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South Colton Oral History Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Cecilia Robledo Huerta

Interviewer:

Dr. Tom Rivera

Interview Date:

October 1, 2015

Location:

Grand Terrace, California

Interview Summary completed by:

Ana Figueroa, 2020

Topic:

Dr. Tom Rivera interviews Cecilia Robledo Huerta regarding the history of her father Savas Robledo and his arrival in Colton, California, involvement in boxing, and contributions to the South Colton community.

Keywords:

- Boxing
- Boxing rings
- Cub Scouts
- Josie Gonzales (Fifth District Supervisor for the County of San Bernardino)
- Colton (Calif.)
- South Colton Community

Comments:

None

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
DVD	00.00.00-00.03.54	Arrival to Colton

DVD	00.03.55- 00.06.15	Boxing
DVD	00.06.20- 00.07.03	Meeting of Spouse
DVD	00.07.18- 00.07.50	Armed Forces service
DVD	00.08.45- 00.09.50	Family tree
DVD	00.09.50- 00.14.15	Community service in Colton
DVD	00.13.15- 00.14.10	Josie Gonzales (Fifth District Supervisor for the County of San Bernardino)
DVD	00.14.40- 00.15.30	Colton boxing ring Hall of Fame
DVD	00.15.40- 00.18.11	Work with Cub Scouts in Colton

Related Materials:

Additional oral history interviews are available from the South Colton Oral History Project at CSUSB, <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/colton-history/>

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Interviewee:

Cecilia Robledo Huerta

Interviewer:

Dr. Tom Rivera

Interview Date:

October 1, 2015

Location:

Grand Terrace, California

Length:

1:05:20

Media format:

DVD

List of Acronyms:

TR = Dr. Tom Rivera

CRH = Cecilia Robledo Huerta

FA = Frank Acosta

Interview Transcript completed by:

Ana Figueroa, 2020

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

VIDEO SECTION 1

TR: Good afternoon. I'm Tom Rivera and welcome to our oral history project. Our South Colton Oral History project. Today is October 1, 2015. It is about 1:30 to 2 P.M. We are taping at 23170 Vista Grande Way. Our Guest this afternoon is Mrs. Cecilia Robledo Huerta. Cecilia, welcome to our taping session this afternoon. Thank you for being with us. We would like to talk about your dad. Tell us a little bit about your dad.

CRH: My father was Savas Robledo—

TR: Was his real name Savas Robledo?

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CRH: Yes, Savas Robledo

TR: And when was he born Cecilia?

CRH: He was born in San Miguel El Alto, Jalisco

TR: He was born in Mexico then

CRH: Yes, he was born in Mexico and he came to the United States at the age of three years old.

TR: Did he come straight to Colton or did he go--

CRH: No, he came to Miami

TR: Miami? Arizona?

CRH: Miami, Arizona and from Miami, Arizona they moved to Santa Barbara. I'm pretty sure he was ten years old then.

TR: He was ten years old in Santa Barbara? How did he get to Colton?

CRH: His father was offered a job at Martinez Bakery as a baker man.

TR: Oh, so your grandpa was a baker?

CRH: He was a baker and he came to Martinez Bakery on Seventh street.

TR: Seventh and M street?

CRH: Right there and they settled in South Colton on Steven Street.

TR: So, your grandpa got a job with Martinez bakery and then he went one block, two blocks, almost three blocks to Seventh street off of Stevens. They set up his house there.

CRH: And he started this [inaudible] Sandoval would take my dad for a ride and then he would fight with the neighborhood kids so he could make money to pay for gas. And my dad really like it because he would beat the kids up and was winning and they would pay him money.

CRH and TR [laughs}

TR: This person Sandoval, was he related to you?

CRH: No, he was not related to us, but he lived across the street from my dad and grandfather. So, he knew the family, they were really good friends.

TR: So, he would work with your dad or pick up your dad?

CRH: Yes, he would pick up my dad

TR: How old was your dad?

CRH: He must have been about ten years old I would say

TR: And they took him to pay for gas?

CRH: Yes. They put him to fight the neighborhood kids—

TR: So, he would provoke fights with the neighborhood kids and he [Sandoval] would bet on your dad and then he would get money to pay for gas. [laughs]

CRH: To pay for the gas. So that's when my dad started liking boxing. He went to Wilson school and Garfield. He started running and really liked boxing and that's when he started.

TR: So, he went to Garfield elementary school then he went to Wilson and then he decided to keep on fighting, and he started training. Who did he train under?

CRH: Under Heremias Perez—

TR: Johnny Perez

CRH: [nodding her head] Johnny Perez

TR: Johnny Perez was a boxer also. A very successful, professional boxer.

CRH: He coached my dad and was his trainer. He would go to box or fight at the Olympic in Los Angeles and in Madison Square Garden.

TR: In New York?

CRH: Yes, he would go to New York.

TR: Your dad fought in Madison Square Garden, New York?

CRH: [nodding] Madison Square Garden

TR: What I know about your dad is that he was a Golden Glover.

CRH: Yes

TR: IN 1937, 1938, 1939 he was a Golden Glover and he was a champion. He came in second in 1940 in the Golden Gloves. But in late 1940's he turned pro. And he had 25 fights and lost only 3. Heremias was a good trainer.

CRH: [nodding her head] He was a very good trainer. He really liked him. He was a really nice man, Heremias.

TR: And did he make any money as a professional boxer that you know of?

CRH: Not that I know of. Probably something but not that I remember

TR: Did he keep any trophies or any mementos?

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CRH: Yes, he did. He kept a lot of medals, a couple of trophies, and paper clippings that he would show us in the family.

TR: And you said being a good boxer, he was dedicated to what he was doing as a boxer. Getting up early in the morning and running.

CRH: Yes, running every morning

TR: Where would he run?

CRH: He would run to the [inaudible]

TR: The [inaudible] was going toward Riverside

CRH: Yes, toward Riverside, the [inaudible] which was known as the Santa Ana river. And then Jap Hill, he would run up there and he would run to Blue Mountain too. He would run all over. And then get ready to go to school.

TR: So, after he did his training in running, he would get ready to go to school. He was at Colton High School.

CRH: [nodding] yes, Colton High School.

TR: And going to Garfield elementary school, did he meet your mom when he was going---

CRH: that's where he met my mother

TR: So, they were very young when they were in Garfield elementary school.

CRH: They dated, and they would walk to school together.

TR: Were they in the same grade?

CRH: I think so. And mom was very shy.

TR: Well you know if you lived on Stevens street, did your mom also live in that area?

CRH: Yes. She lived on Seventh Street at the time that my dad lived on Steven. That's where they met. They were probably like 15, 16 or so. They dated and then got married.

TR: Your dad went to Colton High School?

CRH: [nodding] He went to Colton High School.

TR: He graduated from Colton High School?

CRH: Yes, he graduated from Colton High School

TR: What year did he graduate do you know?

CRH: I think it was in 1942.

TR: 1942?

CRH: I think 1942, that's when he graduated

TR: Did he go into the service?

CRH: He went into the service, to the army and was honorably discharged because he had burned his arm. He couldn't carry the equipment.

TR: Did he burn his arm when he was training or was –

CRH: No, it was in maneuvers

TR: How did he burn his arm did he ever tell you?

CRH: No, he didn't tell us. But it was a big burn on his arm. So, they gave him the honorable discharge.

TR: So, he was discharged because of his injury? And then he came back to Colton?

CRH: He came back

TR: Let me go back a little bit. Did your grandparents always live on Stevens Street?

CRH: No. From Stevens they moved onto K Street. Next door to Father Valencia's house

TR: Next door to the church

CRH: Yes, next door to the church. They moved there and that's where all the family was.

TR: So, the family was basically raised in that area. Do you remember what the address was?

CRH: I think it was two something--

TR: But it was next door to Father Valencia's house.

CRH: Yes, next door to Father Valencia

TR: And they were there for a long time

CRH: A long time

TR: Now we talked about your grandpa coming to Colton because he was a baker who worked for Martinez. How many kids did your grandparents have?

CRH: On my father's side there were five of them

TR: Five?

CRH: Five, they had five. Two girls and three boys

TR: OK so Savas was the oldest or youngest?

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CRH: No, the middle one.

TR: The middle one?

CRH: Yes, the oldest was Shawn Robledo, [looking down thinking hard] then my dad, and then Lupe, and Chepe, and Gloria

FA: What was Shawn's real name?

CRH: Asuncion Robledo

FA: And Chepe is Jose?

CRH: Jose Robledo

FA: Guadalupe?

CRH: And Lupe, Guadalupe and Gloria

TR: So anyway, all of them were raised on L Street?

CRH: yes, all of them on L street.

TR: You mentioned that your dad also was a person that liked to work with children

CRH: Oh, he loved to work with children. The younger the better because he would train them. While he would train the kids, if they didn't have any money then he would raise funds or what ever and the parents would help, and they would buy the equipment.

TR: One of the things I remember when I was 13 or 14 years old, I was one of his students...

CRH: [laughs]

Tr: because he had a boxing school there on the corner of Seventh and N street, behind the Llama area. The Llama was a store. There were several of us, I remember about 10 of us that were in his class. He taught us how to weave, and use the rope, punch and protect the body. We had a wonderful time with him being our instructor, but we were lacking equipment. Estabamos probrecitos [we were really poor] so we were lacking equipment. So, I remember one summer that we got together, all of us that were in the club, and we went to pick grapes. And the money we got that day in picking grapes, we used to buy equipment. Punching bags, and boxing gloves and that sort of thing. So, I think your dad did that all the time.

CRH: Yes, he did all that to help. He never asked for anybody, the city or whoever, he would do it on his own. And people would help, and he would help. He was always a caring man to help anybody in need. He didn't care about race or color, just anybody –

TR: He just wanted to help kids

CRH: He wanted to help the kids.

TR: And then you know after the boxing club, he also started at City of Colton. He started, was it a boxing club?

CRH: Yes, at Mount Vernon there was the little theater, and the city offered him that if he could use it. I think my dad probably went to ask or they asked him. And they said yes. So, he started there, little by little with a ring. And kids would come from all over to box with him. They wanted him to teach them because a lot of them were bullied. And the parents would come and tell my dad or cry to my dad "We need help with our children. They are being beaten up and they are scared to go to school or any place." So, my dad would say "triagalos para aca. Horita les enseno yo." [bring them here, I'll teach them] I'll teach them. So, they would take them. I remember being at home and the guys would come to the house. But we were never allowed to go out to see who they were. I remember seeing a father and a mother come crying and bringing their son that has been bullied and we needed to help. So, they would bring them, and he'd train them. Also, Mrs.-- she's a supervisor from San Bernardino, Mrs. Gonzales? Is that her name?

TR: Josie

CRH: Josie Gonzales, her husband came to my dad's Hall of Fame when he was getting his award. They both came. And her husband got up and said, "I was one of the bullied persons."

TR: I'll be darned

CRH: "And Savas taught me. I was bullied." So that was an honor for my dad. Or for us as a family to hear him say that.

TR: So as a little guy, he took lessons from your dad, and then years later, your father was honored in the Hall of Fame in Colton. And he impromptu, stood up and said, "I was one of his students and he helped me with my situation"

CRH: Yes. And also Mr. Tabera. He was my dad's scouter Mr. Tabera. They had over 200 people in the ceremony, the reception. That was one of the biggest ones they ever had. And I worked hard for that because I know my dad deserved it.

TR: After that boxing club that he established in that little theater, now, they have a wonderful boxing ring in Colton there.

CRH: Yes, that they named after my dad

[both smiling]

TR: They did name that boxing ring after him. It's a beautiful building.

CRH: It's a beautiful place. The only thing we need is for him to just say, eh—

[both smiling and laughing]

TR: Aqui estoy! (I'm here)

CRH: Aqui estoy!

TR: Let's do it!

CRH: [[laughing]]I would say another word that he would say but I'm not gonna say it. Cause that was my dad. But we appreciate that. And the kids that pass by there they say, "oh Mr. Robledo, horale." You know, stuff like that. And the people from South Colton, they were honored that my dad had that. Cause my dad worked so hard. Not for the money or anything, he just wanted to help the kids.

TR: Ok well tell us about his Cub Scout experience

CRH: I guess after boxing there was no Cub Scouts in South Colton.

TR: At the Garfield school?

CRH: Neither at the Garfield or Wilson school. So, he started and got Den Mothers and everything. He started from there. Getting the smaller kids to get involved.

TR: What are the ages of the Cub Scouts?

CRH: I think they are about eight or nine. Any they would go in the Fiestas Patrias parades. They are in Colton. My dad was so excited. They would meet there at the house. And if they didn't have any uniforms, they'd say "Mr. Robledo we can't join because we don't have the uniform." And He'd say, "Don't worry about it, I'll get you some." Some of the older ones would leave the uniforms and he'd say, "get in the room and see if they fit you." [using hand gestures to symbolize move into room]

TR: So, hand me downs from older kids

CRH: Hand me downs, yes. Or if they didn't have it, he would go buy them at Helman's. And he would take them hiking too. And take them to this lot on Steven's street and camp over-night.

TR: Close to his house

CRH: Close to his house

TR: Because you guys lived on Seventh street.

CRH: Yes, we lived on seventh street

TR: and Stevens was just around the corner

CRH: Yes, around the corner there, there was an empty lot. They would camp overnight, cook and talk about the Llorona and scary things. The kids would get so scared that they wouldn't even want to go to the bathroom. And he taught them how to cook. He'd say, "One day because you're going to get big, you're are going to learn to cook and help your wife." He would take them to the Cunino's for outings, swimming.

He'd take them to Blue Mountain to hike and Jap Hill too, they would go. When they went to Blue Mountain the little ones would fall behind. When they were tired, they would fall in the canal. They'd put a rope on them, and they would pull them up. He'd tell them "you can't eat 'til you get to the top."

TR: Well Jap Hill is a good climb. A good climb.

CRH: And then they would stop at the [inaudible] when they had the melones (Melons) there. Probably they would eat melones there. But they had fun.

TR: But they did lots of hiking trips, lots of camping trips, around the corner in a safe place.

CRH: And he would take them to Disneyland too.

TR: Tambien? (also)

CRH: Los llevaba a Disneyland. All the kids, the Cub Scouts would go to Disneyland.

VIDEO SECTION 2

TR: and how did he provide transportation?

CRH: Some of the parents, and we would take some. The den mothers would help too.

TR: and how many kids did he have, how many did he work with?

CRH: in the scouters? Maybe between 15 and 20 kids. And he would have dinners for them at Wilson school, the blue and gold dinners

TR: What is a blue and gold dinner?

CRH: oh, you got me on that one...

TR: ay, Tambien yo ["Me too", they both giggle]

FA: Those are the school colors

CRH: de la Wilson? [from Wilson] Ok, ok

TR: So, he would take them to dinner there?

CRH: Yeah, he would take them to have dinners and cakes for them

TR: He provided a wonderful program for them, character building, independence, and feeling good about themselves.

CRH: Yes, and the kids do not forget it. When I see the kids out on the streets and I remember them I say that I'm Savas's daughter, Oh my God, they say if it wouldn't have

been for Mr. Robledo, we would have probably been on drugs. He saved us, he helped us, he taught us. And I say, I'm glad to hear that. It makes me feel good.

TR: Well you know I saw him on the Fiestas Patrias parade with his little cub scouts. There he was on front, leading his troops. And the kids were behind him you know, they had the calls, and the marching orders.

CRH: Yes, the marching orders. They would march all the kids. My dad would sweat and say "come on, you gotta get over there, come on. You can do it, you can do it. Stuff like that.

TR: And that lasted for how many years?

CRH: The cub scouts, I would say like 20 years maybe

TR: But in 1974 he was honored for being one of the recreational leaders in Colton. I think he was provided along with seven other people, they were provided recognition by the city of Colton. His work with the cub scouts, at that time he had given 15 years to the cub scouts.

CRH: The Humanitarian award from Max Loffy?

TR: Yes that's what it was

FA: Max Loffy

TR: So he was working with the cub scouts for a long time. And He was also a devoted Catholic?

CRH: Yes, he helped in the San Salvador Church. He was an usher and helped the church on the council. And helped build the church.

TR: He was one of the people that got together with Father Luque and said we are going to build a new church for Colton.

CRH: Yes, he was there and anything he could help the people he did.

TR: Do you remember what year that was? Mid 60's-70's?

FA: '74

TR: '74 or '75?

CRH: About '74

TR: And you know there was a lot of help building that church by the community.

CRH: A lot of help. All the old timers that worked so hard. They helped build, tear down the old church and help rebuild it. And all the ladies would cook together, even my mother helped. A lot of people from South Colton. The men too, the old timers, and the young ones too. Even my husband Jesus Huerta helped. A lot of people.

TR: You know even my dad helped with the cement work. And the carpenters helped with their carpentry skills. And electricians, everybody participated.

CRH: Everybody. I remember your dad and cemento [cement]. They called him Rumba. Carlos Navarro. A lot of people that had skills and they would all help build the church. And the ladies would cook for the men.

TR: And in the meantime, where did they have their services?

CRH: At Wilson school. They had them there until the church was finished.

TR: So that took about two, three years?

CRH: Around there yeah. And when they finished it, they had a big celebration at the sombrero for everybody. It was very nice. Those were the good ol' days. [they both laugh]

TR: Tell me about your dad, he was an usher for the church?

CRH: Yes, he was an usher for the church

TR: How long was he an usher for?

CRH: oh, I can't remember that. I remember him always helping Father Valencia. And they would help bring Judas down. And the priest even washed his feet for Quaresma [lent]. He was even chosen to go to LA when the Bishop came.

TR: Oh your dad was chosen by the church

CRH: Yes, by the church. I think they just chose so many. And he was chosen but my mother was not chosen. And he said "oh, I don't think I'll go" and we all said no you have to go because you were chosen to go and it's an honor to go. So he went to go see the bishop, the Pope.

TR: He was chosen by the Dioses or the parish?

CRH: I would say the parish. Because every parish had so many that could go.

TR: And he said if my wife, what was your mom's name?

CRH: My mothers name is Elsie Robledo.

TR: If Elsie doesn't go, I ain't not going

CRH: Ah-huh 'cause they were very close. They were close but we said no, you have to go dad.

TR: Were they like two parakeets?

CRH: Two parrots like that, always [using crossed fingers to symbolize closeness] So he went and he said it was a beautiful experience at the coliseum.

TR: What made it a beautiful experience?

CRH: He said you feel like you are just one person there in the coliseum. And people are singing. It is the Holy Spirit that is there. And when I turn, I can see the face of GOD looking down at us. He said the experience is unbelievable because you are all one family and the Holy Spirit is there.

TR: So, he was chosen and had a great experience of meeting the Pope?

CRH: A very great experience of meeting the Pope. And he came and talked to us and it was unbelievable. My dad was very Christian. Con Dios [with God] and the Virgen de Guadalupe [The virgin of Guadalupe] were his pride and joy. He would lock himself in the room and talk to GOD. Talk to GOD and we didn't see him, but we heard him talking to GOD.

TR: You said your grandpa was also very religious.

CRH: Oh, his father Isidro Robledo and his mother-----

TR: What was his mother's name?

CRH: Margarita Robledo. They were very religious. They didn't have anything, but they had religion within. That's the way it is, religion.

TR: You said your grandpa lost his leg?

CRH: Yes, he lost his leg. He was diabetic, got gangrene and lost his leg. He couldn't wear that prosthesis, is that what you call it? He couldn't wear it and just got sicker and sicker and passed.

TR: And you said that he didn't have resources to support himself, but he was a strong believer in his religion.

CRH: In his religion and a great baker. He made pan de boda [wedding cake] for the weddings, there hasn't been another baker like that. But religion was everything.

TR: The whole family, verdad? [right]

CRH: The whole family, religion. And I guess it carries on like us, his kids. And I try to carry it on with my grandkids. Because without religion, there is nothing.

TR: And let me ask you another question about your dad. Being an usher with the church, and helping with all the activities with the church, did he spend a lot of time in the church, with Father Valencia? Did he know Father Valencia well?

CRH: Oh yes. Cause he lived next door to him too.

TR: And do you remember some of the interactions that he had with Father Valencia? Some of the getting together and talking?

CRH: Getting together like for the holidays that they would go and get the palmas [palms] or when the bishop would come and they would get the palmas to decorate all along the path. And whatever Father Valencia needed, he could call on the family right next door, I need this, I need that. So they were right there for him, to clean the church, the altar, or get it ready for the Quaresma [Lent]. All of that they would do.

TR: So your family, your dad's family was one of the people that Father Valencia could count on to help prepare the church for service?

CRH: Yes [nodding in affirmation]. He was always right there for anything that he needed.

TR: Now did your dad have any friends that he paled around with or was he dedicated to---

CRH: Yes, he had friends.

TR: Who were his friends?

CRH: Manuel Gonzales, Chato Gonzales—

TR: Chato, from la Calle O?

CRH: Yes, Chato from la Calle O. Well, he was related to my mother Elsie Robledo. And Talo Canales from LA. He had a lot of friends. There was one that they called him Vizconte. Another one... Oh I got the names, but I can't think right now.

TR: The other thing Cecilia, tell us where you dad worked?

CRH: He worked for food machinery in Riverside. He was a certified sheet metal worker.

TR: And how did he get the training to be a sheet metal worker?

CRH: I think in high school

TR: High school or was it in the army?

CRH: No in high school, he learned there.

TR: And how long, in Riverside?

CRH: I think he worked there for about 32 years

TR: Oh, he retired there

CRH: Yes, he retired from the food machinery. And from the church, when they had the fiestas, he would go and get all the ice. He would have fights there. He would bring in a ring and have fights for the people.

TR: Exhibition fights?

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CRH: Exhibition fights right there

TR: For the Jamaica? [name of a religious festival at a church]

CRH: Yes for the Jamaica, but on the street, he would put a ring there

TR: You're kidding?

CRH: No, he had fights there, oh that was his pride and joy. He got a kick out of that and then we put a snow cone booth. We were just there to help the church and that was his thing.

TR: And where would he get his boxers?

CRH: His guys that he trained.

TR: His students?

CRH: His students, he would bring them in and fight there. Oh he had fun there—

FA: So he did that for the Jamaica, but also for the Fiestas Patrias. I've read about the exhibitions, boxing during the fiestas [CRH nodding her head in confirmation]

CRH: He would make time for all of that

[TR and CRH sharing a laugh]

TR: was he in love with boxing verdad [right], parece que [looks like] he was in love with boxing [laughing]

CRH: oh yes, that was his love. But he always had time for us too, the family.

TR: Tell me about, you mentioned mon and dad, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

CRH: well there was two girls and one boy.

TR: and you are Cecilia—

CRH: I'm Cecilia, I'm the oldest, and then my sister Christine and then my brother Pat. We lived there on seventh street with grandma and grandpa too. My mother's parents

FA: What was your mothers maiden name?

CRH: Prieto, Elsie Prieto Robledo

TR: So you were there close—

CRH: Yeah, everyone was there close, united, close knit family

TR: And how many grandkids did you dad have?

CRH: Grandkids? Five

TR: and how many did you have?

CRH: I only had one, my sister had one, and my brother had three.

TR: And your brother's name is?

CRH: Pat Robledo. He works for Stater Brothers warehouse. My sister is a house wife and I'm a retired hairdresser

TR: And how long have you been retired?

CRH: I just started in September

TR: Congratulations!

[both laughing]

CRH: And I don't like it. But you know what? I still go and work one day a week. I enjoy that. And I enjoy helping people too whenever I can. I like to help the church fiesta too. I bake for them and I make cascarones [confetti eggs] for the fiesta.

TR: But you are still involved with San Salvador.

CRH: I'm still involved with San Salvador. Whenever they need me, I'm there.

TR: But you live here in Grand Terrace.

CRH: I live here in Grand Terrace

TR: We have our church here in Grand Terrace, but you go to San Salvador.

[both laughing]

CRH: That's my home base there. The church there in South Colton.

TR: And you went to school where Cecilia?

CRH: I went to school at Colton high.

TR: Elementary?

CRH: Elementary, Wilson

TR: You went to Wilson?

CRH: I went to Wilson. We all went to Wilson. And then the junior high--

TR: Well it was the barrio school verdad [right]?

CRH: Yeah the barrio school

TR: Did you go up the parades, did you go over the bridge or was it close at that time?

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CRH: Well you know what, at that time I had a cast on my leg and I went down the bridge [uses hands and finger to symbolize down] cause my goal was to get up the bridge but I made it.

FA: What Jr high did you go to?

CRH: Colton Jr. High, and then I went to Colton high

FA: and you said you graduated in 1963?

CRH: '63 yeah. Then I got a scholarship to go to beauty school. So I went to beauty school in Redlands, and after Redlands, I worked there in Redlands and I love Redlands.

TR: So you were there for a long time.

CRH: A long time, about 40 years.

TR: And when did you get married?

CRH: I got married in '65.

TR: '65? Almost right out of high school

CRH: Yes.

TR: So how did you and your husband meet?

CRH: In high school?

TR: At Colton High School?

CRH: yes. He came down from Mexico. He was adopted.

TR: Adopted by who?

CRH: By the Beltran family

TR: Beltran? Mayor Beltran Family?

CRH: They adopted him and he got his citizenship papers. And I married him. I met him in school and I said that's the one [pointing to as if in memory], that's the one I'm going to marry.

TR: Pobresita [poor you] you were [in audible] at that point.

CRH: So we are married now 50 years. I made it.

TR: Congratulations, that's good/

CRH: and I only had one daughter too.

TR: And she is at Cal State Los Angeles you said?

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CRH: yes, Cal State LA. She loves it

TR: What year is she in at Cal State?

CRH: She's been there two years

TR: She is half way done

CRH: Yes, half way done

FA: What is she studying?

CRH: History

TR: So maybe we'll get her to do some oral history of South Colton? [laughs]

CRH: I hope so yes. And she is not married. She says grandma, I don't want to get married.

TR: Dile que no se case {tell her not to marry}

CRH: I told her, go for your masters, you've gone this far, go for the masters. No, no quire [no, she does not want to]

TR: Now was your dad involved with, you said las fiestas patrias, did he have any other activities he was involved in like los Trabajadores Unidos [United Workers]

CRH: Yes, he was in that porque los Trabajadores Unidos [Because the united workers]

VIDEO SECTION 3

CRH: and then they had to pay the quotas or something like that

TR: Yes, yes

CRH: yeah, he was in that. And another one he boxed there on O street at the Patio Supremo too.

TR: So there was a Congress of Community Clubs

CRH: Yes, a lot of them and they would come from little towns from all over and they would have fights there. Doctors would come and check the kids to see if they were in good health to fight.

TR: Tell me about that. They set up boxing fights for tournaments there on O street

CRH: Yes on O street. Como se llamaba, El Patio Supremo? [what was it called, patio Supremo?]

TR: I don't know---

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CRH: Next to Aboytes [unable to accurately transcribe Aboites, it is an approximation]

TR: oh, yes yes yes

CRH: Ok there. They had Fiestas Patrias there too

TR: The Congress of Community Clubs I think owned that or los Trabajadores Unidos

CRH: I think it was los Trabajadores Unidos and they had fights there too

TR: Regular fights like once a month

CRH: Yes boxing once in a while but he would arrange to have them there. Kids would come from the past, from different directions and they would come and have amateur fight there

TR: I'll be darned. Your dad coordinated all those activities

CRH: Oh yeah, he coordinated everything. He would go all out on that and he would put us to make hot dogs and sell stuff to make a little bit of money for the trophies and equipment you know.

TR: [nodding in agreement]

CRH: So that is what we would do to help out. He never asked anybody for anything

TR: He just did it

CRH: He did it on his own [using hand gestures to symbolize nothing or done]

TR: Se tiene que hacer y lo voy hacer [it has to be done and I'm going to do it]

CRH: Y lo voy a hacer [And I'm going to do it], Yes,[pause] with no help

TR: was he involved with Los Progresistas? [the progressives]

CRH: I think so too

TR: Tambien eh? [also too, right]

CRH: Sosa? Remember Sosa?

TR: Oh yeah, his son just passed away this morning

CRH: Which one?

TR: Omar

CRH: El Omar? [with soft shocked voice]

TR: Today he passed away this morning

CRH: Oh my goodness, oh how sad. He went to school with us too

TR: Well Omar was in my class, we graduated in '58 from Colton

CRH: Really?

TR: [nodding in affirmation] So you remember Omar?

CRH: Yes, I remember him. Didn't he marry one of the---

TR: Marian...Marian Lozano

CRH: Ok [pause] oh my goodness. A lot of people

TR: So anyway, your dad was a good socio [acquaintance] of Luz Sosa?

CRH: Si [Yes]

TR: Because Luz Sosa was always active...Los Progresistas

CRH: There was one also, Manuel Padilla?

TR: Manuel Padilla was one of the leaders of South Colton. And do you remember Pete Luque?

CRH: Yes, yes

TR: I would imagine your dad knew Pete Luque very well?

CRH: oh yes, cause he was very active in the church too

TR: His father was Father Luque

CRH: Si, el papa [Yes, his dad]

TR: Did you dad ever get involved with politics and help people get elected to office?

CRH: I don't think so

TR: Like Pete Luque and Pasqual Oliva, or Abe Beltran or any of those people?

CRH: No, I don't think so. Not that I remember[pause] No because he was so involved with his whole thing here, with the scouts and the fighting

TR: But he was very much involved with the activities that Mr. Sosa had, Luz Sosa had

CRH: [nodding in affirmation] I can't remember anything else. Que mas? [what else] [looking down in thought]

TR: Well we can talk about you?

CRH: About me? [with a louder voice expressing shock, then laughs and smiles]

[they both laugh]

CRH: Well I'm an old timer from Colton too. I knew some of the old people there

TR: Now that you mentioned that tell me how was it like to grow up in Colton from the perspective, the eyes of your dad? How was Colton during that time? Describe how

Colton was during the time your dad was very active, and growing up in poxy and first years of marriage, helping the church, being a cub leader. How was Colton during that period of time?

CRH: What I saw of my dad? You mean the younger ages? My age?

TR: Yes

CRH: I don't know. Well when we were kids, we always used to go to grandma. And they would get together there and talk and make Menudo because that's all they had, all they knew. And they had a lot of people and had a party

TR: And which grandma was this?

CRH: This was my dad's mother. Margarita Robledo and Isidro Robledo. We would always go over there on the weekends and I guess party and play and they would talk, and have their beers and have Menudo and just have a good time

TR: Did your mom or dad have compadres that they would read with or...

CRH: they had a compadre that they were very close, the comadre came from Mexico and she was a citizen from here and they had three kids. The comadre didn't have any family here. She adopted my dad and mom. They loved each other and helped each other. She told my dad "oh compadre, I love you because I grew up with no parents, they gave me away. You're my family. So, my mom and dad looked after her like their own kid. They would go to my grandma and grandpa Isidro. They would have the Mexican bread which was good and we would go to the church and play. Outside the church they had baptisms and they had bolo----

TR: What is bolo?

CRH: bolo? If you were the Padrino and you baptizing [a baby] you had money [using hands to gesture coins in palm] and the bolo you would throw it out---

TR: oh for people that were--

CRH: yeah for people that were waiting outside

FA: it was for the kids

CRH: yeah for the kids, money for the kids and we would say bolo, bolo when the Padrinos would come with the baby and they would have to throw the money. [hand gestures mimic putting hand and pockets taking money out and throwing into crowd] We would get it and go buy ice cream. That was our pride and joy. While our parents were having a good time with the Menudo [using hand gestures to symbolize somewhere else by waving hand and arm behind her], we'd go buy us the ice cream. We did that every Saturday, that was fun.

TR: That was great

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CRH: Family get togethers

TR: Every Saturday almost

CRH: Every Saturday. Sundays we would—

TR: What about weddings?

CRH: We went to the weddings. They were pretty weddings. People would decorate their cars in their weddings. And they would go all over. If you wanted to go in the car to your barrio, or to the street where you lived. And all the ladies would get together or the families would hire the ladies to make the food; mole, pico de gallo, potato salad, rice, bread, champurrado if you would get married before 12 o'clock.

TR: But they would get in the car and the car was decorated verdad [right]?

CRH: The car was decorated with paper flowers and they'd go honking all over the neighborhood

TR: Yes, I remember

CRH: And then go to the American Legion or the Sombrero and have the wedding there. It was elite to go to the Sombrero cause that was nice and just party

TR: well you know, you grew up close to seventh street and there was a lot of activity on seventh street verdad [right]? Tell me about some of that activity?

CRH: Oh, the activity. It was the Bolero, the Mexicali Rose, the Llamas place, Lala's

TR: El Sombrero

CRH: El Sombrero, Martinez bakery

TR: what was Lala's?

CRH: Lala's was a little store where people would buy meat [thinking about more]

TR: was that Morales?

CRH: I don't know, probably[thinking] Chuchi?

TR: Si [yes]

CRH: Yes, right there that store. And then there was the Tampico, the Seaside, and the little garage that was Carmen, I remember that. And then Valderama was the little trailer that sold snow cones

TR: Where was that located?

CRH: Right on the corner of seventh and O

TR: Oh yes, ok

CRH: And there was a barber shop later on there, como se llamava? [what was it called]

TR: Nacho

CRH: Nacho [nodding] but before Nacho was Valderama's little trailer. And there was Esteban's store and then Navarro's store and then Dell's Drive-in. They came in around 1954. And then Aboytes. But on seventh street

TR: You had the tortilleria [tortilla shop]

CRH: We had the tortilleria which was Tucker, el Tucker

TR: Tambien Hernandez?

CRH: and Hernandez yes. And upstairs was the legion

TR: The American Legion

CRH: The American Legion upstairs yes

TR: Fidel Hernandez and American Legion post

CRH: Yes, all of those

TR: So esa calle siete [So that seventh street] was very active

CRH: Oh and la tortilleria Luques [making hand gestures to symbolize tortilla making by hand]

TR: Hernandez

CRH: Hernandez, they made the tortillas. And cabezas [heads, usually cow]. Even my dad---

TR: Well you like that [laughs]

CRH: my dad even made cabezas [heads]and ribs

[hey both are laughing]

CRH: So South Colton was good for everybody. Good memories and everybody got along. There were no fights, Que I'm going to fight the Paloma, I'm going fight the Reserve or others [using arm gestures to symbolize one side then next]

TR: So you lived on the calle siete barrio [seventh street neighborhood] You mentioned the Reserva which was just west of where you lived, across the tracks. And on the other side passed La Cadena was La Paloma. And then you had La Calle Cinco [5th street]

CRH: Cinco, yes. There was a little store up there. The Reese

TR: Reese, Reese, Y Tambien Bocanegra

CRH: Yes, the Bocanegra store. So it was good. Good times for everybody

TR: It was a little area of Colton that was self-sufficient verdad [right]?

CRH: Yes

TR: We had everything

CRH: everything, we had everything there. We didn't have to go to the north side.

TR: No nos dejaban [they didn't let us]

[they both laugh]

CRH: No I remember my dad talking that if you went you could only go to the [inaudible] theatre. They had it roped off, the Whites would go on one side and the Mexicans on the other side

TR: your dad mentioned that?

CRH: oh yes

TR: So he remembers that?

CRH: oh he remembers that. And I don't know if they [making hand gestures like holding an id card] lo cartiaron Tambien ahi [carded him there also]. I think he paid 20 cents to go to the theatre at that time.

TR: Do you remember any of the bands that played in that area or were available in that area?

CRH: [thinking] Campo Azul? But that was in my time

TR: Yes that was your time, you were too young

CRH: But the older bands, no

TR: We did have a bunch of them

CRH: Yes, there were a bunch of them

TR: Now tell me were you at the church when Margarita Gomez was also working with Father Valencia at the church?

CRH: I was small but I remember her and there was another one, she used to wear braids on top [using fingers to circle her head bottom to top of head] I can't think of her name. And another one Rosas, la Senora Rosas

TR: Oh yes yes. She had many daughters and they all ran for queen

CRH: Yes, las Rosas, Y la Senora Alaniz

TR: Yes, they lived around the corner next to the laundry

CRH: Yes, and the one you mentioned, what was her name?

TR: Margarita Gomez

CRH: Margarita Gomez, I think they would go and help Father Valencia when the bishop would come and get the ladies to come and help clean the house and the church. And he would shew us away, cause we would look and he didn't want us to see [laughs while looking down] But they would cook. I think que le asian mole [they made mole for him] and he would go and get big peaches [using hands to gesture the large size of peaches] cause we would look. So when the bishop would come he was treated like a king... oh my god

TR: Well we saw him on TV recently. Y te iba a preguntar [I was going to ask you] how about Margarita Padilla and Tulla Padilla, did you know those two ladies?

CRH: Yes, they were very very religious

TR: What do you remember about them?

CRH: Tulla teaching us religion. And they had a little hall or house across the street where they lived. She would teach us religion, to pray. And she would take us to a place where they would get together and pray there. I can't think of the name-- Retreat. She would take us and Maria and Tulla would make chocolate for us during I think some saint. But we were kids

TR: But you do remember them teaching religious instruction

CRH: Yes, very religious. They would take us to Altadena for a retreat and pray. And my dad would go and take us in the station wagon whoever could fit

TR: So your dad was always involved in all the church activities

CRH: Yes, all the church activites, he would take us to Altadena in the car

TR: Now when did your dad pass away?

CRH: It's going to be 24 years. So what would that make us? 24 years ago. Could it be '71?

FA: 24 years would have been 1991

CRH: 1991?

TR: In the 90s then. He passed away in the 90's

CRH: [nodding] In the 90's. And it looks like it was just yesterday

TR: Que apenas paso verdad [like it just happened right]? And you guys had a reunion?

CRH: Me?

TR: Your family. I see the big board there says Savas and the picture

CRH: Yes, I think about three years ago we had a family reunion at the Colton park where his gym is. They opened up the gym so we could use it. We had all the food and we had a lot of people, the family was about 300. [camera is showing a big blue display board with Savas in large blue writing and lots of pictures]

TR: Ooh, that was a big one

CRH: It was a big one. We ate outside, we had tables. it was all decorated. And it was all family.

TR: I'm sorry Cecilia, when did this all take place?

CRH: About three years ago

TR: Apenas eh, just recently. And you had a lot of people show up

CRH: a lot of people, all family. They came from Santa Barbara, and just around the area, Riverside, Colton, San Bernardino, Hesperia. We all had a nice family reunion. Not too bad. They weren't here, the rest of the immediate ones that left already. But there were only two left, my mother Elsie and my Tia Gloria. My little sister.

TR: If you are thinking of your dad, how would you describe your dad. Just thinking about him and his life? His role of a father and as a mentor, as an influential in young kid's life, a Christian, how would you describe your dad if you were to talk about him?

CRH: If I was to talk about my dad, I would say my dad was a santo [saint]

VIDEO SECTION 4

CRH: That's how I would describe my dad, a saint. He loved his family. He loved the community. He helped everybody in need. If they didn't have any shoes, he would go out and get shoes for that person. But he never wanted to be known as that way, just as a loving human being. He would always give of himself he didn't care about...how should I say it? It was him

TR: He didn't have an ego

CRH: No he didn't have an ego. If someone would beat him, he would let them beat him up because he was beaten up. We told him "why don't you fight back?" He'd say "what for? It's ok" I'd say but dad look how they left you, he'd say that's ok mija. He loved his family. There was nothing that we needed. We knew he was our dad and he had to do what he had to do. That's how I would describe my dad [she is very emotional and teary eyed] as a santo. And helping the kids to be something, to help themselves, their families. And he did it. He did not ask for nothing, nothing

TR: You were blessed Cecilia

CRH: I was very blessed

TR: In being able to have a dad like Savas Robledo

CRH: Yeah. And always, always his main concern was religion and to be able to help the need of other people. That's what he taught his family too. That's what I can say about my dad, He loved everybody, he never discriminated anybody. That's all I can say about my dad.

TR: What about in your case, growing up in Colton, going to schools in Colton, meeting your husband in Colton, what was the best experience you can in growing up in Colton?

CRH: In growing up in Colton, seeing the people. The people are all united, we were all like family. But when I was growing up, I was bullied too. And I guess I bullied somebody too. I'm not going to say that I didn't or whatever. But I grew up, I chose my friends. And I wanted to be good. And I tried to be good. I also tried to like my religion. To me the Virgen de Guadalupe is my patron saint, I'm a Guadalupana. I love my church, my religion. I try to instill that in my kids and my grandkids. The barrio was everything to me, Everything was right there. I didn't need anything more beside my family, the barrio was there. We were all family, we all visited each other. There was no meanness around. You could go to the store and not be afraid cause everybody would watch. Everything was nice and secure there

TR: Secure

CRH: Secure there. And...

TR: Safe

CRH: Safe. We were all safe and everybody knew everybody. We could for help to anybody or we could go know on the door and they would help you. There was no meanness

TR: So I guess the best thing about growing up in Colton, it was a very safe, healthy place to grow up in

CRH: Yes

TR: In our interview this afternoon, did I ever say anything that you would like to tell us about?

CRH: Well I don't know

[they both laugh]

CRH: Well I married my husband Jesus Huerta and he's good. My mother's parents were very good too. Pedro Prieto and Cela Lopez were my mother's parents. They were good parents too.

TR: Where did they come from?

CRH: My grandmother, my mother's mother was Yaqui Indian. She came from San Diego. She met my grandfather which he came from Mexico with a green card. He worked in the railroad. I think they were braceros they called them

TR: Traqueros Tambien

CRH: No, Traqueros or whatever. And he cooked for the railroads. He migrated here to Colton and met my grandmother and that's how they married or got together.

TR: Y se quedaron [And they stayed]

CRH: Se quedaron aqui [they stayed here] yes. My grandmother was a Yaqui Indian, that's where my mother gets her Indian blood too.

[they both laugh]

CRH: But other than that, we are happy. Everybody helped each other. And everybody used to go pick chabacanes, apricots in Hemet, and go down and pick Walnuts. I remember my mother telling me they had to go pay the taxes of the properties. People would do that. Or go up north to pick the hops to make the beer, the pears, the plums, and we would go when we were kids, that was our vacation.

TR: That was your camping trip

CRH: The camping trip. To go up there so they would pay for taxes, and buy their food and their clothing for school.

TR: So people followed the crops

CRH: Yes

TR: To make that extra money so they could pay taxes or other expenses that they had to pay

CRH: Yes and they would go with Maria Delgado. She would have a truck and they would go with her in the truck to Hemet to pick the chabacanes. That was how everybody in Colton, South Colton got together, families and go. As I was growing up, I went to Hemet too but I went just for the joy ride, to eat the chabacanes, not to pick

[They both laugh]

TR: To have a social life

CRH: Yes, social life that was it, friends. But other than that, it was good. That was what people did. People didn't have cars. They used to have the stamps. That's what my dad used to tell us, stamps. No habia gas [there was no gas] And bread was 18 cents or so. Then they would go to, como se llama [what is it called] where they made the raspados [snow cones]

TR: Chayos

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CRH: Chayos

TR: Chayitos

CRH: They were good. Sometimes I wasn't allowed to go but I went [laughing]

TR: That was after school right?

CRH: After school treat

TR: You had a wonderful time growing up in Colton

CRH: I had a good childhood yes, very good.

TR: Well Cecilia thank you so much for being with us this afternoon

CRH: Thank you for inviting me

TR: I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation this afternoon

CRH: I did too

TR: Like I said before, is there anything else that I missed?

CRH: I don't know. I hope I didn't miss anything either.

TR: Well again thank you so much. Look over your notes quickly and see if I missed anything

CRH: OK. Cause I don't want to miss anything.

TR: Well you have a lot of notes there

CRH: Yes, but I think we talked about it. [She is looking through pages of notes] I think we talked about everything. We added stuff too from the Calle Siete [seventh street] I think we got it if not I can call you.

TR: Thank you so much

CRH: Thank you for inviting me. I enjoyed it. [clapping and laughs]

End of Interview:

[1:05:20]