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South Colton Oral History Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Gloria Luna Escobedo Flores

Interviewer:

Dr. Tom Rivera

Interview Date:

August 19, 2017

Location:

Grand Terrace, California

Interview Summary completed by:

James Knight III, 2020

Topic:

Dr. Tom Rivera talks with Gloria Flores about what it was like growing up Hispanic in South Colton. Gloria explains how her grandparents came from Mexico and settled in Colton. They discuss church, school, how she met and married her first husband Ted as well as her second husband Mario after Ted passed away. She also talks about growing up with her extended family, having a family of her own, what it's like with her children now as adults, and how Colton has changed over the years.

Keywords:

- Grandparents
- Colton (Calif.)
- South Colton Community
- North Colton Community
- Church
- Father Valencia
- Fiestas patrias

Comments:

None.

Related Materials:

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

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Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Interviewee:

Gloria Luna Escobedo Flores

Interviewer:

Dr. Tom Rivera

Interview Date:

August 19, 2017

Location:

Grand Terrace, California

Length:

[01:17:30]

Media format:

Streaming Video

List of Acronyms:

TR = Dr. Tom Rivera

GLE = Gloria Luna Escobedo

H = Cameraman Henry

M = Mario

Interview Transcript completed by:

James Knight III, 2020

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

TR: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Rivera and welcome to our oral history project. Today is August the 19th, Saturday. It's approximately 1:10 in the afternoon and we are continuing our oral history project. Today we are taping at 23170 Vista Grande Way in Grand Terrace. And our guest this afternoon is Ms. Gloria Luna Escobedo. Hey Gloria would you mind giving us your full name?

GLE: It's Gloria Luna Escobedo Flores.

TR: Okay thank you very much and welcome Gloria. Welcome it's nice to have you here and thank you very much for helping us with our project. Gloria where I'd like to start is

you told me a wonderful little story before we started about your grandma. You know I was talking about how brave our grandparents were when they took off from Mexico. Young with no money not knowing the language of the culture of the US but they went ahead and did what they needed to do to come to the United States. Can you tell us a little story about the grandma that you shared with me just a few minutes ago.

GLE: My grandmother's name was Maxima Chavez. Of course later she became Luna but her maiden name Maxima Chavez. She told me a story of when she was a young girl her mother had passed away and they were living with an aunt in Mexico in Huanimaro, Guanajuato. Her father had not been living with them. So one night at a carnival, he literally kidnapped her and her sister and the brother and gathered their immediate belongings and they started to travel to the United States. They traveled for three days and three nights. She said it was a real hard trip. She was only five years old. But they came here because he had a sister that was living here with her husband.

TR: What mode of travel did they use you said they--

GLE: Actually they rode part time on a burro [Spanish for donkey]. Part of the time they wrote on the burro and part of the time they walked. And she says it was times when they had nothing to eat or drink and they would find puddles in the street and that's where they would drink from.

TR: And they crossed into Texas?

GLE: And they crossed into Texas and then made their way into the United States. She came here at the age of five years old.

TR: What year was that Gloria? Can you--

GLE: In 1906.

TR: 1906?

GLE: 1906.

TR: And your grandmother's name was?

GLE: Maxima, well she was Chavez and then she became Luna when she married my grandfather.

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TR: Okay. Alright how many kids did she bring with her?

GLE: She had a sister and a brother.

TR: Okay.

GLE: Their father brought them. Her mother had already passed away.

TR: I see. Now you talk about your grandparents, Tomás and Juana Luna. Tell me about them.

GLE: Those were my great grandparents.

TR: Oh great-grandparents okay.

GLE: Those were on my grandfather's side, Guadalupe Luna. They brought my grandfather here. He was born in 1888 and they brought him into the United States in 1900, in the 1900s. And they brought him because at that time there was a lot of work here in California. There was a lot of citrus work. They all came as migrant workers. They came for a better life and to work.

TR: So your grandma and grandpa Luna did they have any children.

GLE: My grandmother and my grandfather got married when she was 13 and he was 18. And they had 12 children--

TR: --Okay.

GLE: --together. They had nine sons and three daughters.

TR: And they were all raised here in Colton?

GLE: They were all raised here in Colton.

TR: There was a lot of work here in Colton for migrant workers. They picked oranges, grapefruit, lemons whatever--

TR: --Agriculture--

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GLE: It was a lot of agriculture here in this area. Not just Colton, but Highgrove, Riverside just--

TR: The whole area--

GLE: Del Rosa, this whole area there was plenty of work. And that's where all my uncle's went to work.

TR: You said that there were 12 in the family?

GLE: Yes.

TR: Do you remember any of their names?

GLE: That were related to our family?

TR: Yes.

GLE: Well as our family started to expand our family grew and we're all interrelated. I think everybody in Colton is probably related to somebody.

TR: Oh everybody Colton is related. You know everybody in Colton is related. But you mentioned that [your] grandma and grandpa had six kids I think.

GLE: Well my grandfather had five sisters.

TR: Ah. Okay--

GLE: And they all grew up here in Colton and they all got married. On both my grandmother and grandfather's side the families that are interrelated are Chavez, Vasquez, Velazquez, and Valdez. [Reaches for piece of paper] I made a [list] so I wouldn't forget--

TR: Thank God.

GLE: Guerrero, Delgado, Cortez, Moreno, Rivera. There's just multiple relatives here in the extended family in Colton. I think most of them grew up here in Colton except for a few here and there that moved away.--

TR: Yep.

GLE: I think because there was so much work here they all pretty much stayed close to the family.

TR: So I get, Gloria, that your grandparents through their families and their siblings were able to marry many of the families here in Colton and that became a kind of an inroad of everybody in Colton related to your family in one way or another.

GLE: Yes.

TR: Yeah, can you tell me some of those names again. You went through a list. Let me have them again.

GLE: Okay. Well, there was a Chavez, Gomez, Valdez, Vasquez, Guerrero, Velasquez, Delgado, Chavez, Cortez, Moreno, Rivera. I'm sure there was more--

TR: [chuckles]

GLE: Those are the ones that come to my mind. At my age I can't remember [laughs] as well as I used to. But I still remember that we were all related growing up.

TR: You know one of the things I think that we came up with the study is that we found out is that everybody in Colton is related--

GLE: Pretty much.

TR: Yeah--

GLE: Pretty much.

TR: Yeah. And some of the girls that we've interviewed have mentioned that when they got a little serious with a boy or the girl they would ask mom or dad or grandma grandpa are we related to them.

GLE: Yes.

TR: Did that happen?

GLE: Yes. [Nods and smiles enthusiastically] The kids would run into each other at a dance or something and they would come home and they would [say], "oh my god."

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[Gloria says as if to imitate the kids] “You know I met this handsome. . .” [Gloria says as if to imitate the parents] “No, not that one. That one's your cousin.”

Both: [laugh]

TR: So that was the end of that?

GLE: That was the end of that.

TR: [laughs] Now tell me about you Gloria. Where were you raised in Colton?

GLE: As far back as I can remember, we lived on M Street. It was 365 M Street. Right behind there was a bakery. Martinez Bakery, right there on the corner of 7th and M Street.

TR: Yes.

GLE: We lived right behind there.

TR: Oh between the 7th and 6th Street.

GLE: Yes

TR: Ok

GLE: We lived there. My grandfather had bought three little houses there and we all lived there. The grandpas, Juana, and her parents. We all lived there. Tomas, they all lived in there. And then later on in years he bought another two houses up on N street, at 420 West N Street. So we moved up there and some of us stayed over here on M Street. The grandpas stayed there. They didn't want to move anymore because they were older. But the rest of us moved up to West N Street. It was there that I met my husband through one of my uncles. And I ended up getting married when I was fifteen.

TR: Oh following your grandma's footsteps?

GLE: Yeah.

TR: Kind of.

GLE: And we were married 53 years after that.

TR: Well before I get to that, you mentioned that your grandma and grandpa raised you. How did that happen?

GLE: My mother got sick after childbirth. There's her third child that she had two weeks after she had my little baby brother. She had kidney failure and she passed away at 24 years old. And the baby passed away two weeks before she did. So then my father went back to live with my grandmother. She took us back to live with her. I grew up there with my grandmother, my grandfather and my uncles.

TR: And this was on N Street?

GLE: Yes, that's right.

TR: Now was it a large family that you came in to live with?

GLE: Well, I told you that my grandmother had a brother. Well he got married and moved up to Oro Grande [California]. And during the influenza a lot of people died during that time. That included my grandmother's brother and his wife.

TR: What year was that? Do you remember?

GLE: Gosh--

TR: The influenza--

H: It was about 1918, approximately--

GLE: More or less, probably. Because they were only 24 years old and they already had six children. So my grandmother went up there and my grandfather and brought all the children home with her.

TR: And Oro Grande was up in the high desert?

GLE: Yeah.

TR: And that was a mining--

GLE: Yeah--

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TR: Little city, little town--

GLE: So she brought them all back with her and raised the five of them. One aunt took one of them but she raised the other five and raised her own. So we had a big family, a huge family.

TR: How many were you at the house on N Street?

GLE: Well when I came along I think there was probably about 17 of us. I don't remember how many.

TR: Seventeen?

GLE: But we had three little houses. And then we had the other ones down here on M Street. So there was a lot of room for all of us.

TR: Now your grandpa must have had a lot of mouths to feed. How did he do that?

GLE: I remember my grandmother saying they had gone over to the, what was called, what you would call welfare now I guess. It was called the WPA at that time.

TR: Yes. In the thirties. Yeah--

GLE: And went to ask for help. Because my grandfather was the only one working at the time. And they said, "Nope. You have a nice house made out of rock, stone, you don't need help." So a lot of the uncles all had to drop out of school. They couldn't go to school. They all had to go to work to help support the family go pick up oranges.

TR: Oh, so your uncles that lived with you--

GLE: Went to work. The oldest ones like my uncle Manuel, my dad, Ambrose, all the older ones didn't get to go to school. They had to go to work to help support the family.

TR: I see I see. And they all went to work in the citrus industry?--

GLE: Picking oranges--

TR: Picking oranges--

GLE: Picking oranges

TR: Yes. Did any of them become cieneros picking oranges?

GLE: My oldest uncle, Manuel, was--

TR: A cienero?--

GLE: Yes.

TR: He could pick a hundred boxes a day?

GLE: A hundred boxes a day.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: Because he'd been doing it since he was a young boy. And he became a cienero. They used to call him that because he could pick a hundred boxes a day. Yeah.

TR: You know one of the things that I remember, I picked oranges myself. And I remember the best thing was having lunch because we would take the--

GLE: It's like going to a picnic.

TR: Yes. We would take the twigs and the little branches, dry branches, and set up a little fire. And then we would let the fire turn into coals. And we put our tacos, bean tacos or egg tacos on top of the coals and just have a wonderful, wonderful lunch. I remember those days.

GLE: Yeah, growing up my grandfather bought a truck and he would take the workers. He would contract for citrus workers but he would contract for families to go pick walnuts. And he would take families up to San Fernando. He would take us, when we were growing up, with my grandmother. And all our siblings, my uncles and me, when I was like seven or eight years old, they took us to San Fernando. And we lived in tents and we worked picking walnuts and olives and whatever was--

TR: Oh so you were migrant workers?

GLE: Yeah.

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TR: Yeah. Yeah because you had a large family?

GLE: We all worked.

TR: Yeah so it was worth it.

GLE: Yeah, in later years I picked walnuts til I was about 11. Then school wouldn't permit me to go anymore. But I picked walnuts til I was about 11 years old. And then during the seasonal [we would pick] strawberries, berries, whatever was--

TR: So whatever California grew you picked?

GLE: Yeah.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: Grapes. We picked whatever.

TR: Now where were the grapes grown here in the area?

GLE: Up here [points]. And actually there was an area here in. . . they used to call it Cucamonga.

TR: Yes.

GLE: Now they call it Rancho Cucamonga.

TR: Of course. They're more sophisticated.

GLE: It's more sophisticated. But all that was nothing but grapes. Miles of grapes. Between Rialto, Fontana, Rancho Cucamonga, there was areas of nothing but grapes. Matter of fact Ted went to work there loading up the crates. I would pick and I would drive the tractor for him while he loaded up the crates.

TR: Oh you drove the tractor? How old were you when you drove the tractor?

GLE: It was right after we got married. Probably about about 18 maybe.

TR: Well, tell me about him. How did you meet Ted, your husband?

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GLE: Actually he had come looking for my Uncle Ray, my youngest uncle.

TR: Well your Uncle Ray was a musician. He played the guitar--

GLE: Yeah!

TR: beautifully right?

GLE: Yeah. He still does. And they played in a band. His sons, they had what was called the [inaudible campo e sul?] and they played locally all over. They were in demand all over. Evidently they had gone to school together, Ray and my husband. He came looking for him one day and we were out playing football in the street. He picked up the football and he threw it to me. Then after he left he just smiled at me. After he left I asked my uncle, "Who was that?" And he said, "Oh, that was," his Spanish name, "Lolo Escobedo." I asked him, "So, where does he live?" He says, "He lives up there on Agua Mansa Road." And then I never saw him again until years later. I asked him [my uncle Ray] one day, "What happened to that boy?" [Uncle Ray responded] "Oh he doesn't live here anymore. He lives in El Monte." "Oh," I said. And that was the end of that. But then one day his [Ted's] best friend was dating my cousin and there he was. And I--

TR: Who was your cousin--

GLE: Her name was Velia Cardoza and she dated Ralph Delgado. She ended up marrying Ralph and I ended up marrying Ted--

TR: Yeah--

GLE: Later on--

TR: But you know Ted was five or six years older than you were.

GLE: Yeah he was.

TR: So how old were you when you got married?

GLE: Fifteen.

TR: Fifteen?

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GLE: And he was twenty.

TR: I mentioned before that you were following your grandma's footsteps but--

GLE: But I had met him when I was thirteen and we had dated. They would let him come to the house to visit me, to see me. But they wouldn't let me date him. One of my uncles said, "Let him come to the house to see her because she's gonna be sneaking around if you don't."

TR: Okay.

GLE: So that was how it started.

TR: Well Gloria, in those days you know there were the chaperones.

GLE: My grandpa would sit at the porch--

TR: Did he have a shotgun with him?--

GLE: Yes. And he would sit at the porch and me and Ted would sit [motions hands in front of her as if to point to stairs in front of her] right where the stairs was were and then he would [look at his watch and say] "9 o'clock" [or] "8 o'clock" [Gloria makes a shoeing motion mimicking her grandfather talking to Ted] "You, go on. Get out of here." [Then her grandfather would say to her] "You, come in the house."

Both: [laugh]

TR: How would we say it in Spanish?

GLE: He would tell him, "Usted muchacho vayase vitesse! Y tu, metete. Va dentro!"

Both: [laugh]

GLE: And I would go in the house all mad and tell my grandma, "He just chased Ted away!" She said, "Well mija, you're lucky he lets him come, you know." And it went like that for two years. Until finally when the army sent him a--

TR: draft notice?

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GLE: [nods] a draft notice. He said he wanted to get married before he left. He didn't want to go in the army. So what he did

End of Video Section 1:

[00:18:18]

Start of Video Section 2:

[00:00:00]

GLE: was he joined the Navy. And we got married three weeks before he left.

TR: What year was that Gloria?

GLE: 1951.

TR: 51?

GLE: In June of 1951.

TR: 1951.

GLE: We actually got a letter from my father giving me permission to get married. And we drove to Yuma with Ralph and my cousin. And they stood up for us. And they actually married us in Yuma.

TR: Well you know Glora, we hear that story with our interviews that a lot of the young couples during that period--

GLE: They had chapels--

TR: eloped to--

GLE: --to Yuma--

TR: --Yuma.

GLE: Yeah.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: All you had to have was a letter from your parents saying they gave permission. And they would marry us. Within the hour you would have your license and you'd be married there. They had a bunch of chapels as you drove into Yuma.

TR: And then Ted was in the Navy for five years?

GLE: Four years.

TR: Four years?

GLE: He served. Mostly he was stationed in Guam for a year and a half. And then he traveled a lot and he was on a destroyer and a carrier. And he traveled to Korea, China, Japan, Hawaii. He was all over the place. [He went to] New York, New Jersey. He went to school in New Jersey. He loved the Navy. He would have made it a career, except we already had two kids when I said, "No, that's it. We need a father home."

TR: Well tell me about your kids. How many kids--

GLE: I have six kids.

TR: --do you guys have?

GLE: I have six kids. My youngest works for a school district in San Bernardino. One of them's a correctional officer. They all live here locally. Except for one of them lives in Las Vegas.

TR: And you mentioned that one of the things that Ted insisted that the kids speak English. How did that come about?

GLE: Well when he went in the Navy, I went back to live with my grandparents.

TR: Okay. That's on N Street?

GLE: On 420--

TR: N Street?

GLE: And they spoke nothing but Spanish. So I went back to speaking fluent Spanish all the time. So when he came home from the service, I already had two kids and all three of us were speaking Spanish. And because he had been gone four years and all his

friends were Anglos and he didn't speak Spanish anymore. So when he came home he said, "That's it. I don't want anybody speaking Spanish in the house." [That was] after we bought our house. [He said] "Because our kids are having a hard time in school." When we moved to north Colton it was all predominantly Anglo. And so my kids went to school there were mostly Anglo kids.

TR: And what year was this Gloria?

GLE: In . . . 57

TR: 57 or so?

Both: 57

GLE: And so our kids would come home crying because they were being made fun of because they couldn't speak English well. So that's when Ted said, "No more Spanish in the house. I better not catch you [speaking to Gloria] talking Spanish to them anymore."

TR: Mhm

GLE: So they could learn, so we could all learn how to speak English. And the only time I spoke Spanish was when I went to go visit my grandparents at the house. Which I did often.

TR: So how was the transition from moving from south Colton, an all-Mexican side of town, moving to the Gringo [non-hispanic] side of town? What kind of transition did you have? Was it a hard transition? Many of the Mexican families have moved to that part of--

GLE: About half of my neighbors were hispanics--

TR: Ok

GLE: --that had already moved there before I did. So it wasn't hard. Because even though there was quite a few Anglos still there. We were kind of integrated, about half Anglos and half hispanics. And we all got along good. Our kids played well together. We got along. It wasn't hard for us. And then Ted got along with everybody. Ted was this outgoing person that was friendly with everybody. He had friends everywhere. And he got along with everybody so we didn't have a hard time.

TR: Well I remember when I was just out of high school. I was eighteen or nineteen. I worked for Henry Portillo at the gas station--

GLE: Yeah, yeah, I remember.

TR: And you guys were our customers. And then Ted and the family would come. And you're absolutely right, [Ted was] very outgoing and friendly and [he would say] "How are you doing?" And "How are things with you?"

GLE: Yeah, he was a very outgoing person. He had friends. . . you couldn't believe the day when we buried him. The church wasn't big enough for the people that came to see him off. And then he joined the VFW. Both of us did. And he became the commander there and I became the president. We were very active in a lot of the functions. Raising money for all kinds of charities. And so he became the commander there. After five years they were hanging on to him. They didn't want to let him go. Because he was--

TR: Which VFW was this?

GLE: Over there on Foothill. Actually the one in Colton wanted him to come over here.

TR: The one on Foothill, which is at the end of Rancho Avenue?

GLE: That one!

TR: Okay. Got it.

GLE: He was a commander there for five years and I was the president. And we worked hard raising money for a lot of functions to help kids in school [like] Mary's Kitchen, Cancer fund. We did a lot of fundraisers. So that's why they didn't want to let him go.

TR: [laughs] Now, while Ted was in the service did you work?

GLE: No. No, I mostly just stayed with my grandparents.

TR: Yeah

GLE: And raised the kids. Now every time he came home on a leave, Gloria would be pregnant again so no.

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TR: Now when did you start working, Gloria?

GLE: Actually I didn't go to work until the last of my children went into school.

TR: Okay.

GLE: I stayed home with all of them until I saw my youngest go to school full time, and that's when I went to work.

TR: Was this a kind of recommendation or tradition that families had, staying home until the kids were old enough?

GLE: Actually my grandmother was dead set against me going out to work.

TR: Okay.

GLE: She just would not have it. She wouldn't hear of it because that was unheard of back in those days. Women stayed home and took care of the children, raising them.

TR: Gotcha.

GLE: And so I stayed home until my youngest went to school. Then I said, "Okay, I'm going to work." And I went to work. I worked as a waitress because I had no education. I was married out of the eighth grade. So I didn't have a high school education.

TR: So you went to Garfield Elementary School?

GLE: I went to Garfield and Wilson and married right out of Wilson, out of the eighth grade.

TR: Out of the eighth grade? So you didn't go to Colton High School?

GLE: No.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: So after I became a waitress for eight years. And Ted always wanted me to go back to school, get an education, get a job that had a future and that would pay me some benefits. Somehow one of my nieces that was already working for the county, she got me an interview at the county--

TR: At the county of San Bernardino?

GLE: [Nods yes] And I passed the interview, and the test, and they hired me.

TR: What was the job?

GLE: I went to work for, my first job was at head start. I worked there for a year and a half as a health aid. My job there was to make out all the cunes [transcripts] that went with the children through school through all the years. And I made sure that they had their physicals, their immunizations. Everything went into their cune. I charted everything. And then I worked for child health. And I worked at all the baby clinics. From there on they transferred me into county public health. Then I worked for child health, family planning, maternal health, and I worked for several programs. And I ended up working sixteen years for the county public health.

TR: Oh well that was a long time Gloria. That was a long time. Yeah. Now Gloria, getting back to when you were growing up in Colton, who were your friends? Do you remember who your friends were?

GLE: My very first, closest, friend was from the Calles family next door.---

TR: Oh that's right.

GLE: They were our neighbors.

TR: Okay.

GLE: I don't know if you remember the name. Calles lived next door to us. Their mother worked that the El Sombrero as a waitress there for many years.

TR: Gladys.

GLE: Gladys Calles.

TR: Her husband was Joe.

GLE: Joe Calles. She worked there as a waitress and Joe Calles worked in Crestmore.

TR: At the cement plant in Crestmore.

GLE: And Gloria Calles and I became [friends]. Because we were not allowed to play in the street. My grandparents did not allow us to be out in the streets and stuff like that. So there was a hole in the fence where Gloria and I used to sneak through there and play with each other. [We would] play dolls. We promised each other who ever married first we would baptize each other's child. And I was the first one to get married and she baptized my first daughter. We became comadres.

TR: Ah.

GLE: But first we baptized each other's dolls. So we had already--

TR: [laughs]

GLE: We had already been comadres from when we were little. She was my comadre. My grandpa would make fun of us.

TR: [laughs]

GLE: He would go outside and look at us [and say] "A ver, tan las comadritas."

Both: [laugh]

GLE: He would tell us when we were growing up.

Both: [laugh]

TR: What other games did you play with Gloria?

GLE: You know we didn't have toys. We didn't have money for toys. So what we would do is we would sit and tell stories. We would tell each other stories. We would sit by the radio and listen to Inner Sanctum. We would listen to all of those programs. And we would sing. She had a swing so we would swing in the swing and we would sing old songs and tell jokes.

TR: Do you remember any of the songs?

GLE: Oh God. [Points to someone off camera] We were remembering the other day, because my husband was taping music. There was an old movie on T.V. They were showing some old songs and I started singing and he says, "You know that song?" And

I say, "That's the songs we used to sing when we were young." I said, "But right off hand, right now I don't remember the name."

Mario: "Hace un ano"

GLE: "Hace un ano que yo tuve una ilusion." And I started singing it and he says, "You know those songs? Man you're really old."

Both: [laugh]

GLE: I said, "Yeah, those are the songs we sang when we were growing up." I said, "Because we didn't have a TV." We didn't get a TV until, I think 1948. [That] was the first TV we had in the house. My uncle David, I think, bought it. And then we used to watch all nothing but cowboy movies because that's what my grandpa, Lupe, wanted to watch all the time. He wanted to watch the cowboy movies.

TR: Well my grandfather used to say, "Vamos a ver los valientes." Los valientes, those were the cowboys.

GLE: Yeah.

TR: Yeah. Any other friend besides Gloria? How about in school?

GLE: In school? Well, there was a lot of friends growing up. One of my teachers was Stella Castorena.

TR: Oh you're kidding. She was your teacher?

GLE: And it ended up she was related to me too because her mother, Ines Castorena, was a Chavez. Mi tia Manuela Chavez was her mother. It ended up Ms Castorena, Stella Castorena, was related to me.

TR: Yes

GLE: And she was my gym teacher.

TR: I'll be darned. Where at? The--

GLE: At the--

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Both: Garfield

GLE: At Wilson actually

TR: At Wilson?

GLE: Yeah. She was a gym teacher there at Wilson School. And when we would come out in the playground as kids, as soon as we would come out of the classroom we would start speaking Spanish. And she would go, "English, English!"

Both: [laugh]

GLE: She wanted us to learn English because we all went home and there was nobody to speak English with. So it was hard for us to learn English. But in school she was always on us you know. And we were all close friends. Actually all of us were close friends because we were either related. There was about two or three of my cousins in my classroom. There was Refujio Gomez and there was Alfred Melendres.

TR: [laughs]

GLE: There was Socorro Valdez, Oscar Valdez. We were all related. Half of us were not only friends but we were related too. We went to school together. So we all had a lot of friends because we were all related.

TR: [laughs] So you couldn't do any wrong because they would tell on you?--

GLE: Pete Chavez. Pete Chavez was in my room. Mary Chavez was in my room. At one time or another we were all in the same classrooms and we were all related.

TR: So you had to behave because otherwise--

GLE: Well yeah, we were all cousins--

TR: you were told, or they would tattle on you. Yeah.

GLE: We were all cousins. We were all related. So it was fun growing up in Colton because not only were we friends we were related. And we pretty much came from the same families. So we were pretty much all attached. You know. And then most of us baptized each other's kids or confirmed them. Or took them to confirmation or took them to marriage. So that even extended our relationship. Because not only were we related

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we became compadres and comadres and padrinos and madrinas. I can't tell you how many godchildren I have. You know.

TR: So it was almost--

GLE: Like one big family in Colton.

TR: It seems like that. Yeah. And now did you have family parties?

GLE: Oh all the time. Because somebody was always getting baptized because we were all such big families. Everybody, my uncle Ben, had seven kids. I had six. There was always somebody getting baptized or somebody getting married. Or then somebody would be dying. You know, I was just telling my husband now, "I feel lonely sometimes. Because you know how many people in my family and friends I have buried?" Just in the last nine months alone, I've buried three of my uncles that I grew up with. And my cousin Danny that I held when I was eight years old when he came home from the hospital. And I said, "Do you know how many of those close, very close family"-
-

TR: And the name of our uncles were who?

GLE: Manuel Luna. My father was Ambrose Luna. And then there was John Luna, Ben Luna, David Luna, Arthur Luna, Robert Luna, and Ray Luna. And Joe Luna passed away in 1941. I was just a little girl. I barely remember him. And one of my aunts passed away in 1936, the year I was born. The other two had already passed away.

TR: Now did you have any sisters?

GLE: Only one sister.

TR: Sophie.

GLE: Sophia. She passed away, I want to say, about eight years ago.

TR: Yeah. She was in my class.

GLE: She would have been your age.

TR: She was in my class.

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GLE: She passed away when she was 69.

TR: Now did she have any kids?

GLE: She had seven kids. But they're all scattered. Once in a while I keep track. Because they all moved away. There are some in Tennessee. Some in the high desert. They're all scattered.

TR: Like everybody else. You know--

GLE: Yeah.

TR: The kids--

GLE: They didn't stay here like mine did. My family was a very close-knit family. So we all pretty much stayed close.

TR: Talking about closeness and talking about activities that you played when you were a little girl, do you remember las fiestas patrias [national holidays]?

GLE: That was another thing that we had a lot. We had las fiestas patrias, las Jamaicas, the church carnivals that we had. As a matter of fact, Ted and I were very active and because I was in the church choir for five years, and just automatically you had to be in charge of a booth. So Ted and I were in charge of, and a couple of other members, in charge of a booth where we cooked up fajitas or whatever sold good. And Ted would come and help construct the booths. We both would work a booth. We were very involved for a good five years when Father Mike was our priest.

TR: Oh yes. Okay.

GLE: I became--

TR: What was his last name I forget--

GLE: Father Mike . . . um I never knew his name--

TR: It'll come. It'll come to us. I remember him too.

GLE: But we started with the congregation, Immaculate, when we first moved up there to north Colton. When Father King was our . . . he was a fun priest. He was Irish and he

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was stubborn as they came. But he was good. He was a good priest. That's when we first started going there.

TR: Well I remember Father Valencia.

GLE: I also went to church with Father Valencia. Father Valencia married my first daughter and baptized her too I think. And we started--

GLE: Right there with Father Valencia.

TR: Your grandma, was she a church goer?

GLE: Did you know that Father Valencia grew up in Chihuahua with my grandmother on my mother's side. And my grandmother's first cousin would come every year from Chihuahua to visit. And we knew when he came Father Valencia was going to be there in the house. Because evidently they had grown up together. What happened was during the persecution of the priests in Mexico, Father Valencia had gotten beaten. And he escaped and ended up here in Colton.

TR: Oh. When was that Henry the year?

H: Cristeros?

TR: Si. When was that?

GLE: During that time--

TR: 1926 or so?

H: It was

TR: Thirties?

H: I think it was in the mid to late twenties. Something like that.

GLE: That's when he had gotten beaten over there in Chihuahua. And he escaped and he ended up here.

TR: Yeah he came to Colton 1936.

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GLE: Yeah, but he was still best friends with my grandmother's first cousin--

TR: I'll be darned.

GLE: When he would come to visit my grandma, she would call Father Valencia and he would come to visit with him at the house--

TR: [laughs] Everybody in Colton's related--

GLE: And they would reminisce about when they were young kids in Chihuahua.

TR: What city in Chihuahua? Do you remember?

GLE: Delicias. My grandmother was born in Delicias, Chihuahua.

TR: Wow.

GLE: And my grandfather on my mother's side was a tarahumara indian. We couldn't figure out why we could never catch up to her--

TR: [laughs]

GLE: --because she used to walk real fast. One of my grandsons researched her and found out that she was a tarahumara Indian from Chihuahua.

TR: I'll be darned. Yeah.

H: They can run fast.

GLE: They're known for running--

H: Long distances--

GLE: Our whole family were always long distance runners, all of us. We were in sports and ran hard and beat everybody in track. We couldn't figure out where all that had come from until my grandson researched and found out that tarahumara indians are, which we are all part of through my grandmother. That's why all my kids were fast runners, good athletes, including me. I was captain of my baseball team, volleyball team, basketball team. I was a good athlete in school.

TR: You mentioned that your grandma was pretty active in church, that she went to church everyday.

GLE: She belonged to a group of women. And probably Margarita Gomez and all of them belonged to that same group. And every member saw them all marching to church. And they were all dressed in dark. And they had something hanging from [motions with hands around neck as if to say a type of necklace]. But I can't remember what they were called now.

H: In some places they called the ladies las bellatas but I don't know if that was true in Colton.

GLE: Yes. She belonged to that group because my grandmother made us go to church every Sunday. Her and Juana and Tomas, Juana used to go to church everyday. Because they lived there on M Street. So they were just around the corner from the church. So she used to go to church everyday. And she would pray to the signs of the cross.

TR: All of them?

GLE: All of them.

TR: How about your grandpa?

GLE: My grandpa would say one "Our Father" and he would say, "One is enough for me. Ay con se reparten todos," he would say.

Both: [laugh]

GLE: He wasn't as committed as she was. But they were all--

TR: Now what about your--

GLE: Including Margarita Gomez, I think she played the organ for the church.

H: Yes she did.

GLE: They were all very involved.

TR: What about you? Did you attend church on a regular basis?

GLE: Every Sunday. I told you my grandmother wouldn't let us go anywhere. You couldn't go to the show on Sunday if you didn't go to church. As a matter of fact when I had my first son she made me . . . [she said] "You can't go anywhere until you take your children to present them." When they were very first born you had to take them to church to present them in church before you even thought of going anywhere else or taking them anywhere else.

TR: So very strict?

GLE: Yeah.

TR: And you mentioned that right after school, las monjitas, the sisters would come and --

GLE: Yes there's a bridge in south Colton where you cross the street from the school--

TR: La Cadena bridge to connect them--

GLE: La Cadena bridge there. Coming down that bridge there, I think it was on Tuesdays and Thursdays or something like that, the sisters would be waiting for you at the foot of the bridge. It wasn't an option. They would line you up and they would say, "Okay let's go," and march us to the catechism. And they would take us to catechism.

TR: So [a] captive audience right off the bat.

GLE: Right.

TR: Right off the bat?

GLE: I miss that. You know when they used to do that to our kids. And I did that. I followed through with my kids. I made them go to church every Sunday. I made sure they got their first communion, their confirmation, and then I married them all by church. I completed my responsibility. After that I said, "It's up to you guys."

TR: We were talking about fiestas patrias. How popular were they in the Mexican neighborhood, in our neighborhood?

GLE: I don't think there's anybody in Colton that didn't attend las fiestas patrias back when we were growing up. Because that was a to-do thing. Back then we still didn't

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have a TV. We didn't have the internet. We didn't have anything. That was our form of entertainment for us. We looked forward to that every year, to the fiestas and our local beauties running contests to see which would be the fairest or the prettiest.

TR: [chuckles] Were you ever in a contest?

GLE: No. No I was never that pretty.

Both: [laugh]

GLE: But we supported all the ones that did run. A lot of my girlfriends did.

TR: Which girlfriends ran?

GLE: Well one of my dearest girlfriends was Sally Ortega. And one of the good friend of my husband's was Dora. . .

TR: Villa?

GLE: [Dora] Villa. She was a very good friend of my husband. They had been neighbors when they were growing up over here. And that was another thing that different areas of Colton were called by different names---

TR: Oh we had barrios verdad? We had barrios.

GLE: They called them barrios back in those days.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: Up where I lived there was--

TR: La Reserva

GLE: La Reserva more or less.

TR: Right right.

GLE: And the ones down here by the Mexican. . . where the Colton park over there--

TR: Las Palomas--

GLE: --Las Palomas. So they lived . . . Ted grew up in Las Palomas. And Dora Villa was his neighbor. She became one of the princesses. And then Rachel also became one of the princesses that I went to school with.

TR: Rachel [who]?

GLE: What was her last name? [Points to someone off screen to help her remember]

M: Carrasco.

Both: Carrasco

TR: Rachel Carrasco.

GLE: She became one of the princesses. Who were the other ones that were. . .

TR: Now how did they raise funds Gloria? How did the queens raise funds? How did they become queen? How did they become the queen of the fiesta?

GLE: They made these little coupons. You could buy a coupon off of them for like fifty cents, I think, or twenty-five cents. And the one that sold the most is the one that got to be the queen.

TR: Ah. So if you had money like--

GLE: And that's how they raised money to put on--

TR: the fiestas?

GLE: The fiestas. So of course they would hustle to see who would raise the most.

TR: So they would do it though dances?

GLE: And they would hold dances. They would hold jamaicas and stuff like that. Their parents would have fundraisers so that they could sell more tickets so they could support them. And that's pretty much how they ended up winning, the one who would get first place.

TR: Did they have anything else besides the crowning of the queen and the princess?

GLE: Well they had a parade. They would have a parade. They would have floats. And the girls would dress up in their gowns and their crowns and they would end up at where ever the fiesta was going to be. They would fix up a place that was designated where the fiesta was going to end up, where the parade was going to end up. And local merchants would put up booths. They would sell food. They would sell soda pop they would sell whatever. The locals, well all of us would come from north Colton, because most of them were held here in south Colton.

TR: Yes.

GLE: And we would come down to attend the fiestas.

TR: When you lived in south Colton were the schools giving the half day off to participate in las fiestas patrias? Do you remember any of that?

GLE: You know what? I don't remember. I remember that on Good Friday they would give us a half day off. I don't remember if they would give us a time off to attend the fiestas. I don't remember. I'm pretty sure we didn't. We might have gotten some time off here in south Colton when we were growing up but I don't remember.

TR: The other is in Colton, Gloria, you know you're a lifelong resident of Colton, south Colton and north Colton. Who were our leaders in south Colton? Who were the people who were our leaders in south Colton?

GLE: You know, one of our local residents that I went to school with was Frankie Gonzalez. Evidently Frankie Gozalez's father had been in the police department in Colton. As Frankie was growing up, Frankie became active in politics. Eventually he became our first hispanic--

TR: Mayor--

GLE: Mayor.

TR: Yes.

GLE: And right about the same time one of my best friends Patty Cisneros--

TR: Oh she became a--

GLE: She became--

TR: --councilwoman.

GLE: a councilwoman. And she became a councilwoman here for 18 years before she started to get sick. She told me, she said she just [had] too many surgeries. And she started to get sick.

TR: So Patty was in your class and a good friend of yours?

GLE: Actually she was younger than me. I think she was like in the sixth grade when I was in the eighth grade.

TR: Okay.

GLE: But later on in years we became very good friends. And we travel together a lot, her and I and her husband.

TR: Yeah because she became a councilwoman in 1976. And she was there for 18 years?

GLE: Yeah, she was a councilwoman for 18 years. Because I remember after we became real close friends Ted would help her husband go put up the signs when she was running for reelection.

TR: Okay.

GLE: Ted would help Ernie go make up the signs and then they would go around and put them up. We always supported her when she ran.

TR: Any of the other leaders that you remember?

GLE: Abe Beltran was also a good friend of ours and he became the mayor there too. Those are the only hispanics that I can remember.

TR: Abe lived pretty close to you when you lived on M Street?

GLE: Yeah.

TR: Because he lived on N Street.

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GLE: Yeah because he married one of the local girls too. I don't remember who the other ones [were]. There was the mayor before Frankie. I can't remember who he was.

TR: Pascual Oliva.

GLE: Pascual Oliva was also a good friend of ours. Pascual was a good friend of my husband Ted. And he was very active as a councilman too for many years. He became very active as our councilman here. He was very well known all over. We have a neighbor, Robert Rosales, that where him and his brothers evidently were in the second world war and were decorated heroes and were very recognized here in Colton.

TR: Yes yes the Rosales family. Maybe you went to school with Monchi.

GLE: I don't remember Monchi being in school when I was in school.

TR: Because Monchi lived on Rose street next to my grandfather. Monchi was a good handball player. You know we had dared Monchi there in south Colton park--

GLE: South Colton park.

TR: Yes. And Monchi was the best handball player from there.

GLE: We also had a very good baseball team that were called the Colton Mercuries--

TR: YES!

GLE: That were very popular

TR: Yes. Yes and they played there at the same park.

GLE: Yes. We used to go see them play.

TR: Oh did you?

GLE: Yes. When we were growing up.

TR: Okay.

GLE: Yes because some of the local boys made up the team actually. I think it was Manuel Luna, Mike Mercado. I can't remember the others that were in the team that played.

TR: And that was on Sunday afternoon right?

GLE: They would play at Colton park.

TR: Yes. Yes. Because, getting back to Monchi, Father Valencia would not play handball unless Monchi showed up so Monchi could be his partner. And they would win all the rebote games after that. So Father Valencia wasn't taking any chances on losing any of the games.

GLE: So he would take Monchi?

TR: So he would wait for Monchi until Monchi showed up.

Both: [laugh]

GLE: One of, was it Monchi's brother, that became a priest? Father--

TR: Monchi's son, Ray.

GLE: Monchi's son, Ray.

TR: Ray. Ray.

Both: Became a priest.

TR: And he was there in San Salvador.

GLE: He was one of my favorite priests. Him and I used to get along real well together. I liked his ideas. He old ideas of bringing up children. And I actually attended a four-day seminar with Father Rosales in charge. That was one of the best things I experienced in my life. Ted and I both attended one of those.

TR: I forgot about Father Rosales. Thank you for bringing him up. But he was very active also in social issues.

GLE: Yes that's why I attended. It was a seminar he held, a four-day seminar. Actually he held it at the Guadalupe Church in San Bernardino and Ted and I attended. It wasn't called a seminar then. It was called something else. But it was very educational. Father Rosales put on a very good program. We were disappointed that they transferred him out. Evidently he had too many of the old ideas that he grew up with. The congregation in San Bernardino, the people there didn't agree with some of his--

TR: Philosophy? Yes.

GLE: He was a little too strict for them I think. Which I thought was wonderful because--

TR: And he died very young didn't he?

GLE: Yes. . .

TR: Growing up in Colton, you know when I was growing up they integrated the schools in 1953. We had Wilson Junior High School and we had Roosevelt Junior High School. In 53 when I was an eighth grader they put us together and we became Colton Junior High School. Growing up in Colton did you experience any segregation, racism or kind of a--

GLE: Other than what Ted [experienced], [there is] a story that Ted told me. He said, "You know when we were going to Wilson School they didn't allocate monies for our schools in south Colton for uniforms and athletic equipment. So some of us went to school barefoot because we couldn't afford anything else." He said "But there was a time when they took our team to go play the Roosevelt team. When we got over there," he says "the Roosevelt team, they had nice shoes with cleats. They had uniforms, nice baseballs and basketballs and they had all the nice equipment. And there we went with our team, half of us were barefooted and they were all"--

TR: A ragtag team?

GLE: "But we beat them!"

Both: [laugh]

GLE: All the equipment and the uniforms didn't help them. He says, "We still beat them." He used to talk about that and he thought that was great.

TR: How about the movie? You mentioned something about when the New Colton opened up the seats were a little different for people.

GLE: That was the only time that I experienced that. I think when I came along my grandmother used to talk about the people that owned the Willets Department Store and Helmans here in Colton. I guess the ones that owned Willets were Jewish. And they were the ones at that time I guess with all the money. But my grandma used to say. . . I used to coax her about learning the Preamble of the Constitution and about

GLE: learning how to read and write because my grandmother never went to school. She never learned how to read and write. And I tried to teach her how to read and write. I would have her to practice the Preamble. I said I would take her so she could become a citizen and she would tell me she never wanted to become a citizen. And I said, "Why?" [She said] "Well, you don't know how we were treated when we came here." But that's all she would say. But she would say, "But there were some people that were good to us." Mrs. . . the lady that owned the Willets and the Helman's, she says, "They were good to us." So evidently there was some that were good to them. But I guess maybe some that were not so good to them. But she never wanted to become an American citizen. She said, "No." For whatever reason, she never really went into detail. So evidently they were not treated very well.

TR: Yes.

GLE: -- when they first came. So. . .

TR: What about your uncles? You know? Like Ray and some of your uncles, did they ever talk about the differences between south and north Colton?

GLE: Not much because I think when we came along everything was changing we were integrating a lot. People were moving into North Colton. I think things had started to change so I don't think we experienced too much of that.

TR: Yes.

GLE: It wasn't too bad then.

TR: Because the integration started, like I said, 53 with our junior high school. And then World War II ended in 46. You know the soldiers from Colton were coming back and like you said, during that period there were a lot of jobs that were created in Colton. You mentioned the Caltech and you mentioned the--

Both: Crain

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GLE: Cement Plant, and then there was Crestmore, there was Norton [Air Force Base]--

TR: Kaiser [Steel]--

GLE: Kaiser. And then there was the railroad. There was a lot of industry here in Colton. It just gradually, it started to go away. But during those years when I moved here there was a lot of industry. That's where all my uncles went to work. They went to work for the cement plant, Griffin Wheel [Company], Kaiser, Caltech, Crane. They all had jobs with all those companies. They all stopped picking oranges and they all went to work for all those companies. And they all retired from all those companies.

TR: So things got a little better, or or a lot better for--

GLE: Oh yeah.

TR: --for people in south Colton.

GLE: After the war.

TR: After the war. And after Korea also.

GLE: Yeah. It started all getting better. They all got good jobs. Well they considered good jobs even though they were still laborers. But they were at least not out picking in the fields like before.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: It got a little bit better for all of us. Ted worked for Griffin Wheel for 25 years until it closed.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: And then he worked 10 years for city schools in San Bernardino. But things got a lot better for everybody after that.

TR: So basically integrating into north Colton was kind of almost a natural transition because everybody was doing it during that period of time.

GLE: [Nods] Gradually.

TR: During the late 50s and the 60s.

GLE: I moved there in 57 and it was already several Hispanic families. And now it's almost, I want to say, there about 90% Hispanic families in North Colton now. Not only did some of the Anglos passed away but the biggest majority moved away.

TR: The kids especially.

GLE: Their kids. The elders either passed away or moved away or moved to go live with their children someplace else. And now it's all predominantly Hispanic in North Colton.

TR: So the changes that you've seen growing up in Colton, the big changes that you've seen, have been integration and we have more and more Mexican Americans predominantly living in Colton.

GLE: Than anything else.

TR: What about the changes in South Colton Gloria? What changes have you seen?

GLE: Well after my grandparents passed away in South Colton, we didn't really visit South Colton much anymore. Most of our family that lived in South Colton have all passed away. My uncles, my uncle Ben Luna, my uncle David Luna, they all passed away. And their kids moved away from South Colton. I don't think any of their kids live in South Colton anymore. So we have very little family living in South Colton. Other than maybe some of the Gomez's, Vasquez, maybe some of them might have stayed in South Colton. I don't know.

H: Doesn't Ray?

GLE: Ray Luna's the only one living in South Colton.

H: He still lives on N Street.

GLE: He's the only one living here. He's the only one that stayed in the old house. He's pretty much left it the way it was when our grandparents lived there. For what reason? I think it's because he wanted to hold onto what was left of our grandparents. But he could have moved away any time, like the others. But he chose not to.

TR: [chuckles] Now tell me Gloria, have I forgotten anything that you want to [share]? Because I know that your daughter did some genealogy research about your family. And you mentioned that the tarahumara tribe of indians from Mexico.

GLE: That's on my mother's side.

TR: Any other findings that your daughter made regarding your genealogy?

GLE: Well, she decided here about a year ago that she wanted to find out, you know because everybody says, you know they ask you "You're Hispanic?" all the time. They say, "You're Hispanic?" or "You're Mexican?" And my argument was always that I was not a Mexican. And she said, "What do you mean you're not a Mexican?" I said, "No, I'm not. I wasn't born in Mexico. Okay?! If you were born in Mexico, you're a Mexican." Well, to put down all our doubts she went and sent her [information] to find out what her nationality was. And it came back that she was 43% American Indian. I said, "Well, what does that make me?" She said, "That probably makes you about 60%."

Both: [laugh]

GLE: Yeah, because my grandmother was pure tarahumara indian. And she says, "Mom, you're probably about 60% indian". And I said, "But we do have family that was born in Mexico." And on Ted's side of the family, she traced him back to Spain. His family.

TR: So that was an eye-opener for her because you said--

GLE: Yeah! Because she said, "All of my life there've been people telling me 'you're hispanic'. Turns out I'm an American Indian". So the way it turns out, everybody that's been sending in their DNA comes back American Indian, but we all have a little bit of hispanic because our great grandparents came from there.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: But as it turned out, her great great grandmother turned out to be French. And her great great grandfather was from Spain. So there's where all this--

TR: So the genealogist in your family is your daughter then?

Both: Yeah.

TR: So if anybody wants to know what your family is--

GLE: She's got traced both of us [points off camera] back all the way to the 1700s. To the great grandparents. The parents of Tomas and the great grandparents of Tomas and the great great grandparents down. . . one, two, three, four generations from Tomas. She's gone back that far.

H: The people of that part of Jalisco are Guachichil indians.

GLE: Yeah. My grandmother Maxima used to tell me. I have a picture of Tomas and Juana and you could not mistake them for being indians. They're tiny little guys. Dark. My grandfather had dark hair when he passed away at 83. He did not have white hair. My grandmother Maxima always used to say, "Your grandpa's an indian mija". I would say, "How's that?" She says, "Look at a picture of his parents". You could tell just by looking at them, pure indian. And she says, "They're indian. Look at your dad, he doesn't have any white hair." And so when my hair started white, and I used to dye it all the time because I was getting gray hair, I stopped dying my hair about four years ago. And my daughter said, "Mom, you don't have that white hair like my dad." I said, "No, because I'm indian mija."

TR: Well you know, a few years ago Gloria, you had a group of people that invented the McDonald's story in Colton. What was the name of the group?

GLE: What happened, I met up with [points of camera] Gabby and Alfred Melendrez one day there, and it turned out we were all related. And we were having coffee and we started a conversation and then word got around that the cousins were starting a coffee club there. So little by little, they started coming in one by one and before I knew it I became their secretary and I ended up with 16 of them. And some of them were Gomez, Valdez, Melendrez. Because the Melendrez are related to us too. And so there were 16 of us and I took down all their names, their dates, their ages, when their birthdays were. I would celebrate their birthdays. I would bake them a little cake and I would bring them a little gift. And then I started scheduling trips. And so they decided that we needed to have a name because everybody would come and tell a story and they would say, "She's probably lying. She probably just made that up." And so it became the Liar's Club.

TR: [Laughs]

GLE: And they even had t-shirts made. It says Liar's Club.

TR: I have one.

GLE: Oh you used to come with us once in a while! And I would schedule trips for them because most of them didn't drive anymore, they were up in age and they were reclusive at home. Nobody took them anywhere, so I would schedule trips for them. I would take them to the Fantasy Casino and they would give them a free buffet. Or I would take them to the state line and they would give them a free buffet over there for five dollars. I would take them on little trips. We would go to San Diego on a bus trip sometimes. And I would take them on little trips. And they said, "You know, we look forward to this because it gets us out of the house and it gives us something to do. And we get to talk and joke and eat." I would bake them cookies. Most of them were diabetic so I would bake them cookies with sugar-free, and bring them something to eat. We just passed the time there and little by little I started to lose them all. There's only three of us left.

TR: And those three are?

GLE: It's me and Dorothy. Now Dorothy is related because of Oscar Bejerano was a Valdez originally. And his mother married a Bejerano. We were all interrelated some way. So little by little Dorothy, [looks at ____ off camera] who's the other one that's alive still? The other day we were figuring out.

M: Tony

GLE: Tony

M: Castro.

GLE: This guy named Tony. He's not related to us but he joined our coffee club. We're the only three left. . . out of sixteen.

TR: But that was a nice club.

GLE: It was a nice, it was a fun club.

TR: Yeah.

GLE: I remember the first time I scheduled a trip to take them to the Fantasy [Casino], they went around telling everybody in Colton, "Gloria's taking us all to the Fantasy!" They thought it was the Fantasy [strip club].

All: [laugh]

GLE: He said, "Whaat? She's taking you guys to the Fantasy [strip club]?" [Everyone laughs] I said, "No, no, no. It's a casino over there [near Palm Springs]. I'm not taking them to that one over there [referring to the strip club in Colton]."

TR: Well Gloria, that's part of your legacy then. That's part of your legacy. Now Gloria, you mentioned you were married for how long with Ted?

GLE: We were married for 53 years.

TR: 53 years?

GLE: Before he passed.

TR: And then he passed away in?

GLE: 2005. He's been gone for 12 years.

TR: 12 years. And then you remarried?

GLE: Two years after Ted passed away I married Mario.

TR: How did you meet Mario?

GLE: Actually, what's her name, Helen.

TR: Helen?

GLE: Villalobos. And Marylou. . . [looks to Mario off camera] what's Marylou's last name? They invited me with them to a tardeada at the American Legion. I already was familiar with the VFW because I had been the president there for about five years. So I already knew everybody there. And they invited me with them to go to a dance. It was on a Sunday afternoon. It was taco night so they invited us. Helen came and picked me up. I didn't want to go but she said "C'mon you've gotta go. It's nice. There's a bunch of us widows. We have a table we all sit at. There was Helen, Marylou, Andrea Luna, Irene. . . what is her name? She's a widow too. There was about five widows and they would all sit at one table and eat their taco and have something to drink and listen to the music. So that's how it started. I started going with them. And we would all sit together and we would listen to the music. And a lot of them have close friends that they would

get up and dance with. And we, all the women would dance. And that's where I met him [points to Mario]. That's where I met him.

TR: You met, what's his full name?

GLE: Mario Flores.

TR: Is he a Coltonite?

GLE: No. He's from Stockton actually. He would come down here to work and he was working down here. And he was living up here in Reche Canyon in a mobile home park and he had his own place there. He actually wasn't a member there, but one night he says he came and he just wanted to go in there to have a beer. He asked the bar manager, he [the bar manager] wouldn't let him come in just for one beer just to come in and sit for a little bit. And he [eventually] allowed him to come in. That's how he was able to get in.

TR: Ah.

GLE: And when I run into him [the bar manager] I tell him, "It's your fault". He says, "Well it's not my fault! I didn't tell you to marry him".

All: [laugh]

TR: And how long have you been married now?

GLE: It'll be ten years in July.

TR: Oh. Congratulations. You know, it's gone by quickly.

GLE: We dated, after we met, we dated for a whole year. And between him and Helen, I decided I should get married again.

TR: Helen was la alcahueta.

GLE: Yeah she kept edging me, "He's a good man. He likes you. He'll take care of you. Come on, you need to get married again. I promised Ted I would take care of you. And he's a good man". And so finally I caved in and got married.

TR: Well congratulations to both of you. Congratulations. My last question Gloria, is [what was the] best part of growing up in Colton or the worst memory that you have about growing up in Colton. What would be the best memory that you have about growing up in Colton?

GLE: I think the best memory is having such a big family. And so many were not only friends but family. We were interrelated so we had a lot of fun times together. We were a close family. We always partied together. There was always somebody somewhere that you knew. To this day we go to Walmart, we go to the store and I'll disappear for awhile and he'll say, "I knew you ran into somebody you knew." He says, "I knew I saw you talking to somebody. Who was that?" "Oh that was my cousin," or "that was my comadre," or "we went to school together," or "we used to be neighbors." [He says] "but you know you know so many people and you become attached to all these people and my saddest part of that. . ."

GLE: "part is when you start losing them and then you feel so alone." That's been the worst part of my life. Losing all the loved family and friends comadres and compadres that I've lost through the years. That has been the worst part.

TR: But the best part has been the family is secure?

GLE: Just being a part of Colton, of the closeness, the togetherness that I found here in Colton. Before we got married we actually went to Redlands. We went as far as Santa Maria. We went all over to find a place because we were gonna sell our places and buy a house somewhere by ourselves. And we were gonna make a new life. And after we went through as far as Santa Maria, we went all over the place looking. Coming home, I'm coming home like that in the car [head down as if pouting or defeated] like this, and he says, "You're not going anywhere are you?"

All: [Laugh]

GLE: [Mario says] "This is where you want to be and this is where you're going to stay." He sold his place and he took all the money he had and remodeled my home and made it like a brand new home. He says, "So your children and your grandchildren and your great grandchildren will have a home and they'll always have a place to come to."

TR: Well thank you Mario. A beautiful ending. And Gloria, thank you so much for sharing your life with us and be with us this afternoon thank you so much.

GLE: Thank you for having me.

End of Interview:

[01:17:30]