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South Colton Oral History Project

Interview Summary

Interviewee:

Boxie Raymond Perez, Angie Perez

Interviewer:

Tom Rivera

Interview Date:

May 2, 2015

Interview Location:

Colton, CA

Length:

00:39:55

Interview Summary completed by:

M. Camacho Nuno, 2024

Description:

Tom Rivera interviews two residents from South Colton, "Boxie" Raymond Perez and Angie Perez. As they spoke about what South Colton was like in the past, the couple mentioned how school was for them and the dynamics in a Mexican American family. Boxie, or Raymond, talks about his father, who was a boxer and the first Mexican American councilman in Colton. There is also the topic of Angie's mother, who had to raise five children alone and had her own business to support them. There is also some talk about customers Angie remembers and then the topics shift back to real estate. The interview ends with pleasant memories of South Colton as well as recollections of segregation and racism.

Subject Topic:

- South Colton
- Boxing
- Property/Real Estate
- Single Parent/Large Family
- Korean War
- De Facto Segregation

Spatial Coverage:

Name of Site (if relevant)	General Location/Address
San Miguel el Alton	Jalisco (Mexican State)
Yahualica de González Gallo	Jalisco (Mexican State)
Garfield School	Colton, CA (Defunct Location)

Woodrow Wilson Elementary School	750 S 8th St, Colton, CA 92324
Colton High School	777 W Valley Blvd, Colton, CA 92324
Skandron Business College	San Bernardino, CA (Defunct Location)
San Salvador Church	178 W K St, Colton, CA 92324
Valley Ballroom	San Bernardino, CA (Defunct Location, Currently Houses the Inland Center Mall)
Olania Morales's Liquor Store	Colton, CA (Defunct Location, Originally on 7th Street)

Temporal Coverage:

1900s - 2015

Key Events:

- Raymond's grandfather gets kidnapped on the train.
- Angie's grandmother arrives in Colton in around 1907.
- Raymond gets his nickname.
- Olania is left with her children and starts a successful business.
- Raymond's time during the Korean War.
- South Colton's various and important, but now defunct businesses.
- Angie's stunt at the soda place.

Key Organizations:

- Norton Air Force Base
- San Salvador Church

Interview Index:

Media Format	Time (hh:mm:ss)	Topic Discussed
Digital Video	00:00:31 - 00:01:08	How Raymond got the nickname Boxie.
Digital Video	00:08:01 - 00:10:49	Raymond's grandfather gets kidnapped and taken to the United States.
Digital Video	00:24:31 - 00:25:11	The man that complained about his wife and how Angie's mother told him off for doing so.
Digital Video	00:34:14 - 00:34:57	Boxie and the seven cars with no tires.

Digital Video	00:34:58 - 00:37:42	Stories of segregation in South Colton.
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Related Materials

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

Full interview transcript can be found below.

Interview Transcript

Start of Interview:

[00:00:00]

TOM RIVERA: Good afternoon. I'm Dr. Tom Rivera, and today is May 2, 2015, and we're recording from the Colton Museum in downtown Colton. Our guests this afternoon are Angie and Boxie Raymond Perez. And welcome. Welcome to our interviews.

ANGIE PEREZ: Thank you.

BOXIE PEREZ: Thank you.

TOM RIVERA: And we're delighted that you're here and you volunteered to go through this interview.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes.

TOM RIVERA: Why don't we start? Boxie, where did you get the name Boxie? I've always known you as Boxie, but -- I didn't know your name was Raymond, but how did you get the name Boxie?

BOXIE PEREZ: (inaudible).

TOM RIVERA: Tell me.

BOXIE PEREZ: (laughs).

ANGIE PEREZ: He was fighting in --

BOXIE PEREZ: We were in New York -- living in New York, and he came up on the ring -- that's what they tell me. I was only about three months old -- and [00:01:00] he says, "Oh, we'd like to introduce to you a new Perez in the family. His name's Boxie." That's it.

TOM RIVERA: That's it. What were your parents doing in New York?

BOXIE PEREZ: He was boxing.

TOM RIVERA: Oh, your dad was a boxer?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: Tell me about your dad.

BOXIE PEREZ: Well --

TOM RIVERA: What his (inaudible)?

BOXIE PEREZ: There's a whole bunch of pictures of him in there with movie stars.

ANGIE PEREZ: Your dad was boxing that night, wasn't he?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah. And the (inaudible) came on the ring, and he announced that we have a new -- Boxie.

TOM RIVERA: So your father is [Johnny Perez?]?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: I didn't know that.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: He was a tremendous athlete from Colton.

BOXIE PEREZ: Right.

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: And he trained [Cuevas?], all those guys.

TOM RIVERA: He trained Cuevas, he trained -- how about [Diego Rosales?]?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yes.

ANGIE PEREZ: That's in that write up that I just brought.

BOXIE PEREZ: I even got a big statue that he made of my dad. [00:02:00] I didn't think about that.

TOM RIVERA: Diego did it?

BOXIE PEREZ: Diego.

TOM RIVERA: Diego did. And then also your father was the first councilman -- the first Mexican American councilman here in Colton. He was elected in 1948, yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah, and then he became the mayor, I don't know for how long. Yeah, that's right. I forget a lot of this stuff now.

TOM RIVERA: No.

BOXIE PEREZ: I'm going to be 82.

TOM RIVERA: Well, happy -- when is your -- when are you -- when is your birthday?

BOXIE PEREZ: The 13th.

TOM RIVERA: The 13th of this month?

ANGIE PEREZ: This month.

TOM RIVERA: Happy birthday. (laughter) [Henry?] and I can sing Las Mañanitas if you want us to. (laughter)

ANGIE PEREZ: Okay. (laughter) I'd like to hear that.

BOXIE PEREZ: You live here in Colton, too?

TOM RIVERA: He lives on 5th Street. La Calle Cinco, La Calle [Nicle?].

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh.

BOXIE PEREZ: That's where -- did you know how much money was found on 5th Street and -- what's the name of that other street?

TOM RIVERA: Fogg? [Commons?]?

BOXIE PEREZ: No. No, [00:03:00] it's this way from Fogg. The main street. They found a lot of money -- la [Calderas?].

TOM RIVERA: The Calderas found a lot of money? Tell me about that story.

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh, yeah. A box.

TOM RIVERA: Tell me about that story.

BOXIE PEREZ: Well, he owned those little old houses there, and they started cleaning them up and digging, and they found pots.

TOM RIVERA: Oh, that was on 5th Street?

BOXIE PEREZ: 5th.

TOM RIVERA: Maple? On Maple?

BOXIE PEREZ: No, right on --

ANGIE PEREZ: Right at the end -- almost at the end of 5th Street, wasn't it?

BOXIE PEREZ: It's the same as [Waterloo?], one of those houses we have up on there on 7th and what was the name of -- I'm forgetting. It'll come.

TOM RIVERA: Okay, but the story is that Caldera owned those properties, and those small houses, and when they started cleaning up those -- that area, they found a lot of money?

BOXIE PEREZ: Money. Gold.

TOM RIVERA: Gold. Gold coins? And do you know how that happened to -- that money happened [00:04:00] to be there? Was it because the stage coach passed through there?

BOXIE PEREZ: I don't know, (laughs) but that's where they found that -- then that's when he built a swimming pool, and the boxing arena, and -- what else was in there?

TOM RIVERA: The bull ring?

BOXIE PEREZ: And all those houses. Caldera did it.

TOM RIVERA: So the Calderas -- the property, they cleaned it up, they found some money there, and he used those resources -- money resources -- to build his baseball diamond --

BOXIE PEREZ: Right.

TOM RIVERA: -- his swimming pool, and his bull ring --

BOXIE PEREZ: Boxing arena.

TOM RIVERA: Boxing arena. And the big saloon.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah. That's the main one.

TOM RIVERA: The big saloon. And that was during the '20s, verdad?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: During the '20s. And at that point, remember Boxie, we were a segregated community? Remember, we could not pass the railroad tracks, te recuerdas?

BOXIE PEREZ: And they were -- if there was a fire over there, they let it burn because you had to go [00:05:00] through the tracks.

TOM RIVERA: So if there was a fire in south Colton, --

BOXIE PEREZ: Goodbye.

TOM RIVERA: -- the fire department would not go to south Colton?

BOXIE PEREZ: They couldn't. They couldn't. It was here in Colton.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah. So it was really a completely segregated community back then when you were growing up. Now, were you born and raised in Colton?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yes. Well, it's a new name -- what is it? This -- La Cadena.

TOM RIVERA: Si, La Cadena.

BOXIE PEREZ: Remember the store Cervantes?

TOM RIVERA: Si.

BOXIE PEREZ: Across the street, they just put a new wall where they're going to build something there, that's where I was born. My dad and my mom.

TOM RIVERA: The Cervantes market is on the corner of La Cadena and M Street.

ANGIE PEREZ: M Street.

BOXIE PEREZ: But right --

ANGIE PEREZ: Just before you get to that.

BOXIE PEREZ: There's alleys there.

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: That's where I was born right there.

TOM RIVERA: Oh. What year, Boxie? What year?

BOXIE PEREZ: [00:06:00] '33.

TOM RIVERA: '33? And did you attend the schools in Colton?

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh, yeah.

TOM RIVERA: What schools did you attend?

BOXIE PEREZ: Garfield, Wilson -- right?

ANGIE PEREZ: Mm-hmm.

TOM RIVERA: Garfield, Wilson, and did you go to --

BOXIE PEREZ: Then the high school here.

TOM RIVERA: Were you a yellowjacket?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah. I worked. (laughter)

ANGIE PEREZ: No, but you went to school there. They called them yellowjackets.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: The -- so you went to Colton High School?

BOXIE PEREZ: Mm-hmm.

TOM RIVERA: What year did you graduate from Colton High School?

BOXIE PEREZ: '50-51, something like that.

ANGIE PEREZ: No, you graduated in '52 because that's when I graduated.

BOXIE PEREZ: '52.

TOM RIVERA: '52?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah. Well, I was close. (laughs)

TOM RIVERA: And then were you in the service?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yes, I was in the Air Force.

TOM RIVERA: And what war was that? Was that the Korean?

ANGIE PEREZ: Korean Korean

BOXIE PEREZ: Korea, yeah.

TOM RIVERA: And then you said that your mom and dad -- your grandpa owned some gas stations down in south Colton?

ANGIE PEREZ: Mm-hmm.

TOM RIVERA: Tell me about your grandpa. What was his name?

ANGIE PEREZ: [00:07:00] [Cesario?].

BOXIE PEREZ: Cesario.

TOM RIVERA: Cesario -- [Chuyito?].

BOXIE PEREZ: Chuyito.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, he used to make snow cones, remember?

TOM RIVERA: He made the best raspados in the world.

ANGIE PEREZ: The world.

TOM RIVERA: For a nickel.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, but he made -- you know why they were so good? He made his own syrup. He made his own syrup for the snow cones.

BOXIE PEREZ: And candy apples.

ANGIE PEREZ: And candy apples.

TOM RIVERA: That's right. Now where was his gas station, Boxie?

ANGIE PEREZ: At that time --

BOXIE PEREZ: The first one was on 7th.

TOM RIVERA: 7th and --

BOXIE PEREZ: Was that N?

TOM RIVERA: N Street?

ANGIE PEREZ: 7th and N -- is it N street? Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: Yes, uh-huh. 7th and N.

ANGIE PEREZ: 7th and N.

TOM RIVERA: And then the second gas station was over by the --

BOXIE PEREZ: The highway.

TOM RIVERA: Garfield. By Garfield.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yep. It was --

TOM RIVERA: La Cadena used to be like the freeway.

ANGIE PEREZ: The freeway, yeah.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, we didn't have the new freeway that we have now.

BOXIE PEREZ: No.

TOM RIVERA: La Cadena connected Riverside and the beach areas.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah. I remember driving to the beach took all day. (laughter)

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: Because all those stops that we had to go through.

BOXIE PEREZ: You're getting (inaudible) I want to tell you. [00:08:00]
(laughter)

TOM RIVERA: Your grandfather was quite a businessman, and what -- how did he open his gas station? I mean how did he start?

BOXIE PEREZ: He -- I always say this -- he was imported from San Miguel el Alton, Jalisco to cook because he was a good cook and he used to have status like in Guadalajara in the town there -- San Miguel. But -- so he was persuaded -- they got him to come, and he was cooking for the company.

TOM RIVERA: Which company?

ANGIE PEREZ: Cement.

BOXIE PEREZ: Cement plant.

TOM RIVERA: The cement plant? Okay.

ANGIE PEREZ: The Colton Cement Plant.

TOM RIVERA: Okay.

BOXIE PEREZ: And they had these boarding houses, and my grandfather ran them. That's why he got a lot of money, you know? But --

TOM RIVERA: So after he made some money, he opened up the [00:09:00] gas stations?

BOXIE PEREZ: Well, he started right away.

TOM RIVERA: Right away.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yea.

TOM RIVERA: Right away.

BOXIE PEREZ: You know -- remember where the [boleto?] was at?

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Well, that was my grandpa's, too.

TOM RIVERA: Oh, he was quite an entrepreneur then.

BOXIE PEREZ: Then he owned a restaurant.

TOM RIVERA: Cómo se llamaba el restaurante? What was the name of the restaurant? Do you remember?

BOXIE PEREZ: [Chuyito's?]. He named everything after himself.

TOM RIVERA: Chuyo's?

BOXIE PEREZ: Chuyito.

TOM RIVERA: Chuyito. Qué quería ser Chuyito? It's a nickname?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah.

BOXIE PEREZ: It's for little.

TOM RIVERA: Henry, what's chuyo?

M1: Is it for [José?] maybe. I'm not sure.

TOM RIVERA: We'll find out later, it'll come to you.

ANGIE PEREZ: Well, yeah, but when he came from Mexico, wasn't he kidnapped by the bandits?

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah, in a train.

ANGIE PEREZ: In a train.

TOM RIVERA: Well, tell me about that story. Sounds like --

BOXIE PEREZ: They executed all the officers, and -- well, the guys were like bandits or whatever. They kept him --

TOM RIVERA: [00:10:00] So the train in Mexico? In Mexico? The train in Mexico? He boarded the train, and then there was people that took over the train, and he was kidnapped.

ANGIE PEREZ: Uh-huh. And they brought him to the United States to work at the cement plant.

BOXIE PEREZ: Just to the border. Just to the border.

ANGIE PEREZ: Just to the border.

TOM RIVERA: El Paso?

ANGIE PEREZ: No.

BOXIE PEREZ: Juárez.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, Juárez and then El Paso?

ANGIE PEREZ: Mm-hmm.

TOM RIVERA: Okay. And then he came -- he crossed the border, and did he come straight to Colton?

BOXIE PEREZ: Well, yeah, that's where he got him -- he had a job already. And they had the building, but they didn't have anybody to cook for those people. More like a boarding house. And the guys work -- I think he told me it was 25 cents American a day, but not him. He made about \$15-20 a day.

TOM RIVERA: Now tell me about you. We talked about your grandfather Chuyo, but what about you? Who was your mom and dad?

BOXIE PEREZ: [00:11:00] (laughs) Well, my mother -- my grandma -- did you ever hear of a crook named [Johnny Russo]?

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: He was my friend. Anyway, he was real good with people -- with businesses. He always drove a Cadillac. I had to say that. And he would buy gas from us. He lived in San Bernardino, and he would come over to buy gas because my dad didn't like him. So my dad would leave, you know, he would --

TOM RIVERA: What was your dad's name?

BOXIE PEREZ: [Johnny Martinez?].

TOM RIVERA: Oh, yeah. Johnny Perez, yes. Okay.

BOXIE PEREZ: But he was too young, so he had to change his name to Johnny Martinez -- just his last name. And that was it. [00:12:00] Family knew gangsters. Anyway, my grandma and my mom lived alone. He passed away -- my grandfather. But yeah.

TOM RIVERA: I'll be darned. That's quite a story. That's quite a story.

BOXIE PEREZ: (inaudible) on 7th Street in the big houses out there by the -- Garfield.

ANGIE PEREZ: That was his.

BOXIE PEREZ: They were his. That was supposed be mine, but all the houses were given to girls.

TOM RIVERA: So you were robbed.

BOXIE PEREZ: Of the houses, yeah, but, hey, tell him how many cars he gave me.

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, no. They were just cars that couldn't run. (laughs)

BOXIE PEREZ: They could run, there was no tires.

ANGIE PEREZ: There were no tires.

TOM RIVERA: During the war.

BOXIE PEREZ: He gave me seven cars.

ANGIE PEREZ: "You can have them."

BOXIE PEREZ: He'd say, "Here. You can have them." Because I was telling him, "I need [00:13:00] a car. I need a car." I was driving when I was about 10.

TOM RIVERA: But how old were you when you --

BOXIE PEREZ: When I got my license? 12. You had to be 12.

ANGIE PEREZ: The women didn't drive. It was during the war. There was no gas, no tires.

BOXIE PEREZ: Did you remember [Nelson?]?

TOM RIVERA: Tell me about Nelson.

BOXIE PEREZ: He lived right behind the service station. Him and his aunt or grandmother. And my dad bought all that, so --

TOM RIVERA: Now, where was this located?

BOXIE PEREZ: Right there behind the service station.

TOM RIVERA: Okay, okay.

BOXIE PEREZ: And now I own all of it. That's about it.

ANGIE PEREZ: That's it.

TOM RIVERA: Angie, let's talk -- let me pick on you.

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, well I don't -- I've got it all in that --

well, no, that's yours. That write up.

TOM RIVERA: Well, tell me about your folks. Where are they from?

ANGIE PEREZ: My mother -- my mother is from [00:14:00] Yahualica, Mexico.

And my grandmother came to the United States probably -- I'm not sure, but it was about 1907 or 1908. And they came through Juárez, I believe.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah, Juárez.

ANGIE PEREZ: And all she had to do was sign a piece of a paper and they let them cross over. So they came to the United States, and my mother was only about eight years old or seven years old. And they landed up there in Northern California, and then they migrated down to California. and then from California, they landed in Colton. (laughs)

TOM RIVERA: What brought them to Colton, Angie?

ANGIE PEREZ: I don't know, they just --

TOM RIVERA: Did your dad work for --

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, he went and worked for cement company.

TOM RIVERA: The cement plant?

ANGIE PEREZ: Uh-huh. And then [00:15:00] pretty soon, I was about -- I was born. I was only about three months, and all of a sudden, my father got bogged down or whatever it is, and he left. I was three months old. He never -- he left five children.

TOM RIVERA: So your mom raised all five of you?

ANGIE PEREZ: All five of us. And then in 19-- of course, she had a hard time. And there was no welfare, or food stamps, or -- none of that. You either worked or you starved.

TOM RIVERA: What was your mom's name?

ANGIE PEREZ: [Olania Morales?].

TOM RIVERA: Olania Morales.

ANGIE PEREZ: So if you didn't work, you starved, I guess. And I don't remember any of this, but my mother told me.

TOM RIVERA: You mentioned you had brothers and sisters?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, my oldest brother was [Primo?] -- and then -- they called him Primo, his name was Arthur. And then there was my sister, Mary; and then there was my brother Jesús, and he died, and then there was another Jesús born; [00:16:00] and then there was my brother Alfred; and then there was me. There were actually six of us --

TOM RIVERA: Six of you?

ANGIE PEREZ: -- but one died. But one died.

TOM RIVERA: And you went to all the -- what schools did you go to?

ANGIE PEREZ: I went to Garfield, and Wilson, and graduated from Colton High in '52. Then I went to business college, and then I got a job at [Norton?].

TOM RIVERA: Was that Skadron that you went to?

ANGIE PEREZ: Uh-huh. And then I went to work at Norton.

TOM RIVERA: And how long were you at Norton?

ANGIE PEREZ: I was about 18 years old.

TOM RIVERA: And how long were you --

ANGIE PEREZ: Employed there?

TOM RIVERA: -- employed there?

ANGIE PEREZ: 29 and a half years. And my brothers -- Alfred was a musician with Al Lucero. My brother was his trumpet player.

TOM RIVERA: I'll be darned. Yeah, okay.

ANGIE PEREZ: And Pasqual Oliva.

TOM RIVERA: Pasqual. What was the name of Pasqual's band? Do you remember?

ANGIE PEREZ: No. It's --

TOM RIVERA: But he had a band, verdad? Pasqual, he had a band.

BOXIE PEREZ: Well, they were all together.

ANGIE PEREZ: They were all together. They played at the [Paco Paco?].

TOM RIVERA: Where was the Paco Paco located?

BOXIE ELDER: [00:17:00] (inaudible) Wilson.

ANGIE PEREZ: Past (inaudible).

BOXIE ELDER: Past Wilson, one more block.

TOM RIVERA: On the east side of --

ANGIE PEREZ: They used to play all over.

BOXIE PEREZ: On this side of the tracks.

ANGIE PEREZ: Of course, my brother was a lot younger than the rest of them, but he was a good trumpet player.

TOM RIVERA: Did he play for Nick Martinez?

ANGIE PEREZ: They played together.

BOXIE PEREZ: They all played together.

TOM RIVERA: They all played together?

ANGIE PEREZ: Nick, Pasqual, Al Lucero, my brother -- my cousin, [Theo Casala?], and my brother, Alfred.

TOM RIVERA: What about the [Gomez?] -- [Lopez's?]? Tony? Did he --

ANGIE PEREZ: Tony Gomez, he didn't play with them. My brother was the main trumpet player there. And after that, they all went to -- my brother, Alfred, went to college, but my brother, Arthur, didn't. He got into business and he rose up like that, and was a very good worker. Sometimes he worked 12-14 hour -- but for

himself. And he left a lot of property when he died last year. [00:18:00] And my brother, Alfred --

TOM RIVERA: Was he -- did he leave Colton? Or did he stay in Colton?

ANGIE PEREZ: San Bernardino.

TOM RIVERA: Oh, close by.

ANGIE PEREZ: Or to east Highland.

TOM RIVERA: Close by, okay.

ANGIE PEREZ: Mm-hmm. And then my brother Alfred had that liquor store on Rancho, right on Rancho.

TOM RIVERA: Liquor store. On citrus and --

ANGIE PEREZ: Citrus and Rancho. That belonged to my brother, Alfred.

BOXIE PEREZ: Machete. You probably knew him as Machete.

TOM RIVERA: Nickname Machete.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah. (laughs)

TOM RIVERA: What was his name?

ANGIE PEREZ: Alfredo -- Alfred.

TOM RIVERA: Alfred Morales, okay.

ANGIE PEREZ: And he bought that liquor store. And he did real, real well, then he got into real estate. And they all survived real good. They all had money.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah. Now tell me, your mom was quite a gal.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, she bought that little store there.

TOM RIVERA: When did she buy the store? That's on 7th Street, right?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, she bought it in the '40s. The mid-40's, I believe. I can't -- I can't -- I have a piece of paper that tells me, but [00:19:00] she bought there, and she didn't hardly have no money, so she started making her tamales, and everybody came. By 10 o'clock -- she used to make them on, I believe, Thursdays

and Fridays. She used to make cans that big. You could see the rows. And by 10 o'clock Sunday, she didn't have one left.

TOM RIVERA: They were all gone.

ANGIE PEREZ: And menudo.

F1: Are you filming or what?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah. (laughs) Anyway --

ANGIE PEREZ: And she made quite a bit of money.

TOM RIVERA: Well, not only that, but --

BOXIE PEREZ: Now she's the owner.

ANGIE PEREZ: Now I'm the owner.

TOM RIVERA: Is the store still open?

ANGIE PEREZ: No. No, we closed it.

TOM RIVERA: When did you close the store?

ANGIE PEREZ: And we're having -- and we're having problems because --

BOXIE PEREZ: With the city.

ANGIE PEREZ: With the city because we went in and -- see my daughter and her husband? He's a general contractor. So he went in and fixed the back of the house. There's this house in the back -- connected. [00:20:00] And oh, he fixed it so nice, put laminate flooring, new -- everything new -- everything. Windows, everything is new. And people have come over and they want to buy that real estate, but we can't sell it.

TOM RIVERA: Why?

BOXIE PEREZ: The city.

ANGIE PEREZ: Because of the city. The rezoning of the city. Let me talk -- have my daughter come over. She'll tell you.

TOM RIVERA: So the rezoning is what's holding the --

ANGIE PEREZ: What's holding it up -- the sale.

TOM RIVERA: Not only the sale, but also the development of that properties in south Colton.

ANGIE PEREZ: And now if they don't let us, well, then we're going to build some apartments there in the front. There's a house in the back. And -- but he'll do all the work.

TOM RIVERA: Now did you work for the store yourself?

ANGIE PEREZ: A little bit when I was still in school, but after I got out of school, then I went to Skadron, and then I got my own job, and then -- and then --

TOM RIVERA: Do you remember your customers?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, a lot of them.

TOM RIVERA: Who -- who were your customers?

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh.

TOM RIVERA: Can you name them?

ANGIE PEREZ: The Oliva family next-door.

TOM RIVERA: [00:21:00] Oh, they were next-door to you?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes.

TOM RIVERA: Across the alley.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes. And then Father Valencia. Remember Father Valencia?

TOM RIVERA: Yes, yes, yes.

ANGIE PEREZ: He used to bring all the transits over to my mom's little store.

TOM RIVERA: Oh, because the Southern Pacific was there, and the --

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes, and the transits used to go to his house to ask for food, so then he would come over to my mom's and ask her, "Well, can you slice me some

bologna?" And all that -- "So I can give food to these poor people." And we would say, "Yes, of course."

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, because there was -- the railroad was there, and many of them would just hop on the boxcars and go where the boxcars were taking them.

ANGIE PEREZ: Taking them. And then a lot of them, when the boxcars would stop there, they would get off, and right across the way was Father Valencia's house, right?

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

ANGIE PEREZ: And then he would bring them over -- he would come over and get the bologna and things that he wanted to give the poor -- poor people so they could keep on their transportation.

TOM RIVERA: Angie, let me ask you another question. This has to do with the properties -- [00:22:00] the stores that were on 7th Street. The first one -- let's start with -- at the end of 7th next to San Salvador Church. You had the laundry -- you had the laundry.

BOXIE PEREZ: Laundry was over there.

ANGIE PEREZ: There was a laundry.

TOM RIVERA: The laundry was there, verdad?

ANGIE PEREZ: Right at the corner. And then just a little further up --

TOM RIVERA: And then who -- were there a lot of people that worked there that lived in south Colton?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yes.

ANGIE PEREZ: A lot of people. When they closed that laundry, they put a lot of people out of work.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, so that was a good employment for people that lived in south Colton.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

ANGIE PEREZ: And then a little ways up was my mother's place.

TOM RIVERA: On the east side, verdad?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes.

TOM RIVERA: On the east side. What about that corner store -- before we get to your mom's store -- there was a corner building there, and I thought --

ANGIE PEREZ: Was that [Martinez?]? Martinez?

BOXIE PEREZ: Are you talking about the bakery? Or the one across the street?

TOM RIVERA: Across the street from the church.

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh. Yeah, what was his name, Angie? The guy that had the five and ten and all that in there.

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, that was further up though.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah, what was his name?

TOM RIVERA: [Eedy's?].

ANGIE PEREZ: [00:23:00] Eedy's. But he was further away from my mom.

TOM RIVERA: Right. But I'm talking about the -- across the street from the church where they used to -- they used to hang [hoodas?].

BOXIE PEREZ: Hoodas. Oh, that's --

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, yeah.

TOM RIVERA: That store. Yeah, who was that? Who was that?

ANGIE PEREZ: No, I don't remember there being a store there.

BOXIE PEREZ: There was a store.

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, [El Mingo?]. Mingo?

BOXIE PEREZ: No, that's across the street.

ANGIE PEREZ: That was across the street from my mother's, wasn't it?

BOXIE PEREZ: The big one where they used to hang hoodas -- make them dance.

ANGIE PEREZ: That was -- that was Cervantes.

TOM RIVERA: No.

BOXIE PEREZ: No.

TOM RIVERA: That was --

ANGIE PEREZ: That was a long time ago.

TOM RIVERA: Was that Hollywood?

BOXIE PEREZ: Hollywood owned it after that.

TOM RIVERA: Hollywood owned it. Hollywood's family, right?

ANGIE PEREZ: But there was no business there. There was no business there until you got to my mom's place.

TOM RIVERA: And then your mom, and then you had the Olivas.

ANGIE PEREZ: Martinez. No, Olivas.

BOXIE PEREZ: Olivas.

ANGIE PEREZ: But they didn't have no --

TOM RIVERA: And then Eedy's. Then you had Eedy's.

ANGIE PEREZ: Uh-huh. And across the street was Martinez Bakery.

TOM RIVERA: And then next to -- going north was the Tortilleria? Hernandez?

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, the -- that was a little -- just a little [00:24:00] room.

BOXIE PEREZ: [Caldera?]?

ANGIE PEREZ: No, it was --

BOXIE PEREZ: Caldera was big with the tortilla.

ANGIE PEREZ: No, Boxie. It was [Doña Lola?].

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh, that was across the street.

TOM RIVERA: Yes, yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Nelly.

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

ANGIE PEREZ: And then further up was Martinez, and then Tucker.

TOM RIVERA: And then across the street from Martinez was Tucker. There was tortilla -- he had a grocery store.

ANGIE PEREZ: And they all closed down except my mom -- the lady. And then some men were kind of jealous, I guess, because they would go in there and say, "How did you make this money? You're by yourself, and you're"-- but she said, "I have good children because I knew how to discipline them. And you know how I made my money? Like this (laughter) and this." And then some guy would go in there and talk about his wife, "Oh, my wife doesn't do this, and she doesn't do that, and" -- criticizing his wife.

TOM RIVERA: So your mom was admired by many [00:25:00] people.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah. And she finally told him one day -- she wasn't in a very good mood, I guess, but she told him, "You know what? You've told me all your wife's defects, now tell me yours." (laughter)

TOM RIVERA: And you were talking about some of your customers. Tell me some of the customers that you remember.

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh. Well, those two. And then another one was -- what was her name? [Alvarez?]? No, I don't remember that. My brother was real young, and he got a job at the ice plant. He was only 15, and they gave him a job because he was big.

TOM RIVERA: Where was the ice plant? Where was the ice plant located?

ANGIE PEREZ: Over by Southern Pacific.

BOXIE PEREZ: Behind the big store there.

ANGIE PEREZ: I don't remember.

BOXIE PEREZ: Where you guys used to live next door.

ANGIE PEREZ: Martinez.

BOXIE PEREZ: No.

ANGIE PEREZ: I mean Cervantes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Cervantes up.

ANGIE PEREZ: Way in the back. Up. Up there. And my brother got a job there. He was only [00:26:00] 15, and he cut -- you know, they used to have those picks, they used to put like that and then --

TOM RIVERA: Grab the ice and move it along.

ANGIE PEREZ: Grab the ice and move it along. And, of course, he was only 15, and he cut himself with one of those picks. And my mother said, "You know what, son? Someday you're going to have some money." And by God, he sure as hell did. (laughter)

TOM RIVERA: So next to Tucker was the [Juan Caldera?] store?

BOXIE PEREZ: (inaudible).

TOM RIVERA: The pink --

ANGIE PEREZ: Two stories.

TOM RIVERA: -- two story building.

BOXIE PEREZ: (inaudible) -- the big -- what was the name -- Sombrero.

ANGIE PEREZ: (inaudible).

TOM RIVERA: (inaudible). Across the street was the Sombrero.

ANGIE PEREZ: Across the street. And then across --

TOM RIVERA: But getting back to the pink building, wasn't the veterans' post there?

BOXIE PEREZ: The upstairs?

TOM RIVERA: Yeah. Cómo se llama? [Fidel Hernandez?]. Were you part of that group?

ANGIE PEREZ: No, he was too young.

BOXIE PEREZ: No. I was still in the service in Arizona -- no, in Texas.

[00:27:00] And then came back, but -- there's a lot of history here in Colton.

ANGIE PEREZ: You know who was a customer of my mother's little store? That famous lawyer from Colton. The city lawyer from Colton named [Lawrence J. Hutton?].

BOXIE PEREZ: Right here.

TOM RIVERA: Well, the building is named after him.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, and the humane society.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah, it's right here.

TOM RIVERA: And he was one of your customers?

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, yeah. He'd go there every week. My mother had -- he used to tell her, "You have the coldest beer in this whole damn town." (laughter) And he used to buy the tamales, and he used to buy beer, and he says, "I'm going to have some people over and they sure like your tamales so I'm taking them, buying them."

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, very good. And then next to Caldera pink building, you had the [Ornela's?] Barber Shop?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes, Ornela's, yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: (inaudible). That was one that ran the pink building -- one of the brothers.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah. And then next to that was the Bolero.

ANGIE PEREZ: [00:28:00] Yeah.

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh, yeah.

TOM RIVERA: On the corner, the Bolero.

BOXIE PEREZ: Ruben.

ANGIE PEREZ: Ruben.

TOM RIVERA: Ruben. Ruben -- I forget his name -- last name -- Avila?

ANGIE PEREZ: Avila.

BOXIE PEREZ: Avila.

TOM RIVERA: Ruben Avila.

ANGIE PEREZ: He didn't have -- he didn't have a --

TOM RIVERA: He lost an arm, yeah. And then across the street, of course, you had the Sombrero.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: And then you had [Yamas?]. The liquor store there, Yamas.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah, it was around.

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, yes. The little store there. And then later on you had --

TOM RIVERA: The pool hall there.

ANGIE PEREZ: Uh-huh. And then you had [Navarros?] across the street.

BOXIE PEREZ: Navarros was down the street.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, on O Street and 7th. O and 7th.

ANGIE PEREZ: And then further down you had [Estevan?].

TOM RIVERA: Uh-huh. Estevan. And then after Estevan, you had the furniture store.

BOXIE PEREZ: Muratalla.

TOM RIVERA: Muratalla

ANGIE PEREZ: Muratalla.

TOM RIVERA: Muratalla. You had Muratalla down the street.

ANGIE PEREZ: Now they're all gone.

TOM RIVERA: And then your grandfather's gas station across the street from Muratalla. And then under the bridge, you had the 76 --

BOXIE PEREZ: (inaudible).

TOM RIVERA: The 76 Gas station.

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh, [00:29:00] that's catty-corner.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: But underneath the bridge, was (inaudible).

TOM RIVERA: (inaudible) where your grandfather had the stand.

BOXIE PEREZ: We had that under a tree.

TOM RIVERA: Yes, I remember that. Now, who owned the gas station -- the 76 Gas Station?

ANGIE PEREZ: That's --

BOXIE PEREZ: You just named him, but the son ended up with everything. And you know what? He didn't do nothing.

TOM RIVERA: [Thomas Velasquez?]?

BOXIE PEREZ: Tom.

ANGIE PEREZ: Velasquez.

TOM RIVERA: Tom Velasquez. Tommy Velasquez.

BOXIE PEREZ: His son.

ANGIE PEREZ: But, you know, his son lost it all.

TOM RIVERA: Bobby was a musician.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes, he played the piano.

BOXIE PEREZ: But then he didn't do nothing.

ANGIE PEREZ: He didn't do anything with it.

BOXIE PEREZ: I tried to buy it from him -- when he had it for sale, he said no.

TOM RIVERA: But, you know, Colton has really changed quite a bit, verdad?

In the old days, Boxie and Angie, I used to -- well, I described 7th Street as a Broadway of south Colton.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: That's right.

ANGIE PEREZ: That's right.

TOM RIVERA: It was.

ANGIE PEREZ: [00:30:00] All the little businesses were along there.

BOXIE PEREZ: You know, I started driving when I was 12 -- you had to be 12. Women didn't drive.

ANGIE PEREZ: And there was a war going on.

BOXIE PEREZ: I could drive from Pomona to Arizona and from Las Vegas to Furman Park. I could drive at 12. Yeah, women didn't drive.

ANGIE PEREZ: Well, there was no -- you know had to have stamps? I just hear about it, I wasn't very old. They had to have stamps for everything because of the war.

BOXIE PEREZ: Stamps for gas.

ANGIE PEREZ: Stamps for gas, stamps for tires.

BOXIE PEREZ: Because I was working for a company. But women didn't drive. Finally, the last part, when I was getting out the service for the first time, there was two girls -- two ladies -- one was my aunt, [00:31:00] [Celia?], and, oh, she was a --

and the other one, [Alvarez?]. The only two who could drive. No women drivers. But they all had little red wagons.

TOM RIVERA: I was going to ask you, Angie, you were kind of unique. Most of the girls did not work, and, you know, like Boxie was saying, no les dejaban manejar -- they didn't let them drive. How did you happen to be --

ANGIE PEREZ: Because I wanted to make money, (laughs) you know? And I had to go school, I knew I had to go to more schooling, and my mother said, "Well, go ahead. I think I can --" you know, that's when my mother was first starting, and I said, "Well, mom, you have to help me pay for the school." And she said, "I'll help you. I'll pay for it." And I did, I went.

TOM RIVERA: [00:32:00] So lots of encouragement from mom that -- lots of good support.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah. And then my brother had his liquor store, and then he went back to school, and -- you know, it wasn't easy. Like the kids nowadays think that it's easy, it wasn't easy. My brother had to go back to school and study a lot of real estate, and he had a liquor store to run, and then he had to work under a broker, a real estate broker for two years in order to get his brokerage license after going to school and getting a real estate license. So he wanted the brokerage license, and he was very good at math, so he went back to school, and he went, and went, and went, and he finally got his brokerage license. And he started selling real estate and having his liquor store, and he was making quite a bit of money.

TOM RIVERA: He was very busy.

ANGIE PEREZ: Mm-hmm.

TOM RIVERA: He was very busy.

ANGIE PEREZ: And he was a musician.

TOM RIVERA: He was busy.

BOXIE PEREZ: He had [00:33:00] five stores or seven stores?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah. And then my brother, he said, "You know what? I'm going to have to give up music." He used to love to go and play. He was a good musician.

TOM RIVERA: Did he play at the -- at the one on Orange Show?

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh. (laughs)

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, the [Valley Ballroom?].

TOM RIVERA: The Valley Ballroom.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, yeah.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

ANGIE PEREZ: And he finally knew he had to give it up, the musician par, in order to make more money in his real estate. And he did.

TOM RIVERA: Well, let me ask you another question. You said you graduated in '51-'52 from Colton High School.

ANGIE PEREZ: '52.

TOM RIVERA: I was born and raised in Colton, too, and we -- because of segregation, prejudice, and everything that went with it, we had the barrier -- the railroad was a barrier that we couldn't cross into north Colton.

ANGIE PEREZ: To north Colton.

TOM RIVERA: How did you -- how did you -- [00:34:00] you went through those experiences and --

BOXIE PEREZ: Oh, yes.

TOM RIVERA: Tell me some of those experiences.

BOXIE PEREZ: But we were the only service station before Hank.

TOM RIVERA: I worked for Hank for four years. Yeah, [Hank Portillo?].

BOXIE PEREZ: Our service station -- we opened a new one right there before the bridge for Garfield and Wilson. I got something else. I drove -- like I said, I started driving when I was about 10, but my grandpa -- I was telling him -- they used to buy cars for parts. It was nothing -- no tires. And I kept telling him, "Grandpa, I need a car. I need a car." And you know what? He gave me seven cars.

ANGIE PEREZ: No tires. (laughter)

BOXIE PEREZ: No tires. Seven cars with no tires.

ANGIE PEREZ: We better get going. We got (inaudible).

TOM RIVERA: [00:35:00] Well, the other -- I was talking about growing up in a segregated community. Did you experience any of those --

ANGIE PEREZ: No, I didn't.

TOM RIVERA: You know, that you couldn't go to the [Plunge?], or you couldn't go to the show, or you couldn't cross the railroad tracks.

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, the only experience I had is when you went to the New Colton Theater, you know, the whites would sit in the -- as you went in, they would sit on the right, and you had to go to the left. It was segregated. But that's about the only thing.

BOXIE PEREZ: No. Well, I --

ANGIE PEREZ: My oldest brother did -- did --

BOXIE PEREZ: One thing that we had here that the white people on this side didn't have -- the ice cream place in the corner. You remember that?

TOM RIVERA: No.

ANGIE PEREZ: They used to put on --

BOXIE PEREZ: Underneath the trees over there.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah.

TOM RIVERA: Oh, the root beer stand.

ANGIE PEREZ: Root beer stand.

BOXIE PEREZ: Yeah.

ANGIE PEREZ: They would do that --

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, the root beer float.

ANGIE PEREZ: They had root beer floats.

TOM RIVERA: Right, I remember that.

ANGIE PEREZ: And they would only --

TOM RIVERA: Past the tracks. (laughter) Past the tracks.

ANGIE PEREZ: They only would come --

BOXIE PEREZ: They were on this side. [00:36:00] It was that side of the tracks. And we had the ice cream and the root beer, and the white people didn't have it.

ANGIE PEREZ: And they had to come to south Colton or else they couldn't get no root beer floats. (laughs)

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, that was a root beer stand that was there.

BOXIE PEREZ: You remember that?

TOM RIVERA: I remember that.

ANGIE PEREZ: And then my brother -- my oldest brother used to play football. He was a good football player. And that Coach [Adams?], he was telling us a story -- he used to take them to [Hunt's?] -- you remember that? Hunt's?

TOM RIVERA: Yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: Over here.

TOM RIVERA: Yeah, the soda place.

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, but they didn't allow any Mexicans in there, you know?

TOM RIVERA: Right. Right.

ANGIE PEREZ: So the coach had to bring them their hamburgers and their milkshakes outside to the Mexican guys.

TOM RIVERA: What year was that, Angie? What year was that?

ANGIE PEREZ: I don't know. He didn't tell me.

TOM RIVERA: Was it in high school? When was he in high school?

ANGIE PEREZ: Yeah, it was in high school.

TOM RIVERA: When did he graduate?

ANGIE PEREZ: I don't know. I don't remember. But, anyway, my brother was real tall, and he was very fair-skinned -- really, really fair --

BOXIE PEREZ: (inaudible).

ANGIE PEREZ: -- and then he had dark curly hair, [00:37:00] and so he didn't look Mexican at all. So he went in one time -- he got mad, and he went in, and sat at the counter, and they served him, and then when he finished, he said, "Hey, you know what? You just served a Mexican, and I ate, and my name is not [Moralie?]" -- because he told them his name was Moralie. He said, "My name is Morales," (laughter) and he went out. He said, "My mother's going to know about this," but they never -- never turned him in. They needed him in the football team, (laughter) that's why.

TOM RIVERA: Well, listen, Angie and Boxie, thank you so much for being with us this afternoon. Thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. And did -- one last question. What is the best thing that you remember about growing up in Colton? What was the most wonderful [00:38:00] experience or the best thing that you remember as you grew up in Colton?

ANGIE PEREZ: My best experience was the church -- Catholic church there. Out of all the girls, the nuns -- the nuns used to teach then at Catechism -- they selected me to crown the Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Fatima.

TOM RIVERA: How old were you?

ANGIE PEREZ: Oh, I must have been about 12 years old, 11 years old.

TOM RIVERA: Okay, you were young.

ANGIE PEREZ: And they made a beautiful crown for her, and I crowned her -- with the music and everything.

TOM RIVERA: Oh, wonderful.

ANGIE PEREZ: They played beautiful music in our little church. And that was really -- I almost fainted when she told me because they made a big train for me, and a beautiful dress. I never had such a beautiful dress in all my life. And then they put -- they also put me a crown -- a little crown. And that was the most beautiful experience.

TOM RIVERA: [00:39:00] So you never forgot about that?

ANGIE PEREZ: No. I have a big picture of me of me in (inaudible).

TOM RIVERA: Let us scan that. (laughter) How about you, Boxie? What was your --

BOXIE PEREZ: Well, you know, we were separated -- white and Mexican. But my grandfather had a short leg.

TOM RIVERA: Yes, I remember that, yes.

BOXIE PEREZ: He had to cross the highway. There was one policeman -- [Lavello?] was his name. He used to pick me and my grandpa up at night and take us home. That was it.

ANGIE PEREZ: Okay, well, we better go.

TOM RIVERA: That was a good experience.

BOXIE PEREZ: I'll never forget it.

TOM RIVERA: Well, thank you very much for being with us. And you say goodbye to Henry.

BOXIE PEREZ: Bye.

ANGIE PEREZ: Thank you.

End of Interview:

[00:39:55]