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South Colton Oral History Project

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**Josie Guel**

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# South Colton Oral History Project

## Interview Summary

**Interviewee:**

Josie Guel

**Interviewer:**

Dr. Tom Rivera

**Interview Date:**

August 14, 2015

**Location:**

Colton, California

**Interview Summary completed by:**

Kimberly Morales & Roxanne Bogarin, 2020

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**Topic:**

Dr. Tom Rivera talks with Josie Guel, a long time resident of Colton, California, about how her family came to South Colton and her experiences there as a youth and into adulthood. She talks about her husband and family, jobs that she held over the years, community members and events, cooking and food preparation, and about what it was like living through the Great Depression in Colton.

**Keywords:**

- South Colton Community
- Colton (Calif.)
- Church
- Father Valencia
- Cooking
- Family
- Great Depression

**Comments:**

Interview contains some Spanish language.

**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:**

Josie Guel

**Interviewer:**

Dr. Tom Rivera

**Interview Date:**

August 14, 2015

**Location:**

Colton, California

**Length:**

[01:02:08]

**Media format:**

Streaming video

**List of Acronyms:**

TR = Dr. Tom Rivera

FA = Frank Acosta

JG = Josie Guel

**Interview Transcript completed by:**

Kimberly Morales & Roxanne Bogarin, 2020

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**Start of Interview:**

[00:00:00]

TR: Good afternoon, I'm Tom Rivera and today is August the 14<sup>th</sup> and it is approximately 2 o'clock in the afternoon. We're working on these South Colton Oral History Project and behind the camera is Mr. Frank Acosta. And today's guest is Josie Guel.

JG: [Nods head].

TR: Josie, thank you very much for being with us this afternoon, we truly appreciate you taking time off from your schedule and being with us to help us with the South Colton Oral History Project.

To get started Josie, tell me, when were you born?

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JG: I was born July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1925.

TR: So you're 90 years old.

JG: 90 years old.

TR: And Josie, what's your secret to a long life? You look great.

JG: [Laughs] I don't know, I just, I don't know.

TR: Was it the tortillas and the beans? Nopales—

JG: —It could be, all that probably [laughs] —

TR: —and the chile and then the tough life you had to live.

JG: Hard work.

TR: Hard work, hard work. And where were you born Josie?

JG: I was born in Jerome Arizona.

TR: How did you happen to come to Colton?

JG: Well because my dad, he worked in a mine and they closed it down.

TR: Oh, they closed the mine in Jerome?

JG: Yeah because they were mining underneath and it started to sink.

TR: Oh okay.

JG: So, they closed it down and then he got a job over here now in Riverside, the cement plant.

TR: La Crestmore?

JG: [Yes]

TR: Crestmore cement plant.

JG: Yeah and then we came over here.

TR: And how did you end up in Colton?

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JG: Well my mother was, you know where the Green Acres is?

TR: Yes, in Bloomington.

JG: There was only two houses there. Ours and another family lived there. And then on top of the hill where the offices are, there were some Italian people there. And they sold vegetables and eggs and stuff but then my mother was pregnant with my younger sister and so we moved to Colton.

TR: What year was this Josie?

JG: 1937.

TR: 1937 and you moved to—

JG: —To Colton.

TR: Fifth Street?

JG: [Yes]

TR: La Calle Cinco?

JG: Yeah.

TR: Same house that you live in now?

JG: No, no we rented a house two doors north of where I live, mas [inaudible]—

TR: Okay and where do you live now?

JG: At 824 South Fifth Street.

TR: Okay and then you moved two houses down?

JG: No, no we lived two houses north of where I live.

TR: Okay.

JG: And then there was a house there, where I live now and it burned down.

TR: [Nods head].

JG: So my dad bought that [inaudible] for 150 dollars.

TR: Oh, again in 1937, '38?

JG: '37. And it was owned by some people that had a store that was on N Street and it was called La Reforma. That was the name of the store there and—

TR: La Nueva Reforma?

JG: [Yes]

TR: Just passed the Railroad tracks.

JG: Yeah, the Aguilars.

TR: Yeah, between—

JG: —just south of Fifth—

TR: —between Sixth and Fifth—

JG: —yeah, because there was no underpass there. It was just N Street all the way through.

TR: So La Nueva Reforma owners sold the property to you.

JG: [Nods head] Yeah. They sold it to my dad and then we cleaned it out and he started to build the house.

TR: I see, I see.

JG: And then when he got through, we moved into it.

TR: So, you've been there all these years?

JG: [Yes] Since '37.

TR: Yeah. Now, Josie, I'm curious. Fifth Street, eh? Because there was a lot of activity in Fifth Street. For example, we had The Caldera Park.

JG: Yeah.

TR: The Caldera [inaudible].

JG: Yeah, Juan Caldera.

TR: Juan Caldera and then where you live, on the corner of Congress and Fifth Street; and where was the Caldera property located from where you lived?

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JG: South from there—

TR: —going south—

JG: —south, about maybe two blocks or three blocks.

TR: So crossing Congress, you had the Macias family.

JG: [nods head], La Macias and the Mirandas.

TR: Okay. Lupe Miranda, she was in my kindergarten class.

JG: Oh, she was?

TR: She was and then south of that—

JG: —and then the Mendozas.

TR: Okay.

JG: David Mendoza.

TR: And after that?

JG: And then it was nothing but then it was a plant.

TR: And then where did the Caldera family live?

JG: Across from the plunge, right across.

TR: Across from the plunge? The plunge was on west side of Fifth Street?

JG: [Yes]

TR: And then they were across the street, on the east side.

JG: Yeah.

TR: On the east side.

JG: Yeah.

TR: A small house or a big house or?

JG: You know, it was a two-story house.



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TR: They lived in a two-story house?

JG: Yeah.

TR: And then the plunge was across the street.

JG: [Nods head].

TR: Now did you ever visit the plunge?

JG: Well, we went over there because there was a lot of activities on the weekends so.

TR: Saturday and Sunday? You went on Saturday and Sunday?

JG: Yeah. We would go for a little while.

TR: What did you do when you were at the plunge?

JG: Well we just sit around and watch people swim in the pool and bite popsicles, raspados or whatever they had.

TR: So, you had a nice time just watching people.

JG: Oh yeah [nods head].

TR: Having raspados and—

JG: —Yeah, it was nice.

TR: Were there a lot of people that visited the—

JG: —Oh yeah. On the weekend there was a lot of people there because they couldn't go to the swimming pool in that town so they would—

TR: —on the north side of town they couldn't go to swim—

JG: —on the north side we couldn't go over there.

TR: What about, I understand there was also a baseball field in that area.

JG: Yeah, just below the plunge.

TR: Just below the plunge was the baseball field?

JG: Well next to the plunge was the dance hall.

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TR: Ah okay.

JG: And then there was the baseball field.

JG: But they use that for different things. Sometimes a circus would come and they would be there.

TR: Oh, they would use that area for the circus?

JG: Yeah.

TR: So a lot of people would, well it seemed like that was the entertainment center for South Colton.

JG: Yeah.

TR: Where people would be there—

JG: —There at the dance hall, one day a week, outside the dance hall the doors would be closed but there will come these nuns to take us to catechism. We would all hide [laughs and smiles] because we didn't want to go.

TR: [Laughs] Tell me that again.

JG: They had the nuns who would wait there, outside of the dance hall waiting for the kids so they could take us to catechism.

TR: Why were the kids at the dance hall?

JG: No, they weren't there. They were just passing by or coming home from school, they were mostly coming home from school.

TR: Oh. Now what school was this?

JG: Garfield and San Salvador Schools.

TR: Garfield?

JG: And then there was San Salvador too. Not the one that's there now but the old one, across on Rancho and Agua Mansa. That was San Salvador School there.

TR: And where would the nuns take you for catechism?

JG: There was a little house there, next to the church. It was called La Guadalupana like a little office and then they would have catechism there.

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TR: Oh, next to Seventh and L Street?

JG: [Nods head], right by the L.

TR: And you were quite active or you were very, you attended church regularly.

JG: Yeah, we went every Sunday and on the holidays like Christmas and all that [inaudible].

TR: So, your dad and mom made you—

JG: You know what, my dad and mom didn't go. It was my grandmother that usually and my uncle because my grandmother was very religious. They were both very religious.

TR: So, you had to be there?

JG: Yeah.

TR: Now, tell me about how did you meet your husband Josie?

JG: I met him in Arizona when we moved down there for two years.

TR: Oh so you were here in Colton—

JG: —[yes] and '49 to [inaudible], we went down there.

TR: And why did you move back to Arizona?

JG: Because my dad had been laid off at the cement plant.

TR: Okay.

JG: And there was work down there so we went down there. Then in 1943 they called him back, it was right after the war.

TR: Oh so he went back to Arizona for two or three years and then they called him back from the cement plant so you came back.

JG: Yeah, so we came back [nods head]. Been there ever since.

TR: And you've been there ever since.

JG: [Yes]

TR: Yeah but—

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JG: —And the house, when we went down there, he rented the house to some people.

TR: Oh, the house that you had here in Colton.

JG: [Yes]

TR: Now, you avoided my question. How did you meet your husband?

JG: Through a friend [nods head].

TR: Where?

JG: In Arizona.

TR: Tell me how that happened with a friend.

JG: They just introduced us and [shrugs shoulders] we got married [smiles].

TR: Did a big courtship or a long—

JG: —No not long because we weren't there that long. And my parents came back and I stayed but then I came back right after.

TR: You mentioned that your parents were very strict.

JG: Yeah.

TR: Tell me about, why did you describe them as strict?

JG: Well they didn't want us to go anywhere [laughs], wear shorts or pants [laughs] or just dresses and skirts.

TR: But how did you get to marry your husband if they were, your dad was very strict?

JG: We eloped.

TR: Oh, you eloped?

JG: Yeah.

TR: How old were you when you eloped?

JG: I think I was about 17.

TR: And where did you elope to?

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JG: Yuma, we got married there.

TR: You got married in Yuma?

JG: [Nods head].

TR: And then did you come to Colton with your husband?

JG: No, he got drafted after that and I came by myself. He was in the Navy.

TR: What year was that Josie?

JG: '43, the beginning of '43.

TR: Of '43.

JG: [yes]

TR: And then he was—

JG: —No, it was the beginning of '44.

TR: '44. He went to the Navy and you came to Colton.

JG: [Yes]

TR: And then what happened?

JG: Well we got a divorce after that.

TR: Did you have any children?

JG: Yeah, one [nods head]. We had a daughter.

TR: And what's her name?

JG: Geraldine.

TR: Geraldine?

JG: Yeah, I call her Gerry though [smiles].

TR: And does she live in Colton?

JG: [Nods head]. Yeah, she lives on Fifth Street.

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TR: Does she have any family?

JG: She has three kids, three children.

TR: So are those your only grandkids?

JG: Yes.

TR: Tell me about your grandkids.

JG: Well Richard, that's my oldest grandson he has the twins. And my other granddaughter she had a little girl and she couldn't have anymore so she adopted a boy. He's 14 now, he was 22 months when adopted him.

TR: So those are your family here in Colton.

JG: Yeah and then my youngest daughter Regina, she lives over there by the Davis Park.

TR: Josie, you were a single parent.

JG: [Yes]

TR: You were a single parent and how did you support yourself Josie?

JG: By working.

TR: Where did you work?

JG: I worked at different places.

TR: Tell me—

JG: —At first, I was working, there was a place on Valley and they used to make lunches, sandwiches and stuff and they used to take them to the air bases to sell.

TR: Norton or Garfield?

JG: Both of them.

TR: Okay.

JG: So we had to go to work at about three o'clock in the morning so the trucks will be ready to leave at seven.

And I was there for a while and then they closed that down—

TR: The sandwiches that you made, was it baloney?

JG: They had all kinds, yeah.

TR: Salam[?]

JG: Salami, ham—

TR: —tuna, ham, cheese—

JG: —all kinds and they had donuts, pastries, pies and they would take them at the bases.

TR: You would go in at three o'clock in the morning.

JG: [Yes]

TR: And how long would you work?

JG: We worked up to about 11, 10.

TR: How much did they pay you an hour?

JG: I don't remember but I found a [inaudible] the other day—

TR: —[Laughs]—

JG: —I still have it, it was 14 dollars a week.

TR: 14 dollars a week?

JG: 14 [nods head].

TR: And how many hours a week did you work?

JG: Sometimes you worked 30, 40. It depends on how much they had.

TR: And how long did you work there Josie?

JG: I worked there until they closed it down.

TR: Which, how many—

JG: —and then I went to work in a—

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TR: —How many years was that? One year or—

JG: —maybe a year.

TR: A year.

JG: And then I went to work at a place over there on, not San Bernardino, it was called the Day and Night Fair Corporations. They made these bombs, [inaudible] bombs. And it was like a cylinder and we would pack it with rags and they would put gasoline in them and seal them.

TR: And what bombs were, for the war effort?

JG: Yeah.

TR: Now, being a single parent did you drive or did you take the bus?

JG: No, I had to take the bus or ride with somebody that was working over there.

TR: And what time did you have to be there?

JG: At eight.

TR: Eight o'clock.

JG: Yeah, we worked there four, four thirty.

TR: The full eight hours?

JG: Yeah.

TR: How long were you there Josie?

JG: Well til they closed it down I think, it wasn't very long.

TR: A year or two?

JG: Yeah, about maybe a year because after the war ended, they closed it down.

TR: What about your other job that you had, what other jobs did you have?

JG: Well, I went to work in the Dry Cleaners in Riverside and I worked there 14 years.

TR: How did you get to Riverside from Colton?

JG: On the bus.



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TR: So you has to start—

JG: —I had to go early because the bus went by at five o'clock—

TR: —and where did you pick up the bus?

JG: On La Cadena, over there by the railroad tracks. You know, there's some steps that go down there by, down to La Cadena.

TR: Yes, yes. Near the Depot?

JG: No, near the fire station that's on La Cadena, just north of there.

TR: Oh, the fire station that's on—

JG: —that's on Fog—

TR: —oh okay, I got it, Fog and La Cadena

JG: [Yes]

TR: The bus would stop there?

JG: Yeah, well if there was somebody waiting but sometimes it was so dark.

TR: [Nods head].

JG: He wouldn't see us so what I would do, I would take some matches and [hand gestures] start lighting one when I saw the bus coming [smiles].

TR: [Laughs].

JG: But afterwards, sometimes the bus drivers already knew me so they would stop and then I would—Because I didn't go to work until seven but I couldn't take a later bus because there was no later bus. So, I would just get off at the bus station, on Seventh and Market, and I would just wait there, til it was time for me to walk down to 14<sup>th</sup> Street, that was quite a way [laughs]. And I would go to work there and I worked there for 14 years.

TR: And after that?

JG: After that they sold it and some of the people didn't like the new owners so somebody burned it down. And then I was offered a job in Highland.

TR: [Nods head].

JG: In the dry cleaning. So, I went over there and I worked there for about three years. It was a hassle to get over there because I had to take the bus to downtown Colton and then I had to transfer in San Bernardino and go all the way to Highland on the bus.

TR: So that was quite a trip.

JG: Yeah [nods head]. So, then I applied at a cleaners in Colton and she took my name, she said she would call me if she needed me.

So a few days later, from the other cleaners, she had given my name to the other cleaners there at the shopping center. The shopping center just opened.

TR: There on, Mount Vernon—

JG: —on Mount Vernon—

TR: —Yes—

JG: —and there was Janet's Cleaners and I worked there for til after my dad died.

TR: What year was that?

JG: I can't remember what year my dad died. I think it was in '66 or '67.

TR: [Nods head] And you were there until all those years of that cleaning?

JG: I was there all those years.

TR: Now, when did you retire?

JG: I retired in '84. And then you remember that—

TR: —from the cleaners or from some other place?

JG: The cleaners. Remember that cleaners in, it's still there on La Cadena and H?

TR: [Nods head] Yes.

JG: He called me, wanted me to go work for him. I worked for him for a while and then he sold it and moved to Redlands. So, I went with him.

TR: To Redlands?

JG: [yes] [Takes a pause]. No, I didn't, that didn't happen [shakes head]. I went to work in Rialto for a person—

JG: —had a dry cleaning there and then he sold it to some Korean people. And they were completely different, nobody could ever, started quitting because they just let the place go down.

So, then I went back to Redlands to work for the same guy that had the cleaners in Colton.

And then my mother was always sick so one Sunday I took her to Loma Linda and that was in '84. I took her to Loma Linda and they told us to get all of our sisters together and told us that she couldn't live by herself anymore.

I was living with her but during the day, so they wanted us to put her in a [inaudible] home.

I said, "no, I'll just quit my job and I'll stay home and take care of her."

TR: Oh, you took care of her?

JG: So I quit and I took care of her for four years until she passed away.

TR: [Nods head].

JG: By then I was 61. So, when I turned 62, I just started to get my social security and I just retired.

TR: And you just decided to stay home.

JG: Yes, stay home and babysit [laughs and smiles].

TR: Oh, you babysat too?

JG: But I went back to work after that. After she passed away, I went to work at the [inaudible] cleaners for about a year. And then I started running my social security and retired. From then, it's been babysitting [laughs].

TR: [Laughs]. So anyways Josie, the late 30s you lived in Colton, you were a single parent, you raised your daughter. And who were your friends? Who were your friends that you remember?

JG: Well like Sal Ayala and Moralia, their name was Gomez.

TR: Horaria Gomez, yeah—

JG: —that's Henry's—

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TR: —that's the Gomez family.

JG: I think that's Henry's aunt. Charlotte.

TR: So, you knew all the—

JG: — the Romos.

TR: Yeah.

JG: But that's about it. The rest of them just [laughs] stayed home.

TR: Oh, you just stayed home. Did you ever think of remarrying again?

JG: I never really did. I never did. My sister that visit La Puente, her and her husband used to travel and sometimes I'd go with them to Ensenada or wherever they went; they always invited me. So I'd go with them, yeah.

She passed away five or six years ago. In 2009 she passed away. She had Alzheimer's really bad and I took care of her too. She had a house over there on Eighth and Mountain View in San Bernardino. Every day I would go over there and take her food, take her to the doctor and take her to wherever she needed to go.

TR: So, you were quite a caretaker for the family.

JG: Oh, I've always been and then my uncle I used to take him to the doctor. And one day, he had like a little birth mark right here [touches the side of her nose]. The doctor said, "You better go to the dermatologist." I took him and it was cancer. They operated on him and after that he had colon cancer. He lived on Fourth and K Street by himself. When they did the surgery for the colon cancer, I told him, "You're not going to stay here no more." So, I brought him home with me and I took care of him for four years and—

TR: —Now was this the relative that was very active in church?

JG: Yeah, he was my mother's brother.

TR: Now what did he do at the church?

JG: He was an usher.

TR: And—

JG: —And cleaned and helped.

TR: So, he was there every Sunday?

JG: Oh yeah, every time, [shakes head and laughs] he almost lived there.

TR: For how many years Josie?

JG: Well just 38 to, you see he died 17 years ago, he died in 2001 so—

TR: —So he was quite a person that people depended on him at the church.

JG: Yeah.

TR: Was he married?

JG: Yes, he was married but his wife had passed away. And then he remarried, he remarried a younger woman and he was always worried, “What’s going to happen to her if I die?”

But she died before he did.

TR: Yeah. What about his first wife?

JG: She had, she died.

TR: Yeah, you mentioned that he was much younger than his first wife.

JG: [Nods head] Oh yeah.

TR: Could you tell us about that?

JG: He was about in his 20s when she met, when they got married, she was in her 50s.

TR: So quite a difference—

JG: —Quite a difference [nods head]. And they lived in Jerome too.

TR: [yes]

JG: So, when they got married, they moved over here and you know where that office is for the San Salvador Church on K Street?

TR: Yes.

JG: Well they lived next door.

TR: Okay.

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JG: Until they bought the house over there on Fourth and K.

TR: Yeah.

JG: So, when they lived there, it was very handy for him and Father Valencia to get together.

TR: So, you attended church when Father Valencia was—

JG: —Oh yes [nods head]. Father Valencia, he married my daughter-in-law, my son-in-law [inaudible] [nods head].

TR: How would you describe Father Valencia?

JG: He's very outgoing [laughs], he's very outgoing. He used to play ball there where they had the Sombrero, with the kids, sometimes he had a couple of kids, boys [nods head]. His sister lived on Agua Mansa and every day at noon he would go over there for lunch, to his sister's.

TR: Father Valencia had a sister?

JG: Yeah [nods head].

TR: And where did she live?

JG: On Agua Mansa, just passed Rancho.

TR: [Takes a pause].

JG: Just passed Rancho [hand gestures].

TR: Yes, yes.

JG: About the third house down—

TR: —On the right side or the left side?

JG: On the left side, [nods head]. Yeah, because there was no houses on the other side.

TR: What was her name?

JG: Her name was Josefina.

TR: Josefina. Valencia also?

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JG: No, Summy. Her husband's last name was Summy.

TR: Summy.

JG: Yeah.

TR: And that was his sister?

JG: [Nods head] that was his sister.

TR: I had no idea that he had a sister in Colton.

JG: Oh yea, he had a sister.

TR: Did she come with him when he came in 1937?

JG: I don't know [shakes head], I don't know. I don't know when he came because when we came, he was already here.

TR: Yeah, 1937. Now, did she come, was she always there?

JG: Yeah. After he died, she moved to San Diego.

TR: Ah okay [nods head].

JG: I don't know if she's still there [shrugs shoulders] or if she's still alive.

TR: What about, did you also know Father Luque?

JG: Oh yeah.

TR: And—

JG: —Yeah because we used to buy from his grandmother when he was young and he lived with his grandmother.

TR: You said you used to buy from his grandmother?

JG: Yeah, we used to buy. Every Sunday they would have menudo, tamales, and everything.

TR: Who was this?

JG: There was Pete Luque's, their older Luque's mother, it was Father Luque's grandmother.

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TR: Oh. That was Hernandez?

JG: [nods head]. Yeah, Remijio Hernandez.

TR: Do you remember, or did you help Father Luque build the church?

JG: No, I didn't.

TR: But you remember when they were building the church?

JG: Oh yeah. Yeah, I remember when they were building it.

And then he bought that house. Well he didn't buy that house two doors, let's see, two doors down where I live, there used to be a church there but it burned down. A long time ago. And then the church owned that property, so they moved the house there. The house sits there now.

TR: Now where is the property located?

JG: It's on Fifth Street two doors down from me.

TR: On Fifth Street?

JG: [yes]

TR: South from you?

JG: Yeah. And no, no North from me.

TR: North from you?

JG: [Yes]

TR: Cerca de, going towards the—

JG: —Next to where the [inaudible] used to live.

TR: Oh, next to where there—

JG: —This side of the [inaudible].

TR: Oh, that's the property, the church property.

JG: It was. They sold it but when the church bought it, they built a house, they put a house there. They brought it from somewhere, they didn't build it, they moved it there and Melee he used to live there and take care of it.



TR: Millie?

JG: Tantarino.

TR: Tantarino.

JG: [yes] Until they sold it and I don't know who owns it now.

TR: But you also mentioned Millie and I remember she going to high school in high school and she was also a very good singer.

JG: Yeah, she is. She's still a very good singer.

TR: And what is she doing now, does she still live there in Colton?

JG: Yeah, she lives about a block from where I live.

TR: On Fifth Street?

JG: [Nods head] South from me. Yeah.

TR: Is she still involved with the church?

JG: Yes. She's still—

TR: —She's still singing with the church—

JG: —still singing with the choir every Sunday.

TR: San Salvador?

JG: [nods head], yeah.

TR: And is she retired?

JG: I guess she works part-time, it's because she has her own business.

JG: Yeah, she does massages for people.

TR: And she's been doing it for a long time?

JG: Oh yeah, she's been doing it for a long time.

TR: You also mentioned somebody that ran for Fiesta Queen—

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JG: —Lucia?

TR: Y la Colorada—

JG: —Yeah, Lucia Arias.

TR: Lucia Arias. Tell me about her.

JG: Well I don't see her very often but I don't know if she's living in Imperial Beach.

JG: She's a good friend of my sister's that lives in Hemet because they went to school together.

TR: Here in Colton High School?

JG: Colton High School.

TR: And—

JG: —Then she married, what's his name—

TR: —David Gasga —

JG: —David [inaudible] and then they got a divorce. But they had three children.

TR: But you know, she was a very pretty person girl—

JG: —Yes—

TR: —And she ran for Diez y seis de Septiembre.

JG: [Yes]

TR: Did she become queen?

JG: Yes [nods head].

TR: She did?

JG: Yes [nods head], she did.

TR: Do you remember las Fiestas Patrias?

JG: [Yes]

TR: What do you remember? Tell me about las Fiestas Patrias.

JG: Everybody used to be there [laughs and smiles].

TR: [Laughs].

JG: And they had a parade and crowned the queen and everything.

TR: So, they had the parade, they had the stage—

JG: —Yeah, a lot of food—

TR: —they had El Grito, they had El Grito—

JG: Yeah, yeah.

TR: And then they had the big fiesta.

JG: Yeah, they had the big fiesta.

TR: What did you like about the fiesta?

JG: Well they had a lot of activities going, food, selling food, games and all that. Yeah.

TR: So, it was a wonderful community project because you saw everybody.

JG: Oh yeah.

TR: Everybody would come.

JG: Everybody, yeah.

Now can't even see any parades anymore [laughs].

TR: Yeah. There are big changes, big changes.

JG: [yes]

TR: Now, you know the people that lived over in Fifth Street, how did most people earn their living? What did they work in?

JG: You know, in the first years they were mostly all on welfare.

TR: Oh, I was going to ask you—

JG: —there was hardly any work—

TR: —thank you for reminding me pero I was going to ask you; how did people survive Josie? During the Depression, during the 30s, how did people survive?

JG: Well they used to get free food and free whatever they could. My dad always worked.

TR: At the cement plant.

JG: [Nods head] At the cement plant.

TR: And how did people survive, you know, did they [shrugs shoulders], how did they survive?

JG: Sometimes the people, well they would give them clothes too.

TR: Who would give them clothes too?

JG: The government [nods head]. Because there on, there was like a little shopping center [inaudible], but they had a place there where they had ladies for WPA. And they made clothes and they would give them to the people.

TR: Downtown Colton?

JG: [Nods head] Yeah.

TR: WPA would support them and have them make clothes?

JG: Well they would pay them for a little bit. A lady would work there and make clothes.

TR: And then give those clothes to people that—

JG: —Yeah. Everybody was wearing corduroy jackets [laughs] the same color.

TR: [Laughs]. What else, did they have food that they gave away?

JG: Yes, they had food they used to give away there on J Street, they would give food away. Especially during Christmas time, they would give a lot of candy and stuff but they didn't give out during the year.

TR: Yeah. So, during the Depression, were tough years.

JG: Oh yeah, I guess, but we didn't really notice because my dad always had a job.

TR: What about the people around you, the neighbors.

JG: No, the people next door to us, they're gone now but he worked the cement plant in Colton.

TR: Oh, the cement plant.

JG: And then the [inaudible], I don't think he( Mr. Luz Sosa) ever worked. He always, but his kids are so smart, they all got good professions.

JG: Yeah. I think most of them passed away now except for Omar and the other one. Mundo passed away, Lebrada passed away, Porfida passed away.

And there on, two doors down from my daughter were the Sanchez, the Sanchez lived there.

TR: What was there, do you remember the father's name?

JG: No, but I remember the mother's name was Dona Cuca.

TR: Dona Cuca Sanchez.

JG: [yes] And one of her sons married one of the Sosas, the oldest one Frank Sanchez.

TR: Oh, I remember Frank.

JG: Frank Sanchez, he married Porfida. She just passed away not too long ago. She passed away after Herma.

TR: Now, the Depression were tough years but people seemed to survive them, verdad?

JG: Yeah, they got along.

TR: What about the jobs, we mentioned the cement plant. Que mas? What other jobs did people have that they worked there in Colton?

JG: Not many [shakes head] expect for the WPA where they would make sidewalks and all that.

TR: And special projects. But I'm talking about other jobs. What about la pisca?

JG: Yeah, that too. When school started well a lot of people would go up North to pick fruit and walnuts. So, when the kids came back from picking the walnuts, their hands were black [laughs]. Everybody would come back with black hands.

TR: [Smiles] So you knew that they were—

JG: Yeah but they would pack up, oh in June or right after school. They could take their tents and stuff and go down to Hemet to pick apricots.

TR: Okay [nods head].

JG: To pick apricots and then they would split them in half and put them out to dry. We never did that, but a lot of people did.

TR: And then a lot of people also picked walnuts and what other—

JG: —I picked grapes one summer.

TR: Where did you pick grapes?

JG: In Fontana, around that area.

TR: Did you do it for a long time?

JG: Well just that summer [shrugs shoulders], just one summer.

TR: Just one summer.

JG: That was a hot job [laughs].

TR: [Chuckles].

JG: Yeah, there was trucks that would come, and they would park on the corners and pick you up to take you to pick—

TR: —Oh, contractors would just go pick you up at your house.

JG: And it was, I was there on the corner, they would park, and they would take us. Boxes were big but they were 10 cents a box. So, you had to pick a lot of grapes [laughs] to make any money [smiles].

TR: And you did it for one summer?

JG: One season, yeah. When we started, we started about the end of August until they got done. [Inaudible], that's what it was.

TR: What about schooling, Josie? Where did you go to school?

JG: Well when I came here, I started at Garfield.

TR: Garfield Elementary.

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JG: Yes, and then—

TR: —At what grade level did you start?

JG: I think it was the fifth or sixth grade.

TR: Okay.

JG: And then when they were where Wilson is, it was just orange [inaudible].

TR: Where the property—

JG: —Where Wilson is [nods head]. But then they tore it down and built Wilson.

TR: Okay.

JG: So they just branched it over there.

TR: Oh, so you just went from Garfield—

JG: —to Wilson [nods head]—

TR: —to Wilson—

JG: —yeah.

TR: And—

JG: —And it was a junior high then.

TR: [Yes] So you went there sixth, seventh and eighth grade?

JG: Yeah.

TR: And after eighth grade?

JG: I stayed home [laughs].

TR: Oh, you stayed home after eighth grade?

JG: [Smiles] To take care of my mom and the kids.

TR: You didn't continue your education?

JG: No, I wish I had.

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TR: To take care of your family.

JG: To take care of my mom because she was always sick. She had a lot of health problems. But my dad said, "You have to stay home and help her with the kids."

TR: Oh, so your dad, you were the oldest one.

JG: [nods head].

TR: You were responsible for taking care of the family.

JG: [Yes] Helping everybody, cook and do all of the cooking. They all remember [smiles].

TR: And cooking, did you have—

JG: —Make the tortillas, we had to make tortillas—

TR: —Every morning?

JG: Every day. My dad didn't like [shakes head] leftover tortillas.

TR: Okay.

JG: They had to be warm [laughs].

TR: Okay. Nice to have them freshly made, eh?

JG: [yes]

TR: Now what did you—

TR: —cook on? Did you cook on a gas stove or wood stove?

JG: Yeah. At first, we had a wood stove but then we got a gas stove.

TR: And to light up the gas, the wood stove, what did you have to do Josie?

JG: We had to go out and find something that would light [laughs and smiles] and bring the wood in and get your arms off of the splinters [smiles].

TR: So, get the wood from outside.

JG: Yes.

TR: Get some kindling and start the fire—



JG: —Yeah, start the fire and sometimes it wouldn't start [laughs].

TR: And from there you would make sure that the comal was ready for tortillas—

JG: —to make the tortillas—

TR: —and you made tortillas?

JG: Oh yeah.

TR: How did you make tortillas?

JG: I just quit making them not too long ago.

TR: Why? No, no, no don't [inaudible] [laughs]—

JG: —One day, I made a tortilla and I said, "By the time I go to the store and get everything—I'll just make them." So I started making them and my two oldest great grandkids, they were about six or seven years old Jasmine and Jordan, and I started making them and they couldn't even [laughs] [inaudible], they couldn't wait til[inaudible] so they put butter on them [laughs and smiles].

TR: Oh, so it was a good experience for them?

JG: Oh yeah. I would give them a little ball of dough and they would roll it out [hand gestures]. All crooked and everything [smiles] but—

TR: —So—

JG: —Like when their mother came to pick them up, oh they were real happy [laughs] because they had made tortillas [smiles].

TR: When you were taking care of the family, you made the tortillas.

JG: Well we took turns. One day, my sister that was next to me, she would make them one day and the next day I would.

TR: Yeah. What other foods did you prepare besides tortillas?

JG: Well, we used to cook beans.

TR: Okay.

JG: Yeah, cook beans. My mother would buy meat sometimes and nopales and potatoes. We always had our food.

TR: Okay but you were responsible. Did you make mole?

JG: My mother used to sometimes. No, we never made that but Christmas time my grandmother would come over and we would make tamales.

TR: Oh, you made tamales tambien eh [nods head].

JG: Yeah and she was a short lady and with this big [hand gestures] ol' pot to cook them in and she used to have to stand on a chair [smiles].

TR: [Smiles].

JG: To reach [laughs], yeah. That's a long time ago.

TR: What about menudo?

JG: Oh yeah, we made menudo. My dad was very good at that, killing pigs. And—

TR: —So he would slaughter pigs?

JG: Yeah, he would slaughter them for [inaudible]—

TR: —Did you raise them or did he go out and buy them?

JG: No, he mostly did it for other people.

TR: Oh, okay.

JG: But we had chickens. We had chickens and turkeys. You remember the [inaudible]?

TR: Si.

JG: That they lived up on the hill?

TR: Yeah.

JG: Where San Salvador is now?

TR: Yes, yes.

JG: Yeah, well my dad gave him the old wood stove when we got the gas. And then where the field is, but they used to own all of that property, the [inaudible]. Where the school is and on the other side and they would raise tomatoes and corn and a lot of stuff and sell it.

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JG: I mean, not a little bit but a lot of them.

TR: Yeah.

JG: Then after the war, there was this apartment that airmen used to use at Norton. And after the war, they sold the apartments. So they bought one apartment, it's two apartments but it's all one, they're connected.

Joe Lara, he bought that and he put it right across from my house. And there's two apartments and now they—

TR: —Tell me the apartments, they were owned by the military?

JG: [yes]

TR: By the government?

JG: Yeah.

TR: And the government built the apartments there on Fifth Street?

JG: No [shakes head], no. They sold them over there at Norton—

TR: —Oh, they brought them to the property, okay.

JG: Yeah, they sold them and then he brought those here.

TR: So, tell me about your dad, you said he would slaughter—

JG: —He would kill pigs mostly for other people.

TR: And then he would sell the meat to the other people?

JG: Well no, they weren't his but usually they would give him the blood, to make blood sausage.

TR: Oh, he used to do that then?

JG: Yeah, he used to do that, blood sausage.

TR: And then he would sell pieces, parts of the hog—

JG: —No, he wouldn't sell anything, they weren't his.

TR: Oh, he would just slaughter—

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JG: —For other people. They weren't his.

TR: [Nods head].

JG: But they would call him to do it for them and then they would give him some meat and some [nods head], yeah.

TR: So it worked out very well for the family then.

JG: Then everyday we used to go, there was a on fog street, next to the tracks there used to be Longs Dairy. You remember that?

TR: I remember that.

JG: In everyday we used to go there though, on Fog Street, but next to the tracks on the eastern side Longs Dairy do remember that? We used to go every afternoon to bring the milk to buy the milk there. Yeah, really nice people George and Elsy then they moved it across the street just on set and then they passed away.

TR: But Longs there was the place where you got your first milk?

JG: Yeah, that's when I get the milk.

TR: Tell me about the other place that you shop for example you needed arina you need the beans. You needed manteca .Yeah, you needed all those ingredients now where would you shop?

JG: You know how to wrestle this, Larson's the drugstore.

TR: Yes. Yes.

JG: What is the best Safeway there?

TR: Okay.

JG: We used to call them by the other stores, like Bocanerga and Esperanza, and Julias

TR: Big bags of flour, hundred pound bags of flour or 50.

JG: 25.

TR: 25 pounds of flour. What about beans that are also big?

JG: 10 pounds. Then sometimes flour came in the 25 pounds bags. The bags were printed, but they had patterns on the and then we take them in and washed them, cleaned them up and then we'll make little shirts for my nephew. I used to sew a lot.

TR: Do you have a machine so we will always set aside Is that the one that you use the pedals or?

JG: Yeah, okay, let's do one of those. I better get rid of it. It wasn't mine but the one my mother has when she passed away was given to one of my sisters. But then this one that I have now it used to belong to my uncle's wife. But I'm trying to get rid of it this. We never use it anyway. Honestly, I have my own sewing machine so..

TR: You use the sack of the harina of the flower?

JG: Material.

TR: It was.

JG: Sometimes it had a nice print.

TR: Whatever the manteca thicker the large juicy would that come in?

JG: It can open cans.

TR: Now did you have a refrigerator where you?

JG: Know you know at first we had one at that time everybody had just the icebox and they have these diamond shaped curve balls. And on each corner is at 25, 50, 75, 100 and you hang it up outside depending on how many pounds of ice you want so when guys come they will bring you the ice.

TR: Oh.

JG: We had one of those ice boxes

TR: And so that the ice would come?

JG: Remember they did? And they would just then ,whatever your number of pounds you want I did put it up pointing after. And he would bring his ice.

TR: Was there a bakery?

JG :Yeah, the Martinez bakery. Yeah, we split everybody bread mexican bread.

TR: In fact,what was your favorite sweet bread from Martinez?

JG: Any kind.

TR: Everything good?

JG: Yeah, but we used to buy the Mexican bread Bocanegra because they delivered there? Uh huh. Every day.

TR: So, the refrigerator that's why you went to Longs every day to get your fridge to get their milk.

JG: In the box. And then over there on F Street and third. There was a store that was like I can't remember the name of this store. They sold mostly tires and batteries and, and a few appliances. So one day one over there and I bought a refrigerator for my mother. She was so happy, we got rid of the ice box.

TR: You bought a refrigerator? What year was that? Do you remember when you bought it?

JG: Early 50s. I don't remember.

TR: But was she happy?

JG: Oh yeah, yeah, we'll get that and then we used to have a ringer machine washing machine.

TR: Oh, I do remember with the scrub board.

JG: Yeah, washing machines and yes, with the closer the ringer and with fresh water, rinse them in them. Again for the line. You know, about three years or four years ago since I have trouble walking. I quit hanging my clothes or y'all used to hang with clothes everybody would you have a dryer? Well, I like to hang them off but now I can't.

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TR: But you went through the period of the ringer the scrub board and hanging the clothes out isn't the anchor.

JG: I wish I could still hang them up.

TR: Yeah, besides food Josie. Where did you shop for your clothes and your shoes?

JG: And you know, at that time, there was a JC Penney downtown.

TR: So, you went downtown Colton?

JG: In Colton there was a JC Penney's there we bought shoes and stuff there. Yeah.

TR: Was that the only store that was that? You.

JG: No, that [inaudible] and there was Hellman's.

TR: And did you ever have credit that Hellman's or

JG: We probably did. Because they were real good about that. And then they closed Down because the freeway was built on their property.

TR: Yes, yes. Yes. What about the grocery stores in South Colton? Did you have any credit with the grocery stores and sell?

JG: Bocanegra.

TR: Bocanegra gave you milk and gave you credit?

JG: Well, yeah, my dad, we would go with me for credit and pay the money that we will pay him.

TR: Okay. So every week he would go and pay.

JG: I remember he got paid every week or every two weeks. He kept he would go pay

TR: When you went shopping or Bocanegra. Did you? Did they know you? And-

JG: Oh yeah.

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TR: It was easy for you.

JG: Oh Yeah.

TR: What did you buy at Bocanegra's?

JG: Oh whatever we needed

TR: And they would put it on credit?

JG: Yeah. And then in a little booklet he took and he will write everything down, and then so--

TR: So it was very convenient? Then with Hellman's also you may have credit close up to clothing. Yeah.

JG: Oh, yeah.

TR: I was gonna ask you Josie you moved to Colton in '37. Do you remember the 1938 flood? The big boy?

JG: Yeah. We were already living in Colton.

TR: What do you remember about the flood?

JG: And I remember that my dad was working in Riverside .

TR: Okay.

JG: And he couldn't get through to our House so he decided to go back to work and come back to South Colton. He couldn't get to it was so hard and I was playing so hard. And we get to walk to school and in that rain

TR: To Wilson.

JG: Wilson.

TR: Wilson. Okay, and when did the flood come close to your house?



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JG: No isn't doing any damage? You know, you came up with a finding of maybe just past fall foliage to fall.

TR: Oh, so we got all over the fall.

JG: Mm hmm.

TR: Where the dairy is?

JG: Yeah.

TR: But what about Wilson School?

JG: No. But on the other side? By the end of O St.

TR: Yes.

JG: It took some of the houses there. Isn't this where?

TR: Where my mom and dad live.

JG: Remember that it took some of those houses. Yeah, I think that it is [inaudible]

TR: It was quite a flood.

JG: Yeah. Yes.

TR: And how long would it take for your dad to be able to go to work after they repaired the damage?

JG: As far as soon [inaudible] they could get through?

TR: Yeah.

JG: I don't remember how long it was.

TR: And how long did the flood last? Do you remember?

JG: No, I don't know. I remember it was in March. It was really pouring.

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TR: Nothing like that before?

JG: Nothing.

TR: Nothing like that. Nothing.

JG: Is I see? Yeah, it was because that time we are already living in the house where I live. So he has to drive to Yeah. Well, when we lived in Bloomington, there where the cemetery really he used to walk across the tracks or to go to work because it was so close to the cement plant. But then a [inaudible] like an empty car. A Ford and rumble seat.

TR: Yes. I remember.

JG: Sundays we used to come to Colton to buy the groceries and we were all [inaudible].

TR: Well, you were how old when you had that little car?

JG: Eleven, I guess.

TR: You'er from Bloomington you would drive to Colton to buy groceries once a week. Where would you buy the groceries?

JG: I don't remember.

TR: How did you get from Bloomington to Colton?

JG: You know my dad would drive that little Ford we had?[Inaudible] and get the groceries and go back? Yeah. A long time.

TR. And Josie then we talked about the leaders in our community we talked about Father Valencia and Father Luque. Any other leaders that we had in the community?

JG: Not just the [inaudible].

TR: Who's the Councilman and Mayor ?

JG: He was. Pascual Oliva.

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TR: What about the Father Luque? His father? Pete Luque Senior.

JG: He [inaudible]--

TR: What about?

JG: I remember his wife real well?

TR: What about the logias? like the progrecistas?

JG: Yeah, the progrecistas. Yeah, that was a very popular large. Yeah. Dues used to be \$1 a month. After that, and then when you die they give you I think \$500 or \$260.

TR: The family married to the person?

JG: Yeah. My dad died. I think he died in 1667 or 68. And I thought of a plot over there. We makers. Okay, next to him, and I paid \$350 for it. And now they are \$2000.

TR: They're expensive.

JG: Yeah.

TR: But the progrecistas would help.

JG: Yeah, they would help them with the funeral expenses yeah with the funeral expenses, so it wasn't very much it was like \$200 or something like that. But that time everything was cheap.

TR: Were the progrecistas in charge of the [inaudible]?

JG: I don't know. But I know they had some fiestas over there. O Street. Yeah, they were. I think they own that property there. Where they had the Fiesta?

TR: Okay. Okay.

JG: They used to rent it out too.

TR: Who else do you remember from the system besides? Just the Pete Luque you remember?

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JG: [inaudible] I can't remember this name .

TR: Manuel Padilla.

JG: Yeah.

TR: What about Raul Ochoa? He was one of your neighbors? He was also very active in--

JG: Carolina Padilla, she's a [inaudible].

TR: Oh, that's the yeah, that's the daughter.

JG: Yeah, she went to school with my daughter.

TR: Oh, she went to school with your daughter?

JG: [Inaudible] the school there. And she went there. And she went to school with my daughter. They still are friends.

TR: Oh.

JG: [Inaudible] Yeah.

TR: Yeah.

JG: My daughter was a teenager my[inaudible]. Yes, so many friends. Yeah, but when my daughter was coming home from school, she would walk over to the Olveras. All the kids that went to            And Richard, Richard Calles.

JG: He was only 13. But he was already after her.

TR: Oh.

JG: He was already in love with her.

TR: So that was that's how that happened. And they were too far from each other. He lived on N St.

JG: Yeah. He would go down to the corner and wait for her.

TR: Yeah. Yes, yes,

JG: Yeah. And then they get married, they get married in '62 they marry. And then her son was born September '62. Now, then he got married and had the twins.

TR: And then back then, you know, when they were in the 40s, really the 40s their late 30s and 40s. And I mentioned who you remember as leaders, and you mentioned a few people. What about Colton was a segregated community? Okay. We have the North end, and we have the South where we live. Yeah. Yeah. Do you remember any of the incidents that happened? Did you realize that there was a difference between the North Coast and the South?

JG: You know, I never did. I don't think any of it doesn't bother. bother anybody. Just for granted, I guess.

TR: Yeah. That's the way it was. Yeah. It accepted that.

JG: Yeah. But the school that was there in the city

TR: Lincoln.

JG: Yeah. Lincoln. No, they're meant to stay on this side.

TR: Any other incidents you remember you couldn't participate in?

JG: No. The theaters you had to sit in the back. There was a theater[inaudible].

TR: Yes, the New Colton Theater. No, the Hub Theater.

JG: And then they open a new [inaudible]. No, they are now in Valley. Yeah, we can sit in the back. Yeah.

TR: Any other incidents that you would love in school? You went to Wilson?

JG: I'm going to [inaudible] and then Wilson

TR: Yeah. Now, how did you meet Cecilia Cabrera?

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JG: Oh well, we went to when we moved to Arizona for two years. They were living there. They lived across the street. Well, there was a big [inaudible] one street and then there was a big Creek between [inaudible], and they live next to us.

TR: And then you got together in Colton again.

JG: Yeah. Then they came to visit us. And they just say they find a house and stay. Yeah. Unless you marry. Tell me. Yeah. Brother. I think he married that girl from Mexico. My brother.

TR: Yeah. But anyway, that's the way the relationship between you and Cecilia, both of you are from Arizona.

JG: And you they came from this she's not what she wasn't originally. I think she was born in Nevada. But they came and they were living there when we were there. And that's how we met.

TR: And you're still friends.

JG: Yeah, we're still friends. Yeah, we're still friends.

TR: Well, he knows-

JG: She's my daughter's godmother.

TR: Okay. Anyway, she was the one that told me to call you. Oh, you call Josie because she is number one and she has a lot of experience and has lived in Colton for a long time.

JG: Yeah, she's their house goes as far as [inaudible] her mother built that house. And her mother [inaudible] .But she's never, she rented for a while but the people that live there destroyed it. So she's never rented again. It's really going down.

TR: But anyways, she was the one who said call Josie. Yeah, she's you'll have a wonderful time meeting her.

JG: Yeah.

TR: And Josie we're almost at the end of our interview. And my question now would be, can you think back and think back of being in Colton, just remembering something that ,

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you still remember as being one of the best memories that you have about living in Colton?

JG: Well, I guess when I was younger, I had a pair of good friends in school that I still keep in touch with. I remember that I won't miss and oh, you know, Ernie Garcia.

TR: Dr. Garcia. Yeah.

JG: Well, his sister and I were best friends. Eva, her name was Eva. Eva and Hilda.

TR: Hilda? Yes.

JG: We're best friends. Her mother was the best seamstress. Yeah Dona Lupe. She always had, but she passed away a long time ago. Uh huh. Yeah [inaudible] that live on 10<sup>th</sup> street their house is still there.

TR: I remember living on O Street.

JG: Uh huh.

TR: You get the [inaudible]. Yeah.

JG: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

TR: So, friends is what to remember best about living in Colton.

JG: He [inaudible]. Then, Romos came from Arizona

TR: Dell's the cafe restaurant. Yeah.

JG: They're great. And they came after us. Mm hmm.

TR: Oh, they're also from Arizona?

JG: Yeah, well, not the kids but the mother Rachel and...

TR: Connie.

JG: Connie. Oh, Connie's the oldest. I remember their dad died. Yeah.

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TR: Anything else? Besides friends? You mentioned that you smile when you said friends.

JG: I remember [inaudible]. Last year. Yeah. That's the way through, didn't she?

TR: Yes, yes. Yeah. Well, Hilda was in my dad's class.

JG: Really?

TR: So, you must have gone to school with my dad?

JG: Because I was in Eva was in my class. My dad used to work for the railroad.

TR: Yes. The PFE. Yeah. Any other memories that you know about living in Colton?

JG: No. It's just normal.

TR: Well, Josie, thank you so much.

JG: Well, [inaudible].

TR: Well, thank you so much for being up with us. And sharing your life as you grew up in Colton and raised your family in Colton. Thank you for being with us this afternoon.

JG: That was nice. I enjoyed it.

**End of Interview:**

[01:02:08]