, they came the same way as our folks at one time or another. So I mean, we were all foreigners.

CUSICK: Yeah, at some time.

GARCIA: But then that's the only time that I really felt. I've heard other kids say that they were discriminated against, but I haven't felt it.

CUSICK: You were fortunate.

GARCIA: Yeah. But I forgot to tell you, when I went to Hawaii, it was funny. There's a place, they have a sugar factory. And I think it's a cahooka? Cahooga? Sugar factory. And it's a factory. It doesn't run sugar. It's just fixed so the tourists can see how the operation sugar. They've got all the machineries painted different colors. You go through and they explain the process. And then you go into another room and one of the guys shows you a movie, and he explains about all the foreigners that developed Hawaii.

CUSICK: I didn't realize that all these different groups had been brought in to work on a plantation. There were Spanish people and other groups too. There were a lot of Asians...

GARCIA: Japanese. Asians, yeah.

CUSICK: So he went, and then they have this wall. Oh, there's a lot of pictures. And then they have the Chinese and the Japanese, and then they have this kind of work that they did, and the Hawaiians. And he went on and said, well this group came first and this group came second, and about the sugar cane companies, how they brought all these people in. They never mentioned the Spanish people.

CUSICK: Not at all? And that was a big group that went in.

GARCIA: Well I was waiting for it. So he got through with his speech, and then he took us into that little Sheraton. So he was sitting there on the corner, just kind of sat down, and I said, "Hey. I've got a bone to pick with you." I says, "How come you never even mentioned the Spanish people? I was born in this town." We happened to be in the island where I was born, on Maui. I said, "I was born here, and I know the stories my father and mother had told me. I can tell you exactly what immigration they came, and all the different Spanish people that came. And I know there was a lot of boatloads that came, and they all worked here in the sugar plant. I don't think that's fair." "Well," he says, "I'll tell you why. Because they were in the minority." I

says, "Well just exactly what do you mean?" He says, what he meant that that was the least. In other words, the other immigrations, there were more people. The Spanish people didn't come in as many came in, so he's not even gonna mention it.

CUSICK: Oh. There's so many Japanese and Chinese that they got mentioned, but there were only a few Spanish people.

GARCIA: They were in the minority. As far as he was concerned, there wasn't that many. But I can tell you, Brentwood is just loaded from the ones that came over there.

CUSICK: That's right. There are a lot of people that first came to the Bay Area.

GARCIA: Yeah, they came from there. But I thought, well, he's not gonna get away with that. I'm gonna let him know about it. He laughed. I said, "Well the next time, will you mind mentioning them?" So I always tell everybody, if you're gonna go to Hawaii, when you go through there, just listen to see what he does.

CUSICK: He'd better be mentioning the Spanish, definitely. I was gonna move on and ask you about your courtship with your husband. You said you met him at a dance. He came from Brentwood? How old were you when you first met him?

GARCIA: So he told me his name, he told me where he was from. I didn't know until I mentioned to my parents...

CUSICK: Oh, we know his family.

GARCIA: Oh yeah. And then his family told him, "Well, I know who she is. We all came in the same boat." Because he has a brother that was born the day before I was. At the same island. Yeah, both in Hawaii. And there was a lot of women that came pregnant. I always say that I belong to both countries. I was made in one and born in the other.

CUSICK: Because your mother was pregnant when she went to Hawaii?

GARCIA: See, because they left in March. I was born in June.

CUSICK: That's just like your sister-in-law, I think. Her mother was pregnant with her. And can you imagine on the boat? Traveling when you're pregnant?

GARCIA: Oh, my mother. I don't know that she's told that story or not, but I guess she hadn't forgotten til the day she died. Like when they arrived and we had to go through... Oh, I don't know? What would you call it? That they had to get disinfected I guess. They said they took all their clothes, and then they stuck all the children and all the women in one room. And can you imagine from the country that they came from, imagine, they never undress in front of their

own children. And then all of a sudden they turned the water on. They said water was just coming out of all of the walls. And then screaming. I'm surprised that there wasn't some births there! And she says, oh, she'll never forget that. That was terrible. And the water must have been cold.

CUSICK: I'm surprised they didn't have better treatment.

GARCIA: That's the way it was. And somebody else was telling me the other story about them taking your clothes, and I don't know what they did to them. And they had to wait until their clothes dried. I don't know what they did, and then they gave them back to their clothes. They must have disinfected them. Because I remember my mother saying that they picked up I think it was Portuguese. Some island or some place they picked up – must have been Portugal. And somehow some of them had lice. And then he got them all aboard and they all got them. See, they didn't have short hair. They had long hair [].

CUSICK: They must have been brave if they went through all that.

GARCIA: Yeah. Like my dad, he used to have a big oven. I saw that oven when I went to Spain. It was still partway down. I mean, the bricks were still there, but I did see it. And this is the oven that he used to tell me he'd bake bread. And then for instance, everybody bakes a bread at home, and then you bring it to this oven to bake it. It's a big round oven like an igloo, you know?

CUSICK: Yeah. Those big old stone kind.

GARCIA: So when he came, he was on a boat. Naturally, right away they say, "Well, what can you do, what can you do?" And my dad says, well, he'd rather work. So he came as a baker all the way. And my husband's mother tells me that her husband came as a cook. And she says, "He doesn't know how to cook!" I says, "Well what did he do?" "Well," she says, "they made him pick potatoes." But my dad says that they were better off than the rest of them, because like if you came as a cook or a baker, you can bring more stuff into the family. So can you imagine? I know how I felt when I arrived in Spain. I didn't let them know I was coming. I thought I was going to surprised them. The ones in Madrid did, but not in the little town where my mother was born. And it was raining, and I had been told in Madrid that there were taxis. At the train stops, you could pick up a taxi, and all I had to do was give them the address. They'd take me to the house I wanted to visit. No taxi. No cars. Nobody. The station, there was nobody there. I thought, "What in the world am I gonna do carrying these heavy suitcases and raining?"

CUSICK: What did you do?

GARCIA: I walked! Walked. And I saw a garage, so I walked in there. Of course they could see I was a foreigner. Naturally, with slacks on. Can you believe it that everybody in Spain wears slacks... My uncle Tony, he was scaring me. He says, "You could put you in prison over there." But then everybody were. All the kids were wearing slacks over there.

CUSICK: Do they? The women do.

GARCIA: Oh yeah. More so now than when I went. But they did, even in that little town. I was surprised. But anyhow, they knew that I was a foreigner, so I told them who I was, and he happened to know these people. So he grabbed one of my suitcases and I carried the little one, and we walked. District, district. Don't tell me where I was going. I said, "Oh boy." So they took me there. I told them, "I'll never do that again."

CUSICK: Arrange for your transportation.

GARCIA: So what was going through my head at the time, what did my folks feel like when they arrived in the United States? Of course, they had some direction when they arrived, because they didn't know what was going to happen to them, like what happened to my mother. They didn't know what kind of little huts they were gonna be put in or anything. But they were told, "You do this." And then the language. Communication was terrible. At least I could speak Spanish over there, but when they came here, they didn't know a word of English.

CUSICK: And how did they get around like that?

GARCIA: Signing, making noises. Pointing to things.

CUSICK: They weren't the only ones, but just the fact that they had to go through it wherever they went. Communicate somehow...

GARCIA: So my dad made up his mind he was gonna learn English, and he did. He learned it in Hawaii. He could understand.

CUSICK: What did your parents first expect when they came to California? Did they know anything?

GARCIA: When they came to California, it was a little different. And they received more letters from my dad's cousins that lived here. And so he would tell him, well, they're doing this and they're doing that, and they were in this bunch...

CUSICK: So he was a little bit up on it. He had some information about what was going on. That would help a little bit.

GARCIA: Yeah, and then they all went into home. I think they kind of lived together for a while, then each got their own.

CUSICK: Oh, sometimes the families would live together? Like if your dad came over and he had a cousin here, and they'd stay with him for a while.

GARCIA: Until they'd find a place of their own, yeah. Because my dad especially, and my mother too, they were very independent. I mean, they wanted their own place.

CUSICK: Did they make all the family decisions together? Or was it your dad mostly saying, "Okay, we're gonna do this and then we're gonna do that."

GARCIA: Yeah, my dad. Yeah. Definitely. It's not the same here. I mean, here, I say something, he says something.

CUSICK: Oh, you mean you and your husband?

GARCIA: Yeah. It's a different story.

CUSICK: How do you like that? Or how does that affect you when you can look back and see your parents handling their house in a very different way? Like bringing up your children, and then you and your husband and how you relate.

GARCIA: I'll tell you, I don't believe... I do and I don't. Now, let's see. Some of the Equal Rights Amendment. I mean, I think its equal rights for women is a little too much on some of it. But I think that my mother and my father, they really needed some... [laughing]

CUSICK: They need more equal rights?

GARCIA: Really. Those old, old timers. I really think, because boy, the man's word, that was law. Because I know my mother used to rebel, but it didn't...

CUSICK: So how did you feel about that when you'd see this from your parents?

GARCIA: I think we were a little bit afraid of my dad, really. I mean, not that he'd ever – I don't remember my dad ever hitting us.

CUSICK: But he had such a final word on everything?

GARCIA: Yeah, his was the final word. He said, "That's it."

CUSICK: How did you feel about your mother, who had to go under that too? Even though she was an adult of the same standing.

GARCIA: After I grew up, I used to argue with my dad about it. And then he kind of felt like we were always sticking up for her, not for him, you know? But I think he kind of mellowed when he got older. But I've seen worse. I mean, I've seen some Italians []. I think they're even stronger than the Spanish. I mean, that is law!

CUSICK: But you have none of that in your household now then?

GARCIA: No.

CUSICK: Has that ever been a problem?

GARCIA: No.

CUSICK: It's just the way that you and your husband happen to relate together?

GARCIA: Yeah. And with my husband, he says his father was a pussycat. His mother, she'd convince him of things. But my dad was a little bit... And my dad, all he thought about was work. He wanted to get ahead. And then he'd always say, "It's for us."

CUSICK: For my children?

GARCIA: And we'd get tired of that. We'd say, "We don't want it for us! We want it for you. Now quit."

CUSICK: Yeah. Would you expect that you and your brothers and sisters would do the same for their children as your parents did for your generation?

GARCIA: Yes. They are doing it, yes, they are. Because I hear them say, "Well, I'm doing it for my kids." Yeah. And I hear my husband say, "What do you mean for your kids? You better think about yourself." Because maybe, I don't know if it's because we don't have any children or whether, that I can't answer truthfully. Or whether it's because we could see back what's happen and we don't think it's right. Because we also can see, because we're on the outside, we also can see that their children are not appreciating it.

CUSICK: You feel that they're not appreciative as much as you were?

GARCIA: [cross talk] Not as strongly as they are. Yeah.

CUSICK: As the parents were when they were children to your parents. Really? You see that's the difference in the generations now?

GARCIA: Yeah, I can see that. Where we're on the outside and we can see.

CUSICK: Yeah, you have an objective view of it all of course, because you're looking at your nieces and nephews.

GARCIA: Right. And I can see where they think of themselves more, and maybe they don't have the money, but somehow they manage to go here and there and enjoy life, and their parents are working because they feel, well, I want to leave my children something. But their children, they don't want them to do that. They tell them! But I guess like you say, it's been in the head, you can't get out of it. You think you want to leave them something. But you shouldn't feel that way. It's alright to leave them something, but like my brother. He works so hard. He's not really a well person, but he thinks he's never gonna get old or something. I don't know. That's what I keep telling my husband. He says, "Well, later, later, later, later. I got this to do and I got that to do..." There's no end to it.

CUSICK: He's always got something to keep him busy? Well you're the same way. You like to keep busy.

GARCIA: Yeah. But I always say, well, we're doing a lot of painting in our house. When you work and there's no time on weekends, you can infer he's marking down on things. So now he feels like he wants to get all this straightened out, and then he'll give the excuses. "My garden, who's going to take care of the garden? I shouldn't have planted so much." So I says, "That's just an excuse." He hates to drive. Like to go on trips. You know some people like to drive to the mountains? He doesn't like that.

CUSICK: He prefers to stay around the house?

GARCIA: Well, to him would be better to go uptown and maybe play cards. To him that would be it. Or to go to Reno to play cards. To him that's fun.

CUSICK: What did he do before he retired?

GARCIA: He worked for the school.

CUSICK: Oh, that's right. You said that.

GARCIA: Yeah. He worked out in the field. He used to [inspect?] systems and things like that.

CUSICK: And he was doing that for most of the time you were married? Or did he have Josh first?

GARCIA: No. In '61, he got in the school district. Before he used to work for the cannery in the warehouse. And when he was young, when we first married, he used to work in the packing sheds and make boxes and pack the boxes.

CUSICK: And you were working for a little bit after you got married you said?

GARCIA: I worked for three years.

CUSICK: And after that, you weren't working. During your marriage.

GARCIA: I guess in the '50s some time.

CUSICK: How did you feel about the jobs that your husband had?

GARCIA: He never was satisfied.

CUSICK: Really. Why is that?

GARCIA: I don't know, he just...

CUSICK: How did that make you feel too, if he was not happy with his job?

GARCIA: He liked to make boxes because he liked to work on contract. To be his own boss. Because he was raised where they have a lot of packing sheds, and he used to work seasonally. And he was raised in a little town. And it was contract. So if you worked hard, that's the money you make. But then when he went to work for the canneries and you've got a boss who tells you to do this, tells you to do that, he didn't like that. So he'd work for one cannery and then go to another, and of course that was seasonal. So then off-season, in the winter time he'd work making boxes. So that made it kind of hard. Anyway, when we moved over here in '61, then he got into the school. He liked that. I tell him, "You need to pray." 18 years he worked for the school. He just loved it. And they just loved him there too. They gave him about three retirement parties. They didn't want him to retire. But I figure, gee, he had an operation, a brain tumor, in 1954. And he was lucky because there was five operated that week at the [Ritter's Hospital?] in San Francisco, and he's the only one that lived. And his happened to be the night, but they weren't able to take all of it out. They just killed it with radiation. And his problem was that he was going blind. They just gave him about another six months or so. So I figured he was lucky to get out of that. The way the doctor talked to me, he says, "It might come back and it might not. It might take 30 years to come back." So I calculated, "Well, he's getting old now. Why is he working? He should relax." Now he wishes he was working. He says he's working harder. But anyway, I want to get him to the point where we'll take off. We'll maybe visit my aunts in Hayward. I have friends up in Santa Rosa. And come back, ease off, and maybe I can get him to take a trip some time. Because you never know when if that tumor is coming back.

CUSICK: You want to take advantage of your time you have.

GARCIA: Yeah, and maybe, just like me. I've been in the doctor's care for so many years, and now I...

[End of Tape]

[Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape.]

GARCIA: ...Naturally, the nieces'll end up getting it, and as soon as they got it, what would they do with it? Go on a trip! That would be the first thing they'd do. I wouldn't blame them. I wouldn't blame them! The only trip I've ever been able to make him take was to Hawaii, and I forced him to enjoy the trip. Because see, during the war, he was in the Pacific. He says, "Heck, I saw Hawaii from the boat. That was enough for me. I haven't left the island." He didn't care for it. He don't like the beaches. That's why he did retire. I really forced him to retire. He's 65 already. He's worked hard all his life, and it's time. He has...

CUSICK: That award?

GARCIA: Award that he retired, and it had two signatures[?]. And he got two of these before. See, this is for 18 years. For service to youth for working in the kids [].

CUSICK: That's great.

GARCIA: That's why he []. This is on the 15th year, it's the same.

CUSICK: '62 to '84. So from the service to 1984.

GARCIA: In fact, this morning he had to go over there to see how they're doing.

CUSICK: Oh, he can't stay away? Does he go over there and visit a lot then?

GARCIA: Yeah, because he was always out in the field you know. Out with kids and stuff.

CUSICK: How do you think his jobs compared with other men of Spanish descent here in Stockton? Is there any comparison to make at all?

GARCIA: Well, some of the Spanish people that I know of, some of these, after they grow up...

CUSICK: The ones in your school?

GARCIA: There's one of the boys, they were all working in the cannery because they didn't know anything else. They were the farm, you know. In fact, one of the families, the father couldn't make a living at farming, so he went into raising pigs.

CUSICK: This is one of the kids in your class?

GARCIA: Yeah, the girl. That girl, that was her father. So then I went to working in the canneries, and shoot, they stayed til the very end. They made enough, the husbands and the wives, where they'd make a trip. They'd go to Spain, and they'd take all these senior citizens on the buses. One of the younger ones, Johnny's... He works for Richmond Chase[?], I think. He's some big shot in there now. I mean, he runs the department. But his brother's retired. His sister, she moved to Oakland. The Bay Area some place. She used to work, in fact she's still working. She's a supervisor in some department... Something to do with electricity, I don't know. She runs the whole department. And then during the war, a lot of the Spanish people, they went to Los Angeles. They worked in the airplane factories, as riveters... What I mean is, they didn't stand still. Now this girl that I'm talking about, this is the sister to the one that is the big shot here at Richmond Jay's[?], she made them enough money, her and her husband, they have I don't know how many apartments alone. I mean, they're wealthy. What I mean is, they worked. And they save their money. Like this uncle one that I was telling you that was 17 when his father left him. His father went back to Spain and he said he didn't want to go.

CUSICK: Yeah.

GARCIA: He went in partnership with my dad in the beginning. He was working with my dad on the farm. Then after that, he got a farm of his own. He raised two boys. He bought a ranch, and this was sad though at the time. You know, he had 17 acres of cherries, so him and his wife decided they were going to sell the place. They were in the process of getting the money and she got a stroke and died overnight. And then they were waiting for this money to come so they could make a trip to Spain. And he sold his acres for half a million dollars. Then he bought him a... He has the Oldsmobile. They bought some land, they build the building, there in Sunnyvale. I don't know how much he's worth now.

CUSICK: Wow. Do you feel that it's really typical of the Spanish people that have been in this area, or even overall?

GARCIA: Now the ones that I know in Stockton, there's one right here on the Thornton Road that he moved here quite a few years after we did, and he bought there on the Thornton Road. Now he came from Youngstown, Ohio. He settled in Europe when he came. I guess he didn't come in our immigration deal. I guess he must have come on his own. I don't know. Anyway, he'd come over here and how he knew that the Thornton Road was going to be built through, I don't know. But anyhow, he built his home. He still has that old home there, you know where the gun shop is there on Thornton Road?

CUSICK: Just coming up this way, huh?

GARCIA: Uh huh. Well, they built that gun shop. His son has the gun shop. And he used to have, I guess you read in the paper about the Indians with the funny burial grounds?

CUSICK: Yeah.

GARCIA: Okay, you know where the tin is, right in front? There's kind of like a little table there where the Indians are there, kind of watching the place.

CUSICK: Yeah.

GARCIA: That used to be his. He sold that. He was lucky to get rid of that. And then he sold it. I don't know how many times it's been sold. But the burial grounds are behind his place. Well, at one time or another, my dad farmed that piece of land with the burial grounds.

CUSICK: Is that right?

GARCIA: That used to belong to a Spanish person.

CUSICK: When [].

GARCIA: Yeah, way before. And she went to my dad and they worked it. Well, that was a Spanish man. No, she was married to an American guy, that's right. He moved to Spain. He was an engineer and he married her and brought her to the United States. I believe that's right. And he was one of the men that was the engineer when they built the Bay Bridge in San Francisco. I think she's still living. Anyhow, that used to be her property, where the Indian burials back there. And it's interesting, because I read this and I think back when I was a kid and I think about all these things. And anyway, I've gotta tell you something. When my dad and my brother were working over there, they dug up a big rock, and it's an Indian bowl.

CUSICK: The way it's all smoothed out inside?

GARCIA: Inside was not very smooth, but it's old. It's about so big. And it had one of those what do you call the thing?

CUSICK: The little mau, whatever it is.

GARCIA: Yeah. That thing disappeared. My mother had it for quite a while, then my brother took it, and then I used to have a lot of cats, but one day my brother gave it to me. I don't know how many years ago this has been. Maybe ten years ago. He gave it to me and says that the cat will drink water out of it. You know the cat won't drink water only in that bowl? And that bowl came from over there. Now I found out it's over 2500 years old.

CUSICK: Oh my gosh. Oh no!

GARCIA: And so I know it's been in the family at least 30, 40 years.

CUSICK: You still have it, don't you?

GARCIA: Yeah, it's right there. The cat drinks water out of it.

CUSICK: Could be worth a lot.

GARCIA: Isn't that funny though? I said, "Gee, the Indians better not find out about this, come home and pick it up." But what I mean is, now that man's wealthy too. He came over here and he's worth a lot of money.

CUSICK: But it's not just luck. It's a lot of their hard work.

GARCIA: Their hard work. Alright, there's another Spanish man that I know of that lives on... And see, he used to come visit my dad, but I wasn't acquainted with him until we had the Spanish club. He lives on Alpine and El Dorado. The duplex, real nice duplexes across from the gas station. In other words, it would be on the southwest corner. Okay. Him and his wife, of course she's died, but he's got property in Hollister. I don't know how much that man's worth. He's got an only son now that the other son died. Broke the mother's heart and she died. That was sad. But anyhow, here he has only this one son, and he does a lot of farming, raises tomatoes. And the other day, one of my friends moved. Went to his apartment. He lives on one side and they moved over to the other side. And these are Spanish people. And at one time they had all kinds of little homes in town, they sold them. But he's had a hip operation and they put a plastic deal, you know. Bone. So see, he's still smart. He said, "Well, I think the best thing for us to do now we got rid of all our little houses, let's get rid of our home too." They had a little home over on Harrison Street. He says, "The house needs too much repairs. I can't take care of the yard anymore." So he sold it for a lot of money, and he decided, "Well, we're gonna go to those apartments and live there." I thought he'd go nuts over here. He says he loves it. It's a holiday every day watching those cars go by.

CUSICK: Because he's used to these wide open expanses.

GARCIA: And then he walks with a cane. He goes up and down. He makes friends. He knows all the neighborhood already. Goes down there every day, takes a walk, talks to everybody. What I mean is he's old – he's, oh I don't know, close to 70 – but he's still using his head. He figures his wife is a little younger than him. If something happens to me, I don't want her with all these headaches. He's looking ahead. They probably have all their money invested, but at least she won't have that headache. Now he's paying rent. They found a nice little duplex. Beautiful. All repainted. And the other Spanish man that's wealthy put in brand-new rugs for her. And I don't know, they seem to... Everybody that I know, now I didn't realize it that they really...

CUSICK: They just prospered.

GARCIA: Seems like we were the only ones that were really struggling. But then now when my mother and father died, we sold a lot of land for quite a bit of money. Of course the government took most of it. They're still taking it. But at least we don't have to worry where I don't think I'm gonna be on welfare. But when I go to the store, I still watch what's on sale. But I mean, you know, to me it's nothing.

CUSICK: You have these habits that help you get ahead sometimes.

GARCIA: Yeah. But to me it's nothing to, like say I want to go on a trip, I can go. Before I couldn't. I could say, "Well now that I can afford it, I feel like going." But all the ones that I know, it seems to me...

CUSICK: All the Spanish people you know, you mean?

GARCIA: Yeah. And they living in Hayward and the ones I know from Sunnyvale.

CUSICK: And even your relatives too?

GARCIA: Yeah. And I couldn't believe it. I went to Woodland Picnic in Woodland. How many Spanish people there were there! I never even knew there was that live over there. You wouldn't believe it, how many thousands comes to that picnic when they have the picnic.

CUSICK: Oh, it was specifically for Spanish people? Or was this your club?

GARCIA: No. That's their club. They have a Spanish club. There's Spanish clubs all over! I didn't know it.

CUSICK: Oh. Are you interested now in checking out...

GARCIA: Yeah. We go to their picnics and we have fun. But I mean, they don't talk in Spanish, they talk in English. But what I mean is it's just that they want to keep...

CUSICK: The heritage going.

GARCIA: Yeah, the heritage going. But I mean it's fun to go and watch what they're doing, and they have fun. Then they bring entertainment.

CUSICK: Is it typical Spanish entertainment?

GARCIA: Yeah.

CUSICK: Like what?

GARCIA: I like the old-fashioned. Like maybe here we would call it what you call the western folk dancing. That's the type that I like, because that's what I saw when I was a kid. The Spanish.

But over there, they have more this flamenco and this Jose Greco and all it is is stomping. Some people like it. See, I'm a Spanish. I can't keep up with that. Have you ever gone to this spring festival we had here?

CUSICK: No. Is that the one that has all the different ethnic groups?

GARCIA: You shouldn't miss it next year. It's really a treat.

CUSICK: Where is that, Micke Grove?

GARCIA: It's at Micke's Grove.

CUSICK: And that's how the Spanish club got started too. The one in Stockton.

GARCIA: But you just sit there and you're amazed how many ethnic groups there are there. And there's now one fight.

CUSICK: Between all of them? That's great. So you all fraternize over food?

GARCIA: I'm telling you, everybody sits there on the lawn. They have entertainment, and then each ethnic group, they provide entertainment. And they entertain you all day long for two days. And you see all these different dances.

CUSICK: Oh great. That'd be so interesting. You'd learn so much!

GARCIA: It's a beautiful park. And you just look around and it's something to think about. I look and I say, "How can there be wars? How can there be so much disagreement?" Look at here!

CUSICK: Yeah, they join themselves all together.

GARCIA: Yeah. Nobody bumps anybody and everybody's very gracious. And you see, like our booth, [we meet to decide what the sign should say?]. [] black. I don't know. I won't say color because it's not supposed to be, but I don't see nothing wrong with it. They see something wrong in it, okay. I'm not saying anything disrespectful when they say, but the blacks and maybe you see a Mexican and you see a Filipino. And they're all mixed, you know? Everybody goes and tries each other's food.

CUSICK: Isn't that great?

GARCIA: The best chicken that I had, barbecued chicken over there was from a black booth. Right from here. And my husband is that type where he makes friends.

CUSICK: That's good. I wanted to ask you, can you think of a night when you were young, like say when you were first married.

GARCIA: It was rough.

CUSICK: What kind of hopes and expectations did you have?

GARCIA: The children. I didn't have any. That was a big disappointment.

CUSICK: For both you and your husband?

GARCIA: Yes.

CUSICK: So then how did your expectations change?

GARCIA: Well, I found out that I couldn't have any, so we'll just have to get used to the idea that we weren't gonna have any. And I wanted to adopt one of them. I really wanted to, so I gave that up. Because I had been raised with a large family, and I kind of felt like... But then, when I think back, I think what my mother told me. They seem like they turn to me for advice on this or that.

CUSICK: Your brothers and sisters you mean?

GARCIA: Yeah, they ask me. I still feel like that.

CUSICK: You're still the one they look up to and respect?

GARCIA: As long as I'm still needed. And sometimes I think maybe I baby my husband too much. He depends on me too much. I always keep telling, because my mother for instance. That's going back to the old Equal Rights Amendment. That's why I say that in some ways it's good and in some ways it isn't. I think it's kind of gotten out of hand. I believe a woman... Not exactly equal to men. When they talk about Equal Rights Amendment and you go to work, and if that box is too heavy, you are expected to lift it. Because after all, you're getting the wages. If you want the wages a man gets, you're supposed to do a man's job. Which I don't think that's what they meant when they made the Equal Rights Amendment, do you?

CUSICK: How do you think they meant it?

GARCIA: Well, I think what they were trying to do when they started is to... This is my way of thinking of it. Being that there were so many foreigners in this country, and they had all these ideas like my dad. Like the Italian people were noted for that. And not only Italian, but the others, like the Japanese, I understand that the woman walks behind. I don't know if it's true or not. So when he steps behind the man. That I couldn't see. I think maybe that's where the women started rebelling. Like for instance, in the East. When I'm talking about an Indian, I'm talking about like the Arabs and that. Like these women who have to wear a veil. I don't see no sense in that. Maybe they were trying to equalize it a little bit so that women wouldn't be so

discriminated against, where they couldn't open their mouths. When you open your mouth, to shut up, you know. I'm putting it kind of roughly.

CUSICK: Oh yeah, I know exactly what you mean.

GARCIA: But I don't think they expected to be that when we go to work, the men say, "Now you want to be equal to me? Okay, you do it." I don't think they meant that. Because after all, a woman will never be as strong as a man. That's impossible.

CUSICK: Well that's true, you're right. Then there's nothing the matter with that.

GARCIA: They're losing a lot of the femininity. Being feminine. Of course, like the South. You see these stories from the South, the Civil War and all that. That was a little bit too much. I think the women were kind of bogging it a little bit there, a little bit too much. They just wanted to be delicate and wanted men to wait on them. But that doesn't hurt. For a man to open the car and to treat you like a lady. But I think this Equal Rights Amendment or these equal rights vote are getting to a point where I think the men are not going to respect the women. They're gonna say, "Go ahead." You're not gonna be treated like a lady, let's put that. That's what I'm afraid of. I hate to see the day where you're not gonna be treated like a lady, let's put it that way.

CUSICK: Sure, you may be able to do just as much as the man can, except in cases where you're not physically able, because you can't lift as much because you're not strong. But say you can do, as far as thinking goes, all of them can do as well as a man.

GARCIA: And I don't think a man likes it for you to know more than he does.

CUSICK: See, now that's chauvinism.

GARCIA: You might know a little bit more, but don't let him know about it.

CUSICK: That's the way you feel?

GARCIA: Yeah. Let him think he's still a little bit the boss. Because once you make him feel like you don't need him anymore, what the heck? Right?

CUSICK: I see what you're saying.

GARCIA: Yeah. And that's what all of us do. Because for instance, these women want to climb the telephone pole and do that kind of manual labor. I can't see that.

CUSICK: Why is that? You feel like a woman shouldn't have to do that?

GARCIA: No. I'm sure that there must be a lot of men that need that job. Why's she doing it? There's other jobs she could do.

CUSICK: And you feel like, if anybody's going to do that job, it should be a man?

GARCIA: It should be a man. Like for instance, in construction, I understand there's some women going into it. Why? I think it's gotten to a point where they want to prove that they can do it. They want to show him.

CUSICK: I've heard that too, yeah.

GARCIA: They want to prove that they can do it. But what are they accomplishing by it?

CUSICK: It's individual, of course. For a lot of different reasons.

GARCIA: But I think that when we were put on this Earth, a man and a woman, the man's supposed to take care of the woman. I don't believe that a woman shouldn't work, no. I think, like today, they have to. Otherwise they can't buy a home. No way.

CUSICK: Today, yes.

GARCIA: That a man is going to buy a home and a woman's not going to help him, I can see that. Now why would a woman want to go to war? Why would you want to go to the front? Would you want to go to the front? I'd want to stay away from the front.

CUSICK: You think a man wants to go?

GARCIA: No, no, not even a man.

CUSICK: See? Nobody wants to go. Let's forget about that.

GARCIA: That's silly.

CUSICK: No, but you just don't see that as anything a woman might want to do.

GARCIA: No. Now why are they rebelling because they're not gonna let the women register? Does that make sense?

CUSICK: I guess some people see it as another way discriminating against women just because they are women.

GARCIA: Well, that's what I mean. It's gotten out of hand. Every little thing they do now, they call discrimination.

CUSICK: Yeah. I think a lot of different groups do that. Anything that's a minority. Women, some ethnic group, anything that's a minority is going to pick up on a little thing like that where they can claim, "Hey, you're discriminating."

GARCIA: But some of the foreigners, let's put it this way, that they feel like the government owes them a living. When they don't realize, who's the government? They'd stop and think. Who is the government? It's us. So we're paying for it. Oh, I'm telling you, I've seen young kids in line for these stamps. Food stamps. I've seen in grocery stores, and I tell you, I have to almost bite my tongue not to talk. Because I wasn't brought up that way. My dad, oh, if my dad could see that, he wouldn't believe it! That they can take the food stamps.

CUSICK: He'd be horrified?

GARCIA: Well last time they brought us some folk, my husband and I. This guy was Oriental. I don't know where he was from, but anyhow, he was from that part of the world. And I don't know, Arabic, but they all kind of look the same. He had on his basket a radio and a transmit... I don't know, it was wide as the basket, a beautiful thing. I think it had everything on it. He had, let's say junk food. They just shouldn't even be allowed to buy luxuries that was loaded in that basket. Well dressed, better than we were. He was ahead of us. I almost fainted when I saw him hand over stamps. I thought, "What in the world is that man doing with stamps?" And then you know what they do, the trip they have? I found this from the teller. Like they're not supposed to buy cigarettes. There's something else they can't buy with their stamps.

CUSICK: Cigarettes and alcohol.

GARCIA: And alcohol, probably. Anyhow, they give you enough stamps so they can get change, and they don't give them stamps, they give them money. They turn around and buy cigarettes with the money. When they left, I just stood there talking to myself and my husband. He had to talk.

CUSICK: Did your husband feel the same way as you do?

GARCIA: Yeah. So the poor girl at the counter. "Don't say anything," she told my husband. "I feel the same way. Sometimes," she says, "boy, I could just walk out of the store. I just can't stand it. The people that come over here with stamps... But you know what, we've been told by the bosses to cool it."

CUSICK: Really? They might lose their business that way.

GARCIA: Sure. They lose their business, and they've been told, cool it. And this girl was saying how mad she gets when the mother will send her child over there with, say, a big stamp. I don't know what their largest denomination is, to buy something. Maybe a candy bar or something. And then get this change to take home. And naturally, what do you think they're going to with that change? Go buy booze or cigarettes. So they send their children.

CUSICK: Yeah. That's really sad.

GARCIA: And that's why our country's going to the dogs. Let's put it that way.

CUSICK: Because it's turned into a charity?

GARCIA: I think so. I think that they should make them work for it. I can see senior citizens, yeah. That I can see. We're taking care of the senior citizens, and I'm very disappointed in the convalescent hospitals because they're not doing more for the convalescent hospitals. I think that's terrible. I think it's a disgrace to this country. I wish I could write to the president about it.

CUSICK: Well then do it.

GARCIA: Well, okay, the founders of this nation are in the convalescent hospital. If they're not dying off now, they're getting ready to die. There's very few left. But the ones that are in convalescent hospital, I'll bet you that 90% of them that are in there are people that have built this nation. And they're not treated right. They don't have enough inspections in a convalescent hospital. They don't have enough help in there to take care of them. They should do more for them. After all, they're the ones that built the nation. And a lot of them, I don't say all of them, but most of them have been wiped out from sickness, and they end up in the convalescent hospital, and the convalescent hospital ends up taking them. And they end up with nothing. And a lot of them are there on charity that the government is helping them now is because they lost everything. Everybody's going to get sooner or later, and it all goes back to that. You take my mother. When my dad got sick and he got cancer and he couldn't stop bleeding, he was here in the hospital. So they sent him to San Francisco to see if they could do anything for him. I got in an ambulance. I didn't even have a cold toothbrush or a sweater. I just jumped in the ambulance and left. There was something wrong, the communications, and I thought he was going to bleed to death in the waiting room before they took him to a room. The doctor told me what my dad had was going to cost a lot of money. He said we'd better put him in the – this was done at the University of California – put him, well it isn't a charity ward. Where they don't pay.

CUSICK: Yeah, that special ward.

GARCIA: Well, people that go over there and they don't have any money, and they don't have to pay the full amount. They just pay according to whatever they earn. My dad heard that.

CUSICK: What'd he say?

GARCIA: As long as he had any money, until it was all gone, he wouldn't take no charity. And he didn't. And in a very short time, he spent \$10,000. And he died. The next year, my mother had cancer. We had to take her to the same hospital. She took chemotherapy over there, and she

ended up for three years in the convalescent hospital. They took all her money. We ran out of money. We knew the way we were taught, so let's go to the house. She had built this house. So we sold the house. We thought, well, when that's gone, we start selling the rush. That's it. That's the way they wanted it. It was theirs. That's their money. That's what it was for. So she died. And she practically used all the money from the house too in the convalescent hospital. So just think what they do to you when you get in there. That's what I mean. All your money goes for that. That's how much it costs. That's why I say, a lot of it, when they have all these platforms when they're running for president, they should concentrate on taking care of the people. Give them good insurance or something that don't cost so much money. Because we're all gonna, sooner or later, die and get sick. Make it easy for them. But I've gone into so many convalescent hospitals. All I did was fight while I was there.

CUSICK: With who?

GARCIA: With the nurses.

CUSICK: Oh, I see.

GARCIA: So I decided one day I was gonna be able to watch her and make sure my mother was taken care of right.

CUSICK: Yeah. I've heard from other people too.

GARCIA: But it's because they don't have the help. They don't get paid enough. I know a lot of the works that were working in some of the convalescent hospitals, they're working for Dameron now. Why should they stay over there and have to work? It's terrible the way they have to work for these patients. It's hard to take a patient that's in bed, and they get tired. They can't be cheerful all the time. You know, a lot of these hospitals are run by doctors too.

CUSICK: They're a business interest.

GARCIA: They're owned by doctors. But I hope this isn't all going to be published, because I don't want you in jail.

CUSICK: Don't even worry. I have just a few more questions I want to go over with you. I was wondering, when you look back on your life, what is the best age to be?

GARCIA: The best age to be? Well, you can't judge by me, because I don't remember being a teenager. Our life was, well not exactly slavery, but close to it.

CUSICK: Working hard you mean?

GARCIA: Working hard. I never got married til I was 23.

CUSICK: Were you living at home until you got married?

GARCIA: Mmhhh. I was living at home. After I got married, all I did was work. And then after that, it just seemed like it was work at home. I never went on a vacation. I never went on a vacation all the time we were married until we went to this trip to Hawaii. And the only time that I left home was when I went to San Diego. When my husband was in the service. He got discharged. I'd never even seen that part of the country.

CUSICK: What do you think would make any certain period in your life the best when you're looking back?

GARCIA: Well, I guess when I was first married. There was a lot of hardships, but after that, it's all sickness. If it wasn't me, it was my husband. Then it was my mother. And growing up, all I remember is living in our one-house bedroom when I was real little. She was always some kind of operation. I'm surprised she lived to be 85.

CUSICK: That's a nice advanced age.

GARCIA: When we first moved to Hayward, they took him to Hollister and he had a stomach operation. I guess they heard about this doctor. I don't know how they ever found out all these things, but evidently he must have been a good doctor. Because when he got sick here or they tried to put him in the hospital, he went to the doctor and the doctor could fix him. Because my dad would never go to the doctor. He never went to the doctor. The doctor took an X-ray and he says, "When did you take part of your stomach out?" My dad said, "What?" "Yeah," he says, "you've only got" I don't know what part they told him he had. "Well I didn't know that." He didn't know! And I guess when he was about 23 or something like that he had an operation. See in Spain, he used to suffer all the time from his stomach. He would always get a pain, and when he'd get this pain, remember the old-time chairs that had the little knob on the top? Those kitchen chairs? Well, I guess they still have them today.

CUSICK: Up on the back?

GARCIA: Yeah, on the back, they had a little knob. They'd stick that little knob in your system and it seemed like it would kind of relieve the pain. So I guess it was that he had ulcers. So I guess they were benign, because he lived all these years. So they probably saw, maybe he did have cancer. We don't know. And they took part of that stomach out. And I often remember how my dad used to eat so often. He'd eat a little bit, and then a little bit later, and maybe he'd come in for a snack. And I thought the reason he does it is because they do it in Spain, because in Spain, I don't know how many times they eat. You get up in the morning and they have a cup of coffee, and I think they have a continental breakfast, which is just a desert, and then around 9 o'clock they have their breakfast, and then at noon they eat, and then about 4 o'clock they

have a snack, and then 9 o'clock at night they eat again. They're always eating. So I assumed that that's what it was, but evidently he could just eat so much.

CUSICK: He'd get filled up.

GARCIA: Yeah. See, he didn't know it. And the doctor that I went to today says, "You know, boy that doctor, you must have had a real good doctor, because that was a very new operation in those days. I just can't believe what I'm looking at! Good operation."

CUSICK: He wasn't aware that it was done?

GARCIA: They operated on him, but the language barrier. Evidently they didn't explain to him what they did. All he knew, he felt better later, and that was all.

CUSICK: That was all he was concerned about.

GARCIA: Yeah. And then a number of his shoes, [] back problems. [] The operation didn't turn out [] taken out.

CUSICK: Is there a certain time period in a person's lifetime that you think is the worst time? The worst age to be?

GARCIA: Well, I know what it would be today. I think it would be between the time your mother didn't let you go on when you wanted to go out, you know what I mean, that in between growing up.

CUSICK: And that's what makes it hard?

GARCIA: That's why I had all []. But to me now I think would be growing old. I think more about it than I did before as of now. Yeah.

CUSICK: Because it's not a good age to be?

GARCIA: Because I, maybe I shouldn't read the paper.

CUSICK: Oh. Depressing?

GARCIA: You know, it's depressing to think... The atomic bomb to me worries me. I think it's a terrible age to live in. But you know, at any time. And now they talk about these nuclear reactors and all that, and one of the lessons []. This one that we have up in the hills some place, where it would include Lodi. In fact it would be the center of Stockton. It's pretty bad if that thing leaked.

CUSICK: Radiation and all that?

GARCIA: That radiation.

CUSICK: That's scary. But that worries you then?

GARCIA: That worried me. The radiation part worries me. After living through the time with the atomic bomb. That period, and living through World War II and seeing what happened. I've lived through two war periods, and then we had the Korean War and all that trouble. And see, I had a nephew that went in. We had the Vietnam War and there's one in that, and I had cousins in world war and my husband was in the Second World War. I think that was a hard period when he went to the service. That was kind of hard for me.

CUSICK: Because you were here alone, weren't you?

GARCIA: I had one of my friends come over. She came and stayed. That helped. I was working then. It is bad. I think the times is bad. That bomb, that worries me.

CUSICK: Yeah, with all this technology that's advancing still. Are there any events in Stockton specifically that have really changed your life?

GARCIA: One thing that I never expected was to have to suffer so much as I did and take care of my mother's estate. That was the thing. And that has been going on since 1976. Before that, I had 3 years of taking care of my mother as conservator, when my mother was in the hospital. And until last year where my father was in the hospital. Now I hope it's all settled again. The state decided that the way the auditors had fixed things wasn't the way they wanted. Because the auditors had fixed it where it would be on an installment payment. Well the federal government decided, no, they wanted the capital gains all at one time. They give you five years. And the state, now they tell us from '76...

[End of Tape]