

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

TAPE INDEX

NAME: Mrs. Victoria Archuleta Sierra
DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 10, 1991
LOCATION: Pocatello, Idaho 83201
INTERVIEWER: Angela Luckey

TAPE ONE - SIDE A:

Tape Min.

- 0:00 Introduction. Her people were from New Mexico and Colorado. Her great grandmother was Indian. All family members were born in New Mexico or Colorado. Family came to Idaho after marrying and children were born. They lived on a farm in Colorado. Father was a field worker. They had a model T. Family picked green beans. Vicki and her brother would babysit in the car while their parents worked. Car trouble was common.
- 5:00 Description of lunch in the fields. Boiled potatoes, etc. was on the menu. It was like a picnic everyday and fun for the kids. Vicki learned to cook while parents worked. Her Dad taught her how to make tortillas. Mother cooked "gringo" style not Mexican style. They went to Oregon on Renganche.
- 10:00 Moved to Pocatello. She describes the Indians. She has grown up timid because of prejudicial treatment in Colorado. People here were nice. They lived in a house on Fourth Street. They stayed because one of her brothers married a local girl who was Indian/Irish and settled down in Pocatello.
- 13:00 They came to Oregon by bus. Expenses were paid by renganche program. They came to Pocatello by train. In Pocatello they either walked or took a taxi. Vicki joined the WACs. She went to Des Moines, Iowa and Fort Sam Houston in Texas. She was stationed in Hamilton Air Force Base in San Francisco. Her parents were not too happy about her joining the service. Later, she went to Business School and was employed as a waitress.
- 20:00 Traded on credit. She, her Dad and brothers worked at the railroad. Teens would gather at a little store. Braceros came to town and many worked on the railroad. They also went to the teen hangout. Another store run by Greeks was a gathering place. People's Market was a home-owned store where they shopped.
- 25:00 Mexicans were treated well. No signs banning Mexicans or Indians. Compared with Colorado Mexicans could hold any job and wages were better. There was prejudice within the ethnic group. U.S. Mexicans did not get along with Mexican nationals because they worked for lower wages.
- 30:00 Vicki attended the Idaho State University School of Vocational Education to learn electrical systems to get a job as an electrician. Many women took welding, etc. during the war.

SIDE B:

- 0:00 Vicki married and became homemaker. Her early education was near Grand Junction in a little town called Appleton. After her first day, she was sent home because she did not know English.

- 5:00 Her father had taught her to read and write in Spanish, but she didn't transfer the learning. The family moved to a rent free home which her mother wall papered with old magazine pages. She learned to read by reading the wallpaper.
- 10:00 She was the only Mexican in school. When asked what her nationality was, she said she was Spanish, American, Mexican, and Indian. She dropped out in the 10th grade when they moved to Oregon, she just never went back to school although her father wanted her to. She worked in Head Start when her last two children attended and liked it so well that she got a CDA, Associate Degree and worked there for fifteen years.
- 15:00 Her sister was adopted. Explanation of adoption.
- 20:00 Continuation of circumstances of sister's adoption.
- 25:00 Salaries were money, not goods. There was a Japanese camp in Nyssa, Oregon. Three boys lived with them because they came from Colorado with the family and wanted to work with her Dad. They owned their own home. The most important thing about living in Pocatello is that there is a lot of opportunity to realize your dreams.
- 30:00 She feels accepted in Pocatello. She taught her children to nicely stand up for themselves when faced with confrontation.

TAPE TWO - SIDE A:

- 0:00 Work in Head Start. Sayings or expressions. A character description of her father.
- 5:00 Her brother went AWOL from the Air Force and changed his name. His whereabouts were a family secret. He later joined the Army under his alias, served his term of duty and was pardoned for his previous infraction. Another brother died but Vicki tells about his children. Her younger brother attend Idaho State University and became an educator. He is currently retired but continues to do volunteer work counseling Hispanic youth and teaching ESL classes. Her sister has always been sickly but alive. She had not been expected to live very long.
- 10:00 Vicki talks about her own children and grandchildren. Family reunions are mostly of her husband's family. Her father taught her how to make chile ristras. They used chile colorado but did not eat corn tortillas as much as flour tortillas. She describes other foods that she remembers her mother cooking.
- 15:00 She talks about some Christmas customs. In Grand Junction, the people held velorios. She describes these.
- 20:00 Velorios description continued. Religion was important but being out on a ranch, they only attended church once a month, holidays or special missions.
- 25:00 A book given them by a friend still remains in the family. "La Historia Sagrada" is covered with deer skin. She recently gave it to Robert. It's been in the family since 1926. They went around singing "Las Mananitas with another couple. The woman friend made an impression on her because of her beautiful singing. One time, they went to a three-day birthday celebration. Another time they had a big fiesta for her brother's baptism. His godparents served pineapple for dessert. It was the first time she had ever tasted it.

30:00 They ate more meals "gringo" style than Mexican style.

SIDE B:

0:00 Description of foods that her mother made.

5:00 Music was important. She learned to play the guitar and sing by listening to Lydia Mendoza records. She and others would play at neighborhood dances.

10:00 In Pocatello, she was invited to a birthday dinner and later to a dance. She was asked to sing. She met her husband at that dance but the next day he went into the service. Her wedding was a typical Mexican wedding.

15:00 They had the wedding dinner at home. The dance was at the Black USO hall. She wore the traditional wedding dress with long veil. Her maid of honor wore a yellow dress.

20:00 Weddings in Grand Junction had a procession from the dinner to the dance hall. A traditional custom in Colorado was the Entrega de los Novios.

25:00 Entrega description. Vicki tells about an Hispanic organization in Pocatello. It was for the purpose of unification, scholarships, and social. They celebrated the 16 of September and the 5th of May. It lasted six years. Organization dissolved because of power struggles.

30:00 Vicki tells about her views on Hispanic organizations.