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Interview with Marie Norquest Sleeth (oral histories transcriptions)

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Creator

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

This interview was done with Carrol Norquest, Jr. (Kelly) and Marie Sleeth, the eldest son and the eldest daughter of the Norquest family. The group doing the interview included Sandra Salinas, Amanda de la Fuente, Eduardo Robles, and Miguel Gutierrez of the UTPA Anthropology class, *Discovering the RGV*. This interview segment was conducted as an indoor interview with Marie Sleeth at first, and then later moved onto a tour with Carrol Norquest, Jr. of the family's property on Sugar and Chapin Rd. in Edinburg, Texas. Themes that were focused on throughout the interview were archaeological, biological and geological matters of the property, but there were oral histories, and historical matters of the family brought to life in this wonderful interview.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I know Marie has, and I know my daughter Caroline [Twist] over in the big house she and her husband have been (wind) and then my wife has been contacted. So, anyways. [Pause] Well we'll uh, we'll just go on, go on over there.

Amanda De La Fuente: [distantly heard] It's kind of windy.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: She can tell you whatever she wants

Miguel Gutierrez: (laughter) Thank you sir.

Sandra Salinas: (laughter) Sounds great, that's what we're here for.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea well, originally when they was talking about this she said, no I don't remember much when I was a kid. Or when I was- and no I don't remember much back in those days. And uh I said well, after a few little questions and uh, you might start remembering more then you want.

Sandra Salinas: (giggles)

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So anyways after she's thought about it for about three or four months, why I- when she came down for a visit I said "Do you- would you like to do it?" She says, "Yea, I'll do it!"

Sandra Salinas: Great!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So, everybody gets just a little bit nervous you know, what in the world, what in the world, do I know? Or what in the world- uh of uh- of importance would I remember? "I wouldn't know what to say," they say. So.

Sandra Salinas: It's funny how things like this bring up such memories right?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea. This little house right here, just while we are kind of waiting for her, just to- for information -of course this was a farm. This house here was originally put in for ah- After World War II for a uh- German family, a refugee family to come and live. And they uh, they were here, uh- let's see that was right after the- after World War II, in the late 40's and uh, my father sponsored this family. They were refugees all over Europe you know, and they were ethnic Germans, they had been driven out of Poland by the communists and-

Sandra Salinas: (sympathetic) Oh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and they were in refugee camps over there. So anyway this family, the Templin family uh, my father sponsored them and the oldest son was going to work here on the- on the farm, which he did. So my dad built the little house here for them to live in and then uh they lived in that ah for many, ah- many years. Until, there were five kids, they all grew up and uh- the oldest one became a teacher of English in the high school eventually, she was my age. And then the younger one was a mathematics tea- one of the others was a mathematics teacher

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

ah- in the school district for many years until he retired, then ah another one ah fought in Vietnam and he's totally disabled from that. And uh, so forth anyway they had a history. So- Anyway. Then later on after they moved out, why my wife and I, re- uh re- uh, [pause] fixed it - fixed it up again, we moved in with our two little daughters. (Laughter) and then we built the house next door; well later on we rented it out and so forth, now we are just using it as a guest house, we got a lot of relatives and they come and visit and all. Let me go see if she's ready-
[long pause]

Marie Sleeth: [distant laughter]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: This is- this is Marie.

Sandra Salinas: Pleasure to meet you. Pleasure, My name is Sandra; this is Amanda de la Fuente, Miguel Gutierrez, Eduardo Robles, and Eloise -Eloise I forgot your last name.

Eduardo Robles: Hi, pleasure.

Marie Sleeth: Eloise

Eloise Montemayor: Montemayor.

Sandra Salinas: Montemayor! There we go! (Laughter)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Russ was out here about an hour ago I guess, I gave him a bunch of arrowheads that we've collected here. And he's taking them over there so you guys will be looking at that.

Sandra Salinas: Oh that's great! That's great, maybe we can help identify them for you!

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [Faintly heard] she's got some...she had some of the other relics
[walking indoors]

Sandra Salinas: Ohhh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: so she's... now.

Marie Sleeth: These are Aunt Virginia's bowls.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh they're Virginia's bowls. Oh ok I was wondering.

Marie Sleeth: That [inaudible] belongs here though.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Very good, well, I'll just, I'll just leave them with you Marie.

Marie Sleeth: Ok, do you want to- I got a bunch of chairs. The uhm-

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Nice to meet you all.

Group: You to, sir.

Sandra Salinas: They are going to set up the uhm, the camera.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [in background] Marie...

Marie Sleeth: Oh a camera! O my goodness, I didn't put on-! What Kelly?-

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [faintly heard] if you need anything give me a call.

Marie Sleeth: Ok. That's my chair over there and it needs to be turned so that I can see you all.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. Ok so we will be sitting in this area?

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: Yea, I was thinking that. I don't- I don't- want to be sitting on one of these chairs...

Sandra Salinas: That's great, that's great we can do that. Uhm, in the meantime while they are setting up the uh, tripod what we'll go ahead and do is just go ahead and fill out some consent forms that we need to fill out...

Marie Sleeth: Ok.

Sandra Salinas: ...for um the course. Let me just um. [Pause]

Marie Sleeth: [In background] turn that chair around. Is that your first one?

Sandra Salinas: Yes!

Marie Sleeth: So this is practice!

Sandra Salinas: No, we're just the best group! (Laughter) We joke with the others all the time!
(Laughter) Ok and Miguel I gave you your paper, right?

Miguel Gutierrez: Uh, yeah; it's right here.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. Eddie, you got yours. Mandy did I give you yours?

Mandy de la Fuente: Yes.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. I also printed out a copy of the questions,.

Marie Sleeth: Oh ok.

Sandra Salinas: Um if we don't get to all of them that's fine. We just wanted to let you know more or less what we will be asking.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: I promise not to talk too much (light laughter). I'd like to turn this chair.

Sandra Salinas: Oh no. No we like talking!

Marie Sleeth: [speaking to Miguel] See, put it to where its back is to the window.

Miguel Gutierrez: Oh ok.

Marie Sleeth: that way, see why I am asking you to do it! It's heavy. (Laughter)

Miguel Gutierrez: (laughter) Like this?

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, or just push it back a little bit, that way we can, there and that way we can utilize the couch, and there's my glasses, and those chairs can be brought up.

[background chatter as everybody settles down]

Sandra Salinas: Uhm so- can you show me real quick. He's going to take care of that and Mandy and I will be interviewing and writing notes. Ok. Let's see here, these are the two...

Amanda De La Fuente: How old were you when that family came into this house?

Marie Sleeth: I was ah probably...probably nine , ten years old.

Amanda De La Fuente: And did they have children also around your age?

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, um, actually yeah I guess they did but I thought I was older than that when they came. Maybe, maybe, I don't have the dates right in my head about when they came. So anyway they had three boys and three little boys, and they had ah Doris; she was 'bout 16. She graduated from high school and ah went to Pan-Am, became a teacher, and I think that she recently retired from teaching [**Sandra Salinas:** Wow.] here in Edinburg at that high school level I believe. And um...Manfred, he was older than that; he was 'bout, 20, or 21 but he didn't –

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

when he came – he stayed here but then he got a job and went an’ got his [chuckling] own place to live in (laughing) and I don’t blame him. And I think that, basically, Doris did that too so it was just the three boys. [Pauses, pointing at camera] Is that thing running?

Eduardo Robles: [playful tone] Yes it is.

Marie Sleeth: Oh Glory (laughs)!

Sandra Salinas: We just gotta...let’s get these consent forms taken care of and, um, ok, so this is our CHAPS it’s - we’re with the CHAPS program, um it’s Community Histo – History Archeology Project with Schools that’s what this CHAPS course is under, is considered to be under, and this is just a consent form that we need to, procedures we need to follow (laughs). If you want to look over that you’re more than welcome to and we also, I brought two. One is going to be your copy and then one will be our copy to turn in to Dr. Skowronek, and um it has the information as far as who to contact in case you have any questions. Um once we finish here we will be taking all the information down to the campus and we will get – make a copy, and make a copy of the transcription. Once we have a transcription done, completed, I’m sorry, we’ll send you a copy so that way you can look over it in case we make any mistakes um and, and, [Marie Sleeth: (Chuckling) Yeah.] and this way, also, in case you want to add any more information you’re more than welcome to so we can try to be as precise in our documentation as possible. So, if you want to –

Marie Sleeth: [Looking at Miguel Gutierrez] Everybody’s got a tape recorder going.

Sandra Salinas: (Laughing) Well we have, we wanna make sure we get all the information

[Marie Sleeth: All of it.] in case something, one of them goes off we got backup (laughs some more).

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: That's fine, that's fine I don't care; I just didn't know I was gonna be so important.

Sandra Salinas: Well yes you are (laughs). Here's the consent form if you would like to just read over that really quickly and sign for me at the back of the um...page and everything.

Miguel Gutierrez: [looking around] this is a nice, cozy home.

Sandra Salinas: (smiling) yes it is.

Marie Sleeth: What?

Miguel Gutierrez: I like that this is a nice, cozy home.

Marie Sleeth: [nods head] it's got two...two bedrooms ...I sign everywhere? Or –

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, It's going to be right in here [points to paper, then converses with **[Marie Sleeth:** interviewer section] ...right here, printed name and signature and then if you would please allow us your address so we can send you the transcription and we can get that going.

Marie Sleeth: This house has been rented it just isn't being rented right now, but it rented ever since [emphasizing] THEY LEFT here to, a Pan-Am student or two, you know they go... [voice trails off] Now my signature. I feel like I'm stuttering this morning.

Sandra Salinas: If I start stuttering I'm sorry I'm a little nervous myself so... (Laughs)

[background chatter]

Marie Sleeth: And the date today is the –

Sandra Salinas: The 21st, October 21st.

Marie Sleeth: I am just constantly amazed at how fast time is going.

Sandra Salinas: [Nodding head] Yeah. Almost a new year.

Marie Sleeth: [skims through paper] Want my e-mail address?

Eloise Montemayor: You can move it closer to her if you want.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: Ok. I so n' so so n' so, do I have to fill all that in too?

Sandra Salinas: Sorry?

Marie Sleeth: All this? Or not?

Sandra Salinas: No that's fine just the signature right there.

Marie Sleeth: Right ok...It's duplicating what I just wrote down.

Sandra Salinas: Exactly. Don't worry about that, I'll take care of that.

Marie Sleeth: Ok.

Sandra Salinas: And then, this should be the CHAPS one lemme just make sure I don't, I'm not missing anything [shuffles papers] ok and then the school one, the school [clears throat] consent form is this one. And this is basically the same thing, however, we just need to have that done this is interviewer and interviewee. You don't have to fill this information out, um just the interviewee signature and we'll put the address later [**Marie Sleeth** mumbles something] that's fine [Sandra Salinas clears throat]. I'm sorry [inaudible] waiting one minute. Just wanna make sure we don't skip anything. Lemme just double-check on these...ok and this is just basically saying that, um, the same thing that you're allowing us to [points to paper] yep right here [**Marie Sleeth** writes something] I shoulda put X's on those I'm sorry (chuckles).

Marie Sleeth: I've never been an [emphasizing] INTERVIEWEE before.

Sandra Salinas: (Laughs) It's always fun because um a lot of wonderful memories come out when you start... [Voice trails off]

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, did we decide it's the 21st today?

Sandra Salinas: [nodding head] the 21st yes ma 'am.

Marie Sleeth: Ok. It's Friday isn't it?

Sandra Salinas: Yes [**Marie Sleeth** chuckles].T.G. –

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: When you're retired, time, I – I don't even wear a watch anymore.

Sandra Salinas: (Sighs) The luxury (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: Ok

Sandra Salinas: Alright, wonderful, thank you so much lemme give you yours [hands paper to

Marie Sleeth] your consent form, your copies, and like I said in case you have any questions these are the people that you would need to contact and um we will also have copies of your, of the transcription for you. So I'm just going, where do you want me to put these? You want me to put these down here? [**Marie Sleeth** points to table] Ok great thank you, and this is for you, for you to keep [hands pamphlet to **Marie Sleeth**], that's just a little bit more about the CHAPS program.

Marie Sleeth: I would love to be down here and taking this with you, this course, I love history

[**Sandra Salinas:** Oh really?] Yeah, things like that, when I first, Kelly first started talking about it, my question was: Can I take the course too? [**Sandra Salinas** chuckles] Cuz it just sounds so interesting! People that, you know, are interested in history are, I think they're special people (chuckles) Ok what do we need to know?

Sandra Salinas: Alright well let's go ahead and get started, [turns to Mandy De La Fuente] can you hear her ok? Can you hear her ok? It's on right? Alright everything should be on and ready to go. Ok [**Marie Sleeth:** My mouth is already dry.] (laughs) Oh ah like I said this is, these are just basically, basic guidelines, for us to kinda go by, we can just have a conversation, just go and if we don't get to all of these that's fine don't worry about it we're ok we just wanna know as much as we can ok? So let's go and get started with the first question. How do you remember the land before it was tilled? What types of plants and animals were on this land that you can recall?

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: Well first of all I don't remember it not being tilled, because it was already, I came along in 1938, and the family had been here since 1921 – 22 somewhere in there. So, by the time I came along it was pretty much established. But it was just this, the 40 acres here. Now then I, the other, there's 10 acres right over there [points out the window behind the house]. And daddy bought that, he bought the whole 20 acres back to where the, you know, the housing development [**Sandra Salinas:** Ok] the housing project and he sold half of it to the city to build that so. I think, I think this particular land was already tilled, now the third peach, piece, which is adjacent to the other side over there, that has been in, I don't think it's ever been tilled. It's still in its kinda raw state. Maybe there's somebody doing something with it now but not that I know of. What kinda animals were there? We had coyotes [**Sandra Salinas:** Wow] running around and ah roadrunners they're gone the coyotes they lived over by the [chuckling] railroad tracks somewhere, we used to hear them howling at night, after, I mean, this was like, 20 years ago, you can still hear 'em, cuz that's when I left here in '95, so but you can still hear them at night howling off in the distance. Um, I remember, the great big, fat, red ants [**Sandra Salinas:** Ugh, those hurt.] (laughs) Yes, they were huge! And it just seemed like they had trails going all over the place. Horny toads, or horned toads, whatever, were plentiful and those are, they, you just don't ever see those anymore, but they would be out and about. We um didn't own it but we played a lot in the brush, where the holding pond is now? [**Sandra Salinas:** Oh ok yeah.] We had, we called it Sherwood Forest [Sandra Salinas laughs] and that was natural. And so, a lotta stuff I guess I saw was out, out there, and a variety of snakes. I never saw a rattlesnake though. Doodlebugs! Where have the doodlebugs gone? Do you know what a doodlebug is? [**Sandra Salinas:** No, actually I was about to ask what a doodlebug is.] A doodlebug is a, is a bug, little animal, little tiny animal, and he ah buries himself, in the sand, in the dirt. As he does it he flips

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

it out like this and he ends up with a little, round volcano-type thing and he's down in the middle of that, he's buried in the sand he flipped all his (laughing) his, there'd be these pot marks all over, you know, where the doodlebugs were. And if you could get down there very carefully you can catch one of them you know [giggles playfully]. So.

Sandra Salinas: We'll have to keep an eye out for those (laughs).

Marie Sleeth: [High-pitched voice] Red-winged blackbirds! We used to have lots of Red-winged blackbirds, and I understand they got blown off by Beulah, the hurricane Beulah or somethin'. But you just don't see 'em anymore now you see 'em around in the hill country side but not down here. There used to be plenty of them. Let's see what else.

Sandra Salinas: Did you have any domesticated animals?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, yes.

Sandra Salinas: Like which, what type of animals did you guys have?

Marie Sleeth: Well, we had chickens for food and eggs. And we had pigs for food and more pigs (laughs). We, they weren't necessarily raised to sell, but I'm sure that daddy did sell 'em but every year they'd butcher a pig out on, there was an old barn over there [points] Ah, I'm sure Kelly or somebody can show you where all that is but you know, they had the thing with the hook, where'd they hook the pig on and roll it up and then skin it and all that and the same thing with the um a young, a teenage beef, same thing, you know they'd it wasn't veal that they were getting but it was just one, a cow or something that wasn't very old, you know. So, versus a steer or whatever... [mumbles in very low voice] We had those and we had Guinea hens, we had um, bandies, I had a pair of bandies, chickens and...Ralph and Alice (chuckles). I had forgotten about that. Ralph was very [emphasizing] feisty! Liked to [emphasizing] ATTACK little kids (chuckles). [**Sandra Salinas:** Awww...] (Miguel Gutierrez laughs).

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Sandra Salinas: (Laughing) Who needed a guard dog?

Marie Sleeth: But they were just pets, you know, we didn't do anything with them. They...um, I named them Ralph and Alice after the Burrfords, Ralph Burrford was my band director. (Sandra Salinas laughs) Anyway, let's see what else did we have? Uh, rabbits, I remember having rabbits, cuz Mark, Mark got his finger caught in the wire in the cage and mamma found him and he was just giggling away and he thought that the rabbit was licking his finger and it was chewing on it! It chewed off the end of his finger! Yeah, so (Sandra Salinas laughs) anyway and other animals, I'm trying to think I just can't...cows we had, you know, cows, cows. We had a horse for a while then I outgrew it, I outgrew [inaudible] the horse or I went away, daddy returned him he, he kept him, the horse, in the pasture so that I could ride the horse and, um, he borrowed the horse, he borrowed it so for food and water and taking care of the horse well I got to ride. I raised calves when I was growing up, six of 'em I think in all. Daddy would take me to the sale yard and he'd buy me a calf and I would raise it 'till it got big and then back to the sale yard it went. It's that money, I saved all that money, and that's what I used my first year of college my calf money, as I call it. [**Sandra Salinas:** Wise, I should've raised some calves then (laughs)] But I, I would take 'em out along the road it was Johnson grass all over down the road and these calves, they'd eat. You'd put a rope around their neck and they'd follow you anywhere, you know, so I'd go stake it out down by the road with a bucket of water every morning before I went to school. In the evening, I'd go get it and it would've eaten all the grass in the area where it was.

Sandra Salinas: And where there many families around that...? [**Marie Sleeth** shakes head] so you could just leave your animals out there and...wow. Nice.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: I'm trying to think of what, well our closest neighbor was my uncle and aunt, they lived a quarter of a mile right over there [points] right by where the ball park is, [inaudible] they had an acre there and a house, it's gone now. But there was, we had the Sterlins they lived, everybody lived, way, way, my best friend lived about a mile and a half north on Monte Cristo road so on Saturdays I'd walk down there and see her and she'd walk down and spend the day, you know, stuff like that. But everybody was pretty, pretty far away, now the Pauls lived the next, after Kelly's house, the next, there's two little houses there and there were two Paul families that lived there and across from them were the Esquivels. Carlos Esquivel was a big football player, the star of the Edinburg Bobcats. And uh there was, oh the, Heffners, Heffners lived...oh somewhere [pointing] right over there I can't remember exactly, I mean, everything's changed so much but they, they lived there and she was a twirler and she taught me to twirl a baton [**Sandra Salinas:** It's fun] yeah and uh...I'm trying to think...There just weren't that many people that lived around. Everybody, you know, a farmhouse here and a farmhouse there. But these over here weren't farming they were closer to town. So.

Sandra Salinas: What type of plants or vegetation was around?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, lots of mesquite. (Chuckling) A lotta mesquite trees, [**Sandra Salinas:** mesquite] shrub, I don't, I – It was just mesquite. Well, there was **weesatch** [lower tone] I guess you're supposed to call it **weesatche**? [**Sandra Salinas:** (laughing) tomato tomato.] Yeh, and they always were so pretty when they bloomed. What other kind of plants? Mesquite, mesquite, and more mesquite! [Raises voice] PIGWEEDS! [**Sandra Salinas:** Pigweeds] Yeah when the cows got in the pigweeds then their milk didn't taste good at all (chuckles). [Sandra Salinas laughs] It wasn't very...eh, along the fence lines, I don't know what it was, but we called it Bill's Hair, 'cause it was silky, blond, kinda like the corn silk, you know, in a corncob? It was

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

kinda like that and Bill was my cousin [Sandra Salinas laughs] (laughs) So that's why we called it Bill's hair 'cause he had blond hair. Oh golly what else might there have been? Ah, I don't recall any ebony out here but I do know that ebony is made in the Valley but I don't remember any ebony. Hmm, what other kinds of trees would there have been besides mesquite?

Sandra Salinas: Any flowers? Any pretty flowers that maybe you, your family has planted? Or um, trees? Any kind of vegetation?

Marie Sleeth: Oh stuff that we had planted? Well, uh there's Athol, there's one Athol tree right out there that um Grandpa Norquest, he was gonna put a fence along there, and he got these, you know, fence posts somewhere, and planted them and they all grew into great big trees! [Sandra Salinas laughs] Athol trees, Salt Cedar, is what they're called. But then here again I don't know if they're native in this area but that he planted them (chuckles) in the process of building a fence. Um, but...My parents never were decorative people. You know, they didn't have pretty vases, and statuettes and stuff sitting around in the living room, they just weren't that kind of people so consequently, um well, we did have a yard and daddy kept it mowed [voice lowers, hard to understand] he didn't plant anything. I attempted to plant Zinnias and things and they never grew. I have tried a half dozen times to plant Bluebonnets and they've never come up [Sandra Salinas chuckles] [Miguel Gutierrez chuckles] [laughing] So anyway...

Sandra: What kinda crops did your family plant?

Marie: Well daddy was primarily a cotton farmer so everything was under, in cotton and when he did lease, er, he owned land around, not just here but in various spots, and he farmed oh several hundred acres in the area but summer time was um was cotton everything was in cotton and daddy would hire the, the [emphasizing tone] ILLEGAL ALIENS! I hate to call 'em that,

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

they're wetbacks, that's what they are, and if you look up the word "wetback" in the dictionary you will say, see, exactly what a wetback is and it's this area, the Lower Rio Grande Valley river or Rio Grande, they'd swim across and then of course were called wetbacks but that's what they were I – I mean, I'm not being derogatory, it's a specific thing [**Sandra Salinas**: uhum and were...] you know just like refrigerators, chair, you know, [Sandra Salinas laughs] and it meant something and it wasn't derogatory and daddy, did you read daddy's book?

Sandra: Yes, yes we've um, that's one of our um readings that req – not a required reading, but a suggested reading a suggested reading and [**Marie Sleeth**: Well, good.] And um did these workers live on the premises or did you guys have like a certain house built?

Marie: No we didn't have a house built, they lived in camps. [**Sandra Salinas**: Camps, ok] See, they were, they were here for a specific reason and then they went back, they were true migrants. They would come for the work and then go home. So none of them, we never, we never established any permanent place. There was a canal west of here and they camped along the banks of the canal.

Sandra: (Laughing) I was about to ask where more or less the camps were set up, so they were along the canal [**Marie**: Yeah] West, you said right?

Marie: Yeah, west of here, it was a quarter of a mile? Quarter of a mile west of here. So that's where they, they lived um and they'd bring their families over, you know, and the little kids would run around but it was all over there. I ran a cotton-picking crew of 40 men.

Sandra: Wow, that's a large crew!

Marie: [nodding head] And uh my sister ran one and I think one of my brothers did and then what daddy would do is go around and collect the full trailers of cotton and haul 'em off to the

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

gin and bring us an empty one (chuckles) [**Sandra Salinas** laughs] You're doing a great job here's another one! Keep 'er going!] Yeah we would kinda compete to see who could, I, on [proudly] MY crew I had Felix he could pick a bail of cotton a day [**Sandra Salinas**: wow] A bail was 1500 pounds and daddy paid 'em by the pound. I mean, he was quite... [low voice, cannot hear] ...about the work they did. So we would go out there and with our scale, our tripod and scale and, you know, I'd have a book to keep tally and when they'd get their sack full we'd come in and we'd weigh it and then I'd mark it down in the book how many then at the end we would saddle up, they'd call it settling up [chuckles] and daddy and whomever the crew leader was me or my sister or whoever, would sit with him in a, we had, in fact we still have it, one of those two-sider swings, you know, a bench and a bench goes like this, and we'd sit in there, daddy and I on one side, and the picker across from me and daddy would handle a box of cash, and he would ask me how much you know, 'cause I had to figure up how much he owed, he owed 'em and so there were times when I had to settle a dispute, or daddy had to, because I would get in arguments with 'em [imitating dad] no! You didn't pick that much! [chuckles] [back to **Marie**] But yeah, anyway, I was responsible for that, it was forty men.

Sandra: That's a, that's quite a large crew, that's a great job.

Marie: Yeh, and that, that, [pointing] mine was over there across from where Pan-Am is right now. That's the field, we always picked there, on Sugar Road and...crops we were talking about crops, that's cotton. Daddy raised winter vegetables in the winter time, tomatoes, corn, carrots, I remember primarily carrots and corn, no, carrots and tomatoes.

Sandra: And you had mentioned earlier that you really wouldn't, I'm sorry, that your father really wouldn't sell the vegetables that you all grew but um? Did he, when he *did* sell them where did he go to sell the vegetables?

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie: It was, actually, he would sell the vegetables [**Sandra Salinas:** he would sell them, ok] yeah, he would sell them I remember one time he had green beans and he brought home a big sack and that's all we had to eat for supper! (chuckles) Green beans... This is it or you don't eat! (laughs) Anyway there would be a crew that would come and pick 'em for the packing sheds. They would send out a crew and it was all hand-picked, you know, none of this machine, machinery stuff and the cotton was hand-picked, I'm assuming y'all realize that, hand-picked. And the packing sheds would send out crews to pick it and harvest it.

Sandra Salinas: So you would sell vegetables on a regular basis or was it more just when you guys had leftovers, besides the crops that you needed to sustain?

Marie Sleeth: No we never did, like, have a stand and sell vegetables, we always sold it to the packing sheds yeah, rather than – and of course we'd eat 'em too, you know, so maybe that's why I'm such a phobic about fresh vegetables [**Sandra Salinas laughs**] I don't like canned vegetables, only fresh ones.

Sandra Salinas: Is there a big difference in the taste, that you remember, between the canned vegetables and the fresh vegetables?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, big difference. I, to this day, buy fresh green beans and fix 'em. Fresh corn. I don't buy canned vegetables.

Sandra Salinas: And at home do you grow these vegetables? [**Marie Sleeth:** Where I live?] Do you have like your little garden?

Marie Sleeth: I would like to, and I have in the past but where I am right now I can't have a garden because I live with my son and his family. I've been living there for two years. The last

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

time I had a garden it was, I had all kinds of things in it. Corn, squash, lots of tomatoes, popping peppers, what I , what I kinda did was a pico de gallo garden (chuckles) [Sandra Salinas laughs] I had onions and garlic and, oh, but the cilantro never did last very long. It's a plant that matures very, very quickly and then just goes to seed and then...so...yeah, my pico de gallo vegetable garden. I just made some last night, as a matter of fact. I love it [**Sandra Salinas**: it's delicious] Yes.

Sandra Salinas: I guess we can go ahead and go on into the archeology section as far as structures that were built that were, around, original structures and then we can go through them as time has changed, structures that have been taken down or like this house that was created for certain [**Marie Sleeth**: Does an outhouse count?] Yes! Actually I was about to ask about that (laughs) Yes, [**Marie Sleeth**: Oh, I remember it well.] what property do you guys remember that you had outhouses? Where on the property were they located?

Marie Sleeth: Oh there was one just south there of the back door of the big house, there was just one there and then a later one was built and it's that tin shed that's right out here...[inaudible]

[**Sandra Salinas**: Oh that's what, ok] ...used. Um, that's the only outhouse that I know of. Might be interesting to get a [words cut off] to see what might be down there (laughs) Never knew what us kids were gonna throw in there! I remember in the hou – at home when I was very small and there was a fireplace on the north side of the house and it isn't there anymore. But, you know, houses...this is a pier and beam house, you know, it's not, it doesn't have a slab and for some reason there was a, an opening, just a tiny opening, between two of the pieces of floor, flooring and I remember that I had a bunch of pennies and I dropped all of my pennies down here under this log. [Sandra Salinas laughs] (laughing) I guess they're still under the house! [**Sandra Salinas**: could be right!] Anyway, the big house was there, it is in an altered state from when it

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

was originally built. It faced Sugar Road and had a front, a porch, little railing you know on, in , it faced Sugar Road. Now I can remember that house being remodeled, so, I , but I was little, I can remember standing on the porch, that railing, and, you know, that railing was up to here on me and I was looking over the top of it so I had to have been just a little bitty kid. And then the stairs inside were turned the opposite direction, daddy turned the stairway around, it was over here and he turned it and put it over here so that was changed and then some of the rooms were changed and so on. But then, the big house. Then we had the barn, and evidently it was a red barn. I remember the barn. I remember the pigs hanging there because they were being slaughtered. I remember...hay. Not necessarily big bails but I remember we had a haystack, we had several haystacks. [**Sandra Salinas:** Was it fun to play in?] (chuckles) yeah, yeah and when it'd rain and rain and rain and the inside would get all wet and it didn't dry up and then it started to stink [chuckles] Rotting hay, you know, inside anyway [**Sandra Salinas:** that's a scent you won't forget right? (laughs)] But that was the food for the cows. We had a big lot over there where the cattle were, that was fenced. And this area back over here was pasture, it wasn't tilled I mean it was cleared. But, it wasn't tilled, it was pastureland. And then to the south of the house all along there was orchard. Navel oranges. That was so nice go up there and get an orange anytime you want to. We had lots of big, ugly black birds around. And, uh, I would take my daddy's .22 out and shoot 'em, while they were flying.

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) Wow! That's some skill!

Marie Sleeth: And, and, I, over the years, I thought "that just can't be right!" Here I was just 13, 14 years old, how could I shoot a black bird [chuckling] while it was flying? And then daddy would say something like, "You 'member when u used to shoot black birds outta the air?" he'd say (laughs) So I knew I wasn't, so, anyway and, I, um, as my brothers turned 13 they got a .22. I

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

had two older brothers, daddy bought them each a .22 for their birthday so, naturally, when I turned 13, I thought I was gonna get one, oh, I'm a girl. I could out-shoot the boys but I'm a girl, so I didn't get one. That's why I didn't get to go to A&M. 'Cause I was a girl.

Amanda De La Fuente: Was it too far? 'Cause they didn't want you to go, too far from home?

Marie Sleeth: No, I was a girl. It was strictly boys then, [**Amanda De La Fuente:** That would go] So yeah, I was gonna be, I was an agriculture major in college for two years. But I couldn't pass chemistry so I had to give that up. So I went back to music. [**Sandra Salinas:** Music!] Yes, we're a musical family.

Sandra Salinas: And what kind of music, um, did the family play? Do you remember playing when you were younger? How did the music change through time?

Marie Sleeth: Well, we always played classical stuff, or hymns, or something of that nature, we didn't do this boo-biddi-boo-biddi-boo stuff [Sandra Salinas laughs] none of that. But, we, um, primarily stringed instruments. Um, daddy decided he wanted his own string orchestra (chuckles) But he would really be proud at what, what has turned out, from him wanting his string orchestra. There were [could not understand clearly-Angrie?] played the piano. Now Rick, my brother Rick, he is two years older than me, never did learn a string instrument. But all the rest of us did, I played string base. And that's how I got my scholarships to college, playing string base.

[**Sandra Salinas** to **Miguel Gutierrez:** Do you have your allergy medicine? Wanna take that allergy pill?] [**Miguel:** Uh, I'm fine, it's not, it's not bad.] [**Sandra:** Are you sure? Back to

Marie Sleeth: I'm sorry] So, that's ok, so but, as, as we grew up and got married and had kids all of our kids played instruments too so now they're all, you know, in their 20's, 30's, and 40's but when we get together it's quite a huge little orchestra. So...I started piano lessons when I was in

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

the 1st grade and I went on to major in pipe organ in college. OK! I've been rambling! I don't even know if that was on subject! [**Sandra Salinas** (laughing): That's ok! No, no, no that's great, we love to learn, we love to learn about traditions, and just, um, how people were able to grow up. You know, it's funny 'cause they, they had, they joke around how kids can't go outside anymore 'cause they don't have internet outside (laughing) or, you know] Yeah! They're so afraid that, the parents, I mean somebody's gonna, um, rob them of their kid! You know, haul the kid off, there's so many stories like that.

Sandra Salinas: Yeah, and bef – and the past, as you're mentioning, I mean, you could leave your, your, cattle outside and you were fine.

Marie Sleeth: We never locked the house except when we went on vacation. Otherwise, it was open all the time.

Sandra Salinas: Man, to be in those days right? (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: We'd go on vacation and daddy, he'd make a big, to do about it getting the key and there it's all locked up now we can go. [Sandra Salinas and Miguel Gutierrez laugh]

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) And just the one key.

Marie Sleeth: (laughing) Yeh, the one key. Now I dunno if the back door was locked or not! But I know the front one ...(chuckles) But I'm sure it was.

Sandra Salinas: And where would you guys go for vacation? Do you remember?

Marie Sleeth: Well, we would take long trips. My daddy was a historical bug like Kelly

[**Sandra Salinas:** Like us! (laughs)] And, we went to, um, a bunch of the battle grounds of the Civil War. We went to Vicksburg and Gettysburg, and Shiloh. Shiloh I remember was the most peaceful place and the deadliest battle of the Civil War was there. And Vicksburg, we went to

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Vicksburg. We wouldn't take these vacations every year [**Sandra Salinas**: Ok.] because summer time was for working. That's when the main cash crops would come in. But we would go after cotton season. And we, um, went one time to see my, this was in the late 50's, um, Kelly was in Tacoma, Washington, in the army and Rick was in Boise, Idaho in the air force, and so we took a trip. And, um, visited relatives along the way. Daddy's family is all from Kansas and Nebraska. So, we went up there and cut across to go see the boys. But, um, a lotta relatives, he still knew 'em, you know, he was still young at the time, you know he wasn't, he was born in [19] '01 but he moved down here in his early 20's when his parents came down, he came here. So he still knew his aunts and uncles and stuff. This was like, thirty years later. And they were still alive. So we got to visit a lot of our relatives. Now what was the question? [**Sandra Salinas** laughs] Oh! Oh, vacations. Um, we, um, I was trying to think, no, we didn't take many vacations, it was always history um, [mumbles something in a very low voice] Anyway.

Sandra Salinas: Well, um, let's, let's come back this way to, um, so we spoke about the outhouses but what about the trash? How did that get taken care of? [**Marie Sleeth**: We burned it, we burned it.] Burned it? And was there a certain designated area that you burned the trash? [**Marie Sleeth**: The incinerator] Incinerator. And where was the incinerator located?

Marie Sleeth: It was, um, just off the southwest corner of the house. The kitchen was right there. [inaudible] And there's a cistern there that daddy built. And before that it was a well, we had a well. And the well was salty water, so we couldn't drink it. But we could do everything else in it. And it was located, oh, maybe 50, less than 50 feet, 25 feet east of the front door of the house. And I remember momma took a picture of Bill and me. And I was sitting on the house and he was standing, on the pump house, and he was standing there. And I remember arguing with my mother that I was taller than him! (chuckles) See here's proof! See the picture! (laughs) Look!

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

He's this tall! I'm this tall! (laughs) 'But Marie...', you know, she never could, I was just being silly you know, I didn't know the difference. But, I was trying to convince her. So... [**Sandra Salinas**: That's always fun. (Laughs)] The barn was, um, over there. The barn, was, yeah, just right...

Sandra Salinas: Maybe if, if you, um, would like to show us around later...

Marie Sleeth: Yeah! Well that would be kinda fun, fine, yeah. Kelly had indicated you probably wanted, didn't wanna do that. He was I think [**Sandra Salinas**: Oh, that's always fun for us.] he was wanting to do the tour but you can still do the tour with him [**Sandra Salinas**: Exactly!] that's fine. 'Cause he, remember, he's four years older than me. So he remembers a lot more. But the barn was right over there and I can show you where, and then that was eventually torn down, and, um, that tin structure was built. That was the barn [**Sandra Salinas**: Oh ok.] and machine shop and all that sorta stuff. Tractors were kept in there, and daddy's tools, and then we had a, stuff was stored up above, on the other side of it. The pigs were on one side of the barn and they... anyway, yeah I can show it to you if you wanna see it. [Sandra Salinas laughs]

Sandra Salinas: And what type of tools, um, besides the tractors, did you guys have on the premises?

Marie Sleeth: Well, um, besides tractors, we had tractors. Three or four of 'em. The tools for, um, I don't remember them, you know, the, I'm sure they had the mules and the plows and stuff when this land was first tilled, 'cause that's all they had back then. Chapin Road was made by my grandfather. [**Sandra Salinas**: Really?] It only went so far and, uh, he cleared it and everything all the way down here.

Sandra Salinas: Great, great, I actually live on Chapin Road so thank you! (laughs)

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: Well, it was only to the house here that he cleared it, did it, then it was a dirt road and, um, muddy, a lot of muddy. It kinda had ditches on the side. But then finally, um, somebody started maintaining it, the county probably, and they, first, they gravel, it was gravel they used first I believe, and then eventually caliche. They used caliche there. And, um, yeh, I can remember when it got paved it wasn't that long ago.

Sandra Salinas: It really wasn't that long ago. (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: And they just, they didn't do anything, they just laid down the asphalt. It has stood up, all these years, you know, for just that, I guess it had a good gravel and caliche base underneath it so that...because I, I, they don't repair it. Or maybe the asphalt back then is better than it is now, or something, you know, 'cause you get pot holes all the time.

Sandra Salinas: And what type of, um, transportation, vehicles did you guys have?

Marie Sleeth: We had a...I'm trying to remember the first one it wasn't a Model T, but it was something of that nature. You know, it was a, an old car at the time. Like, during World War II everything was so scarce you couldn't buy new cars or anything but uh... Daddy, see there were seven of us kids, I don't know if you knew that or not. And daddy would, um...back then the cars had arm rests that weren't on the door. I mean, it's, you got in through the door up here and the back seat. Daddy would put up, it was a padded board across, between those arm rests. That's where the little kids sat and the bigger ones sat on the seat. And then we eventually got a, after the war, daddy was going to get a new car, but momma asked for a Hammond organ; she got the ...[something too low to hear] instead of the car. But we did get a pick-up. We got a pick-up and then eventually, and daddy here he's, he was very inventive and he would do things, and I'm still like that. I would do things with stuff you would never expect it to be done with. He would re-purpose things, in other words. In the, um, he decided with a pick-up that he needed, um, some

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

places for the wetbacks to sit. So he installed these seats along the sides. So then, we quite often went places in that pick-up. And daddy put a, on one of the trips that we took, he put a, he made a cover, for it. See, all these things back then, were, I mean, you made what you needed. You couldn't go buy a pick-up cover, you know, you can now. But it was high, and, he put a, um, made a big trunk, big box, that fit on the back bumper, and it was attached, to the, to the car. To the pick-up, and that was where all our clothes went. We each had an army suitcase. Do you remember the little, metal army suitcases? [Sandra Salinas laughs] And you couldn't take it unless it would fit in that suitcase. [**Sandra Salinas** (laughing): Roll it up really tight right!] Yeah! And a doll wouldn't fit. So, um anyway, then two drawers on top that had lids that you would open and that's where the, um, hang-up clothes or the, you know, their clothes, or clothes that needed to stay nice. You know, church clothes, and so on, were in those two drawers, and then seven suitcases. And then, he, he fixed it so it would open up, it closed up like this, and it would open...and he had legs, he'd put it down and that was the table, and that's where momma would um, it was kinda like a chuck wagon you know, she would fix meals there when we were on the road. We rarely stopped at a restaurant it was usually a hamburger, if we did stop, and, um, so that was our, then us, us kids would all sit in the back and there was always a blanket or something on the floor board, that uh, you know, if the kids were little they could sleep. Or one of 'em would be up in front with mommy and daddy and he took the window out, you know, so that we could [**Sandra Salinas**: cross] cross back and forth. (chuckles) So that was, I guess, our first camper, (laughs) or the second one! (laughs) The second one was a cotton trailer. And I think it was a four-wheeler, too. A four-wheeled cotton trailer that we pulled behind the pick-up and, it had, um, here again, the same suitcase kind of arrangement, in fact [mumbles] but we slept inside, and it, it had low sides, they were only like four feet. Or the plywood is four feet,

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

right, four-by-eight, so it was only four feet and then he made a lid to go on it. Now this is the first camping trailer, ever, ever, and the lid went on it. Then at night, when we camped, he would raise that and prop it up and had, um, lona cloth, [**Sandra Salinas**: Oh, ok] do you know what, do you know what lonas are?

Sandra Salinas: It's...well I'm thinking, what I'm thinking is, it's very, kinda thin, but no? Oh, then it's not the right one. I don't know (laughs).

Marie Sleeth: No, this is a canvas. [**Sandra Salinas**: Oh, canvas.] It's canvas and fairly waterproof. [**Sandra Salinas**: Lona cloth] Mmmhumm. And he, in fact it may have been lonas, that he used, you know, to hook up there so that we had the privacy, you know, and we would sleep inside there. Yeah, lonas, um, were used in irrigating fields. What does lona mean in English? You don't know what it is? It's a Spanish word. None of you know what...I think it means "dam". Because they would block off the, they would, um, before they irrigated and where they planted their crops and everything, they would have dirt canals, they would build that go through the plow and make a canal and they would, um, have it in, O' three or four, across the land, and then they would get a, what they call, a head of water, and irrigate and it would come down the canal and be piped in or somehow, I don't remember how the water got from the canal. But then it would flow down these, these, uh, things and there would be crops on either side of 'em. And, so they would dig holes so that the, you know, make holes in the banks, of the little canals so that they would flood, flood the, the land and water the tomatoes, or orchard, or whatever it is, then when that part was done then they would put a lona down and cover up, they'd use dirt as a base but they put the canvas across and it would block the water so that it would go to another section and then down that canal. So it was a, you know, a systematic thing, but they'd use lonas to control the water and where it went. I don't know if that makes sense or

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

not [**Sandra Salinas**: Absolutely, absolutely.] But that's the way we irrigated, now they have the great, big sprinklers and so on. I don't know if they still do flood irrigation here?

Sandra Salinas: Yes they do, some places do. And the canal, is it the canal where the, um, wetbacks lived? [**Marie Sleeth**: I think it was from this canal over there.] The one on this side.

Marie Sleeth: Yeah its, um, it's a half mile down there. How could we get the water to the land? I don't remember. Y'all gonna have to excuse me. [**Sandra Salinas**: That's fine] I have to go in there for a minute I, you know, [**Sandra Salinas**: The modern outhouse? (laughs)] The modern outhouse, yeah. (chuckles) Yeh, you don't need to move that, I'll work my way around it.

[mumbling amongst Amanda De La Fuente, Sandra Salinas, and Miguel Gutierrez while Marie Sleeth uses the restroom]

Marie Sleeth: This was the little house, and that was the big house. (chuckles) Oh by the way this has become known as the Norquest quarters. [**Sandra Salinas**: Norquest quarters? (laughs)] The homestead here, yeah. That's because Neil has his house over there and Kelly has his house right over there, and there was a period of about three years where Scottie and I lived in a, a fifth wheel over here, we had sold our house, 'cause we were getting ready to retire from school, uh, teaching, both of us were teachers, we were getting ready to retire and so we had a chance to sell the house which was in town, you know, the big two, three-bedroom, four-bedroom, whatever it was and we bought a fifth wheel and brought it out here and lived down here for three years and that's always kinda fun. So there were a bunch of us here, [inaudible] and then Dixie was living with momma in the big house. Yeah, she moved in with her. Um, I was just thinking, you know, inside the house, I did a lot of the cooking, and we used a kerosene stove. That had a little canal along, to let the kerosene go into the flames, and it would light the flames, and it was open, open, open canal it wasn't a pipe that took the kerosene it was a, you could see it flowing along there.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

(chuckles) And I think about that and what a fire hazard that was! And my mother let me cook on that stove?! It was, it's frightening now, when you think about it! I would, uh, fix whole meals, I was ten, eleven years, twelve years old then daddy and momma would go to town and they'd do the grocery shopping, with everybody home, so then I would I usually fix the chicken.

[**Sandra Salinas:** Chicken.] A chicken dinner with mashed potatoes. [**Sandra Salinas:** Mmmmmmm.] So that when they got home dinner was ready.

Sandra Salinas: And what kind of gender roles, um, were given to each member of the, um, of the family? As far as, um, what kind of roles did the women have to do, and the men have to do? And then, what did, in these roles were your sister, it was, Dixie was your sister, right? [**Marie Sleeth:** Dixie's my sister.] Were the chores split between you guys, um, both of you? Or?...

Marie Sleeth: Um, ok, well there were, I've got another sister too so there were three of us. There were two boys, three girls, and two boys. And Kelly and Ricky basically helped daddy. They drove the tractors and, um, did the planting and stuff. And so they were always helping, helping daddy. I...well, yeah, I got the privilege of learning how to cook and my sisters, sisters didn't. And they are very poor cooks. There's my cooking tools I travel with. (chuckles) [**Sandra Salinas** chuckles] Right over there! I've got all my knives and my whisks, and my things, it's 'cause, 'cause I love to cook. [**Sandra Salinas:** we've got to get a shot of that in a little bit] (chuckles) traveling...and I do, I keep it packed all the time. So when I'm gonna go somewhere, I just put, that's part of my luggage that I carry.

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) Does it fit in the army suitcase?

Marie Sleeth: Well, yeah, no! (laughs)

Sandra Salinas: (laughing) It's got its own suitcase!

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: (chuckles) So...anyway what was I, what was I talking about? You asked about the...[**Sandra Salinas:** the roles] The roles in the family, yeah. Um, we all took turns inside the house doing stuff. The chores were, um, not divided according to gender. The roles in the family were never, the boys didn't do one thing and the girls, I even drove a tractor. If I was needed I was out driving a tractor too. So it was whoever was around to do the job that needed to be done, so it was never...But my sisters ended up more dainty than I ever was. I was out busy hauling calves up and down the road and they were in the house playing with dolls. You know (laughs) And, um, I remember, um every, every evening somebody was responsible for cleaning up the kitchen. And, uh, I just hated it. I, to this day, hate cleaning up kitchens. So I made a deal with my mother that I would do all the family ironing if I didn't have to clean the kitchen. [**Sandra Salinas** laughs] And I just really enjoyed the ironing, daddy had bought her, 'cause there were seven kids, and back then everything had to be ironed, they didn't have blue jeans, they had khakis. They wore khakis all the time. And, um, shirts needed to be ironed, starched, depressed, too, so daddy bought one of these kind of a commercial irons, with the roller on it, and you'd stick in the button, and you'd push...[**Sandra Salinas:** Uh huh, uh huh] press the foot and it comes up and irons the whole sleeve at the same time, you know things like that. So I would, um, I could do seventeen shirts in an hour with that thing.

Sandra Salinas: I wonder if those are still around...(laughs)

Marie Sleeth: I think they have 'em at the dry cleaning places don't they?

Sandra Salinas: I needa go get me one of those (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: They were just great so...That thing isn't running is it? [**Eduardo Robles:** Yes, it is.] Oh, 'cause I don't see a red light. [**Eduardo Robles:** It's running, it's running.] (laughs) I thought that maybe it had gone off [makes screeching noise as if to imitate camera failing]

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

[Sandra Salinas laughs] So I did the ironing but I also got to listen to all those shows on the radio. Like the *Lone Ranger*, *Green Hornet*, they were always on when I was doing the ironing. So it was, you know, kinda fun. Um, the two little boys, um, I'm sure they had chores of some sort. But they were little, they weren't, we're, the, we're spaced every two years. There were two years between each one of us, except between Dixie and Mark, there were three years. So the little boys, you know, they, they got, they got dressed up like dolls. [Sandra Salinas laughs] They had neat clothes and stuff. They were Ingrid and Dixie's entertainment, those two little boys. And they'd dress 'em up and make 'em so pretty. (chuckles) [Sandra Salinas laughs] (laughing) Anyway, and, um, but I'm sure they'd, well Mark and Neil, after, um, they... In 1962 daddy had a stroke and so, he could not do, you know, run the farm. He was only 60 years old, 61 years old. And so it fell on the two, teenage, my two little brothers, who were teenagers then, to do all the tractoring and everything like that, and by that time Kelly had, had come home from the army and he lived with them and took care of 'em until mom and daddy [chuckles] and he had a job working for the, it was called the T.E.C. at the time. I think it was T.E.C. The Texas Employment Commission. He had, he had a good job there. And then Ingrid and Dixie went off and went to college and never came back. Dixie eventually did but Ingrid's still in Colorado. Ricky stayed in Boise, Idaho. Mark, now was in Colorado Springs. Then there's the four of us that live in Texas. [**Sandra Salinas**: 'cause it's better in Texas. (Laughs)] Oh yes! Oh, oh I hear those people cuss Texas, "Texas is full of allergies!" "Texas is full of this! Full of that!" "The worst drivers are in Texas! I don't wanna go over there!" (laughs) Shoot, the only accident I've ever had I had in Colorado, and that's 'cause somebody hit me! (chuckles) But gender roles... I don't know exactly what Dixie ever did, she was sickly! [**Sandra Salinas** laughs] Dixie was "sickly" [emphasizing sickly]! So I don't think she ever had any responsibilities. She used to

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

when she was little get, great, huge boils! But anyway, Momma kinda babied her. Ingrid, would a, upon occasion, would run a cotton-picking crew for a couple-a years, I had one all the time.

Sandra Salinas: Were there any interesting items that your-yourself or maybe some of the other, um, Norquest members have, have found on the property? Um, I know that, um, Mr. Norquest had mentioned earlier about some arro....um, projectile points [**Marie Sleeth:** Arrowheads] yeh, arrowheads.

Marie Sleeth: Well, he was out in the fields a lot, I never found anything of any consequence...that I can remember. Kelly was digging in the soil [**Sandra Salinas** laughs] irrigating, or tractoring, or hoeing, or somethin' back then everything was done by hand. [**Sandra Salinas:** It sure was.] No, I never found anything. No treasures.

Sandra Salinas: And how did the Norquest family manage to acquire so much land in the region? Um, how much did, if, if you don't mind us asking, how much did it cost back then?

Marie Sleeth: Oh, it was cheap. Land was cheap. Um, daddy would...being a cash crop, as you would say it, for cotton and it came in once a year, and then the livelihood basically depended on, on that, it, uh, he, some years, he would, um, not make very much money than other years. I remember the year that he, we had more than the salary, or, I mean, money that the, excuse me, that the president of the United States made! [**Sandra Salinas:** Wow!] So it was, you know, and it was during times like that that daddy would then, he would buy some more land, or he would, uh, buy a new tractor or a new...something, you know, that he needed and....So it was times of plenty and times of famine like I said. Green beans were for supper, if you, (chuckles) didn't eat 'em you didn't eat anything! (laughs) So, anyway, that's how he would do it, he, he bought, he bought, um, the land, uh he had that whole sixty acres where that Southwest Texas High School

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

is, and the Lutheran Church. We owned all that land at one time. And then we owned the land across the road. And...some, um, where I used to go to do my waiting was across from Pan-Am, and he owned that. And that was like where those...no...no, I thought it was south, uh, north of Schunior. 'Cause I can remember him hauling, the cotton gin was in town but it was on Schunior. Where Schunior met the railroad tracks. That's where the cotton gin was. And I can remember him, I was running the crew here and he would come get my trailer and go over to Schunior, go down Sugar, Schunior, and then take it on over, So I don't know. It has to be where those apartments and everything are. They're along Schunior. And, um, then he, I don't know whether anybody's told you or not, daddy was a planner. He was always thinking ahead. In fact, daddy got the first orchestra going in the Valley here in Edinburg and I played my Senior year in the first orchestra and there were about twelve of us. And, um, anyway, daddy, that whole 60 acres or, however big that is, where Pan-American sits right now. Daddy used to farm that land. And he also, with his own money, purchased an option to buy. He never did exercise the option to buy it. But he was holding it so nobody else could get it. Until Pan-Am was ready to build there. And then finally they did! So that's where, that one, I think it was 60 acres...

Sandra Salinas: And were there any other structures around, um, around here, around the premises that, besides, that were either, shifted or moved or torn down so that Pan-Am can be built, [**Marie Sleeth:** No.] or the following [**Marie Sleeth:** No.] It was mainly these, these structures that are here and the rest were just fields.

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, they were kinda like outlying (chuckles) acreages, you know, but everything was done by hand.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Sandra Salinas: And I had a question, the, um, the camps of the wetbacks, was that part of you all's land as well or was that like comm-communal land? Where the camps were...

Marie Sleeth: It was, uh, right away water, right away, um, because the...daddy didn't own it, no.

Sandra Salinas: Ok. So it might've been communal land?

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, it was public. [**Sandra Salinas:** public.] Because it was right, the right of way, water rights and all that they have to have right of ways to put in canals, drainage ditches...[inaudible] and that's what it was it was the right of way.

Sandra Salinas: So we had, um, pastures, fields, they were being, um, where agriculture area and then we have the orchards there the canal was back here coming this way, right?

Marie Sleeth: I don't remember, you'll have to ask Kelly.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, and then you had your, uh, the, um, Norquest quarters (laughs) the quarters! And then down that way was the canal. Did I get that correct? [**Marie Sleeth:** Mmm Hmm] Ok, the camps and the canal...ok, just wanted to verify that I had that, um, correct.

Marie Sleeth: Daddy would, um, after we got that pick-up with the seat, seats, that would go down and to Penitas I believe it was, pick up the guys on Monday morning (laughs) [**Sandra**

Salinas: Penitas] Because, they'd go home on weekends and then [**Sandra Salinas:** Oh ok!] on, um, Saturday afternoon he would take 'em all back again, I mean he made runs, you know, a lot of 'em had their own transportation. I don't know what kind it was but he didn't, um, he didn't haul because he had lots of men working for him. You know, if Ingrid had a crew of forty and I had one, that's eighty right there! But they would, I don't know where they, a lot of 'em weren't down on the, at the canal, they were, who knows where they were at night. They may have had

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

friends somewhere that they stayed with or whatever. But, um, you'll learn about a lot of that in that book. Yeah, you all need to go read that book before you interview anybody else. [**Sandra Salinas**: Oh yes, yes.] Because it is quite, quite informative. And they're just little short stories, it's not a, you know, a book book. It's two, a page or two for each little story about particular people, land, or an incident. Yeah...I think you need to read, you can read it tonight! I mean, you know it doesn't take long to read it. [**Sandra Salinas**: Um] But it gives a lot of pertinent information. I think daddy changed the names (chuckles) for the protection! But when daddy wrote the book, uh, he insisted, it was the University of New Mexico press that printed it and edited it and he, they weren't edited, and he says "No, you will print it as I wrote it." Because if you start messin' with things and terminology that he uses and trying to find a different word it changes the meaning of the whole thing! So, and he, daddy's first language was Swedish. His parents were born in Sweden. But he was born here. His second language was English. His third language was Spanish. So he uses a lot of colloquialism Spanish in the stories because that's the way it happened, you know. And he, you know, has a lot of things in quotes because that's what they would say. I think you'll enjoy it. When daddy had his stroke, he, um, his first stroke he was he kinda lost his hearing. And, um, he would um, of course, talk in English. But then as he had a series of strokes and one, after one of 'em all he would talk was Spanish. He didn't know English! So the nurses, eh he had to have round the clock care. The nurses would talk to him in Spanish. (chuckles) But then after the big major one it was Swedish. He went all the way back to his root language. Which we found very interesting.

Sandra Salinas: Where you guys able to communicate with him? [**Marie Sleeth**: In Spanish?] In Swedish?

Marie Sleeth: No. [Sandra Salinas laughs] We, no.

Amanda De La Fuente: What about in Spanish?

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, yeah, we could, we all knew Spanish. We don't SPEAK Spanish. I am by no means, bilingual. Never would I ever even hint that I was but I know a lot of Spanish.

Amanda De La Fuente: How were you able to communicate with your crew while you were out there? [**Marie Sleeth:** In Spanish.] You would just have certain words that...[**Marie Sleeth:** Yeah.]

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, Kelly's fluent in Spanish...but I'm not. I can read it. I do a pretty good job of reading Spanish. 'Cause it, a lot of it's so similar to English. It was just pronounced differently.

Amanda De La Fuente: Would your other family, um, the ones who were from Kansas, would they come visit your father down here?

Marie Sleeth: Um, they, a couple times, we would get some company from Kansas or Nebraska. They would come down and stay. We've got pictures of a, um, family members from up there down here.

Amanda De La Fuente: You have pictures in here?

Marie Sleeth: Um, I don't, Kelly has them all. You do know who I'm talking about when I say Kelly?

Sandra Salinas: Yes, um, this might be a touchy subject but we just wanted to ask. When a family member would pass away, um, how were the arrangements for the burials, um, the burials, formulated? Did the family have certain funeral traditions? Or, um...

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: No, I um, I wasn't around when my Swedish grandparents died. And I wasn't around when my German grandfather died. See, my mother's, my mother's German and her grandparents were born in Germany. But daddy's parents were, he was first generation. But, um, I wasn't around when the grandparents died. So I don't know what activities took, um, went on in the house. You know, because I've, I've heard of, um, laying him out on the dining room table, you know, and various things like that. What was the expression? 'He lay a corpse on the dining room table.' That's what my mother-in-law would say. 'He lay a corpse!' That was a phrase! In other words, he was laid out there, they didn't take him to a funeral home. In fact, in the northern states what do you suppose they do when the ground was too hard to dig a hole? The body's in the [cannot understand] shed until the ground...**[Sandra Salinas:** Until it was easier to...dig down] And the bodies would freeze. I mean, you know, all winter long it's cold! Ice and stuff! You know, I was, we were doing some genealo-geneology work in West Virginia, where my husband and I worked and that's one thing that they did. Put 'em out on the wood shed!

Sandra Salinas: You would need to wrap them VERY NEATLY 'cause if not...(laughs) Ah, the stor-the history of those, of those burials are...pretty interesting! Very fascinating! (laughs)

Marie Sleeth: But I don't know whether, you know, I don't know what the procedures were. Kelly may know. 'Cause I think I was a baby when my grandmother, Swedish grandmother Norquest died. I remember my grandmother Nordmeyer dying but she, that was over in McAllen. [inaudible] And we did, just, um...nobody's ever died out here!

Sandra Salinas: Maybe we should live out here all the time! (laughs) And this is why it's better in Texas! (laughs)

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: My mother died in a hospital my daddy died in a nursing, no he was in the hospital too. So it was just, you know, automatic, that was in the 80's! Momma died in 1993. She was 88 years old. But they just take them to a funeral home. No special ritual. That's interesting, I, you'll have to ask Kelly maybe he can remember. We do have a cousin that would've remembered but he died a couple of years ago. Dwayne, he got interviewed though, at length, by my nephew who is a historian only he's stuck in Colorado. He, no, no other history counts but Colorado history. [Sandra Salinas laughs] He's the expert! You know, he's pretty knowledgeable; he's got his Masters in History, he's a History Researcher. [**Sandra Salinas:** Nice, nice. Lots to do with the archives then (laughs)] But, um, Dwayne was over one time was, uh, a couple of years, or a year or so before he died. And, um, Rick interviewed him for several hours like this. And Dwayne could tell you where everything was in the house before they changed it. [**Sandra Salinas:** Wow.] 'Cause he was older.

Sandra Salinas: Are there any family members buried on the property? Well, you guys have a designated cemetery or burial...?

Marie Sleeth: Well, um, over on Ware Road is where my parents are and that's where, um, my grandparents are. But, um, I don't know where Kelly's gonna be buried I don't know where anybody's, I know what's gonna happen to me. I already have my urn! (chuckles) [**Sandra:** Nice.] I get to be placed in my lovely Wedgewood urn in the National Cemetery in Arlington, Texas. It's Dallas, Fort Worth National Memorial Cemetery and my husband is cremated [inaudible] we put him there. I carried him around a while. About ten years. (laughs) And finally I decided, he was, I was living back there at the time. He needed a resting place. And he was buried with, I mean, put in with full military honors; it was all white.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Sandra Salinas: Awww, that's wonderful...well, I'm sorry for your loss but that's, it's wonderful that he got, he had, such honor.

Marie Sleeth: I get to do that, I mean, I get to be put there too! (chuckles) So, anyway...I don't know about any of my other siblings' plans. [Sandra Salinas chuckles]

Sandra Salinas: And, um, that's pretty much everything we've got. Did you guys want to get started on the grounds? Would we be able to, um, take a tour with you?

Marie Sleeth: Well, I tell you what, I'm gonna call Kelly and see if he will do it.

Sandra Salinas: That's fine.

Marie Sleeth: I'll go with you [Sandra Salinas chuckles] because two heads are always better than one.

Sandra Salinas: You know there's going to be a designated group that's, um, we were all assigned a certain Norquest family member and, um, we were all also assigned certain themes as far as, um, we were more archeology, structures, and biology, animals, plants, things like that and so, um, a tour would be good for us because of the arch[aeology]...

Marie Sleeth: Yes, to get it into perspective. [**Sandra Salinas:** Mmhum.] Yeah, I told Kelly that I was gonna-

Sandra Salinas: I'm not sure, um, [**Marie Sleeth:** Oh, my battery is dead] if Mr. Norquest is going to be, um, interviewed under...

Marie Sleeth: The battery's dead let me go plug it in.

Miguel Gutierrez: Do you want me to move, to put

[video and audio cut off for a few minutes]

Sandra Salinas: You wanna have it going. [speaking in background to someone]

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: [Inaudible] His wife was born in ugh...I don't remember the name of the town, but across the border. And that is where her family is and so he's gone down, you know, to weddings and funerals and stuff with her family a lot. And he just became interested in the genealogy of the areas and the history of the various areas in Northern Mexico, so he is the one to really talk to. (giggling). So I'm glad he can come. I was afraid that he wasn't gonna be. Oh here he is. [looking to the front door].

Sandra Salinas: I had a question, [Marie Sleeth: Yeh.] while we were waiting for him I was going to ask, are there any kind of remedies or folk remedies that your parents have passed down to you? Anything using the plants or anything...that....

Marie Sleeth: Mmm-mmm...No. [shaking her head no right away]. No my parents were Yankees (giggling).

Sandra Salinas: Well maybe they might have had something from their Swedish roots or...

Marie Sleeth: [shaking her head no] No. I, I, I (laughing) this sounds terrible, but I do remember taking cough medicine that was made out of honey [**Sandra Salinas:** Honey] and kerosene. (laughing harder).

Sandra Salinas: Oh, wow. (giggling)

Marie Sleeth: Yea, do you remember that Kelly? [Screaming to Mr. Kelly Norquest standing outside the screen door]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: You said honey and what?

Marie Sleeth: Kerosene.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, I remember sugar and Kerosene.

Marie Sleeth: Sugar and Kerosene.

Sandra Salinas: Sugar and kerosene.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well I've talked, I've talked to my wife Odie and her mother gave her the same thing when she was young.

Marie Sleeth: [surprised] Really?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

[Everyone was rustling around here while getting ready to go outside for the tour]

Sandra Salinas: [asking Mrs. Sleeth] Can I leave this here?

Marie Sleeth: Yes.

[conversation between Eduardo Robles, Sandra Salinas, Miguel Gutierrez, and Marie Sleeth]

Sandra Salinas:[um] Eddie can you just get a, can you [um] a, just get that real quick[turns to Marie Sleeth], just a quick glance? That's really neat [pointing at Marie Sleeth's food travel kit]

Marie Sleeth:[oh] well let me get that out of the way, [**Amanda de La Fuente (to Carrol Norquest, Jr. Jr.):** She has the cooking supplies, a portable, her transportation cooking supplies.] so can see my cooking (chuckles) stuff [light laughter]

Sandra Salinas: cooking, travel cooking, utensils

Eduardo "Eddie" Robles: Would you mind letting us know what you have in there? [pointing the camera to the Marie Sleeth's travel cooking briefcase]

Marie Sleeth: [oh] well I got a knife sharper, and some staples, I have some sea salt, and some kosher salt, and some [um] ground coarse [um] ground black pepper [um] and then I got what I call my [emphasizing] Mex-Mix

Sandra Salinas: wonderful (chuckles)

Miguel Gutierrez: Mex-Mix?

Marie Sleeth: It's the standard herbs that the Mexicans use [um][um]cumin and, and coriander and of course black pepper and [um] Mexican oregano. And I, I mix up and I [um] toast all the

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

seeds and then I [um] blend them in a coffee grinder and I come out with what I call Mex-Mix. Now then last night see I made soup. I made taco soup. I love to cook Mexican. Taco soup. Tortilla soup that's what it was and so when it comes to putting the spices in here goes two table spoons of my Mex-Mix in and I got all my Mexican spices in there and this one instead of having to measure each one of them. And so anyway that's my Mex-Mix [light laughter]

Miguel Gutierrez: that sounds really good

Sandra Salinas: Great, well let's start our little...[background chatter]

[Conversation between Mandy De La Fuente and Carrol Norquest, Jr.]

Mandy De La Fuente: We're hoping as you give us a tour outside, if you could hold this close to you?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, ok.

Mandy De La Fuente: It's a recorder; [inaudible] we're making sure that we get the best quality.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Right, okay.

Marie Sleeth: [talking to others of the group in the background] Let me get this out of the way.

Mandy De La Fuente: [Talking to Carrol] She has her cooking supplies. A portable, her transportation cooking supplies.

Carrol Norquest: Oh, okay

Marie De La Fuente: [talking about the spices and cooking utensils in her travel kit in the background] I have Sea salt, kosher salt, coarse ground black pepper and ...[cannot hear the rest]

Mandy De La Fuente: [Talking to Carrol] You are the oldest correct?

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And she is the third.

Mandy De La Fuente: She's three years younger?

Carrol Norquest: She's the third one, yeah, and my sister Dixie that's supposed to , she lives west of us here, she's the fifth one and my brother is the seventh, [Mandy de La Fuente: Oh ok.] and we were **all born right here** in the old house. [Mandy De La Fuente: Yeh, she actually mentioned...] All of us...yeah. (laughing)

Mandy De La Fuente: Amazing. And there is a two year separation between all of the children, like about two years [inaudible]...

Carrol Norquest: About two years. Uhuh. There is one in there where it was three years, otherwise it's two years. Two years apart, yeah. Where are you from?

Mandy De La Fuente: I'm from Weslaco.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh you're from Weslaco. Oh. Okay.

Mandy De La Fuente: Yes, I was born there.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh you were, okay. Very good. What are you studying in at the university?

Mandy De La Fuente: I'm studying Sociology.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Sociology. Okay.

Mandy De La Fuente: I am interested in history. I am definitely interested in the history of people.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Is that how you got into this class that you're...?

Mandy De La Fuente: Yea. Well sociology, since it covers a lot of different topics.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeh.

[everyone gathering up to walk out the door]

Sandra Salinas: I'm going to try to draw this at the same time. Hope you don't mind. I will try drawing the premises.

Marie De La Fuente: [telling Carrol] I guess you've met all of these, Kelly. You met 'em?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea. Not individually so much, but as a group yes. (giggling)

Marie Sleeth: Good.

Sandra Salinas: Well, I am Sandra, oh I'm sorry, I'm Sandra Salinas, this is Miguel, [**Miguel**

Gutierrez: Miguel.] [**Carrol :** Miguel] we've got Amanda, [**Carrol :** Amanda] Eloise, [**Carrol :** Eloise] and Edward... [**Carrol :** Edward.] Eduardo [**Carrol :** Eduardo, Edward]. [Everyone shakes hands with Carrol when he repeats their names]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay, very good... [**Sandra Salinas:** And I love your dog]

well I'm Kelly.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yes, well actually, actually that's my daughter's dog. Christine, she and her husband Ross, Ross Salinas, they're in, at the University of Iowa right now studying their Ph.Ds and getting a Ph. D in English, so that's her dog, so she left it with me to take care of while she is over there. (laughing) so anyway. Okay, well you wanna, you wanna see something around here and uhh?

Sandra Salinas: Well we were [Carrol : See what...] just interested in the structures around the premises. What might have been here in the past? What has, is no longer around? The older structures? The newer structures?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay

Sandra Salinas: Um, we are more interested in the archaeology and the biology factors of the premises.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: We we'll uh, earlier I was telling you about this house. I don't know whether you want anything on that, pertaining to that, but this uh, this house I told you that this was originally built in the late 1940s for a refugee family from Germany. And the oldest son was working here on the farm and they raised, and the lady raised her family here until, oh they lived in it, part of their family 'till ohh about 1970, bout 1970, so they were here about twenty, twenty-five years or thirty. Then it was renovated some. My wife and I lived here and my daughters, and uh, then later on we used it as a rent house and relatives and students that primarily were going to college that rented it and then more recently, the last few years we have been using it as a guest house for relatives and other friends that might come visiting. So uh, I'll tell ya, right here [pointing to a spot under the barbeque pit that was in the southwestern part of the little white with green house] when it was first, it's been renovated somewhat, now it has indoor plumbing and bathroom and it's been ... the porch has been enclosed to be more comfortable, has air conditioning now, right here under where this barbeque pit is, there's a slab of concrete, and that was the original shower outside. [Sandra Salinas: Oh, ok] So, they had an outside shower. Now if you look overthere [facing and pointing a few feet southwest] you see that structure, right overthere, that, see that iron structure, that's an outhouse. And that's the kind of toilet facilities we had back in those days. So that's what they had. It's been outta use since it was renovated with a bathroom put into the, inside of the house here. So Russ [Dr. Skowronek] tells me that outhouses like that are a terrific source of archaeological treasures at times, people tend to throw stuff in 'em, and it gets covered up in there and you never know what you're gonna find, especially if it's been in use for years and years, so uh, anyway that's what he's told me about it. [sound cuts out for a few seconds here].

Sandra Salinas: Did you ever throw anything interesting in there? (giggling)

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: (giggling) Well I'll tell ya, I didn't, but I'll tell you one time my brother Erik, my cousin Jim Nordmeyer lived down there on the other side of the farm, his family my Uncle Eddie, they had five children, they lived on the other side of the farm and they farmed with my father, and like us, they had an outhouse there and my brother and my cousin Jim were about uh, I don't know, five or six years old, and my mother had given my brother and me each a little gold ring. There was a special deal one time and she gave us each a little gold ring, and my brother Erik, took his ring off and held it over the hole and my cousin Jim said, said I dare you, and so he opened his fingers and in it went. Of course, needless to say my mother was not happy about it. (everyone laughing) So down on that end of the place, if you ever do any archaeological digging, you may find a tiny little gold ring. So.. (laughing). So anyway, now, over here on the other side of our fifty acres, sixty acres we have, there's another house, if any of you go down that way, the next house over is sort of a brick-stucco house. That one has been here since, uh, I guess the early 1940s probably, about the time of the end of the depression, and it's ah, there was a farmer friend of ours that lived there and we own it now, and we've owned it for many years, along with the land around it and uh, my niece Liana Setti, I don't know whether any of you know her, she uh, she lives there. She and her, she is getting married very shortly, so she and her fiancé live there, so, you can take a look at it when you go down there, so that's part of the farm too. The uh, where we're standing right now, originally when my father moved here, my grandfather, my grandparents came here, and my father, where we're standing right now, this was where all of their horse drawn equipment was here. This was a kind of machine, machine area and uh, to kept the machinery, they had horses and uh, horses and mules and that's what they farmed with. So all of that equipment was out here. That's all gone now. When World War II came, why they needed, they needed lots of iron for the war effort and all of that went into the,

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

into the war effort. For, to make bombs, and equipment, and everything like that. By that time we didn't need the horse drawn equipment anymore, because my father had a tractor. Tractors and the equipment he couldn't use from the horses and transfer it to the use of a tractor, why he turned it in for the war effort to defeat, to defeat Germany and Japan. And, Ok, let's just walk around a little bit, oh this house right here, my house [brown brick house on Chapin road] that was built in 1976, that was built in 1976. At that time we had an orange grove out here, [**Sandra Salinas:** Orange Grove?] Uhuh...we had an orange grove out there and a freeze uh, later on a freeze killed it out. I don't know, I don't remember when the freeze was that killed it out, but anyway, then we put it into pasture. So anyway, my wife and I lived in this house for a while [pointing to the small white with green trim home] and we built that one in 1976 and uh, that's where we still live. So anyway, let's uh...[stops talking]

Sandra Salinas: What other crops did you guys have on the premises that were also killed by the, or might have been killed by the freeze? Or any of the other types of natural disasters like Hurricane Beulah and...?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, Hurricane Beulah, ok Hurricane Beulah for instance killed out all of our Buffel Grass. This, all of this, all of this was underwater [pointing to the grass on the property all around him]. The whole farm was underwater. And it came into this house, water was in this house, and it didn't come into the big house. It just lacked a little bit. But all of that killed out all the Buffel Grass we had in the pasture. And the cows, we turned, we had about maybe thirty cows, thirty cattle, and we turned them out in the pasture so they can find a dry place during that time. And uh, it took about a month for the water to go down around here, but the cows found a dry place over on the other side, and we had another kind of grass, called African Star Grass that we had planted and it didn't get killed. It has long runners, like Bermuda

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Grass has short runners, but it has long runners. All of the runners that are about ah six to eight feet long that floated to the top of the water and started growing. So every day the cows would leave their, they would leave their, high place over there and walk out into the water and they would graze on the grass that was growing on top.

Marie Sleeth: Isn't that something?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: An answer to that question... [**Mandy De La Fuente:** They were walking on water. (joking)] Yea. (laughing) We have had other crops here tomatoes that would freeze at times. The grass of course always would freeze if the cows were here. When the cows were here, the grass would freeze sometimes. What was your question now pertaining to the crops?

Sandra Salinas: Any other kind of crops besides the tomatoes and the oranges?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That we grew here....Yeah. We had, we had toma...we ...it's kind of a list we had, we had carrots, we grew carrots, we grew tomatoes, we grew/had oranges, we had grapefruits, we had cotton, we had sorghum, milo, we had milo, we grew corn, like it's out on the field now for uh, for eating, for roasting ears. One time my father even, when I was a kid, even had grew a crop of popcorn. There was one or two years that we grew a big crop of broom corn over here, that's what they used to make brooms with. It was right on this piece of land, right over here to our south. And ah there were other times. Those were the main crops that we dealt with, although there were others once in a while that my father would grow, or that we would, but those are the main things that have been growing here. Now that we are in town, about the only thing that we can grow is milo, we can't, they can't spray cotton here in town, and any crops with food on them the people in town, when it gets ripe, when they all come out and they start gathering it. That is sometimes referred to as fingerplight. They would go out and pick it. So those are the basic crops we've grown through the years. We've had black eyed peas, I remember, we had black eyed peas on here too. And we've had hay, we've had hay that we've

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

grown, and are still cut, that we still have on the east eight acres that we have over there.

Otherwise, we had cattle, we had cattle over the years, we had hogs. Right here, you see on the other side of the car, that area where those mesquites are [pointing to northwestern area of the property], that was the hog pen. That was our hog pen for many years when my dad was young and then uh, uh, when my brother and I grew up we had hogs, grew quite a few hogs here until my brother left home and then I did, and uh, and we had chickens, we always had chickens, we had and we had milk cows here that we'd, we also had milk cows that we would milk for the family, for our own home use and ah. Chickens, ducks, guineas, no turkeys, but uh, anyway, we had all those things so... Anyway, why don't we just kinda walk this way and[walking towards the big house]

Sandra Salinas: [asking crew member] Did you get the outhouse?

Eduardo Robles: Mmm Hmm

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Right now, of course with the drought, everything is, everything is all dry, so you see how that looks. There is a Chile-piquin, we got them, they grow all over the place. (everyone saying mmmm and giggling) At least, well they grow all over the place at least when there is plenty of water. Oh and then some of these dead ones, those are Granjenos, we, those are good to eat. [pointing to fence] And you see the remains of the fences, that was for the cows. Those fences here, yeh, those were for cattle, and there you see part of it here, this was the gate right there. Right over there you see, you can see the remainder [accidentally bumped into crew member] Oh excuse me, a remainder of the fence over there [silence due to walking towards the big house] This uh, this originally was all uh, this was always the main corral. Right in here, you see there is the cow tank and we had a cow tank over in the other, in several other places at different times, but there is a cow tank that was in here, and when my father came, they

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

kept the horses and they kept the cows and like I say the hogs, they were back here. And they even butchered hogs here when I was a kid and I don't remember the cows, though we always, the calves that we were gonna butcher, we always, they had the slaughter house here in town, later on they had the slaughter houses, so then we'd take them over there and have meat for the family. Before they had home freezers, they had a locker plant here in town where you could rent a locker that was in a cold storage place. And people would do that and then they would keep their food in it. They had food in that locker and they would go get it whenever they needed meat, well they'd go get meat out. So...

Sandra Salinas: When they were butchering the hogs on yawls' premises, when you guys were...at that time, where would you guys put the excess remains of the [Carrol : Well...] hogs and how/where would you spray it off to?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well, that I don't know. I don't remember, uhm... I don't remember how they disposed of them, I do know that the hog head went into the hole in the ground, in a "poso" and got cooked that way, but I don't know about the rest of it, but they uh, I just don't know the answer on that one right now.

Sandra Salinas: That's fine.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The uh, and you can see fences over there, a fence over there too, the remains of a fence. And this, over here, you see this uh, this sheet iron along there, that was our working shoot. That was a, you see it's got posts and wood across that way, the cows would go into that working shoot and we could give them medicine or work with them or load them, there was a loading, a loading shoot right here where that angle goes, where we could load them on to trailers or take them off. So anyway, that's where we worked the cattle, and the shoot would

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

keep them in line, keep them in order. And uh. Oh you see that little uh, that little concrete thing over there? That was a water trough for calves. There is another one right over there. Those were so calves could drink, they couldn't drink out of the large one over here, so that was for the calves that were no longer getting milk from their mothers.

Marie Sleeth: [talking to Carrol Norquest] Uh, Carrol , what is this thing over here.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, that tank?

Marie Sleeth: Yeh. No. That thing.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: What? That a...

Marie Sleeth: The barrel [**Carrol Norquest:** oh, that barrel over there barrel?]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That was originally used for Kerosene. You heard us talk about Kerosene a while ago with honey or with sugar. Kerosene was used for a lot of things, we didn't have electricity here, so we had Kerosene lamps. Electricity didn't come into the country in those days, so we had Kerosene lamps, the Kerosene was kept in that, it was also used for medicine, it was used for other [**Marie Sleeth:** cooking] yea, for the cooking stove and so forth. Later on when we got electricity and then we didn't need it for Kerosene anymore, eventually we used it for diesel. Diesel fuel, and for many years used it for diesel fuel so...I think, I'm not sure whether that came down with my grandfather or not, but anyway, it's been here many, many since, years, many many years anyway since I was a kid and I'm seventy-six so...it's been here at least that long.

Marie Sleeth: [telling Carrol Norquest] They were asking about the old barn.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Ok, the old barn, the old barn was right here where these, where these buildings were. That was the original barn. [pointing to what is now the tool shed.] and it, is torn down, if you wanna see a good picture of it, go to the museum, and they've got a picture of it up

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

on the wall. The whole thing. The whole barn, and that's a good picture that you can see of it, it's uh... Well it's got my name on it, on the picture anyway. You can see what it looked like, but, after they got rid of the horses and we didn't have to, and could no longer sell milk in town, we had to keep it for our own use, then we didn't need the old barn to store hay in anymore, that much, or to keep the animals in as much, so, and we were getting tractors to use, so my dad and my uncle Ed that was farming with him, they tore it down and they recycled it into that shed right there. That machine shed so they can park tractors in it, and use it in a different way now. So that was done, ohhh, in about 19, somewhere around 1940. So that, that building itself has been there a long time. And it was used primarily for the tractors and the machines and the cars were parked in there. So uh... anyway, let's see...

Sandra Salinas: What is that concrete slab? Was that part of the barn or?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: No. That was part of the corrals. [**Sandra Salinas:** the corrals] Mmhmm. That was part of the corral. My dad had, and you see there, there is a little one over there, there is a little wall over there in the front of the house, he did that at one time. Put those in, made it around the parking area and the yard. He made it all around it, and then that was part of the corral, and then the fences were on top of it. The fences to keep the cows were on top of it. That door right there, that little area [pointing to small door on east side of the shed] we still kept some cows, several cows for our own milking, and I remember, even in college, I did a lot of milking for the family, we had there, of course there were nine of us here and uh, that's where the cows would go in to be milked. Right there there's a place with concrete floor there where they were milked, and got their food while they were being milked. They behaved better when they were eating food and you're milking them, than when they didn't have food. And they were always anxious to go in and get the food because it was always good food. And they, so you

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

would open the g- open the door and they would go in and get their heads in the stanchion and then they'd go in and get to chomping on the good food, you know, and then we were ready to milk. You're working, when you're milking like that, you work up good muscles on your arms. Big ones. [showing off his arms in a humorous manner] (laughing). [after a few seconds of thinking] Now, there was a gate here to go into the corral, with ah whatever equipment we needed, so..., that's long gone now. These sheds of course are current; they've only been here about ten-fifteen years. This is my daughter's shed. My daughter lives here, Caroline [Caroline Twist]. Now you see over here, there's another water tank for the cows. That was another one. We had water coming into it from that structure over there. That, my father built that, you see, you see the wall over there the one that is higher and you see a couple of chairs in it, that, we/he built that as a swimming pool in the 1950s and we also used it as a source of water supply for the cows. So there's pipes, now there's pipes going out from that, two cow tanks like this that uh with a float in them so that they can stay full all the time. So, they're no longer in use. The uh...and here is the other side of the barn, as you notice, there are no tractors in there anymore, people store stuff in there and that's my son-in-law's car, uh pickup and then their car goes in there and he parks them that way. When I was a kid, this lower one is where we parked the pickup, where that red tub is. That red, you see that red tub there, that's a cast iron tub and it was originally was up in the top of that, up in the top of the old house when they built it back in 1913. And eventually we took it out and got a more modern one but uh... anyway, it's still here. It's good for, good for putting a bunch of ice in and putting a tarp over the top and uh...and your beer cans, beer and beer and cokes and all that stuff in it [**Sandra Salinas:** nice celebrations, like the wedding?] yeah, like a celebration (laughing) right. Right. The ah, this little house here,

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

that's, has an interesting history. About where we are standing is where it originally was. And it was a...it was a house for little chickens.

Marie Sleeth: Brooder house.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Brooder house. Yeh. It was a brooder house and uh, it was here and the little slab it was on is still under us right here, but it got moved over there later and it was used for quite a few different uses over the years. Uh, my dad fixed it up to where, when we had seven of the kids here, seven of us here, why my mother needed help, so we hired a lot of a lot of people at times during harvest season and all. The one of, one of the ladies ...several, several of them at different times, basically they would help my mother out, ironing and cleaning and stuff like that, and they'd stay in there. Uh, on a part time basis, or full time, depending, they had their own little place to stay, and later on it uh, when we were no longer doing that much farming, and the kids were grown, we didn't need it for a purpose of a maid to stay there, why then we, then we used it for storage, then my brother Erik used it as a radio shack, we called it the shack now cause he used it, he used it, he wasn't even out of high school, he was into short wave radio and learning to fly and all that, so that was his ah, that was his place where he had his equipment, and then later on when he left home to join the Air Force, it uh, it was used as storage and eventually, and then uh ...when I got married, my wife and I, we lived right here, you see, uh the concrete strips there, they weren't there, but we had a mobile home, so we used it as a storage, and then later Marie, when she and her husband retired from the NAVY, and brought the kids home to raise them here, they lived in that same mobile home, and that was the bunkhouse for their two sons. They had some bunk beds in there, so they, and we put a little air conditioner in it by then, by then we had air conditioners, so they put a little air conditioner in there. Then later when you moved back out here the second time, [**Marie Sleeth:** Yeh] her husband Scottie [referring to

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth and her husband Scottie Sleeth] used it as an office. [**Marie Sleeth:** Right.] Yeah. He used it as an office [**Marie Sleeth:** He had a computer and everything in it]. And right now it's used as a storage, a storage place again. So, but originally, it was a place to nurse the little chickens along. So that was it. Now for the big hens, with the eggs, [**Sandra Salinas:** Wanna get closer to him?] over here where Marie is, right, between here and the uh, here and the little wall, we had the big hen house, for the hens, to be in and lay their eggs and uh, I raised eggs when I was a kid and sold them in town. And, I sold little ah pullets, oh no, not pullets but little pullets, little roosters both, little chickens and fryers. I'd raise them, take them into town and sell them to the grocery store and they'd butcher them right there, at where the museum is, it was HEB, no, HEB for a while and before that, it was Piggly-Wiggly. I'd take half a dozen little chickens over there, chickens that were grown, and they'd take them out across the alley to the North and they'd kill them and skin them up and uh take all the feathers off and [**Sandra Salinas:** That's poultry] put them on the, put them on the shelves in the grocery store there and I'd have a bucket of eggs for them and so...so that's the ways things were back then and then we'd of course my dad, before that, even like I said, he'd take the milk to town to the creameries and sell it. So that's where the chicken house was, and later it became a corral in that area.

Marie Sleeth: Where were the haystacks?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The haystacks were down, about where that ah where that driveway of my brother's. [**Marie Sleeth:** On over there?] Yeah, that was in later years, that was in later years during the seventies and sixties, 1960s and 1970s. And, maybe even in to the eighties. Probably possibly in to the eighties, nah, in to the seventies. Cause we got, we sold all the cattle in 1981. So yeah, and where this drive is, later when we had about thirty or forty head of cattle, that was, those were some, that was another corral, back where all those big trees are, and where

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

this drive is, we would drive in there, and we'd put feed, we'd put feed along where you see the tree row is, that was where the feeder was. We'd put feed in that and my daughter Caroline remembers that when she was a little kid. And where these trees over here, that's where we had the machine, machine lot for the uh...uh for the tractor, for the, all for our disks and silage choppers, and we kept some of the tractors there too so uh, that was the machine lot, [**Marie Sleeth**: Aren't there still some pieces of machinery in there?] which is, no longer is. Yeah, there's still machinery in there, some of the old tractor machinery that's still in there, yeah (chuckling). Unfortunately, the nature trail has been caved in a little bit, by nature, and I haven't had a chance to clean it out so there's not gonna be a chance, to walk through there, unless you wanna get thorns all over you, so anyway...

Sandra Salinas: How much of uh, how much of the tools did you guys purchase um around here, or did you guys get any of the tools or any, any kind of necessities in Mexico?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uhh..[paused to think] we did buy things in Mexico, but I'm not thinking that any of it was machinery or anything, other than uh. My dad, my dad did, during WWII, you couldn't buy anything. I mean, they didn't make any equipment. They weren't making any ..excuse me...they weren't making any tractors, they weren't making any farm equipment or anything, all the metal was going into the war effort, so my dad started going to the junkyards around here, and he would find old tools and either, there was a, there were black, blacks, at least one blacksmith in town, and he'd take those pieces of iron over there, and he would either have him custom make the tools that he needed or fix them up if they were broken, or whatever, so that's what we did during the 1940s, after that, in the fifties, he was able to purchase new tractors and uh, and equipment but, he still when he wanted something custom, custom- made, he'd go to the junkyards and find, find the materials that he needed, take them over to the blacksmith, and

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

he'd, he'd make it. In those years, I don't recall that there was anything of that nature coming over here from Mexico, if anything, it was going the other way. Because of their economy, they'd come over here and buy used equipment a lot and there were a number of dealers around here, ah during more recent years, and by recent I mean after the Korean war and after the wars that we had, that there was, made a full time business of selling stuff into Mexico. They'd get it from all over the mid-west and bring it down here and uh, sell it. [**Sandra Salinas:** And they're still exporting it] Yes, it was more of an export. Yes.

Marie Sleeth: [inaudible] busses, pulling busses, ah you know, school busses all the way down, heading to Mexico, you know, so there's still a lot of..

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Now in more recent years of course when they had the steel industry and iron industries in Monterrey and other places where they have iron over down there, where they have foundries, anyway, more recently they've brought a lot of ah, by recently I mean the last twenty-five, thirty years, they've brought a lot of scrap metal and iron over here to the junkyards, if you've been to the museum and see that cracked bell over there, that came in a load from Mexico, [**Sandra Salinas:** yes] so that's been the more recent exchange of metals. So uh, anyway, good question (chuckling) [Sandra Salinas laughing] the uh, let's see, the old house of course, [asking Marie Sleeth], did you tell them about the house? Now they're hoping to, they're planning on getting together with Caroline, my daughter [**Marie Sleeth:** Ok, that's the only way you're gonna get in there.] and Patrick, and he'll, he'll tell you. Yeah, she's off at a doctor's appointment this morning, and so they're not even here right now.

Sandra Salinas: May we go through the outside? And you [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Yeah.] can maybe show us [**Carrol Norquest:** Yeah.] the little canal of the kerosene that you were telling us about [asking Marie Sleeth].

Marie Sleeth: Oh, that was, that's not there anymore. [**Sandra Salinas:** where it would have been?] Oh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: You're talking about the gas that was in the house?

Marie Sleeth: No, I was talking about the kerosene, cooking on a kerosene stove [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Oh, cooking on the] that had a little canal that sent the kerosene to the flames and it was open. [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Yeah.] Very dangerous in my opinion.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well, kerosene did not burn like gasoline, so it was ah [**Marie Sleeth:** Safer] looking at, yeh, it was much safer though, of course before that, I guess they had a wood stove, but I that was, because they had chimneys in there, but that was before my time, cause it was kerosene that we used. Yeah. Now they did have uh, right here there was a gas ah [**Mandy de la Fuente:** (to other interviewer) Do you wanna get the audio?] there was a gas tank, I guess, it was a acetylene gas I'm talking about, they had a carbide gas and they had the tank in here and there was a pipe into the house and they had gas fixtures originally, that was before my grandfather and my father came down here because I don't think they ever used the gas, eventually my father pulled the tank out of the ground, it was, the tank held some kind of powder and they'd put water in it and then when it did that, it produced gas that would go through a pipe into the house and they had gas lighting in there. I understand that was top of the line stuff at that time, but then later on, they didn't use it especially when we got into the Depression, and there was no money or anything. That was long gone before I ever was born. The uh, that tank was

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

right here, and between here and the house, let's see, right over here, right about in here, we had the windmill. This is where the windmill, where they got water out of the ground, and just to the south of it, right out in there, right in, out in there, they had a tower, a water, with a water barrel at the top and that made pressure into the house with the water. So that they could flow water into the house. And, then between the, then just north of where this little house is now, at one time there was a uh, uh a smoke house, where they could smoke meat, [black? Meat] before the days of before the days of refrigerators and so forth, and I guess they could also dry meat in it. But that was, that's long gone.

Marie Sleeth: Right over there was the rain ...uh [inaudible] or whatever.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, okay. This tank, okay, this tank, that they uh, I was telling you this tank that they put the water in from the windmill, when my dad tore it down, he didn't get, he got rid of the, all of the metal from the windmill but the tank, he took it down and he put it right on the corner here, where that rosebush is, it's got flowers on it, he put it right in there and then he fixed it so that water from the roof would go into it so we had rain water, which was not good water for ah, it was soft water, the water from here was a little salty, from the ground, it was a little salty, so that was soft water and we could use it indoors, and I don't know whether we used it for drinking, bathing and washing dishes and washing the clothes probably and so forth, so then but later when we got the rural water system, why that went out. And uh, so in the 1960s, seventies, early seventies, we got in the rural water system so...we had water and electricity out here now at that point. The uh, you see where this window is, right up here, that's where they had the bathroom with that tub, that I showed you earlier, that's where they had the tub, and they had the bathroom up there, they had a toilet, and I guess a lavatory and so forth.

And then you see the little, there's kind of a little hole up there in the, uh, in the roof? That's

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

where the pipe went up, from the bathroom, up above the uh, up above the roof line, you know, a vent. It was a vent. And then it came down the wall. Right down here, into the, right down here into the ground and then it went underground over to a septic tank that is, as far as I know, is still there, right under that, right by that [**Marie Sleeth:** that pole?] that pole over there, yeah. As far as I know, that's still there. Maybe some future archaeologists will find it! (laughing)

Marie Sleeth: I know there's another septic tank right over there [pointing south]. Where was the, was that main septic tank for the house? [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Which one?] The one over here [pointing north now] [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Yeah.] for the whole house? [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Yeah.] Ok.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That was for the whole house, but it never got used much because they had to take, they didn't have running really good water anymore or anything, so it was taken out. It never efficient and the line never worked very well. So, and especially during the 1930s, no money to fix anything, right out there in those trees we had the outhouse. You would just come out the kitchen door and go out into the outhouse there. And of course those holes got filled up and at times and then we'd dig another hole and moved the outhouse. At the time, that was all citrus where those trees are, that was citrus at that time and for many years those trees are growing up basically where the birds left seeds, so they grew up after a big freeze, why they grew up through those, through those trees, and we left and the cows, we turned that into a corral, and the cows were in there and we just let the trees grow. So that's where they came from. But...

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Sandra Salinas: And where would you guys, I'm sorry, where would the Norquest family, I need to stop saying you guys, where would the Norquest family wash their clothing before the water, before like that water tank?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh, in my remembrance, it was uh, I don't remember in the thirties before, I don't remember how they did it before we had indoor water, when we got electricity here and he tore the windmill down, my dad put an electric pump right here, and then he put pipes into the house. And my mother got a washing machine and it was used right there on that back porch. There she did her washing, right there. And then we had clothes lines outside that we...it was easy to take them out and put them on clotheslines. That was a... [**Sandra Salinas:** Where were the clotheslines...?] job. [**Sandra Salinas:** ...located.]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: What's that?

Sandra Salinas: Where were the clotheslines located?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, come here, and I'll show you [walking towards porch] the uh, oh and hanging them out in the hot weather like that, us kids hated it. That was...ok, here [**Sandra Salinas:** (laughing) I grew up with it too so I know what you mean!] Here's one of the, that's one of the posts that the clothesline was on, and it went directly out south towards that uh, towards that tree. I don't remember how far, but it was enough to put our clothes on. Then the outhouses were basically located primarily just south of where that tree that is there. When the citrus was in here, why some of our, some of them, some of the uh, wetbacks that were working for us, wetback was not a bad word in those days, now 'n days it is, but it was *mojados* they called themselves, and they called themselves [inaudible] depending on whether they were legal or not, they called themselves either *mojados* or *los secos*. So that was the term. Anyway, uh,

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

anyway, sometimes they'd camp in the trees there. We had a house that they stayed in most of the time down there, but when there was a big bunch of them sometimes they'd live here in the barn, and we had kerosene stoves for them, but they'd cook with wood right out here, and my brother and I would always go out there and the guys would offer us tortillas that they were making. They were making tortillas right, just right out here you know. And they'd give us tortillas; we always liked that. We were just little kids like that, you know. And, so that was all quite a, quite a time in those days (chuckling).

Sandra Salinas: And how far down was the house that the, that the wetbacks lived in?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh, it's a quarter of a mile that way, well no actually we usually kept the people that were legal in the house, either the *braceros* or those that were legal in other ways, and then the, the wetbacks they would stay where they couldn't be found. That's one thing, they hid in the trees here. But across, there was ten acres, this, where you see this holding pond here, it was, there was a straight ten acres west of that that we farmed. Immediately to the south was a long rectangular ten acres that was brush, just like we're looking at right over here, and they stayed in that a lot. My dad got tarps for them from the uh... they built tents out there, they built tents out there, and would get in the middle of it so they couldn't be found. And that was the same way here, they had tents in this orange grove and it was grown up and they uh, that was back in the forties, 1940s, and early fifties, and uh, no air conditioning or anything. The guys, they were right here at the house; my, they'd come right up to the door whenever they needed something or wanted something. My mother, my mother always fed them too especially if they hadn't eaten when they came. When they were, when they were, illegal and they'd come by here, they'd get, arrive in the morning, you know, and she'd cook pancakes and eggs for them and so forth and they...

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Marie Sleeth: Haha. He's remembering all kinds...see he's four years older than me so (giggling) [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Yeh, so that was...] he remembers things. Yeh, I don't remember them camping here; they always camped down there.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, well this is one reason that Russ wanted a different [**Sandra Salinas:** exactly, that's what, we're all gonna be...] uh different views from, about a 13 year difference here, and I find that Dixie and Neil remember things that you and I don't, so uh, anyway, then eventually he built this. We, uh, it was a dual purpose. We used it for a swimming pool and then we'd used it for uh, for uh, a storage tank for cattle. And I showed you the little tank over there that the pipe went to, well there's another little tank right over there that another pipe went to for the cows. Can you see it? [background mumbling] It's in between a couple of trees. Yeh, it's kinda low there. [inaudible] Oh yeah, we're filling it in now, it's no longer in use for anything. My son-in-law and daughter wanna make a garden there, so we're filling it in right now. In the old, after, after uh, well the washer, the washer was right in here. [**Marie Sleeth:** right in there] The uh, this is the cistern, right here, it's about eight feet deep. We're gonna fill it in too; it's no longer used because we are on city water and it's...we're gonna fill it in so it'll be safe and all. But, but up here, you see this structure here, we had a grapevine growing on that and back when I was young, my dad and I would make wine. We would make wine with those grapes. And I find, I still got some upstairs that's still aging (chuckling). But, anyway, we had, then they eventually died of root drop; we haven't grown anymore. Now, this 'ole tree, this is the largest, the largest oak in Edinburg. The city forester measured it and everything. My dad planted that in 1929. When he was coming from San Antonio where his father had died in the hospital, and he was coming and bringing him back home and he stopped at Falfurrias and dug up one of those little oak trees and brought it and planted it there in 1929. So it's just been, it took many

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Transcription

years for it to really start growing, but look at it now (laughing). Oh, and for the cistern, we had a, we had a pump right here, a pump went down in there and pulled the water up and it took it into the house. And like I say, now we got city water; we were on Sharyland Coop water system for a long time.

Marie Sleeth: This is the barbeque pit.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And this is the barbeque pit that he built back about 1950 I guess.

Marie Sleeth: And was there another incinerator before this one?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, this one's been reconstructed. The other one had too much fire in it over a long period of time and finally deteriorated and uh...

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, they had asked me where we disposed of our garbage and stuff.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well, that's another story. [**Marie Sleeth:** okay] Well, what we would do... [**Sandra Salinas:** that's ok, that's why, that's why we're asking everybody, we're trying to get (inaudible)] Yes, well no, no, that's a legitimate question because it wasn't easy in those days. Oh, here comes my daughter. That's my wife in the car, though. [welcoming words back and forth] Hi Caroline. [**Caroline** (daughter): Hi, I'm gonna see if I can get into the house] if you wanna join us, when... [**Caroline:** okay] Okay, the, anyway, this is where disposed of all the stuff that would burn, whatever would burn. What wouldn't burn, cans and so forth, there was no place to take it. So my dad had a trailer out there that we'd throw it in, and then where other places were where we were farming, where they had a barbed pit along the road or something, no along the canals, we would put it in there. [**Sandra Salinas:** Oh ok.] That would, they would really be on you now for that. But there wasn't...

Marie Sleeth: Come on over and meet them! [talking to Caroline Twist in background]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: But that was about the only way there was. [**Marie Sleeth:** (to Caroline) I think you're gonna be letting them tour the house.] But first we'd, we'd burn as much of it as we could and then bottles and cans. Okay, let me ah introduce you all, this is,..[**Caroline:** (responding to something Marie Sleeth told her) Ok.] [**Marie Sleeth:** It was mine.]...this is Caroline here, [**Sandra Salinas:** Pleasure] this is my, our oldest daughter. Caroline, she's married to Patrick Twist. He's a teacher and he's not here today, [**Caroline:** But, he's working] and then this is my wife Odie. Odie, she's a, she's a Peña; she's been, her family's been here longer than mine, 300 years so, and Caroline's too. So, anyway... somebody's gonna be interviewing Odie. Oh, there is a message for you and it's got another guy, somebody else's name, probably one of the rest of the team. And Caroline, somebody else is making arrangements to meet with, you with them. So, if I step on your...[**Sandra Salinas:** We were divided (inaudible)]

Caroline Twist: Daddy, I was gonna call you in anyways, for ours. [background chatter]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh yeh, okay. I might get called then, maybe that's why they were leaving me for last, but uh, but uh...[background chatter]

Marie Sleeth: ...somebody call Kelly, because he's four years older and can remember a whole lot more than me.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well let's walk on around this way to the back

Sandra Salinas: [talking to Marie Sleeth] But you did the cooking, see, (laughing) he won't remember that, just the good, the goodness [**Mandy de la Fuente:** that he ate].

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh Caroline, you've got a plastic bag in your yard.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, it's been floating around for a couple of days.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Whoa, excuse me. [**Miguel Gutierrez:** I'm sorry, I'm sorry.] Excuse me. Okay the uh, this side was not, and her husband may tell ya'll about that too, I think he's gonna tell you all, whoever is doing it with him, probably more about the inside. But, oh there goes a butterfly. The uh, there were no, very few trees here at all when they uh moved here and the house itself was built in 1913 when my grandfather traded it in 1925, so that's when they moved here. And there were no trees to speak of and this was a dirt road to the west of us, and there was nothing over that way, except the field and there was porch on this side that went the whole length of the, the whole length of the house, and that was supposed to be a place where you can go out and relax, but instead in the evening, you got this hot sun blasting in, so it was, it was very hot. It was not built for South Texas. It was the kind of a house that they built in the Midwest. And they used it, the company that built it, they used it for a showplace for Midwesterners they were bringing down here, to show, to try to sell them land. And, so anyway, my dad, after the depression, when he got a little money, he and my uncle took that porch off right there and they made, and they turned it around inside, the uh, the stairway that was in there, they turned it around and then they, what they basically did was make it face the east. So what you see out there is not the front porch. And then on the back, this was the backside then, so then, and you see, when they built the house, they didn't have indoor plumbing or wiring, so you see a bunch of the plumbing and wiring on the outside here that's been put in later because the wood in that, it's hard as, hard as iron. You can't hardly drive a nail into it. And it's very well built, structured. So, anyway, that's a, and then this little window is where he made a brand new, at that time, 1940, built a new, a bathroom downstairs and a little half bath upstairs. So, for the family of

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nine, why (chuckling) and taking baths was something else too. I remember we'd take...Marie, do you remember when we took baths in our, in a uh, in a, in a tub, a wash tub? (chuckling)

[**Marie Sleeth:** No.] In the kitchen? They'd heat the water and put the, yes, the [**Marie Sleeth:** I, it seems like [inaudible] back in here] the indoor plumbing wasn't going. Yes, that was when I was a, maybe that was before, you were a baby probably. [**Marie Sleeth:** Yes.] Yes, especially in the cold weather they would, my mom would put the bath tub, uh [**Sandra Salinas:** boil the water and then toss 'em in, right?] Yeh, put the, heat up the water and then toss, yeh and then they'd toss in the kids (laughs).

Marie Sleeth: Tell them about the swing.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, the swing. Yeh. This swing came down from, from Nebraska with them. And we think, that would have been in '25 and it was old then. So we think it went back to Nebraska earlier even. So it's a good 100 years old or more already. So when we were little we swang in that. And now my son-in-law has fixed it again for our, for the grandkids to swing in and fixed it up again. But, it's, it's worn out I don't know how many, how many sets of wood that's in there over the years that have, eventually gone, but the structure, all the iron and everything that's, that's the original thing that came down from up north with them.

Sandra Salinas: Any other structures that are no longer visible, or that were torn down that you remember?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well the old, I did mention the old smokehouse that... I'm not, I'm not thinking of anymore. Although, you go around, you're going to find, there were temporary structures at times maybe. But that's basically, basically it. Basically it. Well, in my interview I may remember some others.

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Sandra Salinas: That's fine. That's fine. We're just the first group [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Yeh.] So, we just wanted to...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeh, well that's the thing about a short interview or only one; [inaudible], there's no way you can remember everything, [**Sandra Salinas:** Get everything at once] or there's no way then of correcting your mistakes later. Sometimes you remember things a little wrong; we may remember some things, you may find some discrepancies [inaudible], but that's the way we remember it. [**Sandra Salinas:** Exactly and that's what we want to know. We want to know the way you remember it.] Two sides to the same coin. Yeh.

Marie Sleeth: I was telling them about the *lonas*. They didn't know what *lonas* were [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Oh the *lona*, ok] and the irrigation and stuff. And uh how did we get the water to the property?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay, right now we get part of the water right here, [pointing northwest] there's a little standpipe right by the corner over there, and the water comes in through that for this corner of the place [the northwestern corner of Sugar and Chapin Rd.] There's another one like that down at that corner [southwestern corner] and that one irrigates eight or ten acres on this side of the property. The rest of the water all comes from this main canal east of us. If you go east of us, you're gonna see a canal that you, that you go over, a little hump in the road that's right close to, before you get to the railroad, it's close to [**Marie Sleeth:** We used to swim in that canal] Yeah, we used to swim in that. It's close to Esquisita and the [**Marie Sleeth:** Azteca.] Azteca, and yeh [**Marie Sleeth:** and the packing shed] yeh and the Chicharrones factory and; it's right there so. And that's where we get the water for all the rest of the it. Yeah.

Marie Sleeth: Well that's what I was thinking, but I didn't, I didn't know how it got over here.

[**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Yes.] How does come from the canal? Is there another?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: There used to be, well it was all open canals originally, but it is now, it's all under pipe, pipes underground now. And that's a different problem in itself. The canals had to be kept clean cause they were dirt, and uh, they were dirt and the pipes were, saved water, it was, ah didn't evaporate and everything. And they, it's much better. Pipes have a way of breaking at times or, and then they have to stop all irrigating, go in and fix them, and you get delayed that way. Uh, one other structure that I haven't mentioned now that you think about it, it is no longer visible to see anything, but east of my house, about a hundred yards or so, used to be the irrigation canal, which was a dirt canal. And it's a dirt, the one I'm telling you about is the one that replaced it another quarter of a mile east. And this one, this one was a dirt canal, if you look, go east of my house oh a hundred, a hundred fifty yards, you look south and you're gonna see some apartments over there with the trees around them, that's The Lantana Apartments, and that's where that irrigation canal went, right there. Later it was making the ground salty all around it so they cut it out and put in that new one that I told you about earlier, this concrete line, and uh, and they went in and my dad bought it from the irrigation company. The only way they would sell it would be to somebody that owns the land right next to it so he got that for a dollar an acre for two acres. And then he leveled it and fixed it up for farming.

Marie Sleeth: To mentioned the salty water; the land is very salty, this used to be an [inaudible] or whatever and daddy put in leach, [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** yeh, it would...] that's something I think they would be interested in.

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Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, I was telling Russ about that this very morning, we were talking about that very thing. He was asking where the salt came from on the land. The salt came from the river water. It came out of the deserts where, the deserts of Mexico and Texas and New Mexico and all where they'd get a lot of rain and the water would go in and make a flood, and so forth anyway, it would be carrying minerals of all kinds. And when you irrigated, the water would go down into the soil and the minerals would stay in the soil; the water would be used by the plants. So over a period of time, especially near the dirt canals, it would start getting salty out from those canals, the land, and you couldn't grow anything there, so in the 1950s, maybe the late 40s, the Soil Conservation Service gave a lot of help for that around here, and these drainage canals that we have now, you know where the flood waters go, those were not for that purpose. They were initially, it was all farming all over, everything here, and it was initially put in to drain the subsoil so that the fresh water could leech those minerals out of the soil into that drain ditch and it would go on down to the gulf. And uh, underneath, the way to leech it, the Soil Conservation Service provided monies that the farmers could put in drain tiles, about that far into the ground, that would open, that would end up in those drain ditches. And when they'd irrigate or when they got rain, which was even better, it would leech those minerals out into that canal, into that drain ditch, and you'd take a little cup of water out of that and it was bitter. It was worse than the ocean. And it, anyway, it was, over a few years, why they, the salts got leached out and the soils sweetened up again. Now when it became urbanized here, and you get houses and everything everywhere, you get surface drainage problems. And the only place to drain is into those ditches, into those ditches, which now they need bigger ditches all the time because there is more and more pavement, more and more concrete and everything. So the irrigation companies always owned those ditches, and now they've gotta a, county, county, I guess, drainage district to

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

where they are gradually, gradually expanding those, right where the irrigation companies had them, those ditches. So that's basically what happened there. So, anyway, I don't, I don't know how long ya'll wanna go?

Sandra Salinas: Just as much as we can get and cause our battery is almost out, but I need to ask a few [inaudible], Mrs. Sleeth a few questions.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, okay, did you need to get anything about me in there as far as whose, do you have to....

Sandra Salinas: Uhm. No actually right now we are just, we're just focusing on the structures itself, and the biology and the plants and animals um and the structures of the..

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh, no, no, what I mean, what I mean is my name, who I am, the guy that's talking, did you need that on there?

Sandra Salinas: Uhm, no, uhm, we have another, oh, I'm sorry [**Eduardo Robles:** Oh, we can just...**Eloise Montemayor:** yeh, go ahead and get it] oh okay. Well...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, just for this particular tape maybe, yeah.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, that's fine. You take over.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well I'm Carrol Norquest, Jr., and um, I'm seventy-six years old. I was born here in Edinburg, right here at the place, the place we're talking about. Um, so that should give a little validity to who you've been listening to. [chuckles] Okay. Okay, you guys got any other

Interviewer: Um...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: thoughts? Oh, wait a minute we've got one other structure over here I didn't mention which is my brother's house, south of us, south of us. Well if we walk over that way, we can go ahead and walk up that way. [Talking to Marie Sleeth]I missed another structure and that was I'm just gonna walk them on over that way to Neil's house.

Marie Sleeth: To what?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: To Neil's house.

Marie Sleeth: Oh!

[Carrol Norquest walking towards the brown brick home on southern end of the Norquest Quarters with Miguel Gutierrez, Amanda De La Fuente and Eduardo Robles, while Sandra Salinas and Marie Sleeth stayed behind to have a separate short interview]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I think I've given you all the dates on the various structures that we've talked about. And this is my brother's house, and he, uh, he's supposed to be interviewed also, and he built this, this house was built about 1986 I believe, is when it was built and it's part of the farm land and so forth. Where we're standing is uh...where we're standing from here to the, uh, to the street and over here to this little shed over here, this was all corrals at one time also for cows for the cows to come in. So we had quite a few corrals around here. And that's where he built his house, so...

Eduardo Robles: So this is one of the newer structures?

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Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah. That's probably the newest one. That's the most recent one. The old house is 1925. Then the little Templin house the guest house that was about 1949. And then my house was about 1976 and then this one about 1986.

Eduardo Robles: Now let me ask you, how do ya'll get mail here? Like how does this house...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Its uh, it was always rural route.

Eduardo Robles: Uh-huh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: But we get regular mail delivery. We got a...and Neil has a mailbox right up there.

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and uh, we've got another one back over there for the rest of us, where we get all of our mail. They just put it all together. It's the same system we've had ever since the very beginning, it's the same...it was always had a rural route. Now it's in the city, but they still have the same routes in the city, so...no ch- Aggravation has been changing, as the area grew, the aggravation has been the having of changing frequently. As the - as people move here, well, we were originally Route 2, later we were Route 4, and then we were Route 9 and now we've got a city address, a street address, so and that could be aggravating. You lose mail and you wouldn't get it delivered properly and then of course adding the zip codes later, why that, that's changed a couple of times too. One time when they changed it, there was a whole week we didn't get mail. [laughter] [**Miguel Gutierrez and Eduardo Robles:** Oh wow!] Not only that, they were sending it back unknown. So anyway but that's another matter. Of course folks that had lived in town that had street addresses those didn't change ever. So they didn't have the problem that we had in

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

the country. Other people, other farmers and people living in the country have had the *same* problem I'm telling you about.

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah with the growth of the area.

Amanda De La Fuente: What was in the, in the city of Edinburg? When you guys - you guys were out here in the rural area, what was actually in there? What would you go visit or what was the...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I'm sorry?

Amanda de la Fuente: Like the main actual city for Edinburg. You guys are out in the rural with your farmland.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Amanda de la Fuente: When you would go into town, were there like movies or?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh!

Amanda de la Fuente: Or what was the entertainment?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh. Yeah there were movies, there were movies.. My earliest remembrance is of the Citrus Theatre

Amanda De La Fuente: Oh yes!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: my earliest – that was in the early forties or late thirties (movie theaters) I guess, The Citrus Theatre. They had quite a number of Spanish language movies. There must

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

have been three or four in town through those years. The Citrus and later The Aztec or maybe *initially* The Aztec Theatre were English movies. It wasn't like they have it now where they have a whole bunch of 'em. You could only show one movie and that went on for a while, and then they'd get another movie, so um...And that was when in those years there wasn't money to get to go to a movie. You couldn't. We'd get to go on our birthday. [laughs]

Sandra: It was a special trip.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, get to go, that was a treat, go to a movie on our birthday. And uh, later on of course, the same way with other people, so there just weren't, weren't that man. But uh, I just, they just had a talk at the museum recently by an expert on the Spanish movies during that whole era. And I think, I was tallying up, I think there were either three or four Spanish movie theatres here at the time. They're all gone now. They're just, they're just aren't any. It's not like it was in those days. And uh, a lot of the workers; they had *Braceros*, they had wetbacks, they had local people that were Mexicans that lived over here for different reasons, besides our, our Mexican Americans.

Sandra: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So those folks would flock in on the weekends and go to the movies and the saloons and whatever else. Uh, and I know that because my dad more than once had to go get some of the guys out of, out of the jail. [laughs] They'd have a good time but they uh, what, from our perspective now, there probably wasn't that much what we'd call entertainment. No T.V. We did have a radio.

Amanda De La Fuente: Yeah, your sister was telling us about ironing and hearing the stories.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And no T.V.'s, and you'd get to go to a movie once in a while but people found all kinds of things to do. We had ball games. We had quite a few local ball teams in the valley, even semi-pro, and, and of course the school activities of all kinds. There were things to go to for that. And uh, out on the farm where you're away from everybody, why you, you had your own ball games, you had your other activities. Like my sister said, we'd go swim in the canal! [laughs] The canal down there. And uh, everybody had quite a few kids in those days, two or, so there were kids all around. So we'd find things to do, you know, get in trouble, whatever you know. [laughs] But you didn't... it's a different world; it's a different world in those days. Some ways harsher and some ways better, really. Then listening, watching T.V. while people were telling stories, they'd sit out in the cool air. 'Cause it was cool outside, it wasn't inside, and with the breeze and uh, and uh, so that - basically that, what I'm thinking of now is basically what we did back then. And when you had a bunch of brothers and sisters, you always had something to do. And we'd, we'd roam all over the country too. Like I said there was brushy, we'd play out in the brush out there. And uh, we even had a camping spot, we built a little place, a little shack out there where we'd stay as kids.

Sandra: Oh really?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Course I told you about the wetbacks staying there, some they'd use that shack. When they weren't using it, why we'd go camp in it.

[both he and the group laugh]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And so forth.

Amanda de la Fuente: Sounds like an adventure. There was so much, so much to see here...

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Amanda de la Fuente: [inaudible] Is there anything else you want to mention about, about...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I think I'll let uh... basically I'll let Neil tell about this.

Sandra: He's home.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: He knows – he'd know more about that. In more recent years, the uh, of something of interest in more recent years; I told you about the floods from Hurricane Beulah.

Interviewer: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: They put in this – right across the street there you see the flood water holding detention area. They put that in in about nineteen - early 1980s, after, after Hurricane... what was it? Hurricane Allen. I had water in my house at Hurricane Allen, over there. And they put this in afterwards so that they could put water from this area of town into that. Get it out of peoples' houses and then they put a big drainage line, a 72 inch that comes out past the university and, and over here now. They're deepening it now so they can get water to go in there by gravity and make it even better so. So, but this unfortunately, this homestead area has put in a uh, put in a little lower area than some places so we tend to get water sometimes here. So... now we've got the garbage truck coming by to pick up our stuff! [group laughter] We don't have to go bury it somewhere! Oh there was a while that, uh, before we were in the city they uh, they had a rural garbage collection. And that happened - that came about in the seventies I guess it was. And I was uh, I didn't know they were gonna have it and then I suddenly see along the street here signs that says "*union y dignedad*" and I wondered "what kind of group is that?" And uh, they'd been having a lot of activist activities and.... Well I found out that that was, uh, that

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

was the name of the garbage pickup. With...with - together [inaudible] we can make dignity and ok it's a co-op and everybody or whatever. I didn't know if it was a coop, but anyway. So then they had a certain fee for it so for many years that was our garbage pickup.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And that uh, 'till the city took us in. We uh, the city annexed us in, uh, I think the late, the late seventies, late nineteen seventies we got annexed into the city then, started paying city taxes, and that included garbage pick-up. [brief pause while everyone walks back to the main house] I'm tryin' to see what you can see out there. Anyway we have lots of birds. My son-in-law, my son-in-law saw a squirrel, a squirrel over there in my brother's yard yesterday evening. That's something we never had out here before; regular squirrel. Not the little brown squirrels but the regular one with the big bushy tail [inaudible]. My brother he's out of town so he doesn't even know he's got a squirrel. And those kind of things have been changing too.

Eduardo Robles: How about fires.? Have you had any fires on the property?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Eduardo Robles:: Any of the buildings burn down?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: No, we've been fortunate that way. The biggest fire came close to my house

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: one time we had pasture there.

Eduardo Robles: Mhmm.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: That was in, uh, probably the late seventy - no early eighties maybe. Uh, a pasture. Then we got the Lantana Apartments over there, uh, the city housing project. We were always having problems with those kids over there they'd throw junk into the pasture and one time they set the pasture on fire and it was all dry so it burned all the way across clear up here, just south of my house. It killed some of my trees that were in the yard even. And uh, but the fire, fire, fire department got out here and put it out. And then that same very evening I had to get somebody, a neighbor of ours over here with a tractor and a disc, to disc all around the edges so it didn't, so if, if it flared up on the inside it would not catch hold on the other grass, or spread to my house or to these other houses. So that was - I wasn't here at the time. My wife and two daughters - the older two daughters were at the house when it happened, and I was at the university. I was doing some historical research up in the library, at the historical collection, and I didn't even know about it. And I got a call to George Gause, you may know him.

Eduardo Robles: Yes.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: George says "hey your wife says to come on home or look out the window. And I looked out the window and there was this big bunch of fire. So I got on home, by the time I got home the fire department was out here. So that, that's one thing, yeah! I haven't thought about that for quite a while, but that was, so after that why we, uh...well even living in a house where the whole house was heated with wood we had a wood stove. The chimneys never worked well. I mean the fireplace never worked well. The chimney in the middle of the house that would take smoke up did. It worked. So we had a wood stove there and, uh, until nearly 1970, right after Hurricane Beulah, we got electric stove. And before that we had the wood stove that we'd heat the house with or heat the downstairs with it in the winter, and it was, uh, fire was always on

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

our mind that way. It was always on our mind so uh, it's always...and there have been other times we've had, we've had fires in this orchard I'm telling you about here. This corral was one time – a pasture just south of it caught fire and my dad and I were out there with wet gunny sacks slapping at it and everything and shovels and, and then we'd get some of the men that were working around here and my mom putting it out. A fire department that - it just wasn't available at that time. But it was not a big fire, it was just creeping in the, in the grass, and uh, and it, it burned then and we've had other smaller ones around. Right now where we have the hay field on the other side of the lot, I'm always concerned about that when it gets dry. Because we've got people living all around there now so I try to keep it mowed down or the hay cut on it. [to Sandra Salinas] So uh, anyway, you get...?

Carrol Norquest Jr.

[conversation between Sandra Salinas and Marie Sleeth] (sitting on plastic chairs by the Big House patio) while others are with Carrol Norquest, Jr.]

Sandra Salinas: Ok, sorry.

Marie Sleeth: It's got too much poop; it's all dried.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, well...

Marie Sleeth: We won't sit on it; [**Sandra Salinas:** Okay] I didn't realize it was that much.

[**Sandra Salinas:** That's fine. That's fine.] Or do you want to? I mean it's all dry? [**Sandra**

Salinas: It's, well you're wearing white pants. I don't want your pants to get dirty.] I don't want

to get in there anyway; it's too wiggly. There's a couple of chairs right over there. [**Sandra**

Salinas: Ok, we can sit over there.]

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

(They walk over to the chairs)

Marie Sleeth: Oh, he's remembering all kinds of things, now.

Sandra Salinas: Well, that's ok. That's a good thing. We like when people remember. Yeh, I can sit down here.

(**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** Now there's another structure and that was my brother's house. [**Marie Sleeth:** Your what house?]) Neil's house. [**Marie Sleeth:** Oh.] Yeh. [**Marie Sleeth:** Oh, yeh.]

Sandra Salinas: I was just wondering about the feminine hygiene. How was the feminine hygiene taken care of at that time? How were you guys able, how were you ladies able to cope with the feminine issues? And where would you throw it, what would you do, what would you use, products?

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, well we used, I guess Kotex (giggling). I think that was the only one they had back then. And it, I guess, went into the trash. I don't know. [**Sandra Salinas:** In the trash?] And it got burned.

Sandra Salinas: And it was just burned in the incinerator?

I know, my family makes their own sponges [**Marie Sleeth:** Oh, they did?] and things like that so...

Marie Sleeth: No, we'd use soap and, now whether mamma made the soap or not, I don't know, but uh, I wouldn't think so, cause she would buy soap back then and washcloths. [**Sandra**

Salinas: washcloths?] Mhmm. Now if you'd like to hear something really gross (chuckling),

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Saturday night was our bath night, that's when we took baths. [**Sandra Salinas:** Saturday night.] Saturday night, yes. And it started with, I don't know which one first, [not too sure if this is what she said- "the oldest ones went first?"] (giggling) [inaudible] same water. [**Sandra Salinas:** Ha. Been there, been there] oh, you have you? Yeh. Same water, because it was so scarce. Water was especially, oh in the 50s it was just. Well, daddy, daddy used to bring in water in milk, big milk cans, in the back of his pickup, and dump them in the cistern. [**Sandra Salinas:** Ok.] cause we, uh that's the only way, I mean, the cistern was used, I mean, it was filled with canal water, but there was on, right on this land, there was a filtering system, of sand and everything and by the time it went through all the filtering and into the cistern, it was clear, clear water. And of course, he would put chemicals in it. But during the drought, the seven years of drought, it um, you couldn't get water. So, you got it where you could, and Daddy would go to Russels [Billing?] Station in town on the corn of Closner and Van Week and he would fill up all these cans of water, make several trips and dump them into the cistern. [**Sandra Salinas:** On Closner and what was it, I'm sorry] I think it was Van Week. [**Sandra Salinas:** Van Week.] Yeh, Russels, um that's an old family [inaudible] that's down here. But none of them live here anymore. They're all gone. But anyway, he would let us, you know, get city water, and I think every time Daddy went to town he would get a load of water and bring it out.

Sandra Salinas: As far as clothing and hairstyles and all of the jazz that, that us women love, [**Marie Sleeth:** Yes.] do you, what memories do you have as a little girl and then of course you know in teenager years and adolescence.

Marie Sleeth: Well, now, every late summer we would go to a feed store over on East University, and we would pick out the material on the feed sacks that we wanted our dresses made out of. [**Sandra Salinas:** Ok, the feed stacks?] Yes, and they were pretty-flowered prints.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

And so we would pick out, I want one of this one, and one of this one and this one. Well, we had to buy feed anyway, you know. So, so we went and instead of just burlap sacks, we would get the pretty and I think flour came in those kind of sacks too. [Inaudible] clothes were made out of. And momma had a sewing machine and then as us girls got to eight, nine, ten, eleven years old, we started making our own clothes. [**Sandra Salinas:** I wish I could do that; that's something that I want to take up myself.] And at that point we would go to get patterns and material and [veilas?]. So, and shoes, we got, we had one pair of shoes, or two pair, one for school, one for church. And golly, we uh, it was, everything, we wore dresses; we didn't wear pants back then. Um, now it was clothing and what else was in that question? About make-up and things, which we never had [inaudible] teenagers, had to buy our own, of course. But we never wore make-up. All of us were late daters. I was a senior in high school before I had my first kiss and boyfriend. And I don't know what happened [inaudible] It wasn't frowned on; it's just that nobody wore make-up back then, except maybe my mother's sisters. They were [**Sandra Salinas:** Very girly?] Yeh. I can see them in their flapper outfits. [**Sandra Salinas:** The flappers; that was the time.] And hairstyles, I got a perm, I guess, once a year or something like that. I remember going to the beauty shop, Mrs. [inaudible] Gelker. She lived down the road here, but she had a beauty shop over here in town. And that was something my mother did once a week; she had her standing beauty shop appointment. But this was when, actually, the beauty shop that we went to was down town on University and Frances was her name, and Frances, she lived right down, Frances Gelker, that's what it was, lived right down here. But anyway I would get those perms where, the old kind that they would put the roll your hair, and then put the elec- [**Sandra Salinas:** the little] hot, hot things on there. Yes, yes, those were the kind of perms that I got (chuckles). So it wasn't that Momma wasn't stylish or anything; there were just other things that were more important,

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

you know. But when my, but when, you know, all of us kids were gone and everything, Momma, she used make-up and everything.

Sandra Salinas: And how many times did you say you got them once a month or once a year?

[**Marie Sleeth:** What perms?] Mmmhmm. [**Marie Sleeth:** Probably once a year.] Once a year.

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, it would be cut short and then it would be curly a little while and then it would get longer and longer and longer and longer. You know, and no particular hair style; I think mine was parted down the middle a lot because that's where my natural hair break is. So...

Sandra Salinas: Ok, any braiding?

Marie Sleeth: Braiding. Not, nahah, my hair was never really long enough to braid.

Sandra Salinas: And were the, were the boys clothes um also made out of the same material?

Marie Sleeth: I would say so, but I don't know. I found that when my, when I was sewing for my own kids, that little boys shirts were cheaper to buy than they were to get the material and make them, spend all the time making them. [**Sandra Salinas:** Really?] Cause collars and sleeves and that all, you know, takes a lot of work to put on a collar because, it's, see it's three pieces, and then an inside thing that gets sewed on. Anyway, they were, it was, it took a lot of time to make a shirt.

Sandra Salinas: And you have two sons, right?

Marie Sleeth: I have two sons and a daughter.

Sandra Salinas: Two sons and one daughter. Um was the, how was childbirth? What was the childbirth situation?

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: I, we were all born in this bedroom right here.

Sandra Salinas: All born in the bedroom.

Marie Sleeth: Yeh, and the doctor, which was [inaudible] but I do know that the preacher's wife who was a nurse, birthed one of my brothers, I don't remember which one it was, because the doctor wasn't available, but that's where it all took place.

Sandra Salinas: And your children were born in this location as well?

Marie Sleeth: No they were, one was born in, let's see, Sheryl was born in Corpus, Scott was born in Kingsville, two Navy bases. And then one was born in [Argencha] Newfoundland, Canada at a Navy base. So that's where my kids were born.

Sandra Salinas: It was Sheryl, Scott and what was your other son's name?

Marie Sleeth: Douglas.

Sandra Salinas: Douglas in Canada. Naval bases you said, right? [**Marie Sleeth:** Mmhum] My sister's fiancé's in the Na-, he recently joined the Navy about three years ago, and he just got deployed again on Monday so... [**Marie Sleeth:** Oh, I back over to the Middle East?] Mmmhmm. But, uh he's got some stories. [**Marie Sleeth:** Yeh, I'll bet, I'll bet.] Ok, um, and then everything was just, when the children were born, pretty much everything was just, any leftover rags, bloody rags things like that was just thrown in the incinerator?

Marie Sleeth: I imagine so. I don't know what they did with the stuff. I was nine when Neil was born. [**Sandra Salinas:** Oh, yeh.] So, I don't remember.

[WS600017.WMA 1:21:00]

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Sandra Salinas: Um, is there anything else that um we haven't asked that you think might be important?

Marie Sleeth: I don't know; I'll probably think of something though.

Sandra Salinas: Ok, well, like I mentioned we're going to send you the transcription and if you [Marie Sleeth: Ok.] remember anything or remember specifics about any of the information that spoke about, we can change it [Marie Sleeth: Ok.] or whatever we need to do. [Marie Sleeth: That's good.] I just gotta find where the others went.

Marie Sleeth: They're right there. [Sandra Salinas: Ah, ok.] See, my brother's house is right over there. I think [Sandra Salinas: I see.] that's what he went to. [Sandra Salinas: To go show] To go show them because it was [Sandra Salinas: the structures] the original property [Sandra Salinas: Great.] and the structure.

Sandra Salinas: Did you want to walk that way or were [Marie Sleeth: Yeh] you going to stay here?

Marie Sleeth: I'm getting tired; I want to go [Sandra Salinas: Ok, that's fine] do something.

Sandra Salinas: That's fine. Thank you so much for [Marie Sleeth: Well, you're welcome], for [Marie Sleeth: ...this is] taking time out of your [Marie Sleeth: what, my busy, busy schedule] your schedule. Well, it's your vacation, right?

Marie Sleeth: Well, yeh, but I'm vacationing. If you all weren't here, I'd be in there working with beads. I make jewelry.

Sandra Salinas: Oh, great!

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Marie Sleeth: And uh. So, I'll, between that and I sketch. I actually, I can, I do portraits in pencil [**Sandra Salinas:** Oh, beautiful, beautiful.] with all the shading and [inaudible-Sandra talks over her] [**Sandra Salinas:** Eloise the one with the bandana, and Amanda the one in the red, the other, both females, they're both art majors and artists. [**Marie Sleeth:** Oh, they are? Oh wow] So, they do a lot of art work.

[walking after interview is over back to the main interview with the rest of the group]

Marie Sleeth: This was where the little [inaudible] was and where, [**Sandra Salinas:** Right here?] when we had our fifth wheel. Yeh there's a septic tank out there, water, and electricity and everything so we parked our fifth wheel right here. So, it's...

Sandra Salinas: And what is that little house for?

Marie Sleeth: Oh that's Neil's kid's play house.

Sandra Salinas: Play house.

Marie Sleeth: It'll be there til... forever.

Sandra Salinas: [writing] the play house, [**Marie Sleeth:** Yeh.] and this was the storage facility.

Marie Sleeth: Now, when were living here those three years, we had a washer and dryer here and a freezer. [**Sandra Salinas:** And a freezer. the big ones?] yes.

Sandra Salinas: I wonder how much time is left on that camera.

[Eloise Montemayor approaches us]

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Eloise Montemayor: I'm not sure, I don't think you got, the stating your name and that, so you wanna make sure you get that.

Sandra Salinas: Oh okay. Yeah.

Marie Sleeth: Okay.

Sandra Salinas: The interviewer is Sandra Salinas, and the date is Friday October 21st of 2011, and the interview began at ten o'clock a.m. and the interviewee is...

Marie Sleeth: Marie Sleeth, that's an Sssss (giggling) [**Sandra Salinas:** an Sssss for Sleeth] yes. I am the child number three and the oldest daughter.

Sandra Salinas: Well it's been a pleasure and we will let you go inside and uh...

Marie Sleeth: well I hardly ever get to talk about myself very much (giggling) So this is nice.

Sandra Salinas: Well this, this is a fun project that we [cuts off] they say that if the beautiful cardinals are around you, it means money.

Marie Sleeth: Well shoot, I used to live outside Banders, ten miles outside of Bandera, outside Bandera, where Scottie and I retired, we had beautiful birds all over the place. And I remember those, but I don't remember any money showing up. (laughing)

Sandra Salinas: Maybe that myth is just false (laughing)

Marie Sleeth: I don't know (giggling)

Sandra Salinas: Well we can take you back this way. Thank you so much Mrs. Sleeth [**Marie**

Sleeth: oh no thank you] have a wonderful day. I know you are gonna go back retire to your beads.

Marie Sleeth: I make jewelry, you know necklaces and stuff.

Sandra Salinas: [pointing to Eloise Montemayor] She's an artist also.

[Sandra walking back to man group that is with Carrol Norquest, Jr. and Eloise Montemayor and Marie Sleeth stayed behind to talk about art]

Sandra Salinas: Yes! We got everything we needed. Um...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And I've found a few more things that we, that I told you we told you all about. Ok very good.

Sandra Salinas: Great! Great!

Interviewer: [inaudible]

Sandra Salinas: Uh, I think we got everything that we needed.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Mhmm.

Sandra Salinas: Let me just double check my questions really quick here.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Ok. I gave, I gave them my name and age and so forth, so you know who's talking on there.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm. Great! Yes, we got everything we needed. Thank you so much for letting us take some of your time.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [laughs] Well we've, we've enjoyed it!

Miguel Gutierrez: One more question.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh-huh? Yes!

Miguel Gutierrez: Just out of curiosity since you guys lived so different in such different times back then. Um, you guys mentioned you had no TV, you had no - the only, the only thing you had was probably a radio?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah.

Miguel Gutierrez: that you'd listen to? Back then, like, when you were younger what were you what were your like, let's say your favorite stations or would you keep up with any sporting events? [inaudible]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Okay! Well we had, we had uh, either two, I think we had two stations here,

Miguel Gutierrez: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And then we had KURV and KRGV; Harlingen and, and Weslaco. We could pick WOAI up from San Antonio

Miguel Gutierrez: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and maybe one or two others and some of the Mexicans' not very many, they didn't have as many as they do now. There were, there were one or two of them and uh, then uh, let's see what was your other...

Miguel Gutierrez: Oh, if you were, if they

Sandra Salinas: Sports.

Miguel Guitierrez: would broadcast any other sporting events. Or any other events?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh yeah, they would have they would have events, like we would always listen to the news, the weat- the news like it was usually about a fifteen minute news at noon or half an hour at noon just like kinda like they do now. And as a kid like that, we'd get home from school we'd listen to uh, listen to the stories that were on there, ya know?

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I'm tryin to think what they were. Anyway they had, they had half hour stories like they do on TV now. Um, there was one about the Canadian mounted police, and then there was, uh, Batman, and there was things like this you know.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: What you'd have in the comics only it was on radio, and we'd listen to that. Sometimes if there were there were, I don't remember very many sports things, but there were some that got broadcasted. If we had an interest, if we had a vested interest in any of those teams we'd listen to them, and we'd listen to some national news, and then there were also uh, like on TV other, other comedy, comedy shows; Fiber McGee and Molly. And the folks, my folks always listened to The Breakfast Club in the morning - Todd - what was his name? It escapes me. Anyway it was kinda like, uh, in a way like some of the morning shows on TV only... So it was – the TV patterned a lot of what they do after that and then improved on it in a, for the visual, visual effect. But you couldn't get transistor radios yet even in those days. You

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

had to, you had to plug it in here, and that was after the uh, the electricity came. Now I don't know before that...you read books, you visited people. They did a lot more visiting around too.

Sandra Salinas: Wrote letters.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, wrote – yeah! That's a lost art or getting to be a lost art. And uh, they had dances here in the house. It was the biggest house around here and my grandfather played the fiddle and my dad played the piano for 'em, and they'd do square dancing, they'd do whatever. The neighbor farmers around would get in too. So that's kind of – you were asking about entertainment. [inaudible]

Amanda de la Fuente: Yeah, I wanted to know about dances also. There was more of a sense of a community.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah. Yeah and the same way in town we could hear the, uh, you could hear on the - without the air conditioning, you could hear the *bailes* at night, wherever it was somebody's backyard or something you could hear the [imitating dance music] “bum bum bada bada bum bum” [group laughs] on into the night, you know!

Sandra Salinas: Uh-huh!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Or another thing! When our men were coming they'd go to Saturday, Saturday and oh we did a lot of singing ourselves among you know, music and so forth we were all musicians and so forth. People did a lot more of that. At night, on a quiet at night, not a lot of wind, you could hear late at night, you could hear some of our men coming back home you can hear 'em singing way in the distance you know. Off in the distance as they got closer, they'd be singing some of their Spanish songs that they knew and all, and that was real neat! Real neat.

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

And then you'd go to bed up stairs and you'd hear the *baile* in town going "bom bom, barra barra, bom bom".

[group laughs]

Amanda De La Fuente: That's the same sound. It's still like that. [laughs]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah! With my grandparents from the Midwest - my grandparents were Swedish immigrants. But anyway my grandfather was a fiddler so the farmers, most of them at the time were uh, were uh, Midwesterners that had come down. There were some of the farmers around here like the Espinosas and, and some others, they had been chased out of Mexico with the revolution. They'd owned land around here too. But most of the ones my folks knew were the Midwesterners and some of them they'd even know back up in Kansas. They'd get together for dances and parties here at our - or some of the other places around here. So, anyway, back to finishing this up. [laughs]

Sandra Salinas: Well this is so interesting that when you start talking about all the different that... you know people say that we're so different from each other in race and all this, but really we have a lot of similarities. I think we need to focus more on that. And there's a big dog coming!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah and our... yeah that's, that's Babushka. Somebody

Sandra Salinas: Babushka!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Somebody, somebody left her out here.

Sandra Salinas: Awww!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: We never had to buy dogs or cats. All my life people have left them here.

Sandra Salinas: Oh you're so pretty. Hi baby.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, but you know along with that a uh, people are intermarrying my wife is from Mexico.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm. mhmm

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: You just met her a little while ago. She was born there she's a naturalized citizen. But it was the same group of people that uh, settled here along the border.

Sandra Salinas: Exactly.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So uh, two of my son-in-laws are like my kids half Mexican.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Both of them are also part Indian.

Sandra Salinas: Oh wow!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: One is Choctaw her husband and the other Modesto Vasquez, he's part Navajo.

Sandra Salinas: Oh wow. Beautiful!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So my brother Neil, his, his daughter

Sandra Salinas: [inaudible] rounds

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: that just finished medical school. She's married to a Flores, and he's a cousin of one of my brother-in-laws.

Sandra Salinas: [laughs] Small world, huh?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yeah, yeah. So anyway, here in the valley though, we've found, getting into genealogy which is part of this all, we've found that here in the valley, it's not *if* people are related, but *how*. So if you're sitting in a restaurant, then you gotta be careful, you don't know who's relative or what. Especially in - the Edinburg area is the, is the most noticeable in that because people are all, all related either through blood or through marriage or through business or through church or through somehow. And they come out of the ranch country too, these people have been here for, for several centuries. And my wife, they go back to one of the original land grants on the South side of the river.

Sandra Salinas: Wow!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: 300 years...No, over 200 years, years ago. And uh, the little village she came from goes back at least 300 years ago, just right close by here. And when that happens, people intermarry, it was a small community that the Spanish had and then the Mexicans for years and years and it was uh, they didn't have anybody to marry except relatives.

Sandra Salinas: Mhmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And so people are all inter-related, and then of course as the valley has grown, all it takes is one marriage and you're related to everybody else.

[group laughs]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So, so,

Sandra Salinas: Cousin! so, yeah (laughing) and it's not strange, genealogy, I've uh, I've done a big study on the Pena Family, my wife and uh, anyway, you can see how they intermarried as they go way back. My wife's grandparents, her father's parents, he was a Pena, her mother was a Gonzalez, they were from the same village, but they were related. Her parents were fourth cousins, but her father's parents were second cousins. [**Sandra Salinas:** oh, okay] on the Pena line, they were third cousins on the Pena line, fourth cousins on the Pena line, and this was not unusual. So if ya'll ever start doing the genealogy, if you're from the border area here, you're gonna find this if you uh, uhh...

Sandra Salinas: Well that's our goal in the CHAPS program, to learn the genealogy and the history and everything that comes with it.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: So yeah, people really, just don't know their history. They just DON'T know it [emphasizes this].

Sandra Salinas: That's what we're for, that's what we're trying to do!

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: This has been a place where people leave, including my cousins, I have forty first cousins that grew up here, people leave from here, these little villages where my wife came from, they leave so that people can continue intermarrying like that, through the years and uh, and uh, anyway, by the time you get down to , get down to this time, well everyone is related. (chuckles) So I found out one of Odie's cousins is in, is in your class, uh, he's a Pena, he's the son of Aaron, Aaron [Pena] the state representative. So, he told my brother, "we're gonna be interviewing you", and he said, I'm looking forward to it, so I'll have to introduce Caroline

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

[Twist] to her cousin when he ..(laughing) He's her fourth, uh with her he's about her fifth cousin. Yeah.

Sandra Salinas: I know plenty of my fourth cousins and fifth cousins, so it's really great when we, families have that connection.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Well we've got, we've got some good friends that their daughters knew, they're eighth cousins [**Sandra Salinas:** wow that's great] so they could, yeah they could prove it through their (laughing) [**Sandra Salinas:** that's great! That's great] so they are all very interesting.

Marie Sleeth: From Alaska

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: From Alaska, so anyways...that's about to give out, well, well I've enjoyed it!

Sandra Salinas: We've had so much fun that we ran out of technology. Haha, technology just can't...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The old technology used to need us to crank it to keep it going.

Sandra Salinas: Yup, yup, that's why we need old technology.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: yeah, yeah (chuckles)

Sandra Salinas: Well it was uh, it was really wonderful meeting both of you! And uhm, we really do appreciate you taking your time out of your day and uhm, careful with the baby [referring to small dog]

CHAPS RGV Group G
Transcription

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: this is uh, an interesting project that Russ [Dr. Skowronek] is starting.

I've known him for several years now, since he moved down, and in our Los Porciones Society, we've been pushing it, we've been working with him a lot to make it happen and uh, and I'm just delighted for him to do that. It's not easy for him to do that

Sandra Salinas: Nope of course not, but we are also happy that we're the guinea pigs.

(laughing)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: (laughing) yup, so down the line, the next groups will benefit from our mistakes.

Sandra Salinas: yeah... (laughing) Well pleasure meeting you again and thank you so much for your time.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh yes. Oh yeah. Oh you've got the, oh, well I could've done the other hand [shaking hands with everyone] Real fun having you out here.

Sandra Salinas: Thank you Mrs. Sleeth, and thank you so much for your time.

Marie Sleeth: Oh yes, and some of you need to go back and get your stuff from my house. And we can say goodbye there.

Sandra Salinas: Oh yes.

Eloise Montemayor: Did you get her name for the record and all that?

Sandra Salinas: Yes, I did.

Marie Sleeth: Yes. Yes I already said all that.

Eloise Montemayor: Oh you did. Okay. Good. You might wanna get it on the camera.

Sandra Salinas: Oh okay.

Marie Sleeth: [in sarcastic tone] Okay, My name is Marie Sleeth! I was born and raised here in Edinburg. (laughing) [**Carrol Norquest, Jr.:** on this property] on this property, is that all you want.

Eduardo Robles: Your age?

Marie Sleeth: I'm seventy-three (giggling)

Sandra Salinas: The only time we are allowed right (giggling)

Marie Sleeth: Yeah, (laughing) well I'm proud of being 73...

Sandra Salinas: I like getting older personally.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: As I told you before, I'm the number one and she's the number three and Dixie is the number four-five and Neil is the number seven. The others are out of town [**Marie Sleeth:** out of state] out of state. I'm glad you were able to catch her before she leaves tomorrow night.

[video camera ran out of battery while walking back to small white with green trim house and only had the Olympus left]

[last conversation of the interview on Olympus device and conversation is between Carrol Norquest, Jr., Sandra Salinas, Amanda De La Fuente and Miguel Gutierrez]

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: [distantly heard] Alot of these berries are good to eat- (wind)

Sandra Salinas: So it was the, an th-, may you pronounce that, uhm, tree one more time?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Anacua.

Sandra Salinas: Anacua. Ok.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I don't know what they call it in English [Wind] it's an Anacua. And then, uh, I've planted some other native trees over in my. There is an Elm over here that is native that we planted. The Oaks of course, and the, the **Athal** there. The Mesquite. Of course you know the Cactus. The Nopal. The Tunas. They're edible. [Pause]

Amanda De La Fuente: Would you use that for cooking when you were younger? The nopal?

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Uh yea. Oh su- yea, right, sure do.

Amanda De La Fuente: (light giggle)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: We got um here, I got a number of varieties this one is a- uh, that one is a uh, ah- Granjeno.

Sandra Salinas: Granjeno.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: It's a uh what do they call it, a spiny hackberry. It's related to hackberry. Or it is a hackberry but it's spiny, it's got thorns, full of thorns. But the, the ah- the fruit on it is good. It's a round orange colored one, and my wife really likes it [pause] and I eat it too I'm not that fond of it but she is. [Footsteps on grass] And uh, let's see I've got what they call in English a wild olive. I planted one myself back over there but that's an Anacahuita. This is the Anacahuita and for some reason that's named Anacahuita but I think they are not related.

Sandra Salinas: hmm.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: These cactus here are what they call a cerius cactus, c-e-r-i-u-s I believe. It's a cerius. And it, they have the most beautiful flowers that bloom at night. They only bloom one night. Big white flowers. Big beautiful flowers (wind)

Sandra Salinas: wow.

Amanda De La Fuente: Only with the moon right? When the moon is full it's when.. it blooms.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Oh then, you can, oh you can see it; otherwise take a flashlight and look at it. And then in the morning they open like this and the bugs are in there doing their thing and then as the daylight- after about an hour, -my little granddaughter and I saw it do this, after about an hour, hour and a half, it starts closing up and we stood there and we watched it close.

Sandra Salinas: Wow.

Amanda De La Fuente: That's beautiful.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: And then it ah then it closed up and it goes into kind of a pretty spiral like this. And then it makes a red fruit, and the red fruit is, kind of like a tuna. Only it's like on a nopal, it's uh- there's different, it got a different flavor (wind) black seeds in it. I've got at least two varieties of this, -the birds planted.

Sandra Salinas: (giggle)

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Amanda De La Fuente: Really. Yes, my sister works in- well she use to work in at a nature center in Weslaco, and she would tell me about that cactus, that it- it would- bloom- with the moon...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: The cerius cactus. Oh ok so you've heard about it then. ok this one right here if you go out a little ahead out of my drive over there, you'll see on the east side you'll see some that look like this, only that it's smaller and they are about like this and uh- if you look you can see some of the little uh little fruits. I think there may even be a red one there now; and you may see some of the, uh the- some of the flowers that have curled up, maybe I'm not sure what's on there now...

Sandra Salinas: (distantly heard) I was wondering...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: but that one over there, that little one over there it's got a bigger flower then this bigger one. It's got a big oh- and they are just real beautiful, real beautiful. I had taken a number of pictures of them, get out here at night with a flash camera. (Laughter)

Sandra Salinas: I'm sure Dr. Skowronek would enjoy looking at those photos. He loves- to see uh beautiful photos like that, so...

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I'll have to- yes. Over time I, I think I may learn a lot, I've gotten to be a good friend with him. And were working together on a number of things so, he'll, I'm glad to hear that too. Anyway, well I'll let you go, go get your stuff. Yeah! We'll hopefully see you again before the projects over. I don't know.

Sandra Salinas: Yea, I know there is going to be another seven groups coming out.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: Yea.

Sandra Salinas: Uhm-

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: But there is other things going on with the project. So we may – we may run across you with some other things yet. Anyways it's been a real pleasure!

Sandra Salinas: [distantly heard] Bye! Thank you.

Miguel Gutierrez : Sir. Last second. Where did you find the, the arrowheads that you showed Dr. Skowronek?

Carrol Norquest, Jr. : Where?

Miguel Gutierrez: Yeah.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I. Ok, well my father found most of them, when he was young, back in the 20s, and 30's, and 40's, and we found um out in here, I don't know where, where all this corn is that's where he found them.

Miguel Gutierrez: Ohh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and [pause] -which indicates there is probably other places. I've heard of finding others around, finding around in the other locations around here. But the one, one of them that I found -was East of the house, about 100 yards a little bit south. You're going to see a conch shell; it's a shell, it's a sea shell. And- they used for various purposes, my daughter Christine found it over here in my brother's house, he's got a fence around it, he's got a gate over in the southeast corner of it and about uh 10 yards out there was crop there at that time. She was 12 years old; she's the one that in uh –working on her PhD in Iowa, at the University of Iowa. She uhm, she said, “Hey daddy I found a big snail!” (light laughter)

Amanda de la Fuente & Miguel Gutierrez : (laughter)

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: and she brought this thing to me. And I said good grief! You'll be able to tell that it's old, it's been underground for a long time, it's not shiny like the shells on the beach.

(Wind) There's a part of it that's chipped out. Tom Fort at the museum did a little research on how they used those shells. (pause) And then I found, my son in law Patrick found and –uh you'll see that uh -ah -it's ahh it's the grinder on the molcajete.

Miguel Gutierrez : ohhh.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: It's different from the ones we buy at the stores, you'll see. You're gonna see. I don't know if it's volcanic or just what. He found it right around here, just north of the little house... Right after they dug a sewer line, I mean, a septic line. They dug down a ways and later on when he was mowing the grass, it was green when he was mowing it, and he said "hey there's this little rock here, let me show you what it was." It was-

Miguel Gutierrez: the molcajete.

Carrol Norquest, Jr.: I don't know whether two sections have different names or not. But the ah- anyway, so I saved that. And it's not what you see here in the stores. It was not. So whether it came here when from the people where clearing the land and it got lost here –or whether in Spanish times someone dropped it here or what. (Wind) I don't know. We just don't know. 15 feet north of the house, So you'll see that-

Miguel Gutierrez: ahh ok.

Carrol Norquest, Jr. : Yea. Maybe you'll all do a little more research on it. See what-

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Miguel Gutierrez : Maybe in the future- (wind) Well thank you.